

# *Defender*



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

*Volume XXX*

*2001*

January

April

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October

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May

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# Defender



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

Volume XXX

January 2001

Number 1

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## WHY I CAN'T SEE THAT

*Gary W. Summers*

No less than fifteen times in the course of his debate with Jerry Moffitt, Mac Deaver asked the audience, “Can we not see that?” or “Isn’t that clear?” For a few speeches it looked like he was going to call Bill Lockwood his friend even more often, but that phrase only occurred eight times (an average of once a speech). Anyway, my answer to his question is, “No, I can’t see that,” and this article explains the reasons.

First, some preliminary observations will be noted. This article is not written to create an adversarial relationship with Mac or any members of his family. The purpose is to examine the doctrine he has set forth. There will be disagreement—but not animosity.

Second, this writer has no intention of answering 100 True - False questions or making a *formal* logical argument. This statement does not imply that those methods do not have value, but they also have weaknesses. As an example of the problem that sometimes exists with them, we will use a True - False question that Mac answered the final day of the debate.

The fourth of five questions was: “True - False. The people on Pentecost were led by the Spirit to become Christians.” Despite Mac’s continual criticism of Jerry during the debate for writing qualifying comments, Mac circled “false” and added, “Not in the sense of Romans 8:14. They were under the influence of His teaching (Ac. 7:51; 2:41).” Well, he is exactly correct, but he could not answer the True - False question without additional definition and clarification. Notice the problem that this question presented to him.

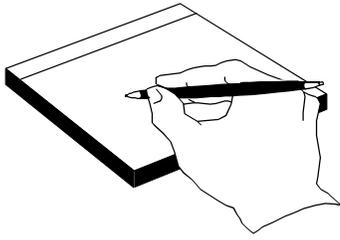
Had he merely circled “true,” then he has admitted that those who were not as yet baptized were led by the

Spirit and consequently (according to his own argument) must already be Christians. To circle “false” would invite objections. By whom, then, were they led—Satan? Does the devil lead people to obey the gospel? By giving the answer that he did, Mac recognized that sometimes a word or phrase must be more precisely defined. Of course, they were led by the Spirit in the sense of being under the influence of the Spirit’s teaching through the apostle Peter—thus the qualifying statement. By Mac’s own admission, then, True - False statements can prove to be a predicament unless the terms are further defined or clarified.

This brief analysis also relates to Jerry’s preference for linguistic logic rather than formal, mathematical logic. Syllogisms have the same weakness with words (and their definitions) that True - False questions do. Some of these will be pointed out as we examine Mac’s main argument. He said in his second affirmative speech on the third day of the debate: “I’m willing to rest the whole case on this argument.” His argument is in the logical form of: If P is true, then Q is true. P is true; therefore Q is true. In logic this form of statement is called *modus ponens*. Some are confused by such things because the terms are not in their common vocabulary. All that it amounts to is saying something like the following: “If angle A is a right angle, then angle A contains 90 degrees. Angle A is a right angle; therefore, angle A contains 90 degrees.” This is a simple statement that is easy to see. The more complex the argument becomes, however, the greater the opportunity for error.

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# Notes From The Editor



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## Debate

Most, if not all, of our readers know of the debate which took place in Denton between brethren Jerry Moffitt and Mac Deaver. Brother Moffitt affirmed: “The Bible teaches that, in the process of perfecting a holy character in the Christian, the Holy Spirit always operates indirectly on the heart to sanctify it, and only through the medium of His indwelling, abiding, and active Word,” while brother Deaver affirmed: “The Bible teaches that, in addition to His sanctifying influence through His Word, the Holy Spirit operates directly to sanctify the heart of the faithful Christian.”

While the propositions for this debate show the true nature of the discussion, it seems as if many still are not clear. Some still believe that this is a debate over how the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian (whether or not He dwells personally in the Christian or representatively through the Word of God). Neither was this debate concerning providence nor prayer. Brother Deaver tried very hard in the debate to try to change the subject to God’s working through providence and His answering the Christian’s prayers. He believes that if he can prove that God works for the Christian externally (God working directly but in an indirect manner upon the Christian) that he also proves that God works for the Christian internally (directly upon his spirit). However, that is not the proposition or what this debate involves. The debate concerned whether or not the Holy Spirit works directly upon the heart of the Christian or whether He works indirectly by means of the Word of God.

One of the unique aspects of this debate is that the audience was allowed to ask questions each day. As one would naturally assume, there were both many questions and many questioners. On the second day of the debate, I had the opportunity to ask a question. Prior to

discussing my question, a couple of comments are in order. Brother Deaver believes that Christians receive wisdom directly from God: the Holy Spirit directly giving wisdom to the Christian’s spirit. He also declared (on the second day of the debate) that he also believes the Spirit directly gives him *epignosis* (which means a full knowledge). As such, I wonder if the Spirit was directly giving him wisdom and a full knowledge (*epignosis*) in answering the questions which were asked of him? If his doctrine is true we should have been able to witness such in the answers which he gave (assuming that he had prayed for such prior to the debate)!

I asked this question and directed it to brother Deaver.

When the Holy Spirit directly gave the apostles and prophets words, we correctly affirm that those words were inspired and infallible. If the Holy Spirit directly gives you wisdom as you claim from James 1:5, then why is that wisdom information not inspired and infallible wisdom information? If the information given in wisdom is not inspired and infallible then why should we consider the information given in words to the apostles and prophets inspired and infallible?

When brother Deaver began his response, he first dealt with what brother Moffitt had said in response to the previous question. After dealing with that he then turned to my question. Here is his response to my question in full.

Now the question had to do with inspiration and something—what was it? Am I not inspired or whatever. Look if you get, if you get wisdom from God, whether you get it directly or indirectly, it is infallible wisdom. Now let me say that again. If God grants you something, it’s sufficient whether it’s indirect or direct. If we had a question on whether or not God forgave you directly or forgave you indirectly, forgave you, is it forgiven? If He gives you knowledge directly or indirectly is it knowledge? You don’t have to have the Holy Spirit to be infallible about some points. That’s why I asked Bill Lockwood in our debate: Can a man have infallible truth, have infallible knowledge about the deity of Christ before he obeys the gospel. He said yes. You see brethren you must know things before you obey the gospel. Things about which you cannot possibly be wrong—that’s infallibility. That’s what it is. Now I am not inspired. I do not have the measure of the Holy Spirit that any apostle had, but I have the Holy Spirit. I have the Holy Spirit, but it is a matter of degree. I have the same source. I don’t have the same degree. Everybody in the New Testament miraculous days didn’t have the same degree of the miraculous measure. We don’t even have the miraculous measure. So it’s a matter of degree, but yes I can be infallible. I don’t go around saying, “Well this is the

answer because I am infallible.” I prove all things and hold fast to that which is good, 1 Thessalonians 5:21. And I do not know the degree or the time at which all prayers are answered any more that you do, but I keep on praying and expecting some help.

While the question was not directed to brother Moffitt, he did respond to what brother Deaver had said in response to his response. When he was through with that, brother McClish asked, “Jerry, do you have a response to the question?” Brother Moffitt’s response was: “Yes, whatever it was, that’s my response.”

As brother Deaver began his response to my question, I again wonder if he was being supplied wisdom and a full knowledge (*epignosis*) directly from the Holy Spirit to his spirit. This is what he teaches, thus he should have possessed it. If he possessed a full knowledge, why did he have difficulty remembering the question? Brother Deaver did admit that he was not inspired. However, if it is the case that he is receiving wisdom directly from God by the Spirit to his spirit, then why would he deny his inspiration? Additionally, we should all recognize his inspiration and his infallibility in all aspects of both his wisdom and *epignosis* (full knowledge). However, why did the Spirit allow brother Mac Deaver to be without this full knowledge (regarding the position he now holds) all his preaching life till 1994?

While there are many other questions that arise: I would like to point out a couple of things. Brother Deaver has chided many preachers when they discuss the all-sufficiency of the Bible for not defining what they mean by all-sufficient. He then tells us that the Bible is all-sufficient informationally. However, in my question to brother Deaver, I used the phrase “wisdom information.” Wisdom is a type of **information**. Brother Deaver believes we get this type of information directly from the Holy Spirit to the Christian’s spirit according to James 1:5. Since it is the case that wisdom is a type of information which is given directly by God (and is not the Bible) then he does not really believe the Bible is all-sufficient informationally. Also brother Deaver pointed out on the second day of the debate that the Spirit directly gives the Christian a full knowledge (*epignosis*). Is this *epignosis* information? Does this information come from the Bible? Brother Deaver says it does not come from the Bible but the Holy Spirit gives it to the Christian directly (the Spirit upon man’s spirit). Thus, if this *epignosis* is information, then again he has denied that the Bible is all-sufficient informationally (at least in this type of information which comes

from God).

Personally, I am saddened by this controversy. I have a great deal of respect for the Deavers. They are friends of mine. However, they have taken a view which cannot be sustained and is extremely dangerous. Brother Moffitt showed that the position they hold attacks the all-sufficiency of the Bible. I know the Deavers have the utmost respect for God’s Word, however (while denying the implication) the doctrine they now hold does denigrate the all-sufficiency of God’s Word. It is my prayer that they will reconsider their position and return to the position brother Mac Deaver once held. *MH*

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(Continued from Page 1)

There must, for example, be a logical connection between the “if” and the “then.” “If this is Tuesday, then we must be in Belgium.” This may state a true consequence if a person is traveling through Europe and is scheduled to be in Belgium on Tuesday, if the plans have not in any way been altered from the original itinerary, and if it is, in fact, Tuesday. All those conditions would have to be met in order for the “then” to correlate to the “if.” Otherwise, most of the world was not in Belgium last Tuesday.

Mac has four parts to his “if” statement. He must prove not only that all four parts are true, but he must also show that the conclusion (“then”) is related to and actually follows the “if.” Below are comments on Mac’s proof of his four statements.

1. He affirms that “the Word of God can directly affect the human heart,” citing Psalm 119:11 and Acts 2:37 (his argument is set forth on pages 520-21 of this year’s lectureship book). First of all, he needs to define *directly* and explain what he means by *the human heart*. Do Scriptures literally leap off the page and embed themselves into a physical organ? No, such would be preposterous. Surely, he is referring to the heart in the sense of the human mind—that which thinks and reasons. The psalmist has internalized the precepts taught in God’s Word so he can call upon them during moments of temptation and be able to resist.

But we are still confused by the word *directly*. Is Mac saying that, when the Truth comes into our minds and perhaps affects our emotions, such is *direct* contact? If so, he contradicts himself. On the third day of “Questions and Answers” Mac affirmed, “By the way, to complete the analogy, you plant the seed in the good soil, but it’s not a Christian yet. The ‘Word only’ does

not quicken the heart of anybody.”

Now he may have been speaking in a different context from what we are, but what he said is true in both contexts. The Word Peter preached did prick the hearts of men (Acts 2:37), and three thousand were baptized (Acts 2:41). However, not everyone that day (or on any other day) that heard the message obeyed the Gospel. Why not? The same Word of God was presented to all. Why did some obey and others reject it?

The reason is that there is another step involved. When the Word is preached, the hearer must evaluate what has been presented to him. On the day of Pentecost the three thousand considered the evidence Peter presented: the manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s outpouring upon the twelve, the explanation of the way the events surrounding the crucifixion fulfilled Scriptures, and the eyewitness testimony of Jesus’ resurrection. They judged that the argument that Peter had made was true. They believed what he had said and willed to act in harmony with the facts.

Why did others, however, not obey? There are other factors that affect one’s thinking. They may have been so prejudiced by the Jewish rulers that they refused to hear or reason properly. They may have had some reservations about Peter’s message (some need more time than others to mull over the new information they receive). Some may have thought they would be forsaking Moses or the religion of their parents. Why did the generation that God delivered out of Egypt with a mighty hand die in the wilderness? “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*” (Heb. 4:2).

The Word does not act *directly* upon the heart. It must be filtered through all the various things that affect our processing of information. If the Word directly affected us, then *all would obey God, and no one could deny Him*. No, we are not saying that Mac believes such a notion; we are only explaining our confusion of his use of the word *directly* and the phrase *human heart*.

2. The second component of his argument is that “the Holy Spirit indwells a saint’s heart in conjunction with the Word (Acts 2:38; Eph. 5:17-19; Col. 3:16-17).” What does he mean by *in conjunction with*? Does he mean that the Spirit dwells within us, as the Bible teaches? In what sense are they both together? He spent a great deal of time in the debate showing that the Spirit is not identical to the Word, but then He does not seem to want the Spirit within someone unless the Word is also there. If the gift of the Spirit in Acts 2:38 is the

Spirit Himself, then He comes by Himself to indwell us, not *in conjunction with* the Word, which would absurdly imply that He brought several Scriptures with Him when He came (or perhaps they just met there).

Furthermore, not one of these verses cited above mentions the Holy Spirit being in the human heart. It does not appear that brother Deaver has proved either his first or second points, either one of which would invalidate his argument. One cannot simply, as he himself put it in the debate, throw material out and assume that everyone will connect it properly.

3. “The Word alone in a heart cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit (Matt. 7:16-20; John 15:1ff; Rom. 8:9-11).” Once again, Mac assumes that these passages are related to one another and that the reader will see the connection. Just because fruit or fruits are mentioned in each passage does not prove they all refer to the same thing.

Matthew 7:16-20 tells us that we can discern a false prophet (or teacher) by his fruits. Apparently, Mac thinks these are identical to the fruit mentioned in John 15 and “the fruit of the Spirit” defined in Galatians 5:22-24. But more than one kind of fruit is described in the New Testament.

What, for example, is the fruit of Matthew 13:23? “But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” Although it may be related to John 15, it does not fit Galatians 5:22-24. The fruitful Christian produces more Christians. In other words, this fruit carries with it evangelistic concepts and possibly good works. Consider the following verses: “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (John 4:35-36).

Can Mac prove that John 15:2, 5 refers to the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians and not the fruit of harvesting souls or engaging in good works? Notice that verse 2 speaks of bringing forth *more* fruit and verse 5 says bearing *much* fruit. These descriptions are certainly harmonious with Matthew 13:23 and John 4:35-36. Paul also wrote that the gospel had gone into “all the world; and bringeth forth fruit” (Col. 1:6).

There are other senses in which the word *fruit* is also used. As Paul discussed the generous giving of the Philippians, he said, “Not because I desire a gift: but I

desire fruit that may abound to your account” (4:17). John the baptizer exhorted the Pharisees and the Sadducees: “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Mat. 3:8). Paul told Agrippa that he preached to the Gentiles that they “should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.” These verses term the works of repentance as fruits. The point is that one cannot just assume that “fruit” in one passage refers to the same thing in another passage; he must clearly prove that the two are the same.

What about Matthew 7:15-20? Is it used in the same sense as John 15 or Galatians 5? Jesus’ point is not that you can tell a false teacher by his outward appearance. Even Satan can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:13-15). Wolves appear as sheep. False teachers almost always appear to have the fruit of the Spirit. They invariably talk about love, joy, and peace, and they are generally very kind and exercise self-control. All of his defenders argue that Max Lucado is the epitome of the spirit-filled person. How do we all prove otherwise? We cite his **doctrine**. Does he teach the Truth regarding salvation? No. Is he bearing fruit evangelistically? No, he is keeping people out of the kingdom of heaven. He is not bearing fruit (in that sense) but laying up for himself damnation. Furthermore, the false prophets are actually ravening wolves, which means they are greedy for gain. They are the kind of men who “devour widows’ houses” (Mat. 23:14).

The New Testament teaches that one cannot go by *appearances* in determining genuineness. Many in denominations have the *appearance* of the fruit of the Spirit. They have wrongly been convinced they have been saved, and many have worked diligently and sincerely at developing the characteristics taught in Galatians 5:22-24. We do not try to convince them they do not possess the fruit of the Spirit by *observation*; we demonstrate that they do not possess it because they are not in Christ—because they have never obeyed the gospel. In other words, we do not base our judgment upon *subjective* appearances but on the *objective* Word.

People can believe they are saved, follow the

teachings of the Bible regarding character, and appear the same as those who really are Christians. We have all wondered if someone we have just met is a Christian because of the character and conduct of that individual. Suppose we are sent to a convention, along with nine other people we have never met before. All we know in advance is that some are members of the church and some are members of denominations. Further, suppose that we spend five days with this group but never discuss the Bible. If Mac’s argument on the fruit of the Spirit is correct, he should at the end of the five days be able to determine precisely (on the basis of character and deportment of the group) which ones are Christians and which ones are not. A few dozen charts will not be able to solve this dilemma. Do all have the fruit of the Spirit? No, but they *all appear* to have it. We must find out which persons obeyed the Gospel to know which ones are actually Christians.

The Word of God itself is so powerful that, when people submit themselves to various portions of it (whether or not they have obeyed the Gospel and are in Christ), it is difficult for others to know by observation alone if they are in the vine or not—without further scrutiny. Jesus, however, always knows who are His.

4. Mac’s fourth point is that “the saint must produce the fruit of the Spirit.” This is the one point that is true without needing any revision or further clarification (Gal. 5:22-25).

We believe that we have at least set forth some weaknesses and have at best invalidated brother Deaver’s syllogism. If the whole case rests on this syllogism, and parts of this syllogism are ill-defined and unclear (not to mention unconnected), then he has not established his case sufficiently.

Readers should bear in mind that, in examining these matters, we have not accused him of possessing any wrong motives. We believe that he is as sincere as a man can be, and we pray that he is not so committed to this doctrine that he cannot stand back and reevaluate it with the logical mind that he possesses.

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## Theme: Encouraging Statements Of The Bible

Date: June 9-13, 2001

# THE MAIN ISSUE OF THE DEEVER-MOFFITT DEBATE

Gary W. Summers

Regardless of syllogisms, fountains of rhetoric, or the means by which God works through providence and prayer, the debate propositions reveal **the** point at issue: Does the Holy Spirit work **directly** to sanctify the heart of the faithful Christian or **indirectly** through the medium of His Word? Some may find this topic to be still confusing. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to make the distinction as clear as possible.

We will discuss a few statements from Mac's speeches in the debate. For brevity's sake, we will designate each quotation by the day of the debate, followed by a colon and whether it was the first or second speech of the day.

Most brethren have contended through the years, whether or not they believed in the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit does things *for* us (on our behalf), but not *to* us. The Deavers now claim that the Holy Spirit does something **personally and directly to** the Christian's spirit. This view is new and different to many of us, and Mac agrees with this assessment. He stated in his very first speech that those who hold his view "have been very quiet for the last thirty years." (1:1).

He contends that God's working proves his case: "If God can help me externally in some sort of direct way, and there are people here who believe that, then I'm saying He can also do it internally. There's no way to stop that once you start that program" (2:2). "Bill Lockwood understands that if God can operate outside directly, he can also operate inside directly" (2:1).

*God working outside* has reference to God's working through prayer and providence. *God's working inside* refers to Spirit-on-spirit influence. The assertion is, therefore, that if God can work **outside** the Christian to accomplish His providence, then there is no way to deny that He can work directly **internally** on the Christian's behalf.

But wait a minute. Can God work on behalf of the non-Christian **externally**? If someone is genuinely seeking the Lord, can God not work providentially (externally in some sort of direct way) on behalf of the non-Christian? Why, then, can He not work **internally** on him (Calvinism)? Consider God's active, **external work** in the conversions of the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius. "Then Spirit said to Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot" (Acts 8:29). "While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down,

and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them" (Acts 10:19-20).

In these instances the Holy Spirit was really direct. Therefore, according to Mac's own argument: If God helped them **externally** in some sort of direct way, then He could help them **internally**, also. Perhaps the Calvinists are correct when they say that God opened Lydia's heart **directly** so that she might receive the Word (Acts 16:14). Readers should not misunderstand: the Deavers do not believe in Calvinistic doctrine, and Mac denied that the Spirit works directly on the sinner's heart; but his argument, if valid, proves that He can.

## How Much Help?

Mac affirms that the Spirit gives the Christian additional strength he would not otherwise have. He thinks the Scriptures prove his contention, and he cites Ephesians 3:16, in which Paul on behalf of the brethren prays to the Father "that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." Admittedly, one might infer, from a cursory reading of this verse alone, that perhaps the Christian is promised Spirit-on-spirit strength. That the inward person—man's spirit—is to be strengthened with power by the Spirit of God cannot be denied.

But where did the verse say that the strength would come directly, through the Spirit exerting some kind of Spiritual pressure on our spirits? If God had chosen to impact us in a direct manner, none of us could possibly object, but such is not the teaching of the New Testament. In fact, in this same letter, Paul writes:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Eph. 6:10-13).

Then Paul describes the Christian's armor. If Mac's interpretation of Ephesians 3:16 is correct, then why does Paul not write: "Therefore take up the whole armor of God, and don't forget to rely upon the extra strength that comes to you directly through the Spirit"? Is it not our faith (rather than immediate help from the Spirit) that quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked one (Eph. 6:16)?

Furthermore, Mac is arguing for God's help from

the wrong angle. He thinks we are given extra strength to resist sin and live the Christian life. The Scriptures teach the opposite: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*" (1 Cor. 10:13).

In other words, God knows our limitations. He keeps us from sin, not by providing extra strength when we are tempted, but by keeping overpowering tempta-

tions from devouring us (which does not require a direct, Spirit-on-spirit operation). We just cannot see that the Spirit would provide the Word to completely furnish us, keep us from being overwhelmed, work providentially on our behalf, yet still need to provide extra strength.

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(Editor's note: Because of the length of these reviews by brother Summers, I will continue them in next month's issue.)

Recommended Book:

## *Tackling Life's Troubles*

Brother Spurlin sent me a copy of this book and I highly recommend it. He sent this notice also:

Tom Holland nearly two years ago urged me to think about writing a book that would address the adversities and tribulations that people face. Since I have faced the trials of a bedridden existence for five years plus, fighting the debilitating disease of multiple sclerosis, brother Holland thought I would be in a position to address this subject. The title of the book is *Tackling Life's Troubles* which includes articles on adversity, dealing with grief, tributes, and doctrinal themes which face us today.

Brother Holland has published the book for us at his cost, for which we are deeply thankful, and the sales of the book will go toward the mounting medical bills that we presently face as well as other financial burdens. We would be glad to send you a copy and would urge your friends to purchase a copy as well. The cost is \$10.00, plus tax and mailing expense. Contact us by email: [prechteach@aol.com](mailto:prechteach@aol.com). Mailing address: Bob Spurlin, 122 Brooks Lane, Somerville, AL 35670.

We wish to thank you in advance and urge you to continue remembering us in your prayers.

The Bob Spurlin Family

## Great Study Aid and Offer

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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

Volume XXX

February 2001

Number 2

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## THE MAIN ISSUE OF THE DEAVER-MOFFITT DEBATE

*Gary W. Summers*

*(Editor's Note: This is continued from the January 2001 issue, I would encourage you to refresh your memory by reading the first part.)*

Besides having extra strength for living the Christian life, Mac says that the Spirit directly supplies wisdom to the saint. We are taught to pray for wisdom, and we do so often. God promises to grant it to us, but He never says He will do so directly (Jam. 1:5-6). Mac addressed this issue:

When God helps me or you come to a better understanding of the Scripture, I do not know the time. I do not know the degree to which the help is supplied at that time. I do not know the degree it comes. Like asking, explain the mechanics of this. Who can, without being God? I do not know that, but I know that I'm in a situation. I'm part of a program that lends itself to my development in knowledge by God's Spirit working in me so I can say 'perhaps' like Philemon 15 (3:2).

If a person does not know when, how, or to what degree that God imparts wisdom, is it possible that he might be mistaken that wisdom is granted *directly* in the first place? Mac kept insisting that we cannot explain the mechanics of miracles, either. While we do not know all of the particulars, of course, we do know one thing—**when**. When Jesus walked on the water, raised Lazarus from the dead, healed the blind man, etc., we know that: (1) He exercised power on those individuals or over nature; and (2) we know **when** He worked a miracle. In the case of turning the water into wine, few may have known the exact moment when it occurred, but they knew within a few minutes.

People knew when they were inspired by the Holy Spirit. So why cannot Mac say **when** he is given this

direct infusion of wisdom? He is arguing for something unobservable in any form and untestable by any objective means. Oh, we could possibly get together five brethren who believe as he does and give them a difficult passage of Scripture, let them earnestly pray, and then have each one explain the passage. But when the interpretations did not match, they could simply say we are putting time constraints on the Almighty and tempting Him (which would sound strangely like the Pentecostal quibble to the demand for objective evidence of a miracle).

We are left, then, with a doctrine, that teaches what cannot be proved conclusively or demonstrated. But even worse, we are told we cannot know how much strength or wisdom we are receiving. On the fourth day of the debate the following question was asked.

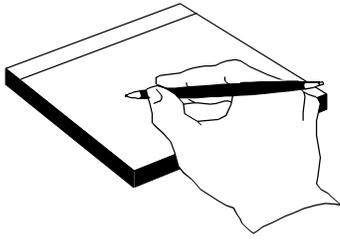
1. When the Spirit operates directly on our spirit, His Divine effort keeps us from (check the correct answer):

- all sin;
- an indeterminate amount of sins that we would otherwise have committed;
- no sins that we would have otherwise committed.

Mac checked “an indeterminate amount.” Why? Obviously, none of us is kept from all sins, and he had already cited 1 John 1:8, 10 to refute that idea. Neither could he answer that **with** this Holy Spirit's direct aid would we be no better off than we would be **without** it—or the “direct operation” doctrine would be useless. So he must say we are better off than with no direct

*(Continued on Page 4)*

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
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## Ephesians 3:16

### ARE CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE LIVED SINCE THE END OF THE MIRACULOUS AGE STRENGTHENED INWARDLY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SOME DIRECT WAY (IN ADDITION TO HIS WORD)?

As the restorers were coming out of denomination-ism two centuries ago, one of the major doctrines they had to overcome was the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the lives of people. Denominationalism was in the grip of Calvinism. Calvinism taught that a man was totally depraved without any capability of doing anything good. God, to save man, had to send the Holy Spirit into him. By this means, the Spirit would **directly** act upon the heart of a person to convict him of his sin and save him. The Spirit would then continue to act **directly** upon the heart of the saved man to make sure he lived in such a way as to be saved eternally in Heaven. All of this activity by the Spirit He would do “in conjunction with the Word of God,” and never would He act in a way contradictory to the Scriptures. Sadly, some of our own number are now at least partially reverting to Calvinistic doctrine—not in the area of initial conviction and salvation (i.e., “conversion”), but in the area of living as Christians (i.e., “sanctification”). These are now saying that we are **directly** strengthened by the Spirit in living the Christian life.

Let us clearly understand what we are **not** discussing.

1. We are not discussing what the Spirit (or the Godhead) might do in the realm of **external providence**. Surely, God works providentially (in both general and special ways) for His children. The role

which the Spirit plays in this we cannot say, because it is hidden from us; it is “behind the scenes” activity.

2. We are not discussing the **indwelling of the Spirit** in the Christian. Everyone agrees that the Spirit indwells the Christian, although it is not agreed as to the way in which He does it. (It is this author’s view that the way the Spirit dwells in the Christian does not need much discussion. It is not an important point. There will never be complete agreement on this subject, nor need there be). (One can be mistaken about this matter and still go to Heaven, as it does not deal with how to be saved or how to live the Christian life. All readily agree, at least verbally, that the way the Spirit dwells in a Christian is not a fellowship issue.)

This discussion pertains to the working—the operation—of the Spirit and how He works today. Does He work **directly** (in addition to His Word) on the Christian’s heart, or does he work **indirectly**, only through His Word to strengthen him and to cause him to bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)?

If the Spirit strengthens the Christian **directly** today, then how could a Christian commit sin? If a Christian did commit sin, then why would it not be the Spirit’s fault for not strengthening him so as to prevent it? In numerous debates with denominationalists faithful men have correctly pointed out that if God must send the Holy Spirit into one’s heart to convict and convert

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\*\*\*\*\*

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

him, and if said person never receives the Spirit and is lost, then it is God's fault for not sending the Spirit into his heart. The late Winfred Clark comments as follows concerning this matter: "This is Paul's prayer. Does this mean a direct operation upon the inner man or the heart? Is that the way they are to be strengthened? If so, such would be an operation of God in answer to Paul's prayer apart from the exercise of their own wills. If they were therefore not strong, whose fault would it be? Would it not be the Holy Spirit's if he didn't make them strong by the direct operation?" (73).

If the Spirit operates **directly** upon us, instead of being judged by what one has "done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10; cf. Rom. 14:12; Rev. 20:12), one should be judged by what the Spirit has done or not done for him. Actually, we should not be judged at all. Why should **we** be judged for what the **Spirit** does or fails to do for us in **directly** strengthening us?

If the Spirit **directly** strengthens the Christian today, then what need do we have of the Bible? Paul teaches that the Gospel is God's power to save: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16-17). "Salvation" here does not refer merely to salvation from past sins, but to salvation in Heaven. To be saved in Heaven, one must live according to God's will. If one must have the Spirit **directly** strengthening him, then the Gospel is not able to do what Paul claims for it. Peter writes, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:3-4).

In God's Word we have everything that pertains to life and godliness (both here and now and in eternity). It is through the Bible that we are able to escape the corruption that is in the world. If we need the **direct** working of the Spirit to strengthen us so as to escape this corruption, then the Bible is not sufficient to do this.

Concerning the sufficiency of the Scriptures, Paul writes, "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and

*is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). When the Scriptures are used properly, for these four reasons for which they have been given, such will result in making us men of God, equipped completely to every good work (those things God has ordained). The doctrine that we have and need the **direct** strengthening of the Spirit in our lives deprives the Scriptures of their sufficiency to do what God says they can and will do when properly utilized. Is the inspired Word itself able to completely furnish or equip us to all good works, or must the Spirit also **directly** help us "in conjunction with the Word"? Paul clearly answers this question in 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

In the larger context of Ephesians 3:16 there is evidence that the Spirit's strengthening is done through the medium of God's Word, thus **indirectly**. Early in chapter 3 Paul declares that he had received this message by revelation of God through the agency of His Spirit (vv. 3-5). This information is reminiscent of the apostles statement in 1 Corinthians 2:10-13: "But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: 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; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

Thus, the Spirit revealed the message to Paul. He wrote that message down for those Gentile Christians (and for us) to read. It was for these same ones that Paul was praying that they might be strengthened by the Spirit. By reading Paul's Spirit-revealed message they would be strengthened. Later, Paul urges the Ephesians to "put on the whole armour of God." After quoting Ephesians 6:10-11, 13-17, Clark remarks, "It becomes obvious that such a person would be made stronger by doing what the Spirit through Paul admonishes him to do, wouldn't he? Now, does this differ in effect from the prayer he prays in Ephesians 3:16? Surely not. The inner man is strengthened by the Spirit as he learns from the Spirit's teaching how to be stronger. His convictions are made stronger leading to stronger determination (Col. 1:10-11) (74).

Remember that Paul was writing to the church at Ephesus. Earlier, when Paul spoke with the elders of this church, he reminded them of his work among them. He issued a warning and then concluded his remarks to them by saying, “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). The idea expressed by the phrase “build you up” is the same as “strengthening.” How would they be built up or strengthened? Paul’s answer is that this would be accomplished by the Word of God. Surely, as they read Ephesians 3:16 their minds would return to Paul’s earlier spoken statement (i.e., Acts 20:32) concerning now they would be strengthened by the Spirit. The way the Spirit was to fulfill Paul’s prayer (that He strengthen the Ephesians) was through “the word of his [God’s] grace.” The Holy Spirit would use the medium, or agency, of the Bible.

The way the Spirit works in the Christian is the same way that He works in a non-Christian. In both cases the Spirit uses a medium, an agent: He works upon the human heart or spirit **indirectly**. This fact is demonstrated from Jesus’ promise to send the Holy Spirit upon the apostles (John 14-16). His manifold promise included telling them what the Spirit would accomplish when He was sent to them. He would “reprove (convict, ASV) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8-11). The Holy Spirit convicts the non-Christian of his sins. How does He do this? As one reads the book of Acts (especially chapter 2), he sees that the Spirit convicts men of sin by means of the Word as the apostles preached (i.e., in an **indirect** manner). Why would we think that the Spirit would convict men of sin in one way, but then convict men of righteousness in another? As one reads Acts, he also observes that the Spirit used the Word to convict men of righteousness. He worked **indirectly, not directly**, which is the exact same way He works today.

#### Work Cited:

Clarke, Winfred (1984), “Paul’s Prayer For Gentile Saints (3:14-19),” *The Book of Ephesians*, ed. Garland Elkins and Thomas B. Warren (Memphis TN: Getwell Church of Christ)

*(Editor’s Note: This was part of a chapter I wrote for the 1997 Annual Denton Lectureship book “Studies In Ephesians” edited by Dub McClish (p. 411-415) and used with permission. All the ADL books are valuable and I would encourage you to obtain each one.)*

*(Continued from Page 1)*

help at all, but he cannot say how much better. Are we 5% improved? 10%? 25%? Perhaps 50%? Could it be as high as 75%? What about 99%? That figure still leaves room for human fallibility.

Mac adds the following note to the question: “However, this Divine effort is effective only as I am willing for it to be effective. It is a cooperative or combination effort. It is not a Holy Spirit ‘takeover.’” Okay, but then his answer to the second question on Thursday is puzzling.

2. Divine effort, as applied to our spirit is (check the correct answer):

- completely sufficient for us to resist sin;
- limited in its ability to enable us to resist sin;
- of no power at all in enabling us to resist sin.

Mac checked the first choice. Obviously the third choice would conflict with his doctrine. The first two choices, however, pose a dilemma. No one would want to say that the Spirit is limited in His ability to help us (the second option above), but that means Divine effort, as it **directly** impacts us, is completely sufficient to enable us to resist sin. Yet we sin.

Now Mac would say, “So what? The Word of God is all-sufficient and we still sin.” True, but the Word provides **indirect** help, which means it must be filtered through our minds, our emotions, and our wills. **Direct** help circumvents all that **by definition**. Therefore, if the Holy Spirit is suppling direct, Spirit-on-spirit help, how could we then fail? The third question on the final day of the debate was: “True - False. The Holy Spirit is all-sufficient for its purpose.” Mac answered true. So, (1) if a person asks sincerely and fervently for God’s help in overcoming sin or in obtaining wisdom, and (2) the Spirit is all-sufficient for His purpose, and (3) Divine effort, as applied to our spirits is completely sufficient for us to resist sin, and (4) God directly impacts our spirits, then we **must** have the ability to overcome sin and understand fully everything revealed to us in the Scriptures. If not, why not?

Are we saying that Mac agrees with this conclusion? No, but we are saying that he agrees with points 2, 3, and 4 (and cannot falsify number one without becoming judgmental). Therefore, the conclusion results from the related facts that lead up to it.

#### Call To Reason

These four points are almost in the form of a

sylogism and probably could be put into one with but little effort—and perhaps used in another debate.

But what good is being accomplished here? To the minds of many, Mac has not proved his case of **direct** influence of the Holy Spirit upon the human spirit. The other side of the coin leads to positions that are unsound and unsafe (not that he believes them). Is it really worth pressing a point that has not been substantiated through the Scriptures (and cannot be proved by any other means)? What is to be gained? Even if the doctrine were true, all that it means is that we have an indeterminate amount of additional help that we cannot know anything about. Is this view worth upholding to the point of division in the brotherhood?

And if it is **not** true, what harm has already been caused, and how much more may yet occur? Sterling reputations have become tarnished. The friendship and fellowship of co-workers has been utterly devastated. Many of us have been sidetracked from important matters on which we all agree—matters that affect the morals of this nation and the salvation of souls. In a manner of speaking, the barbarians are at the gates, and we are discussing how much extra power we may or may not be receiving directly from the Holy Spirit!

Concern about what may occur in the future was expressed well by brother Moffitt during the Questions

## Press Release:

The Southwest Church of Christ is pleased to announce that the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Southwest Lectureship will be held April 8-11, 2001. The Theme for this year's lectureship is *The Bible Doctrine of Heaven*. Twenty-two speakers have been invited to come and lecture to an expected record number of brethren who will gather in Austin from across the nation to attend this year's lectureship series.

Some of this year's speakers include: Tracy Dugger, Tyler Young, Burt Jones, Michael Light, Dave Rogers, Don Tarbet, Tom Moore, Marvin Weir, Michael Wyatt, and Tim Ayers.

Some of the lesson's are: "The Doctrine of Heaven"; "How Can We Know Heaven Is Real?"; "The Doctrine of Heaven and Premillennial Theory"; "What Will Heaven Be Like?"; "If There Is A Heaven, There Is Also A Hell"; "Heaven: Motivation In Living the Christian Life (Romans 8)"; "How Can I Take My Family To Heaven?"; "After Death, What? (Do We Go to Heaven Immediately After Death?)." Additionally, there will be a discussion forum each afternoon on

and Answers on Wednesday:

I cannot for the life of me, and I think I speak for a lot of gospel preachers here, ever conceive of Roy Deaver or Mac Deaver ever going into the liberal mindset. However, I know what we believe eventually has an effect on our actions. And though I don't believe it for them, those who imbibe their doctrine later on, I believe, are going to go pall mall straight into denominationalism where we came out of. Campbell recognized this as the most serious false doctrine. We ought to ask our question, "Why is it so readily accepted by our liberal brethren?" and see if this kind of material will contribute to a digression.

In other words, the Deavers (and those who agree with them) deny that this "direct" influence can be felt, that it makes one perfect or superior in wisdom to all others. But the door leading to those conclusions has, by the implications of the doctrine, been left ajar, and someone, perhaps followed by a multitude, will come charging through it. Even if the conclusion of this writer's four-point "if-then" statement can be shown to be false or invalid, how many others will draw the same conclusion (but failed to be corrected for their "erroneous" logic)? If there is no compelling reason for this doctrine to be propagated, such as that it is crucial to salvation, then why insist upon it?

*920 Imperial Drive; Denton, TX 76201*

Monday through Wednesday.

During the lectureship, exhibits of various brotherhood publishers, mission efforts, and works from around the country will be on display (upon prior approval). In addition, the sermons and lessons delivered during this series will be published in hard-back book form and will be available during the lectureship, along with audio and video tapes of this year's as well as past Southwest Lectureships.

The Annual Southwest School of Bible Studies Supporters' Dinner will also be held on lectureship Tuesday (April 10). For further information regarding this dinner, please contact Joseph D. Meador, Director of the Southwest School of Bible Studies. R.V. and camper spaces are available at the Southwest building.

For additional information and accommodations, you may contact: Joseph Meador (Lectureship Director), Southwest Church of Christ, 8900 Manchaca Road, Austin, TX 78748-5399 or phone: (512) 282-2438 or fax: (512) 282-2486, or you may email: swcoc@inetport.com.

# Spring Bible Institute Lectures

## “A Study and Exposé of Mormonism”

### (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)

February 25 - 28, 2001  
David P. Brown, Lectureship Director

#### Sunday, February 27

9:30 AM	“Mormon Doctrine of Apostles”	Daniel Denham
10:30 AM	“God’s Infallible and Only Source Book for Man’s Salvation is the Bible”	Keith Mosher
4:00 PM	“Direct Revelation of God is Unnecessary Today”	Jason Rollo
5:00 PM	“We Love the Mormons, but Oppose Their Fundamental Doctrines”	Michael Hatcher
6:00 PM	“The ‘Two Sticks’ of Ezekiel Thirty-Seven”	Clifford Newell

#### Monday, February 26

9:00 AM	“The Account of the Origin of Mormonism Proves it False”	Jim Nash
10:00 AM	“Sidney Rigdon and Mormonism”	Paul Vaughn
10:00 AM	“Keep Yourselves in the Love of God” (Jude 21) (Ladies Only)	Anita Hochdorf
11:00 AM	“A Review of the Gatewood-Farnsworth Debate”	Lester Kamp
1:30 PM	“A Study of Joseph Smith”	Jesse Whitlock
2:30 PM	“Literary and Historical Characteristics of the <i>Book of Mormon</i> ”	Gary Summers
3:30 PM	“A Study of <i>Doctrines &amp; Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of L.D.S</i> ”	Tom Wacaster
DINNER BREAK		6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:00 PM	“Mormon Doctrine of Miracles Versus the Bible”	Michael Wyatt
8:00 PM	“Mormons and Plural Marriages (Polygamy)”	Don Walker

#### Tuesday, February 27

9:00 AM	“Mormons and Zion”	Wayne Blake
10:00 AM	“Mormon Doctrine of the Priesthood Versus the Bible”	David Baker
10:00 AM	“Snatching Them Out of the Fire” (Jude 23) (Ladies Only)	Anna Hochdorf
11:00 AM	“The Mormon View of Eternal Life Versus the Bible”	Michael Light
1:30 PM	“Miscellaneous Mistakes of the Mormons”	Darrell Conley
2:30 PM	“The Absurdities of Joseph Smith’s ‘Prophecies’”	Gary Grizzell
3:30 PM	“A Study of Brigham Young”	Noah Hackworth
DINNER BREAK—5:00 PM SBI BANQUET		6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:00 PM	“The False Claims of Mormon Inspiration”	Paul Sain
8:00 PM	“The God of Mormonism”	B. J. Clarke

#### Wednesday, February 28

9:00 AM	“The Bible Warns Against False Teachers”	Monte Evans
10:00 AM	“Mormons and Baptism for the Dead”	Marvin Weir
11:00 AM	“A Review of <i>Mormonism Exposed</i> by G. B. Hancock”	Don Tarbet
1:30 PM	“A Study of the <i>Pearl of Great Price</i> ”	Kenneth Ratcliff
2:30 PM	“Mormons and the New Covenant”	Eddie Whitten
3:30 PM	“The Virgin Birth and Mormonism”	Danny Box
DINNER BREAK		6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:00 PM	“The Mormon Doctrine of Man, Sin and Salvation Versus the Bible”	Jason Roberts
8:00 PM	“God’s Temple versus the Mormon’s Temple”	Bobby Liddell

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# THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE

*Shan Jackson*

The apostle Paul makes a resounding statement in Philippians 3:8. By inspiration he writes, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things."

There is much maturity in those words. By this time Paul was an old hand at dedication and devotion. He was recognized for his scholarship, love, and attention. But why can he justify using the phrase, "for the excellency of the knowledge"?

1. Paul finds justification because this mentioned knowledge comes from God. The sources of all knowledge are two-fold. Either it comes from experience or it comes from reflection. It is one thing to know the wind is blowing, it is another to know why. And, as in this case, perfect knowledge is a combination of both folds. Paul was no doubt proud of his physical education, but he found in the light of Jesus that his physical education was not perfect. Perhaps it had depth but it had limited power. However, the origin of his new knowledge was a higher and nobler one. The teaching of Christ and the influence of Christian service brought Paul to a perfect knowledge. You see, Christianity is not just loyalty to a group of ideas and concepts. Christianity is the acceptance of the ideas and teachings of the Master.

2. Paul finds justification because of the nature of the knowledge. Paul's knowledge was not merely the appeal of a new point of view, not a new ethic, but a call to a new relationship. All of Paul's life he had looked for God, but when he found God it was in his relationship with Christ. He now had reached fundamental reality and it changed his life and purpose.

3. Paul finds justification because of its totality. Jesus was the ending of the law of righteousness and the beginning of the law of love (Mat. 22:37); therefore, we cannot think beyond Him. Christ is the limit of spiritual instruction. He is the totality of spiritual knowledge and truth. He is the last Word concerning the soul and eternity.

4. Paul is justified because the test of true religion is that it meets all the needs of the soul. "Christ," he said, "liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

5. Paul was justified because the knowledge was excellent in its development. Jesus ushered into man's history a new and refreshing outlook. He taught a message that delivered humanity from pessimism and materialism. Man was made to live in a spiritual world and to seek the heaven of Christ's ideal. My friend, our question is: Have we proven the excellency of the knowledge?

*PO Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465*

## Great Study Aid and Offer

The 1988-2000 books are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$50 in which you receive all 13 books (less than \$5 per book). If you purchased the CD with the 1999/1998 books you can receive an update for \$40 upon the return of the CD. Postage/handling per CD is \$1.25. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church Of Christ.

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

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# Defender



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

Volume XXX

March 2001

Number 3

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## THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

*Gary W. Summers*

“How does the Holy Spirit accomplish His work?” is a question that many brethren are confused over today. Some have actually been persuaded away from the teaching of the Bible concerning this matter by a number of people, both liberals and conservatives. It is time to refresh our collective memories relative to the work and the methods of operation of the Holy Spirit.

During the time of the ministry of Jesus and the apostles the Holy Spirit worked directly and miraculously to bring about His will. Anyone can take a concordance and write down every reference to the Spirit in the New Testament. Z. T. Sweeney did so in his book, *The Spirit and the Word*, published by the Gospel Advocate Company many years ago. The student who examines each of the texts mentioning the Holy Spirit will be impressed with the high percentage of passages in which there is a clear reference to the direct, miraculous work of the Spirit.

Most of the instances refer either to inspiration or to the working of miracles which establish the fact that someone is inspired (and therefore should be heeded). The Holy Spirit was active in the New Testament church. The question many consider is: “Is He active in the church and in the lives of Christians today?” Of course, the answer must be in the affirmative. If the reply were in the negative, we would arrive at the unenviable position of saying that we are on our own and have no Divine help whatsoever, in which case it would be futile to pray or expect God to work on our behalf in a providential way. So the question is not: “Does God do anything?” The question is: “How does He do it?”

In Ephesians 6:17 the Christian is admonished to

take “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” The Holy Spirit has a weapon, a *sword*, that He uses to accomplish His purpose, to effect change in human beings. Does He work providentially? Yes, but events alone will not change anyone without words (correct instruction). The Word *is* His tool—His means of causing us to come to a knowledge of the Truth.

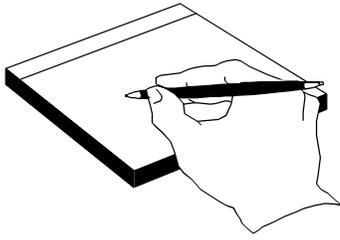
We are invited to share also in the use of this sword. With it we labor to teach others. On the positive side we use this sword to preach the gospel to the lost and to edify the church. On the negative side we defend against error and a multitude of false doctrines. The same Word that saves men’s souls (Jam. 1:21) also is able to build them up and give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified (Acts 20:32). The Word is sufficient to accomplish what God wants. He does not use the Word to reach those outside of Christ and then find it necessary to impact the Christian **directly** because the Word, which was powerful enough to save a soul and start him on his heavenly journey, has now become insufficient to complete the task.

Sweeney (and most other brethren) took issue with this philosophy years ago, showing that the Word (the sword of the Spirit) is sufficient to accomplish **all** of God’s purposes, thus eliminating the need for extra or special, direct help from God, which implies perfectionism and infallibility. The following points come from Sweeney’s book. They will sometimes be paraphrased and edited; all the material comes from pages 122-127.

1. In a sense, the Spirit provides for us faith: “So

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



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## Drifting

J. D. Tant, the pioneer preacher, made the statement: "Brethren, We are drifting!" It would be very difficult to accurately state this concerning the Lord's church today. *Drifting* indicates a slow moving away from the intended course. The church is not *drifting* today, it is running headlong into apostasy. Over the next few months let us notice some areas where it has become evident that the church is rushing into apostasy.

The first area we should consider is our view of God. The Scriptures present a balanced view of God. It presents that God is love. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love....And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:8, 16). The Bible presents that God is good. "Good and upright *is* the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way" (Psa. 25:8). "Thou *art* good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes" (Psa. 119:68). Our God is merciful. "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*" (Exo. 34:6-7). "For thou, Lord, *art* good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee" (Psa. 86:5). Thus God shows compassion upon man. "And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet" (2 Kin. 13:23). Because of

that love and compassion upon man and also to demonstrate His love for man, He gave His Son to die upon the cross for us. "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). "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

We certainly need to remember these characteristics of God. However, the liberal mind set is that God is only good and kind, etc. They have a perverted view of our God. They look at God as some grand-fatherly type being that would never harm or hurt anything. They have eliminated the aspect of God's nature that would punish the evildoer.

They fail to see the other view of God presented by the Scriptures, that while our God is a God of love, kindness, compassion, etc., He is also a God of vengeance. "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:30-31). While Paul gives us advice, he also shows the nature of God to us: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). Just as much as the nature of God is love, the Hebrews writer reveals that His nature is a consuming fire. "For our God *is* a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

Those who have drifted away from God and are rushing headlong into apostasy have forgotten all the Old Testament examples (cf., Rom. 15:4) of God's punishment of sin. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were cast out of the Garden of Eden and from the presence of God (Gen. 3). When Cain killed his brother Abel, God placed a mark on him and he became a fugitive and a vagabond (Gen. 4). Man's evil became so widespread that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Thus, God brought a flood upon the earth to destroy man (Gen. 6-8). Illustrations such as these could be multiplied hundreds of times. However, the liberal mind-set has eliminated these. Some have gone so far that they teach that the God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New Testament. Yet, they seem to forget that God's nature does not change. "For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6). We observe God's grace when He spared Noah during the time of the flood. "But Noah

found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (Gen. 6:8). We also observe God’s vengeance in the New Testament times. God will still punish those who tamper with His Word and fail to live in accordance with it today. We must, as Paul said, “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” (Rom. 11:22). Only by having a proper view of God will we have the proper respect for Him and His Word. MH

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(Continued from Page 1)

then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

2. The Holy Spirit is active in our birth: “Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). The water we understand as baptism, but how is the Spirit involved? “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23). The “seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). The non-Christian hears the Word of God, and if that Word produces faith, he repents of his sins and is baptized for their forgiveness. The Holy Spirit may have providentially arranged the opportunity for him to have heard that Word, but it is still the message that converts.

3. The Holy Spirit provides light: “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Psa. 119:130).

4. The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom; we are even taught to pray for it (Jam. 1:5). But how does God give us wisdom? Providence may be involved, but ultimately it is from the Word: “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15). Even under the old covenant God worked this way: “The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (Psa. 19:7b).

5. The same verse tells us of the impact that the Word has upon us: “The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple” (Psa. 19:7a).

6. God’s Word (and therefore the Holy Spirit) enlightens us: “The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes” (Psa. 19:8b).

7. Through the Spirit’s efforts we get understanding: “Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way” (Psa. 119:104).

8. Does the Holy Spirit quicken us, or make us

alive? He uses the Word to make that happen: “For thy word hath quickened me” (Psa. 119:50).

9. The Holy Spirit uses His Word to save us: “Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jam. 1:21).

10. The Spirit is involved in the work of sanctification, but again He uses a mediate or proximate cause upon us. Jesus prayed for His disciples in that connection: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

11. How are we purified? The apostle wrote: “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).

12. The Word plays a part in cleansing us: “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3).

13. God uses the Word as a means of delivering us from sin: “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17-18).

14. We also receive our divine nature through the Word: “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4).

15. God sanctifies us through His Word and makes us fit for glory: “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

16. God even strengthened His people by means of the Word long before the New Testament took effect. “My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word” (Psa. 119:28).

Can anyone name anything that the Holy Spirit has accomplished *in* us that the Bible does not teach He can accomplish *through* His Word? What Sweeney observed concerning those who hold to the literal indwelling also holds true for those who posit a *direct* influence: “It is not claimed that a direct indwelling of the Spirit makes any new revelations, adds reasons or offers any new motives than are found in the word of God” (125-126).

Therefore, if the Holy Spirit can use His sword, the Word of God, to accomplish all the things listed pre-

viously in an indirect manner, then upon what basis would He also need to act personally and directly? To thus argue implies that the Word is somehow insufficient—even though it is the means that the Spirit has chosen to act upon us. The Word says it is sufficient for all these things. Those who argue that we need special

extra help further affirm that the direct influence of the Holy Spirit is not altogether sufficient to perfect us, either (for we still choose to sin). The truth is, however, that the sword of the Spirit is sufficient to prepare us for eternity (Acts 20:32).

*920 Imperial Drive; Denton, TX 76201*

## SATAN'S MANUAL ON "HOW TO SPLIT THE LOCAL CHURCH"

*Joel Wheeler*

Satan is that great adversary and enemy of God and man. The inspired Word of God says that Satan "deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12:9). We ought not to be amazed at things which appear to be good but after close examination we find them evil. Paul wrote that Satan himself can appear as an "angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). The Devil has many tricks (Eph. 6:10) and will devour anything that stands in his way, if he can (1 Pet. 5:8-9). If Satan had his way, he would destroy the church. In many congregations of the Lord's church, he causes strife, division, and rebellion among the members. Satan has many formulas at work to split the local church. Consider how he normally works.

First, Satan cast doubt in the minds of the members. It usually starts with one or two individuals who are striving for preeminence. Sometimes it is a "want-a-be elder" or even the preacher who wants control. Sometimes, outsiders will stir up problems of contention. Doubts and distrust are aimed directly at the elders and faithful members.

Second, Satan influences the members to have secret meetings, and even call on the phone, and recruit as many that will follow. This is always done behind the back of the elders. These meetings go on for a period of time until the rebels are securely united.

Third, Satan works hard to gain the confidence of preachers who are outside of the congregation. Division works best with a well known preacher who is a friend to everyone. That gives the rebels credibility and validity when they have the support of preachers who know only one side of the story.

Fourth, Satan influences the rebels to make a clean break. After secret meetings and phone calls, a day is set to leave and meet in another location. Usually it is not far away just a few minutes drive. That makes it easy to pull other members from nearby congregations.

Fifth, announce near and far that a "new work" is started. Make sure all of the other congregations know that it is the plan to evangelize the local area. Of course a new facility is necessary which will help attract mem-

bers from other congregations. It might cause others to drive as much as thirty miles in the which they have driven past at least two other faithful congregations to get to the new one just established.

Sixth, when opposition arises, invite a well known preacher to preach at special events. This will legitimize the rebel group. Make sure these preachers are friends, you do not want them asking questions as to why you left to begin with.

Seventh, Satan encourages the new group to attend area meetings and other events. This is a good way to personally invite members of the other congregations to your special events. However, they must make sure this is done in private.

Eighth, Satan encourages the use of young people. Plan special things and invite the young people of other congregations in the name of fellowship. Be sure to use your youth and get them excited enough to invite their friends of other congregations. Young people are more effective proselyters when it comes to their peers.

Ninth, Satan influences the new group to sanction immorality. It does not matter if the eldership at another congregation has withdrawn from some members because of adultery or some other sinfulness. Just accept them into your fellowship.

Tenth, Satan encourages the rebels to announce to the area, how much they have grown. Satan deceives many in believing that robbing other congregations of its members is a way to grow. In all reality, they have not converted one single person to Christ.

When rebellious members of a congregation do not get their way, they can open Satan's manual and find a way to split the church. The sad part is that they are legitimized by preachers who ought to know better and then talk about how much harmony there is among the local congregations. God hates division and strife in a congregation (Pro. 6:16-19; 1 Cor. 3:3; Phi. 2:3) yet Satan is still working among the members. How sad!

*P.O. Box 714; Foley, AL 36536*

THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING  
 3950 Forest Hill Irene Road; Memphis, TN 38125  
 MARCH 25-29, 2001

**“THE BOOK OF GENESIS: FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH AND  
 THE UNFOLDING OF GOD’S PLAN OF REDEMPTION”**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 25**

8:30-10:20 AM Introduction To The Book Of Genesis James Rogers  
 10:30-11:30 AM Why Study The Old Testament? Barry Grider  
 6:00- 7:00 PM Esau, Who Sold His Birthright Steve Ferguson

**MONDAY, MARCH 26**

9:00- 9:50 AM God’s Creation Of Heaven, Earth, Sea And All  
 Therein (1:1-2:25) Billy Bland  
 10:00-10:50 AM Sin Enters World, Consequences; First  
 Messianic Prophecy (3:1-24) Dub McClish  
 10:00-10:50 AM Eve, Who Failed To Listen To God And Was  
 Deceived (Women’s Class) Lois Duncan  
 11:00-11:50 AM Cain Murders Abel, Punishment; Generations  
 Of Adam (4:1-5:32) Ivie Powell  
 Class 1: First And Second Adam Bob Winton  
 Class 2: Genesis: Book Of Beginnings John Daniels  
 Class 3: Is The Genesis Record Mythological? Don Tarbet  
 Class 4: Documentary Hypothesis Refuted James Woodall  
 11:50- 1:10 PM LUNCH  
 1:10- 2:00 PM Sin Multiplies; Preparation For Flood; Grace  
 Of God (6:1-22) Terry Hightower  
 Class 1: Scientific Evidence For Biblical Creation  
 Jerry Murrell  
 Class 2: Characteristics Of God Revealed In Genesis  
 Bill Brazier  
 Class 3: Sarah, Woman Of Faith  
 (Women’s Class) Corinne Elkins  
 2:10- 3:00 PM Sin Punished; The Flood (7:1-8:22) Curtis A. Cates  
 3:10- 4:00 PM Open Forum Garland Elkins  
 4:00- 7:00 PM INTERMISSION  
 7:00- 7:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING  
 7:30- 8:30 PM Noah, Who Preached Righteousness Earl Edwards

**TUESDAY, MARCH 27**

9:00- 9:50 AM God Blesses Noah; Sons Of Noah; Their  
 Generations; Babel; Shem To Abraham  
 (9:1-11:28) Keith A. Mosher, Sr.  
 10:00-10:50 AM Hagar, The Bondwoman Who Was Cast Out  
 (Women’s Class) Lavonne McClish  
 11:00-11:50 AM  
 Class 1: The Ark And The Church Of Christ David Tillman  
 Class 2: Genesis: Archaeological Confirmation  
 Michael Hatcher  
 Class 3: Can A Christian Be A Theistic Evolutionist?  
 Donald Rhodes  
 Class 4: Gap Theory Refuted Joel Wheeler  
 11:50- 1:10 PM LUNCH  
 1:10- 2:00 PM Abraham Entertains Angels; Sodom’s Doom  
 Sin Of Lot’s Daughters (18:1-19:38) Tracy Dugger  
 Class 1: Scientific Refutation Of Organic Evolution Joe Nichols  
 Class 2: Redigging The Wells Of Salvation Ira Y. Rice, Jr.  
 Class 3: Lot’s Wife, Who Looked Back And Is To Be  
 Remembered (Women’s Class) Carol Mangrum  
 2:10- 3:00 PM Abraham Lies To Abimelech; Isaac Born;  
 Isaac Offered (20:1-22:24) John Moore  
**PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND SUPPORTERS SEMINAR**  
 3:10- 4:00 PM Open Forum Garland Elkins  
 4:00- 7:00 PM INTERMISSION  
 7:00- 7:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING  
 7:30- 8:30 PM Joseph, Who Flew Temptation Roy Sharp

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28**

9:00- 9:50 AM Death Of Sarah; Wife Sought For Isaac; Death  
 Of Abraham (23:1-25:18) Lynn Parker  
 10:00-10:50 AM Birth Of Esau And Jacob; Isaac Lies; Blessed By  
 God; Jacob Deceives Isaac (25:19-27:45)  
 Don McWhorter  
 10:00-10:50 AM Rebekah, Who By Faith “Arose” And  
 “Followed” (Women’s Class) Denise Martin  
 11:00-11:50 AM Jacob Seeks Wife; Sees Vision, Receives Leah And  
 Rachel; Jacob’s Children (27:46-30:43) Tommy Hicks  
 Class 1: Isaac And Christ Wade Webster  
 Class 2: Genesis: Lessons In Providence David Lemmons  
 Class 3: Is The Earth Old, Or Young? Charles Blair  
 Class 4: Gods Of The Canaanites Refuted Gary Grizzell  
 11:50- 1:10 PM LUNCH  
 1:10- 2:00 PM Jacob Departs, Is Pursued, Prepares To Meet  
 Esau, Wrestles Angel, Meets Esau (31:1-33:20)  
 Gary Colley  
 Class 1: The Abrahamic Covenant Bobby Wood  
 Class 2: The House Of God Tany Castaneda  
 Class 3: Rachel And Leah, “Which Two Did Build The  
 House Of Israel (Women’s Class) Maggie Colley  
 2:10- 3:00 PM Dinah Defiled, Avenged; Jacob To Bethel; Rachel  
 Dies; Generations Of Esau (34:1-36:43) Paul Sain  
 3:10- 4:00 PM Open Forum Garland Elkins  
 4:00- 7:00 PM INTERMISSION  
 7:00- 7:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING  
 7:30- 8:30 PM Abraham, Who Looked For The City Garland Elkins

**THURSDAY, MARCH 29**

9:00- 9:50 AM Joseph Dreams, Sold; Sin Of Judah; Joseph  
 A Slave, Prisoner (37:1-40:23) Wesley Simons  
 10:00-10:50 AM Interprets Dream, Exalted; Jacob Sends Sons To  
 Egypt; Sons Sent Again (41:1-43:34) Kent Bailey  
 10:00-10:50 AM Tamar, Woman Of Tragedy And Incest  
 (Women’s Class) Jane McWhorter  
 11:00-11:50 AM Plan To Keep Bargain; Judah Intercedes;  
 Joseph Makes Himself Known, Sends For  
 Family (44:1-46:34) Harrell Davidson  
 Class 1: Joseph A Type Of Christ Virgil Hale  
 Class 2: Genesis: Religious Errors Refuted David McElwain  
 Class 3: Were The Days Of Genesis 1 Eons Of Time, Or  
 24-Hour Days? Toney L. Smith  
 Class 4: Atheism Refuted Eugene Jenkins  
 11:50- 1:10 PM LUNCH  
 1:10- 2:00 PM Five Brothers, Jacob Meets Pharaoh; Famine;  
 Joseph Blesses Sons Of Joseph (47:1-48:22)  
 Jerry Moffitt  
 Class 1: Prophecies In Genesis Fulfilled In Christ  
 Johnny Scaggs  
 Class 2: Carry A Little Honey Flavil Nichols  
 Class 3: Potiphar’s Wife, Who Lusted After Joseph  
 (Women’s Class) Irene Taylor  
 2:10- 3:00 PM Jacob Prophecies Concerning His Own Sons,  
 Dies, Is Buried; Death Of Joseph (49:1-50:26)  
 Bobby Liddell  
 3:10- 4:00 PM Open Forum Garland Elkins  
 4:00- 7:00 PM INTERMISSION  
 7:00- 7:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING  
 7:30- 8:30 PM Abel, Who Yet Speaketh Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

NOTE: There will be classes and activities for pre-school children daily, and also for the evening classes.  
 WATER/ELECTRICAL HOOKUPS PROVIDED

# IMPORTANCE OF THE ASSEMBLY

*Tracy Dugger*

The valedictorian of her senior class chose to miss her Baccalaureate in which she was scheduled to speak. Why? For a reason that even some members of the church would think odd. She is a devoted Christian from our area who opted to attend a Sunday evening worship assembly and miss this important high school event. Again, why? Because her dedication to God and refusal to forsake the assembly was first and foremost in her life. Some might think God would understand and approve of her missing services. However, based upon her biblical upbringing she knew what the right decision was.

A young Christian man went to college at a state university. He was zealously advised by his counselors and peers to become a member of certain clubs and organizations. Membership in these groups would look great on a resume and thus would be a benefit in future career aspirations. However, as badly as he desired to be involved in these pursuits, one major problem existed—meetings and scheduled events were conducted during the regular assembly times for the church. This young man chose not to be part of these clubs for this very reason.

Still, one more true account: A high school football team was going to the state playoffs. The coaching staff decided to have a special practice on Wednesday evening. One particular player, who greatly loved the game of football, was a Christian and thus chose to attend the Wednesday evening service rather than be present at football practice. He did this knowing the possible consequences of not getting to participate in the playoffs.

Many would consider these three young people strange (1 Pet. 4:4). However, God does not. They did exactly as God expected! This is the natural response to love for God.

In Hebrews 10:25-26, inspiration states, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” Assembling with the saints is a requirement that leaves no room for question, for in this passage we find an explicit prohibition against failing to be in it.

There are other passages which bear heavily upon this subject. Jesus made many statements that can be applied to our obligation to the assembly:

1. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33).
2. “And he said to *them* all, If *any man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23).
3. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mat. 16:26).
4. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Most knowledgeable Christians admit that those who forsake the assembly of the saints render unacceptable service to God. However, their practice sometimes deny these biblical principles. Consider again Hebrews 10:25. *Forsaking* in this inspired statement means “to abandon or desert.” Whenever we refuse to attend services, then it can be said of us that we abandon God’s assembly. To abandon anything of God’s is always the wrong thing to do.

**When illness prohibits my presence at the assembly am I guilty of “forsaking it”?** No! Obviously God recognizes such occasions as beyond our ability to control. **What about job conflicts?** Recognizing our responsibility to work and labor (2 The. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:8), sometimes the assembly and work conflict with each other. The husband that *must* be away from the assembly from time to time to provide the necessities of life for his family has not *necessarily* forsaken it. I recall one godly woman who took a job and was required to work on Sunday morning. She prayed that she might be able to work something out so she would not have to miss. Along with her prayer, she requested of her employer that she might be able to keep the job but not miss the assembly. Eventually, this was worked out. Another Christian worked the evening shift and was allowed to leave the factory on Wednesday evening and return to work following those services. I do recognize that many employers are not this sensitive to such requests. However, I believe it to be important to do our best in securing hours that

enable us to attend regularly.

I recently was asked the following question: “My job requires me to be absent from **all** services on Sunday and Wednesday, what should I do?” Although this may seem to be a difficult problem, I think the answer is simple—**get another job!** I cannot see how God would approve of continually not engaging in worship to Him. Not to mention the profound effect that such would have upon one’s soul.

There is a difference between missing a service and forsaking it. God knows our heart and what we put supreme in our lives; and He knows the real reason we are absent from the assembly—whether it is a matter beyond our control or something in which we simply lack the devotion to His Will.

Consider another question: “Does the word *forsake* include abandoning only **one** service?” If a person decided to go hunting and thus fails to assemble has he forsaken the assembly? Most certainly! If a husband and father walks out on his family for one night because of anger or neglect has he forsaken them? Absolutely! What about the Christian who would return to the idols of his father’s religion (Hinduism)—has he forsaken God? Yes, indeed (2 Cor. 6)! So it is the case with the Christian who decides to miss the service of the saints because he loves **more** the ball game or the comfort of his pillow!

Consider the following things which I believe to fall under the category of forsaking the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:25; Mat. 6:33): Missing services to attend ball games, visits with friends or family at home or the hospital when other times are available, doing homework, the arrival of unexpected company, staying home with sick animals, laziness, etc.... All these things would not hinder me going to my job, neither should they hinder us in the assembly! Many of these things can be planned for other times such as the doing of homework or projects. When unexpected company arrives, invite them to services and explain your conviction to the assembly of the church. When we stay home with company, what kind of example are we setting to our guests? When Christians choose to be away from the assembly for these reasons they are abandoning it for a period of time.

Why should I be present at all assemblies possible? One unknown author wrote why he attends the assemblies:

I want to go and I am wanted. I need to go and I am needed. I had rather be there than anywhere else. My children are watching me, and will follow my example. My soul is strengthened by the Bible teaching. My heart is warmed by the spiritual songs I sing in His praise. I am better prepared to discuss His Word with those who do not understand it. I hunger and thirst after righteousness.

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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

Volume XXX

April 2001

Number 4

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

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## THE TIME TO SEEK IS NOW

*Gary W. Summers*

The Scriptures teach that God “is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). Yet, how many Americans could be classified as such? Some may be casually seeking Him although there is no sense of urgency. Like the Laodiceans our material prosperity seems sufficient for the moment. We are rich and think we have need of nothing. We are comfortable and secure. Perhaps some day, if we have time, we will try to improve our relationship with God.

Improve? One must first **have** one before it can be improved. Polls indicate that most people think they are saved. How many people could, however, go to the Bible to show what God requires as it pertains to salvation? Some undoubtedly think that they are *saved* because they are fairly decent people and have not committed any of the *big* sins. They do not realize that: (1) they stand guilty of sin (Rom. 3:23); (2) sin brings forth death (Rom. 6:23); and (3) man’s own righteousness cannot save him. If it could, Jesus died a needless, excruciating death on the cross for nothing. But, all men (from the worst to the best) obtain redemption through His sacrifice (Rom. 3:24-26).

Others may think they have been saved because Billy Graham or someone else told them to say “the sinner’s prayer.” So they confessed they were sinners and asked Jesus to come into their lives—not realizing that neither “the sinner’s prayer” nor asking Jesus to come into one’s life is biblical. Since that brief moment occurred years ago, they have not studied the Bible to find out differently, nor have they even thought of God very often. After all, they were assured of salvation.

For whatever reason, the fact is that many have ne-

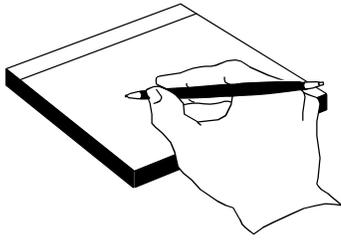
glected reading and studying the Word of God. And while there is yet time to do so, what would it be like if that privilege were denied? How could such an unrealistic phenomenon occur? It really does seem unlikely, but what if Christians were demonized by Humanists and portrayed as the source of problems in the United States? Actually, some are already suggesting this idea. Paul was accused of being a radical troublemaker in the first century: “And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also” (Acts 17:6).

Following the demonization phase could come the confiscation phase, where all Bible and religious materials are removed from society, a la *Fahrenheit 451* (a futuristic novel in which firemen burn books). Only government approved materials would be for sale. Laws could ban religious reading materials, computer programs, etc.

The reader may be thinking, “No way.” Too many Americans would protest. Man does not possess enough power to pull something like this off in this day and age. That hypothesis would be a debatable point, considering that a union of government and education (which mostly denies God’s existence already) might be quite devastating. But, for the sake of exploring the idea, suppose we grant the point that man is not intelligent enough or powerful enough to eradicate the Bible from this nation. There remains One who is powerful enough to bring it about—God. What?! Why would He do it?

We can deal with the why later, the fact is that He  
(Continued on Page 3)

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## Drifting

The pioneer preacher, J. D. Tant, made the statement, “Brethren, We Are Drifting!” There are some congregations where this statement simply does not fit the situation. *Drifting* indicates a slow move away. Many congregations are not slowly moving away; they are rushing recklessly into apostasy. There are other congregations who are drifting away from the truth, and there are still other congregations who are faithfully holding to the “old paths where *is* the good way” (Jer. 6:16). In the last issue, I began looking at some areas where it has become evident that we are no longer holding to the “old paths” but have *drifted* from the Truth. In that issue we noticed that some hold an unbalanced view of God. Now let us consider the view some hold of the Scriptures.

There are those today who are teaching that the Scriptures are nothing more than a “love letter.” For example, Max Lucado is quoted in the *Tulsa World* (3-12-89) as saying, “The Bible is a love letter as opposed to a blueprint.” As such, they reject the Bible as being a *blueprint* or a *pattern* for us today. Rubel Shelly and Randy Harris wrote, “We reject a rigid ‘pattern theology’” (31). Later they wrote, “It [Scripture] certainly does not present an absolute blueprint for building a church” (36). James Woodroof wrote, “The idea of adhering to the Written Word is noble, but it is fraught with as many problems as there are people viewing the Word” (36).

The Bible teaches that it is a pattern, and our obligation to obey it. “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). *Form* is elsewhere translated “pattern.” Paul teaches us that we are to “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love

which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:13). *Form* is translated “pattern” in the only other time it is used. The Hebrews’ writer makes a comparison between the Old Testament tabernacle and church of our Lord. He informs us that God was concerned with the *pattern* of the tabernacle. “Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Heb. 8:5). What stands out is that if God, under the inferior covenant, wanted His instructions carried out with exactness, then we cannot come to the superior covenant with a careless attitude of what God says. God is concerned about the pattern He gave under the superior (the New) covenant.

The Bible is God’s Word; it is not the word of man. “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 The. 2:13). Holy men of God wrote what God instructed them to write. “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21). Thus, what they wrote was inspired of God. “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Since it is the Word of God, and it is a pattern for man to follow, man must not alter that Word in any way. From the beginning of God’s revealed written revelation to man God placed warnings in His Word for man not to change it. Moses said, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Deu. 4:2). The wise man wrote, “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Pro. 30:6). John ended the Revelation by giving the warning: “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19).

Finally, a rejection of that Word will result in

man's eternal damnation. Peter quoted a promise by Moses saying: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:22-23). Paul, after telling the Galatians of his amazement of their deserting the gospel of Christ, tells them, "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. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8-9). *Accursed* is to be eternally cut off from God and thus doomed for destruction.

God will not tolerate any tampering with or rejection of His Word as revealed in the Bible. Sadly, those who have departed (apostatized) from the truth and are no longer hold to the *old paths* have changed, ignored, and rejected His clear Word—God will not hold them guiltless. MH

#### Works Cited:

- Shelly, Rubel and Randy Harris (1992) *The Second Incarnation* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Co.).  
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(Continued from Page 1)

has done it already. Consider what God promised His own people: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it" (Amos 8:11-12).

These verses are truly shocking. It is difficult to imagine that God would ever deny access to His Word. His Word provides light in a world of darkness, life to those could nourish themselves by it (Mat. 4:4), hope for those facing life's various sufferings. Why would God bring about a famine of His Word?

#### Why?

Probably God took such a drastic action for the same reason He shut the door of the ark. He was keeping out everyone who had rejected Noah's preaching. There comes a time when God pronounces judgment. When He makes that decision, it is too late for repentance.

But we should also consider that God possesses a tremendous sense of irony, as seen in the way he dealt with a nation of murmurers. When they refused to fight against the inhabitants of the land to take their inheritance, they whined: "Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" (Num. 14:3).

In response to this eloquent expression of a lack of faith, God denied them the land that would have been theirs. Instead He appointed them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. What about their children? "But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised" (Num. 14:31).

Did Israel say they feared their children would die in the wilderness? Yes, but the parents died there, and God brought their children safely into the land, which had been forfeited by complaint and unbelief.

Similarly, today, the Word of God exists in abundance. Bibles continue to sell well. Possibly, many are given as gifts, which may account for their being unopened, unread, and unused. If bookshelves and coffee tables possessed intelligence and could absorb the contents of the Scriptures by osmosis, they would be vastly superior in biblical knowledge to their owners who use them as footstools or to set refreshments upon.

The irony of creating a modern-day spiritual famine would simply be this: that all the time the Scriptures have been plentiful few have cared. Only in the time of crisis, hardship, and cruelty do some individuals decide that they need to seek God. If the opportunity to know God were suddenly gone, and if the Scriptures (so often taken for granted during tranquil times) were suddenly banned, then many would lament and seek them, but this intense, newfound interest comes too late. Consider a passage from Proverbs that expresses a similar viewpoint:

Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they

shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil. (Pro. 1:20-33).

When we refuse to know God (though we can come to a correct knowledge of Him through the Scriptures), and when we reject the wisdom of His Word, we should not be surprised that we are lost in the day of spiritual famine (or on the day of judgment).

### Now Is the Time

There may never again come a day of spiritual famine in the land, but there is always the risk of a spiritual famine in each individual's life—if the Scriptures are ignored. Now is the time to know God—not later. “Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2). Following is a brief list of some things concerning which the Bible speaks (and where to find them). The Bible teaches that:

1. You are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27).
2. You have sinned (Rom. 3:23).
3. Your sins have separated you from God (Isa. 59:1-2).
4. Your sins condemn you to eternal death (Rom. 6:23).
5. God loves you, regardless (John 3:16).
6. God has extended grace to you through Jesus (Eph. 2:5-9).
7. Christ died for you—even though you have loved and practiced sin (Rom. 5:6-9).
8. You may have salvation from your sins through the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5).
9. In order to access that blood, you must:
  - a. Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:16).
  - b. Repent of your sins, which means you must give up the love of them and quit doing them (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38).
  - c. Confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37; 1 Tim. 6:12).
  - d. Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:38). At this point the blood of Christ will wash away your sins (Rev. 1:5; Acts 22:16).

Note: In none of these Scriptures (or in any others) did an inspired apostle say, “Pray ‘the sinner’s prayer’” or “Just have faith.” Those unfamiliar with the Bible

should read first an account of Jesus’ life (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John), followed by the book of Acts, which shows what people were taught to do to be saved.

10. At the time you are baptized, you are washed, sanctified, and justified “in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).
11. When you are baptized for the forgiveness of sins, you are added to the church (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13), which is the body of believers for whom Christ died (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23).
12. When you are buried with Christ in baptism, you arise to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-5), having become a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).
13. You must grow with respect to salvation (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12).
14. This growth also comes from studying (and applying) the Word of God (Psa. 119:105; Acts 20:32).
15. There is a way in which Christians are to behave and conduct themselves. We should avoid worldliness (Jam. 1:27) and perfect “holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1; Col. 3:1-15).
16. Death will not be the end of your existence (John 5:28-29); you (as well as every other person who has ever lived) will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of yourself (Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 14:11-12; 2 Cor. 5:10).
17. You will be assigned one of two places to live throughout eternity, depending on whether or not you are saved or lost (Luke 16:19-31). Those who have obeyed the gospel and lived faithfully before God will be saved (John 5:24; 1 Cor. 15:50-58; Heb 5:9; 1 John 5:13).
18. You have entered into the great commission and must bear fruit until that time (Mat. 18:18-20; Mat. 13:23).
19. Jesus will be with us until that day (Mat. 28:20; Heb. 13:5-6).
20. You have an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance awaiting you at that time (Acts 20:32; 1 Pet. 1:3-9).

The Bible provides all that we need to know on these (and all other) matters. God has provided a veritable feast of spiritual blessings for us—if we will just take advantage of them (Eph. 1:3). But the time is now (2 Cor. 6:2). It will be too late if God should appoint a spiritual famine in the land. Come and partake of the spiritual food He offers while the opportunity still exists.

920 Imperial Drive; Denton, TX 76201

# “Encouraging Statements Of The Bible”

June 9 - 13, 2001

## SATURDAY, JUNE 9

7:00 PM Encouragement Keith Mosher  
7:45 PM “He Is Not Here: For He Is Risen”; Mat. 28:6 Jerry Murrell

## SUNDAY, JUNE 10

9:00 AM Pressing Toward The Mark; Phi. 3:7-14 Ira Y. Rice, Jr.  
10:00 AM Jesus’ Reassuring Message To Peter; Mark 16:7 Billy Bland

### Lunch Break

2:00 PM God Is; Psa. 19:1 Tracy Dugger  
3:00 PM God’s Superiority; 1 Sam. 5:1-4 Daniel Denham

### Dinner Break

7:00 PM “God So Loved The World”; John 3:16 David Brown  
7:45 PM Peace Passing Understanding; Phi. 4:7 Michael Shepherd

## MONDAY, JUNE 11

9:00 AM “Inherit The kingdom”; Mat. 25:34 Joel Wheeler  
10:00 AM “Be Of Good Cheer; I Have Overcome The World”; John 16:33 Kent Bailey  
11:00 AM “As For Me And My House”; Jos. 24:15 Stanley Ryan

### Lunch Break

1:30 PM Nothing Separates Us From The Love Of God; Rom. 8:31-39 Dave Watson  
2:30 PM “I Can”; Phi. 4:13 Gary Summers

### Dinner Break

3:30 PM Open Forum  
7:00 PM “So Great A Cloud Of Witnesses”; Heb. 12:1 Lynn Parker  
7:45 PM Things Not Seen Are Eternal; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:1 Bobby Liddell

## TUESDAY, JUNE 12

9:00 AM “I Will Never Leave Thee, Nor Forsake Thee”; Heb. 13:5 Eddie Whitten  
10:00 AM “For Such A Time As This”; Est. 4:14 Lee Davis  
11:00 AM “Casting All Your Care Upon Him; For He Careth For You”; 1 Pet. 5:7 Paul Sain

### Lunch Break

1:30 PM Acknowledging God Brings His Direction; Pro. 3:6 Barry Grider  
2:30 PM “All Things Are Become New”; 2 Cor. 5:17 Preston Silcox  
3:30 PM Open Forum

### Dinner Break

7:00 PM The Good Shepherd; Psa. 23 Harrell Davidson  
7:45 PM “They That Sow In Tears Shall Reap In Joy”; Psa. 126:5 Curtis Cates

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13

9:00 AM God’s Word Shall Not Return Void; Isa. 55:11 Noah Hackworth  
10:00 AM God Bears Our Burdens; Psa. 68:19 Garland Elkins  
11:00 AM “God Shall Supply All Your Needs”; Phi. 4:19 Monte Evans

### Lunch Break

1:30 PM The Joy Of Worship; Psa. 122:1 Guss Eoff  
2:30 PM Made In God’s Image; Gen. 1:26-27 Clifford Newell  
3:30 PM Open Forum

### Dinner Break

7:00 PM Successful Families; Gen. 18:19 B. J. Clarke  
7:45 PM The Christian Reward; 2 Tim. 4:6-8 Ronnie Hayes

## Bellview Lectures Information

### HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a “first come, first served” basis (call our office at: 850/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following motel is available nearby and is providing a *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Microtel Inn & Suites (8001 Lavelle Way) offers the following price (tax not included) \$50-1 to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/944-0333. Ask for Allison Dunaway when making reservations in order to receive this price. The cut-off date for making reservations at this price is May 1, 2001.

### MEALS

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

### AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

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

see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

### EXHIBITS

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

### BOOKS

The lectureship book, *Encouraging Statements Of The Bible* will be available to those attending the *Bellview Lectures* at a reduced rate of \$10. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price of \$11 prior to June 30, 2001, or afterwards at the regular price of \$12. It will contain thirty-three chapters and approximately 400 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

### TRANSPORTATION

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

# “ONCE UPON A TIME”

*Danny L. Box*

As small children we were all told or read stories that began with the phrase: **“Once upon a time.”** This phrase was a catch-all statement that literally meant “this was the way things were back then.” As we look all across the brotherhood and note the numerous problems that are facing the church, we need to take this phrase and make a spiritual application, looking at what made the difference **“Once upon a time.”**

**“Once upon a time” the Word of God was respected.** People today no longer respect God’s Word as the authority in all things spiritual. Most no longer accept it as the inspired will of God that was given to man “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We find a good example of how people felt about the Word in Nehemiah 8:1-12. We see a group of people that desired that the Word be brought and read to them; then while the reading was going on, they were attentive to the reading. As it was being read they stood (and remained standing for the entire reading), they bowed themselves and worshiped the Lord as the Word was read, they understood the reading, and then they went and did as instructed by the Word. Yes, **“Once upon a time”** we had respect for God’s Word, but now we follow after the doctrines, creeds, and opinions of men.

**“Once upon a time” the people had a mind to work.** When the walls around Jerusalem were rebuilt by Nehemiah and the people, the job only took fifty-two days. We can read why in Nehemiah 4:6, “So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.” Our Lord, when He was just twelve years old, knew he had a job to do: “Knew ye not that I must be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49). When we do the Work of the Lord: the lost will be taught, the erring restored, the hungry fed, the sick visited, the down-trodden lifted up, and the brethren edified. **“Once upon a time”** the brethren had a mind to work, and all of these things were accomplished, and the church was the fastest growing religious organization on the earth.

**“Once upon a time” the gospel was all that was preached.** Jesus gave the command to “go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Now, look at what the disciple did: “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42). “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). Upon seeing what the

disciples did, look at the results. “And the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). “Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand” (Acts 4:4). “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven” (Col. 1:23). Paul told the young man Timothy to “preach the word.” But, today we see anything but the gospel being preached from the pulpit and taught in our class rooms, and then we wonder why we have problems in the church. Yes, **“Once upon a time”** the gospel was all that was preached to a lost and dying world, and it was this gospel that produced precious fruit in the Lord’s vineyard.

**“Once upon a time” Christians did not forsake the assembly.** The Psalmist had the right attitude about the assembly when he penned these words: “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD” (Psa. 122:1). First Corinthians 11 commands us to gather together in worship to God with brethren of like precious faith. However, we now see congregations with 200 in attendance at Sunday morning Bible study, 600 for the morning worship service and maybe 250 back for the evening worship, and only about half that many for the Wednesday evening service. My question would be, why the difference? Do we not assemble to worship God? Is it not just as important to assemble at all the services designated by the leadership, as it is at only one or at most two a week? If not, why not? Yes, **“Once upon a time,”** Christians were glad to go up to the house of the Lord to worship Him.

**“Once upon a time” pleasing God was placed above anything else.** In Matthew 6:33 we are given this command: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Our primary purpose and goal in life is to serve God, and we can only do this if He is in his proper place in our life. But now-a-days we see Christians all across the brotherhood who are trying to serve God, as well as please man and from reading Matthew 6:24 we know this will not work. We see brethren who love the world and the things of the world more than they love God, and 2 John 2:15 lets us know that if this is the case, the love of the Father is not in us. Solomon concluded that man is to “fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man”

(Ecc. 12:13), and the only way we can do this, is if we put Him first in our life. **“Once upon a time”** men were willing to do this, but not any more.

As with every good story that started out **“Once upon a time,”** most all of them had a phrase that summed the story up that went like this: **“And they all lived happily ever after.”** If we will do as they did

**“Once upon a time,”** then on the day of judgment we will hear: *“Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord”* (Mat. 25:21), and when we hear this, we will **“Live happily ever after.”**

*10985 Country Haven; Cottondale, AL 35453*

## TWO BOOKS YOU MUST HAVE

For about a year now, I have had in my possession two notebooks full of some of the best expositions of Scripture and sermon outlines that I have ever seen anywhere. These expositions and outlines were compiled by a well-known and beloved gospel preacher, who has now gone on to his reward. These outlines and expositions were compiled by James Winfred Clark. Brother Clark was born in Talladega County, Alabama, in 1923, and passed from this life on August 11, 1997.

After brother Clark’s passing; brother Michael McDaniel, a faithful gospel preacher, took the lead in gathering materials authored by brother Clark with a view to getting these materials into the hands of as many Christians as possible. With the assistance of brother Winfred’s son, Jimmy Clark, and a host of others who scoured their files to find materials written by brother Winfred, Michael McDaniel collected hundreds and hundreds of pages of material. This material is now available in book form. The two volumes are aptly names: *Expositions Of “The Expositor.”*

In book form, the material represents approximately 1,300 pages of outstanding Bible exposition. You will find outlines of at least 20 Bible books, over a dozen outlines on great chapters of the Bible, 86 articles from periodicals and bulletins, 139 sermon expositions from biblical texts, and nearly 50 more sermon expositions on biblical topics. These sermon outlines and articles are just what you would expect from brother Winfred Clark: they are true to the book and homiletical masterpieces. Brother Clark had a unique way of presenting the truth in simple, and yet memorable terms. Every church library, preacher’s library, elder’s library, and church member’s library ought to be graced with these two volumes. Call the Memphis School of Preaching bookstore at (901) 751-9964 to order these books.

*B. J. Clarke*

## Great Study Aid and Offer

The 1988-2000 books are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as “baptism for the remission of sins” in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$50 in which you receive all 13 books (less than \$5 per book). If you purchased the CD last year with the 1999/1998 books you can receive an update for \$40 upon the return of the CD. Postage/handling per CD is \$1.25. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church Of Christ.

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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

Volume XXX

May 2001

Number 5

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## Intractable?

*Michael Hatcher*

H. A. (Buster) Dobbs is at it again. In the March 2001 issue of *Firm Foundation*, brother Dobbs places an excellent article in the publication written by brother Bob Cruse entitled: “Some Things God’s Marriage Law Does Not Say” (11-12). However, brother Dobbs could not leave well-enough alone. He decided to add his two-cents to what brother Cruse wrote, and, in reality, contradict what brother Cruse had written. Brother Dobbs writes, “It is possible for a person to be in a marriage situation that is intractable.” According to Webster’s Dictionary *intractable* means: “1: not easily governed, managed, or directed: obstinate 2: not easily manipulated or wrought 3: not easily relieved or cured” (634).

Brother Dobbs then gives a lengthy quote from the book *Soldier of the Cross* edited by Noble Patterson about the life of Foy E. Wallace Jr., to lend credibility to what he had just stated. Brother Patterson records the incident of when brother Wallace was in Springfield, Missouri, and a divorced man came to be baptized. Apparently brother Wallace advised the elders that “the man should be baptized and allowed to raise his family in the church and leave his past mistakes to God’s judgment in the resurrection” (12). Later we are informed of a letter written from L. C. Sears to James Bales (after his book *Not Under Bondage* was published) in which Sears says, “Little did I realize that some in our time had become so extreme in their views on divorce and remarriage as to demand that marriages be broken up because of divorces before people became Christians, that some be refused baptism who want to become Christians, and that those who disagree with

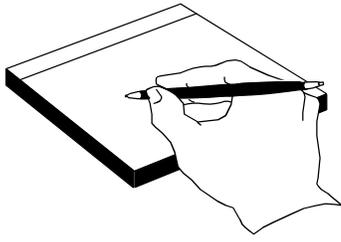
them in these extreme views should be disfellowshipped.” Thus, according to this situation, if an unscripturally divorced person contracts another marriage, and, in reality, is committing adultery, and has children, then that person is now in an *intractable* marriage!!! That person should be allowed to remain in that adultery with the church’s approval, and “leave his past mistakes to God’s judgment in the resurrection.” I believe that brother Cruse gives a great answer to this idea when he writes, “Advice to ‘let God be the judge’ to those who approach the judgment day in a sinful condition is cruel and uncaring” (12).

Are the children in an adulterous relationship cause to ignore God’s teachings concerning repentance? According to Dobbs and Wallace (and he also mentions several others whom he says hold this position, among whom is James D. Bales) we should ignore the adultery. If person A and person B are in a sinful marriage and they have children, we should “leave [the] past mistakes to God’s judgment in the resurrection.” This couple is now in an *intractable* marriage situation! I wonder if brother Dobbs would agree that it is *intractable* if person A and person B were both men and in a homosexual relationship and they had children? What would be the difference? They are both in fornication: one between a man and woman (adultery, according to Mat. 19:9) and the other between two men (homosexuality).

The Scriptures teach that when one divorces his mate for causes other than fornication on the part of their mate and then remarries, he continues to commit

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## Drifting

The pioneer preacher, J. D. Tant stated, "Brethren, We are drifting!" Many congregations rushed headlong into apostasy while others are heading as fast as they can to get there. There are many congregations who are slowly drifting into apostasy, while others are holding to the truth of God's Word. In the previous two articles we have noticed that some hold an unbalanced view of God and some do not respect the authority of the Scriptures (I would encourage you to read the March and April issues). Now let us consider some area's of the worship of the church where we are witnessing a drifting away from the Truth.

The Scriptures authorize man to pray to the Father in worship. On Pentecost of Acts 2, three-thousand souls were added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47). As Christians, these brethren "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). As Paul is correcting the errors in the church at Corinth concerning their worship to God, he writes, "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). While there are numerous passages showing the need for prayer, these two suffice for now.

However, some wish to depart from the truth on prayer. Through the years there are some who have misapplied Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:1-8 as evidence that we are not suppose to pray in public. Specifically Jesus says, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut

thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Mat. 6:5-6). Here, Jesus is not teaching that it is sinful to pray in a public setting, He is condemning the hypocrites who are praying simply to put on a show for others. They will receive their reward by being praised by others, but their prayers are vain. Paul shows in 1 Corinthians 14:15ff that prayers were a part of our public worship.

Another departure through the years concerned: To whom do we direct our prayers? The Catholic Church began this departure with the ideas of praying to others: whether it be Mary, some departed saint, etc. While there was no basis in Scripture for this type of prayer, they did not care, for they only sought the authority of the Church. Those of us who seek to do only what our Lord authorizes (Col. 3:17) know there is no authority for praying to these people. However, there are some of us who have begun advocating that we direct our prayers to Jesus. I personally believe that many never think about this because of some of the songs we have sung through the years (*Tell It to Jesus Alone, I Must Tell Jesus, and Just a Little Talk With Jesus*, among others). Yet, Jesus taught His disciples to pray to the Father, not to Him. "And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil" (Luke 11:1-4). Notice what Jesus would tell His apostles: "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23-24). This is for this day (the Christian dispensation), and Jesus says we are not to ask Him anything, instead we are to ask the Father in His name. Jesus would be the intercessor for our prayers, but our prayers are to be directed to the Father.

Some, who wish to affirm that we can pray to Jesus, argue that since Jesus is God and that He accepted worship, we may pray to Him. There is no doubt that Jesus did accept worship (Mat. 2:2, 11; 8:2; 9:18; et al.) and also accepted worship from the angels (Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5). However, the fact that He may be

worshiped in some ways does not mean He may be worshiped in all ways. We must make a proper distinction between the divine three. For example, it is not the Father nor the Holy Spirit whom we remember in the Lord's Supper. Jesus said we were to do that in remembrance of Him. Likewise it is not the Son nor the Spirit to whom we direct our prayers.

Others will cite a couple of occasions in Acts as evidence that we may pray to Jesus. The first is when the apostles were selecting someone to take Judas' place (Acts 1:24-25). Since it is addressed to *Lord* some assume that it is a prayer to Jesus. However, they cannot prove that *Lord* refers to Jesus in this instance. *Lord* often refers to the Father (Acts 4:24-30; Luke 10:21). The prayer addresses the One who "knowest the hearts of all *men*." The Father knows the hearts of all men (1 Kin. 8:39; Luke 16:15; Acts 15:8). Even if (and there is no evidence to prove such) it is directed to Jesus, it certainly is an unusual situation which you cannot apply to everyone, and one in which the Law of Christ had not yet come into effect.

The second occurrence is that of Stephen and his death. Luke records, "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59). This is obviously a statement to Jesus. However, Stephen was caught up in a heavenly vision where Jesus was personally manifested to him when he said this. Notice what Stephen said he saw: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). We would agree with the statement that if you ever see Jesus standing on the right hand of God, you may say the same thing to Him. However, the nature of this case (being a special case) shows that it cannot be a general rule for us today.

There is one other innovation which has recently crept up. There are those who now advocate that when Paul wrote, "Pray without ceasing" (1 The. 5:17), that Paul meant that we literally pray 24 hours a day. This view was advocated to try to support that all of life, except for sin, is worship. Personally, I do not believe this idea would have ever arisen if some had not tried to support a false doctrine. This idea is false on the face of it, to think that we pray when we are asleep or engaging in other activities is ludicrous. Surely, brethren, we know better than that.

Let us not tamper with what God has instructed concerning that wonderful avenue of prayer within our lives. Let us take the opportunity that God has given unto us to pray and to direct those prayers to the Father through the mediatorship of Christ.

MH

(Continued from Page 1)

adultery. "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 marieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Mat. 19:9). Likewise, the Scriptures teach that those who commit adultery will not obtain heaven's home. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication,...of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind" (1 Cor. 6:9). Paul continues in this context to state, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). When Paul, by inspiration of God, says they *were*, he is also saying that they are not now in these sins. Some of them had been adulterers. However, they repented; they got out of the sinful situation.

However, brother Dobbs, with the sanction of Foy E. Wallace Jr., tells us this should not be. That some of these are in *intractable* marriage situations and they should be "allowed to raise his family in the church and leave his past mistakes to God's judgment in the resurrection." They should not get out of the sinful situation and that if we preachers tell them to get out of it "is a presumptuous procedure" (12). I wonder if brother Dobbs would say the same thing about other sins one might be engaged in, and if that would have been the view of brother Wallace also? I doubt that either one of these brethren would state this same thing about any other sin someone might be engaged in. It is shameful and sinful to take this view when they get to the marriage situation.

When the Israelites had taken foreign wives and had children by them, but now had returned to the land of Israel after the captivity, they were not told: "Well, you are in an *intractable* marriage situation, so we will just allow you to raise your family and leave your past mistakes to God's judgment in the resurrection." **No!** Notice what is recorded for us in Ezra 10:2-5, 10-11: "And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of

Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. Arise; for *this* matter *belongeth* unto thee: we also *will be* with thee: be of good courage, and do *it*. Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they sware.... And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have

taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.”

Brother Dobbs will teach adulterers to remain in the adultery, and thus when they stand before God in judgment will be eternally lost in a devil’s hell. That, beloved brethren, is damnable error. We pray that brother Dobbs will repent of this false doctrine which will send sinners to hell before it is too late.

#### Work Cited:

*Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (1990) (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Inc.).

## WHY SHOULD OUR FATHER BOTHER?

*Burt Jones*

I wonder if anyone else has had this thought in these fast and loose days? **Why should our Father bother?** We are being desensitized to almost every form of degenerate and un-Christian behavior. We are being beguiled (Col. 2:4) in the name of liberalism into accepting that degeneracy is the price we have to pay to draw the world to Christ. What a misapplication of Paul’s teachings (1 Cor. 9:20). The culprit is liberalism withing the Lord’s church. Now, certainly this in itself is not some startling revelation, but it is what is happening to a Christian brotherhood out of touch with its own mission (Gal. 1:6).

Brethren, giving in to the lowest common denominator is not what being a Christian is all about. Christianity in this New Testament church is not about doing and saying whatever one pleases in the name of bringing souls to the obedience of the gospel. It is about Christian responsibility, example and faith. It is about exercising our duty to, and love for, Christ by putting up with the depravities that weigh us down in “running with patience the race that is set before us.” Brother Roy Deaver has stated so eloquently that he is for all the liberality that the Bible allows but outside of that we have no right to assign **our** interpretation to biblical license and authority. There **is** no Christian freedom when there is no respect for divine authority (Gal. 5:1).

The battle cry for those of us in this “all volunteer” army is sadly becoming, not a bloodcurdling scream, but a patronizing, almost indiscernible shake of the head. For liberalism to flourish among otherwise well-intentioned brethren, **it must gain acceptance as**

**something else**—a “vocal” band; a charismatic self-serving youth minister; a new gimmick to bolster attendance during worship. It must masquerade as something more palatable; something that can deflect truth and give notoriety to the false teacher. And so, when the words of those liberal tongues, or some shock show, spew forth error in the guise of a sickening sweet savor, we mustn’t dare call it sectarian “slop,” but simply a “re-thinking” of old, and outmoded ideas. **Then** you can sell it to impressionable young people and to an uninformed brotherhood, and the people will sing along, and clap, and laugh and be entertained and, surely to all that is religious, **fill those pews!**

There is the argument that to preach against liberal leanings would only make liberalism more popular. This is to gauge the worth of rotten fruit by the number of flies it attracts.

Faithful brethren don’t give **out**, they give **in**. They come apart, not in a flash but by the inch. During this permissive period in our Lord’s church, where we are fast approaching a point where anything goes, if this permissiveness continues, it eventually will (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

Some may ridicule and laugh at an all too small band of “do-gooders” who persist in working to seek and save the lost. But, in the end, the eternal “joke” may be on them!

Who could blame us if, in a rare moment of mental clarity, we ask ourselves, “Why should our Father bother?” **Why?** “God so loved the world that...” (John 3:16).

*P.O. Box 985, Moundsville, WV 26041*

# “Encouraging Statements Of The Bible”

June 9 - 13, 2001

## SATURDAY, JUNE 9

7:00 PM Encouragement  
7:45 PM “He Is Not Here: For He Is Risen”; Mat. 28:6  
Keith Mosher  
Jerry Murrell

## SUNDAY, JUNE 10

9:00 AM Pressing Toward The Mark; Phi. 3:7-14  
10:00 AM Jesus’ Reassuring Message To Peter; Mark 16:7  
Ira Y. Rice, Jr.  
Billy Bland

### Lunch Break

2:00 PM God Is; Psa. 19:1  
3:00 PM God’s Superiority; 1 Sam. 5:1-4  
Tracy Dugger  
Daniel Denham

### Dinner Break

7:00 PM “God So Loved The World”; John 3:16  
7:45 PM Peace Passing Understanding; Phi. 4:7  
David Brown  
Michael Shepherd

## MONDAY, JUNE 11

9:00 AM “Inherit The kingdom”; Mat. 25:34  
10:00 AM “Be Of Good Cheer; I Have Overcome The World”; John 16:33  
11:00 AM “As For Me And My House”; Jos. 24:15  
Joel Wheeler  
Kent Bailey  
Stanley Ryan

### Lunch Break

1:30 PM Nothing Separates Us From The Love Of God; Rom. 8:31-39  
2:30 PM “I Can”; Phi. 4:13  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
Dave Watson  
Gary Summers

### Dinner Break

7:00 PM “So Great A Cloud Of Witnesses”; Heb. 12:1  
7:45 PM Things Not Seen Are Eternal; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:1  
Lynn Parker  
Bobby Liddell

## TUESDAY, JUNE 12

9:00 AM “I Will Never Leave Thee, Nor Forsake Thee”; Heb. 13:5  
10:00 AM “For Such A Time As This”; Est. 4:14  
11:00 AM “Casting All Your Care Upon Him; For He Careth For You”; 1 Pet. 5:7  
Eddie Whitten  
Lee Davis  
Paul Sain

### Lunch Break

1:30 PM Acknowledging God Brings His Direction; Pro. 3:6  
2:30 PM “All Things Are Become New”; 2 Cor. 5:17  
Barry Grider  
Preston Silcox

### Dinner Break

3:30 PM Open Forum  
7:00 PM The Good Shepherd; Psa. 23  
7:45 PM “They That Sow In Tears Shall Reap In Joy”; Psa. 126:5  
Harrell Davidson  
Curtis Cates

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13

9:00 AM God’s Word Shall Not Return Void; Isa. 55:11  
10:00 AM God Bears Our Burdens; Psa. 68:19  
11:00 AM “God Shall Supply All Your Needs”; Phi. 4:19  
Noah Hackworth  
Garland Elkins  
Monte Evans

### Lunch Break

1:30 PM The Joy Of Worship; Psa. 122:1  
2:30 PM Made In God’s Image; Gen. 1:26-27  
Guss Eoff  
Clifford Newell

### Dinner Break

3:30 PM Open Forum  
7:00 PM Successful Families; Gen. 18:19  
7:45 PM The Christian Reward; 2 Tim. 4:6-8  
B. J. Clarke  
Ronnie Hayes

## Bellview Lectures Information

### HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a “first come, first served” basis (call our office at: 850/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following motel is available nearby and is providing a *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Microtel Inn & Suites (8001 Lavelle Way) offers the following price (tax not included) \$50-1 to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/941-8902. Ask for Michelle Jones when making reservations in order to receive this price. The cut-off date for making reservations at this price is May 1, 2001.

### MEALS

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

### AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes and video tapes. These tapes may be purchased during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail order afterwards. Order blanks and price information will be available during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail upon request. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the *Bellview Lectures* in keeping the pulpit area free of privately-owned recorders and

microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

### EXHIBITS

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

### BOOKS

The lectureship book, *Encouraging Statements Of The Bible* will be available to those attending the *Bellview Lectures* at a reduced rate of \$10. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price of \$11 prior to June 30, 2001, or afterwards at the regular price of \$12. It will contain thirty-three chapters and approximately 400 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

### TRANSPORTATION

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

# RAHAB

*Al Brown*

Abraham was a great and highly respected leader. His life was commendable. His faith and what it cost him was especially impressive. James taught that his faith moved him to obey God, and any other kind is a dead faith (Jam. 2:21-24).

James' second example of "faith in action" was Rahab (Jam. 2:25-26). She was as different from Abraham as night is from day. She is often ignored when people of great faith are discussed. Compared to others, she seems to be a poor choice. Still, by inspiration, James picked her.

Rahab was not just any woman; she was a prostitute. Some, embarrassed, try to cover this up by claiming the Hebrew word means *innkeeper*. It does not; it means "harlot." Her reputation and character were jaded even among heathens. She was not even a temple prostitute. They had some respectability in heathen society.

Regardless of her past, James said her faith was on a par with Abraham's; it was active. Thayer defines such faith as: "conviction...and trust, conjoined with obedience."

Her faith was certainly crude (Jos. 2:9-13). It rested on what she had heard about Israel's God, and she did not know much when the spies approached her. She had never seen a miracle, but she had heard about them; and she believed the testimony was true. In contrast, Israel saw some of the greatest miracles God ever performed, but they still would not believe.

Acceptable faith involves more than just accepting testimony. It also requires trust, commitment, and action. Rahab was convinced God would overthrow Jericho. She trusted the spies' word as men of God and committed herself to helping them. Then, she activated that commitment; she helped them. Would her faith have been acceptable if she had refused to act on it?

Her faith demanded more than a token involvement. The king had evidence she was hiding the spies. He challenged her to surrender them (Jos. 2:2f). If the spies were found, she could lose everything—even her life.

Perhaps Satan tempted her by asking: "Yea, hath God said...?" She could have responded as many do today—by putting questions marks where God puts periods. There was ample reason to doubt the outcome,

as there always is. She was a heathen and a prostitute, so Israel may not accept her. Israel may not conquer the city. If they failed, where would she be? Why run the risk? Her faith involved considerable risk.

There were other great risks. She lied. The spies had to escape under the very noses of the watchmen. She had to hang a red rope from her window for a month before Israel returned. After the first week, the rope was exposed at least eighteen days (Jos. 2:18). Would that make you nervous? All of Rahab's family had to remain in her house several weeks. If anyone told the authorities what was happening, she and her family would probably be killed.

Would you make such a commitment and then follow through with it? People who will not stand up for Christ today when false doctrine is taught and/or immorality is practiced would not have done what she did! Yet, that is the only way acceptable faith can respond. Faith can be very expensive, and it has always been so. It was for Daniel (Dan. 6:10-24), Stephen (Acts 7:43-60), the apostle James (Acts 12:1-5); and it will cost you too (Mat. 16:24, 26; 10:37-39; Luke 14:33)!

Allegiance to Christ could cost you your job, career, friends, money, family, a comfortable church home, pleasurable habits—even your life. It will certainly cost you unlawful relationships and sinful practices. Paul was ready to die for Christ (Acts 21:13). Would we be faithful if it required our life (Rev. 2:10; 1 John 3:16)? Do we have Job's attitude: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15)? Some things are worse than dying.

Rahab did exactly as she was instructed. Some would call this legalism, but it was not. It was faithfulness. Christians today are called "legalists" when they obey God—as if obedience was a terrible sin. Those who make this charge are liars doing Satan's bidding (cf., Mat. 7:21).

Rahab's faith was rewarded (Jos. 6:22-25). It always is—if not in this life, then certainly in the one to come. She was the great-great-grandmother of David and an ancestor of Jesus. She was numbered with the Old Testament faithful (Heb. 11:31). James said she was an example of the faith God's saints are to have—a faith that works (Jam. 2:25).

Her faith may have been small, but Christ can do great things with even a small but genuine faith. He said: “verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Mat.17:20).

We all need such a faith—the kind W. H. Bathurst described in his poem. It has been set to music, and we teach and admonish one another with this spiritual song.

O for a faith that will not shrink,  
Tho’ pressed by ev’ry foe,  
That will not tremble on the brink  
Of any earthly woe.

That will not murmur of complain  
Beneath the chast’ning rod,  
But in the hour of grief or pain,  
Will lean upon its God.

A faith that shines more bright and clear  
When tempests rage without;  
That when in danger knows no fear,  
In darkness feels no doubt!

Lord, give us such a faith as this;  
And then, what e’er may come,  
We’ll taste e’en here the hallowed bliss  
Of an eternal home.

*Deceased*

## Outstanding New Book by Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

The second volume of brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr.’s autobiography *Pressing Toward The Mark* has been printed and is now available for purchase. This is volume two of a three volume set brother Rice’s life. This volume deals with his missionary work from 1955-1965. It is very easy to read and extremely informative. Curtis A. Cates writes, “You will thrill to read of their many and varied often difficult, even at times life threatening experiences in planting the church in various places in Southeast Asia and of many others encouraged by brother Ira to do evangelistic work. This is a valuable history of evangelism in the mid to last of the Twentieth Century.”

The price of the book is only \$20.00 (he will autograph the book if you request it). It contains 556 pages and is filled with pictures. It may be purchased directly from brother Rice at 3809 Wind Valley Drive, Memphis, TN 38125-2461. You will need to add postage and packing of \$2.50 for a total of \$22.50. You may also order volume I for the same price.

## Great Study Aid and Offer

The 1988-2000 books are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as “baptism for the remission of sins” in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$50 in which you receive all 13 books (less than \$5 per book). If you purchased the CD last year with the 1999/1998 books you can receive an update for \$40 upon the return of the CD. Postage/handling per CD is \$1.25. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church Of Christ.

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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

Volume XXX

June 2001

Number 6

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## A FRIEND MISTAKEN FOR AN ENEMY

*Tracy Dugger*

During a recent gospel meeting, I was given a tour of Parris Island (Marine recruit training center) in South Carolina. I was permitted to observe one particular exercise where recruits were divided up into two teams. Dressed in football helmets and other protective gear, and armed with a stick (simulating a rifle to be used as one would use a bayonet or gun butt), the opposing teams began at two separate starting points. Two recruits from each team made their way down a path in the woods to a meeting place in a center arena. When the recruits met in the middle they were to *kill* the other two recruits rushing in from the opposite direction. Points were given by landing the ends of their sticks to the body or head of their *enemies*. One particular action that really upset the screaming Drill Instructors occurred when a recruit *killed* his own man. Amidst the intensity of close combat, increased levels of adrenaline, and much scuffling, sometimes a recruit would mistake a friend for an enemy, *killing* him. When this occurred, those recruits received a stiff rebuke from one or more Drill Instructors. This, of course, was just a training exercise with obvious safety precautions. However, in the real world and in a real war, sometimes our own troops are killed by what is called *friendly fire*. Sometimes an ally is mistaken for an enemy.

On Paul's first visit to Galatia, he was "received... as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus" (Gal. 4:14). These souls would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him if possible (Gal. 4:15). However, sometime later, their attitude changed toward Paul. They treated him with coldness and suspicion because he pointed out their faults and dangers to their souls; as

though he had become their enemy because he told them the truth. **They had mistaken a friend for an enemy!** This is why he asked the question, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16).

### **The Gospel Preacher's Duty Often Involves Delivering Unpleasant Truths**

In Nature, all is not roses and blossoms; there are nettles and thorns. It is a mistake to conclude that the gospel of Jesus Christ is all sweet nectar. It is very true that God's Word is full of edification, comfort, and pleasant thoughts. But it is likewise overflowing with prohibitions, condemnations, threats, warnings, and *negative* statements! Our presentation of the truth must therefore be balanced. Yes, it must involve edification and comfort, but it likewise must include warnings and admonitions. This is where the conflict begins!

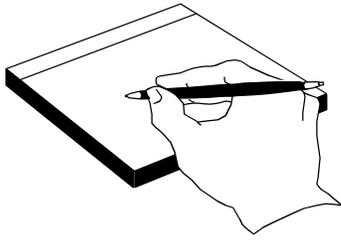
We live in a day when the truth is not popular. Therefore, it should not surprise us that those who proclaim it are likewise unpopular. Ours is similar to Isaiah's:

Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, children *that* will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us (Isa. 30:8-11).

These wanted their ears tickled. Many of the inspired doctrines were a reproach to them. The dedicated

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## Drifting

When brother J. D. Tant stated: “Brethren, we are drifting!” it was a much different time. Many congregations today could not be said to be drifting, they are all the way into apostasy. In this series of articles we have been examining some areas in which we, as a people, are *drifting*. In the last issue we turned our attention to our worship to God. In this article let us consider another area of our worship, that is the preaching/study.

God authorized that during our worship to Him that we engage in preaching (proclaiming) His message to mankind. “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). The “apostles’ doctrine” is the teaching or preaching that the apostles were doing. When Paul and his company went to Troas, they tarried there to worship with the saints. In that worship it states: “And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7). The first day of the week was that special day in which the saints partook of the Lord’s Supper, but during that worship service we observe that there was also preaching.

For years we have denigrated the preaching aspect. Many have treated that aspect of the worship as something that is unimportant. Years ago many congregations changed the order of their service to where they partook the Lord’s Supper at the end of the service to keep people there for the preaching. The only reason that was necessary was because people have contempt for the preaching aspect of worship. However, this disdain for the preaching part of the worship is exhibited in other ways. How often do we see those who sleep through the preaching, yet they would never

dream of sleeping through the Lord’s Supper or the prayers of the church. Others whisper (not about some point in the lesson) back and forth with someone close by while the preaching is going on. Events such as these are common in most congregations.

Another way Christians have tainted the preaching service is when services go overtime just a little bit, the first thing that many want to shorten is the preaching, or when one wants to cut the length of services they always cut the length of the sermon. Preachers have aided this by preaching shorter and shorter sermons. We use to joke that many want sermonettes for Christianettes who smoke cigarettes. The sad fact is that many preachers delivered nothing more than sermonettes. Why? It is because we do not really think it is all that important anyway.

There are ways in which preachers have also tarnished the preaching part of the worship. Preachers started omitting the Bible and began giving moral platitudes in place of God’s Word. Preachers no longer trusted God’s Word as the power of God to save (Rom. 1:16-17; Jam. 1:21) and began relying on man and his wisdom. They preached more what this man said and that man said than what our Lord said. Some preachers did not trust our Lord and His gospel to be the drawing power (John 6:44-45) and thought that they must provide recreation and entertainment to draw a crowd. Likewise, many did not wish to offend their denominational friends so they pleaded with preachers to tone down the gospel. Thus, preachers began *preaching* a warmed over feel-goodish and Pealeism of how to win friends and influence people.

Preachers wanted everyone to leave services feeling good about themselves. However, those in sin should not feel good about themselves; they need to feel their lost condition by the faithful preaching of the gospel and exposing of sin in their lives. Those in sin need to see the ultimate result of where their sin will lead—an eternal separation from God in a devil’s hell. This type of preaching will lead to a desire to repent of sins and to come into contact with the blood of Christ. However, this type of preaching was not *cultured* enough for many so-called Christians.

Preachers have also disrespected the preaching service by preaching false doctrines. The preacher’s responsibility is to preach God’s Word. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). Peter said, “If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). The

preacher's appeal should be to the law of God. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). When a preacher is not seeking out God's Word to proclaim it then he is not doing what his obligation is. "Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read" (Isa. 34:16). Instead of seeking out God's Word, many preachers seek out the ideas of man and are infiltrated with denominational doctrines. They, then, preach denominational doctrines instead of the doctrine of Christ (cf., Mat. 15:9).

Preachers have denigration of the preaching by not preaching the whole council of God. These will always preach the truth of God's Word, but they will not preach the specific truth needed at that specific time. Paul said he was innocent of the blood of all men because he preached the whole council of God (Acts 20:27). He also stated, "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). When Felix tried Paul, Paul could have spoken in defense of himself or he could have spoken on the love and grace of God (which are marvelous themes), but instead he preached on what Felix needed to hear at that specific time. "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). While Felix did not enjoy the lesson, it was what he needed to hear. Many preachers today will preach the truth, but not the truth that needs to be spoken; there are subjects they will avoid preaching because it would not sit well with people (they might even lose some members). These preachers have besmirched the preaching aspect of our worship to God.

We have great reverence when we speak to God (prayer), and well we should; however, do we show the same reverence when God is speaking to us (preaching)? From all appearances we do not show that type of reverence for the preaching service. Nehemiah shows the respect the people of his day had for God's Word when he records, "Also Jeshua, and Bani, and - Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maa-seiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading....And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God *one* fourth part of the day; and *another*

fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God" (Neh. 8:7-8; 9:3). Because of their respect for the word of the Lord, they stood in their place while it was read, then again spent three hours (a fourth part of a day) standing while they read God's law. We need to develop the same type of respect for the preaching of God's Word as these possessed for it is that Word which will save our souls (Rom. 1:16-17; Jam. 1:21).

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(Continued from Page 1)

messengers likewise were reproached and despised. Thus, a true friend was mistaken for an enemy! Does this sound familiar?

Notice further in the chapter the consequences of having this disposition toward the truth:

Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water *withal* out of the pit (Isa. 30:12-14).

The consequences of rejecting the truth are very serious (2 The. 1:7-9). Souls are at stake!

The preacher of the truth must not waver. He must stand long and he must stand tall in the face of opposition always remembering his duty. **But what is his duty?** It astounds me to hear the many human opinions regarding the work of the preacher that are in conflict with God's idea. Paul discusses the duty and work of the gospel preacher in his second epistle to Timothy:

I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

These instructions do not sound like many requirements that are placed upon preachers by churches today. Nevertheless, the work of the gospel preacher is simply to preach the Word; enduring in the face of opposition.

The preacher of the Truth must denounce the sins of the people! John the baptizer came rebuking his own

countrymen. Jesus Christ uttered some of the most scathing, yet loving, words spoken (Mat. 23). The messenger of the gospel has the responsibility to present all the truth. Paul expressed that duty in Acts 20:

*And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house...And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God (Acts 20:20, 25-27).*

Paul declared the whole council of God to the saints at Ephesus. We too, as gospel preachers, have that sobering obligation; we have the duty to speak the whole truth in love (Eph. 4:15). One can preach all their life, never preaching any error, and still not please God in their preaching. Those who transmit the truth must present the truth on a variety of biblical topics, keeping back nothing that is profitable to the audience, but declaring the whole truth. I met a Christian in East Tennessee who learned he was living in adultery. After studying the issue from God's Word and seeing the truth, he became very upset with the preacher at his home congregation for never telling him of his immoral condition. This preacher had not been preaching the whole council of God! The man in adultery wanted to go to heaven and did not want anyone withholding vital soul-saving truths from him even though they are sometimes unpleasant.

Why is it that we have the task of delivering an unpopular message? The answer is found in such passages as Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." This is the basis of preaching; like it or not, we are sinners! The purpose of preaching is to bring sinners to repentance! How can a sinner repent of sin that God will hold him accountable for if he is never reminded of it? One cannot turn from the wrong and do the right when the wrong and the right are not proclaimed! Jesus stated, "Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?" (Luke 6:39).

Instead of becoming angry at Paul and mistaking a friend for an enemy, the Galatians should have held up his hands and appreciated the fact that he corrected them. The end of spiritual correction is the salvation of souls: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16). "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert

him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (Jam. 5:19-20).

It is vital that we recognize the importance of spiritual correction. Because I might be blind to the truth does not lessen its truthfulness. It is still the truth! God did not consult you or me when giving His Word. Our acceptance or rejection does not change the truthfulness of the message. When Saul of Tarsus rejected the truth of the gospel (to the extent of condoning the brutal stoning of one of its messengers: Stephen) did this lessen its truthfulness? When Paul, now one of those messengers, preached the gospel to the city of Lystra and was then stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19), did their rejection lessen their duty to the message? Rejecting the message or messenger does not change the truth—it only hinders the treatment. The doctor may inform me of a serious health problem. What good would it do to lash out at him? If I want to be helped, I need to accept the doctor's message, face the problem, and seek a cure!

Consider what occurred in Antioch of Pisidia when the Jews refused the truth because they believed it was unpleasant:

*And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region (Acts 13:44-49).*

Two things are of special notice in these passages: (1) These Jews had judged themselves unworthy of heaven. (2) The saving message was taken away and offered to someone else. This is a terrifying thought! Imagine having the only access to eternal life removed because of our own rejection of it!

### **The Gospel Preacher must Expect to Be Treated as an Enemy by the Very People He Is Trying to Help**

It goes with the territory. It would be wonderful to expect fair treatment by one's audience when it comes to proclaiming the truth. The expectations of a young

preacher having his message gladly accepted are soon crushed. Likewise, the expectations of any Christian having the truth accepted by all those he comes into contact with are disappointing. However, let us not be alarmed! If the Prince of Preachers could not please everyone with His preaching, neither will we. If He could not please some of His own brethren, neither will we. But that does not mean He quit preaching, nor does that mean He ceased loving His brethren.

The apostle Paul did not cease his loving proclamation to the Gentiles when he found they did not accept the message:

Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and

strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen (2 Tim. 4:14-18).

If we are preaching the truth in love, the Lord is on our side; He will strengthen us and give us a heavenly reward.

When the Word is proclaimed to us, let us never reject it, nor attack the messenger—mistaking a friend for an enemy. When we have the duty to proclaim the gospel, let us freely declare all of its truth. Let us never compromise nor retreat! The words of a popular hymn seem very fitting: “I will not, I will not desert to his foes; That soul tho’ all hell should endeavor to shake, I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.”

*520 Thicket Lane; Kyle, TX 78640*

## JESUS CHRIST IS LORD

*Jesse Whitlock*

“And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ” (Phi. 2:11). In Titus 1:16 Paul writes, “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” Let us pause and consider the meaning and value of that word: profess!

What does it mean to **profess** to know God? *Profess* appears 23 times in the New Testament, but only twice is it translated *profess* (Mat. 7:23; Tit. 1:16); it is found one time in the Old Testament (Deu. 26:3). In all other references this word is rendered *confess*. Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 10:32). Therefore, this word pictures a man who does more than merely **profess** to know God, but one who actually makes an open confession of Him in his daily walk.

It is wonderful to know God and to know that we know Him! Paul wrote, “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12). Notice the great assurance of John: “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments” (1 John 2:3). Again: “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 John 2:6). Thus, we learn that “keeping his commandments” and “walking as he walked” actually mean the same

thing, do they not?

One who refuses to keep God’s commandments and follow in the footsteps of Christ, does not really know God. If you **profess** or **confess** to know God and refuse to obey Him, then you are identified as a liar.

To deny Him is a refusal to keep His commandments or to walk after Him. Christ said, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14). To **profess** that you know God and to worship Him one hour a week is not exactly what Paul had in mind when he wrote the words recorded in Titus 1:16. Many Christians are too fond of their sin(s) to really enjoy their Christianity, and then too fond of their Christianity to really enjoy their sinning. What an unhappy “conflict of interests”!

Recall the story of the man who was on his way to a costume party, and had dressed up as the devil? His car broke down and so he started walking. He came to a church building in the woods and walked in seeking help. When the men and women saw “Satan” in their building it was pandemonium! They screamed and ran every direction trying to get away. One woman was so scared she could not move. It was just her and the “devil.” He walked toward her and she shouted at the man, “Devil, it’s true that I have worshiped here for the past 23 years, but I’ve been on your side the whole time!”

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve” (Jos. 24:15).

*PO Box 1148; Beeville, TX 78104*

# “Encouraging Statements Of The Bible”

June 9 - 13, 2001

## SATURDAY, JUNE 9

7:00 PM Encouragement  
7:45 PM “He Is Not Here: For He Is Risen”; Mat. 28:6  
Keith Mosher  
Jerry Murrell

## SUNDAY, JUNE 10

9:00 AM Pressing Toward The Mark; Phi. 3:7-14  
10:00 AM Jesus’ Reassuring Message To Peter; Mark 16:7  
Ira Y. Rice, Jr.  
Billy Bland

### Lunch Break

2:00 PM God Is; Psa. 19:1  
3:00 PM God’s Superiority; 1 Sam. 5:1-4  
Tracy Dugger  
Daniel Denham

### Dinner Break

7:00 PM “God So Loved The World”; John 3:16  
7:45 PM Peace Passing Understanding; Phi. 4:7  
David Brown  
Michael Shepherd

## MONDAY, JUNE 11

9:00 AM “Inherit The Kingdom”; Mat. 25:34  
10:00 AM “Be Of Good Cheer; I Have Overcome The World”; John 16:33  
11:00 AM “As For Me And My House”; Jos. 24:15  
Joel Wheeler  
Kent Bailey  
Stanley Ryan

### Lunch Break

1:30 PM Nothing Separates Us From The Love Of God; Rom. 8:31-39  
2:30 PM “I Can”; Phi. 4:13  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
Dave Watson  
Gary Summers

### Dinner Break

7:00 PM “So Great A Cloud Of Witnesses”; Heb. 12:1  
7:45 PM Things Not Seen Are Eternal; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:1  
Lynn Parker  
Bobby Liddell

## TUESDAY, JUNE 12

9:00 AM “I Will Never Leave Thee, Nor Forsake Thee”; Heb. 13:5  
10:00 AM “For Such A Time As This”; Est. 4:14  
11:00 AM “Casting All Your Care Upon Him; For He Careth For You”; 1 Pet. 5:7  
Eddie Whitten  
Lee Davis  
Paul Sain

### Lunch Break

1:30 PM Acknowledging God Brings His Direction; Pro. 3:6  
2:30 PM “All Things Are Become New”; 2 Cor. 5:17  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
Barry Grider  
Preston Silcox

### Dinner Break

7:00 PM The Good Shepherd; Psa. 23  
7:45 PM “They That Sow In Tears Shall Reap In Joy”; Psa. 126:5  
Harrell Davidson  
Curtis Cates

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13

9:00 AM God’s Word Shall Not Return Void; Isa. 55:11  
10:00 AM God Bears Our Burdens; Psa. 68:19  
11:00 AM “God Shall Supply All Your Needs”; Phi. 4:19  
Noah Hackworth  
Garland Elkins  
Monte Evans

### Lunch Break

1:30 PM The Joy Of Worship; Psa. 122:1  
2:30 PM Made In God’s Image; Gen. 1:26-27  
3:30 PM Open Forum  
Guss Eoff  
Clifford Newell

### Dinner Break

7:00 PM Successful Families; Gen. 18:19  
7:45 PM The Christian Reward; 2 Tim. 4:6-8  
B. J. Clarke  
Ronnie Hayes

## Bellview Lectures Information

### HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a “first come, first served” basis (call our office at: 850/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following motel is available nearby and is providing a *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Microtel Inn & Suites (8001 Lavelle Way) offers the following price (tax not included) \$50-1 to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/944-0333. Ask for Michele Jones when making reservations.

### MEALS

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

### AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

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

### EXHIBITS

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

### BOOKS

The lectureship book, *Encouraging Statements Of The Bible* will be available to those attending the *Bellview Lectures* at a reduced rate of \$10. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price of \$11 prior to June 30, 2001, or afterwards at the regular price of \$12. It will contain thirty-three chapters and approximately 400 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

### TRANSPORTATION

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

### LIVE ON THE INTERNET

If you cannot attend the lectureship, you can view the lessons live on the internet at: [www.oabs.org](http://www.oabs.org).

# I JUST HEARD IT AGAIN

*Guss Eoff*

Twice this week I heard it again. One time it was from a preacher, and the other time was in a letter from another state. The preacher said, "We have disbanded and our property is for sale." The letter said, "I understand the church does not have enough money to pay the preacher and the bills, the congregation doesn't have enough members to support the work. So I understand the congregation is thinking of disbanding."

Well here it goes again! I can remember about thirty-five or forty years ago, when almost every week we heard of a new congregation being established. What a turn around! **Now**, almost every week I hear of another congregation going out of business.

What is the problem? It is not that there are not sincere, honest, people who will obey the gospel. I read of cults that are growing. Pentecostal congregations are popping up all around and they are increasing in numbers. Some denominations are building new buildings, and their attendance is growing!

The gospel is still the power of God to save (Rom. 1:16). So what is the reason that congregations are throwing in the sponge? We have made all kinds of excuses. "People are just not interested!" "There is too many things to get our interest." "There are all kinds of school activities." "People work hard and they need

time to relax." "We cannot compete with television." "This is a new generation, they are not interested in religion." "Our children are all tied up in sports, and going to their sporting events takes all of our time." These, besides the time worn excuses that have been used for generations, are being put forth.

Why are the Moslems the fastest growing religion in the United States? Why are so many Mosques being built? I will never be convinced that the Koran is inspired of God. I know Mohammed is a false prophet. He like Joseph Smith, Ellen G. White, Mary Baker Eddy, and hundreds of others are as false as the Devil wants them to be.

You know what I believe our problems is? I think the trouble with the church today is that we are down-right **lazy**. We are not trying to convert people! We are not really interested! Of course, there are exceptions, but as a majority we are **lazy**! We are not working! We are not doing as Jesus taught us to do. The whole world is out there for us to teach (Mat. 28:19-20). We all need to look into the mirror. We need to be honest with ourselves. Are we going to heaven when we know the rest of the lost world is going to hell, and we are too lazy to do anything about it? Scares me! How about you?

*221 S. Texas, Mathis, TX 78368*

## Updated Study Aid

The 1988-2001 books and *Defender* issues of 1994-2000 are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$50 in which you receive all 14 books (less than \$5 per book). If you purchased the CD with the 1999/1998 books, you can receive an update for \$40 upon the return of the CD, or last year's with 1988-2000 books for \$5.00 upon return of the CD. Postage/handling per CD is \$1.25. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church Of Christ.

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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

# Defender



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

Volume XXX

July 2001

Number 7

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

E-mail: [bellview@bellviewcoc.com](mailto:bellview@bellviewcoc.com)

RECOMMENDED READING:

## ENCOURAGING STATEMENTS OF THE BIBLE

*Gary W. Summers*

Last year the Bellview Church of Christ had as their lectureship theme *Sad Statements of the Bible*. The opposite perspective was presented this year. Just the idea and the list of verses under each heading is probably worth the cost of \$24 (\$12 for each volume, which provides a total of 763 pages of reading material + \$2.10 shipping for each book).

Before examining this year's book, it would be appropriate to mention a few features of its predecessor, which began with "What Makes A Verse 'Sad'?" and "What is Truth?" and concluded with "Sad Verses Not in the Bible." In between were discussed the following topics and passages:

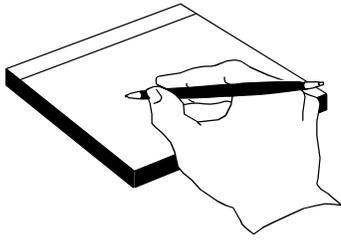
Genesis 3—Broken Fellowship  
Genesis 6:5—"Only Evil Continually"  
Deuteronomy 34:4—The Promised Land Denied  
Judges 2:10—They Knew Not Jehovah  
Judges 5:23—"Curse Ye Meroz"  
Judges 17:6—Doing Right in One's Own Eyes  
1 Samuel 4:21-22—"Ichabod"  
2 Samuel 18:33; 19:4—David's Grief Over Absalom  
1 Kings 14:16—He Made Israel To Sin  
2 Chronicles 21:20—"Departing, To No One's Regret"  
Psalm 41:9—"Mine Own Familiar Friend"  
Psalm 119:136—Crying "Rivers of Waters"  
Jeremiah 5:31—False Prophets and Their Popularity  
Jeremiah 6:15—"Neither Could They Blush"  
Jeremiah 6:16—"We Will Not Walk Therein"  
Lamentations 1:12—"Is It Nothing?"  
Ezekiel 34:2—Elders Feeding Themselves  
Daniel 5:25-27—"Weighed...and Found Wanting"

Matthew 23:37—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem"  
Matthew 25:41—"Depart From Me"  
Matthew 26:74—"I Know Not the Man"  
Matthew 27:46—"Why Have You Forsaken Me?"  
John 9:31—"God Heareth Not Sinners"  
1 Corinthians 5:2—Unconcerned With Sin  
Galatians 1:6-9—"So Soon Removed"  
2 Timothy 4:2-3—Not Enduring Sound Doctrine  
2 Timothy 4:10—"Demas Hath Forsaken Me"  
Revelation 3:1—A Name for Living, But Dead

Just a casual glance at these shows that the history of mankind has caused great affliction to the righteous and to the God who created mankind. But the Scriptures offer many encouraging statements for those still lost in sin but having the desire to depart from it, as well as for Christians who need strength to walk in the light and to overcome temptation. The fact is that we are virtually bombarded with immoral speech, immoral dress, and immoral behavior on a daily basis. Living in the world these days involves a struggle to avoid being influenced by it. Likewise, the church in the past fifty years has been fractured both by doctrines that allow for immorality and some that are just plain erroneous. Once-faithful brethren have given themselves over to teachings that imply things that they would never overtly advocate. One can only imagine what the next hobby horse will be that a respected brother will climb onto and ride so fast and so far that he quickly passes beyond the boundaries of fellowship. How many tears have been shed, how many hearts have been broken by

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
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## Drifting

When the pioneer preacher, J. D. Tant, said, “Brethren, We are drifting!” he had no idea what would be going on in the Lord’s church today. Many congregations are not drifting, they have completely apostatized from the Truth of God’s Word. In previous articles we have considered the way many view God, their view of the Scriptures, and we have been looking at the worship of the church. We have noticed how some have perverted the preaching part of the worship of God, and how others have altered our prayers to the Father through Christ.

In our worship, God has authorized the partaking of the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is one area where we often hear something not taught in God’s Word. Many times someone will say that the Lord’s Supper is in done in remembrance of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. There simply is no foundation in God’s Word for such a statement.

God has authorized the elements making up the Lord’s Supper. Jesus took bread, this was unleaven bread, and then took the fruit of the vine, grape juice (Mat. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20). For a detailed study of the elements on the Lord’s Supper see Don Tarbet’s excellent treatment of this in *The Gospel Journal*, July 2001, pages 13-15, entitled “The Elements of the Lord’s Supper.” We are to eat the bread in memory of the body of Christ, and that is not in remembrance of the church, but His physical body which He gave for us. The fruit of the vine which we drink, we do so in memory of the blood which Jesus shed for us. While not many, there have been some who have wanted to change the elements to something else (i.e., potato chips and cokes).

The Apostate Church came up with the idea that

the elements actually changed (the doctrine of Transubstantiation). They believe that the bread actually becomes the body of Jesus and the fruit of the vine actually becomes the blood of Christ (they thus cannibalize our Lord’s body, if this is true, and the eating of blood is forbidden in Acts 15:29). The Supper is a **memorial**, not a re-enactment of the death of our Lord. If this doctrine were true, Jesus would be shedding His blood every week, whereas the Hebrews’ writer says that He offered His body **once** (Heb. 9:12, 26-28).

God has also authorized when we partake of the Lord’s Supper. “And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7). This is not just an account of action, but it is an example which we must follow. An account of an action constitutes an example that we **must** follow when we find the church with general apostolic approval and teaching (authority) practicing whatever it may be that is right within itself and essential to Christianity. That is what we find here, and thus we have an example which we must follow. There are no other Bible examples of the church partaking the Lord’s Supper on any day other than the first day of the week which is Sunday.

The denominational world gave up on having Bible authority for that which they do, and did not care what the Bible authorized regarding when to partake the Lord’s Supper. They argued that partaking of the communion service every week would make it meaningless to us. Thus, based upon this, they changed from partaking the memorial service from every first day of the week to a monthly, quarterly, or yearly observance.

Some congregations of the Lord’s church have gone the opposite direction. While the pattern found in the New Testament is to partake the Supper every first day of the week, some were not content with this simple plan. First, some argued that we have the right to partake the communion on Thursday night. They based this upon the fact that Jesus instituted the Supper on that night, thus they argued that we have the right to partake of it then. This argument is fallacious because this was prior to the New Testament coming into effect and we do not see the early church observing it then. However, they did not stop at simply Thursday night. Next we saw them partaking of the communion on Saturdays. Almost the same time we heard arguments that we can commune in the Supper anytime Christians are together.

There have been some who have argued that the

Lord's Supper is to be combined with a common meal. They look at when Christ instituted the Supper and tie in the Passover meal they were eating with the communion service He instituted. Then some try to confuse the breaking of bread with the eating of a common meal in both Acts 2 and Acts 20. In Acts 2:42 "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The breaking of bread here is the Lord's Supper. However, in verse 46 "they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Here the breaking of bread is shown to be the eating of a common meal together. In Acts 20 we see in verse 7 that the church came together to break bread then in verse 11 (after raising Eutychus) Paul comes up again and breaks bread. A simple reading of the text allows one to see that the two statements concerning breaking of bread are dealing with two different subjects, and that there was a distinction between the Passover meal and the institution of the Lord's Supper by our Lord.

There is a relatively new practice that many liberal congregations are practicing: Singing during the partaking of the Lord's Supper. The nature of these two acts of worship are such that it is improper to engage in them at the same time. In partaking of the memorial service we are to examine ourselves (1 Cor. 11:28-29). If we are singing during the communion, then it contravenes that aspect of self-examination in remembrance of Christ's death. The major problem with this is that there is simply no Bible authority for such a practice.

God gave us the pattern we are to follow by giving us the example of the church at Troas coming together upon the first day of the week to break bread. In the breaking of bread we see the pattern set forth for the elements we partake at the institution of that Supper by our Lord and the first letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11:17-34). Let us adhere to the pattern sound words and not change or alter God's Word.

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

these problems! We need this book on encouragement. The first chapter demonstrates the need for encouragement by first noting some of the causes of discouragement. Then definitions of encouragement are presented in various word studies. Finally, applications are set forth. This introduction provides a sound basis for the

consideration of the passages that follow.

Genesis 1:26-27 leads off with a discussion of what it means to be made "in the image of God." We are living in a generation that in many instances would be just as happy to be made in the image of Darwin, Huxley, Ingersoll, O'Hair, and others who (if they could communicate with us) would tell us not to listen to them. It is time to restore the dignity and worth of man, to recapture what it means to be made in His image.

"Successful Families" is based on Genesis 18:19—God's knowledge of Abraham's success as a father. The chapter is divided into three sections: "The Difficulties of Fatherhood," "The Duties of Fatherhood," and "The Delights of Fatherhood." The first of these includes sections on youth crime, drugs, sexual permissiveness, suicide, and falling away. Suggestions on the means of preventing these things follow.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Jos. 24:15) has been a source of encouragement for generations, and the writer emphasizes the importance of leadership. Next is 1 Samuel 5:1-4, "God's Superiority." This passage deals with the god Dagon falling forward toward the ark of the covenant, as if acknowledging the one True God. The analysis of this passage is well worth reading.

How often, when discussing the subject of providence, have we been reminded of Esther 4:14? This is always an encouraging subject for Christians. Psalm 19 deals with the fact of God's existence. We know that He is by virtue of the creation itself (1-6) and by means of the Divine revelation He has given us. This Psalm praises God for both what we learn through nature and from His Word; the exposition is thorough and uplifting.

Psalm 23 has inspired and comforted the faithful for centuries. This chapter first focuses on Jesus as the good shepherd. An interesting question posed and answered is: "What makes the good shepherd good?" The next chapter scrutinizes only one verse which teaches us of the wonderful benevolence of God. Psalm 68:19: "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation." The joy of worship is examined in "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of Jehovah" (Psa. 122:1). It is a shame that some have lost their enthusiasm for worship. So often various church bulletins run articles exhorting, cajoling, and shaming members into attending worship as they should. Attendance is not the primary problem; it is symptomatic of a lack of love for

God and a dearth of appreciation for the suffering of Jesus on our behalf. If there is no joy in worship, the reason does not lie in poor song leading skills or in un-entertaining sermons; the problem is that the worshiper had no enthusiasm to begin with. Instead of being glad when it is time to meet with brethren (who are the house of the Lord), some are not even in the tepid range of happiness. One's attitude makes all the difference.

The chapter on sowing in tears and reaping in joy (Psa. 126:5) covers the background of the captivity and also contains several practical lessons. Proverbs 3:6 is another verse that suggests God's providential care. Sub-topics are "How Does God Guide?" and "God's Guidance Is Conditional." Isaiah 55:11 ("God's Word Shall Not Return Void") is another verse that is analyzed.

Moving to the New Testament, the book first considers Matthew 1:21, "He Shall Save His People from Their Sins." Next is an exegesis of what it means to "inherit the kingdom" (Mat. 25:34), followed by perhaps the most significant and inspiring words ever uttered: "He Is Not Here: for He Is Risen" (Mat. 28:6). Subheadings include "The Danger of Denying the Resurrection of Christ," "Universally Recognized Facts," and "The Four Essential Facts." The material presented here is crucial to Christianity and to one's salvation.

Mark 16:7 contains the Lord's "Reassuring Message to Peter." A thorough history of the apostle is presented. Nearly everyone knows John 3:16; the writer presents a marvelous exposition of this great promise. "Be of Good Cheer; I Have Overcome the World" (John 16:33) is another encouraging statement that Jesus made to His apostles, and we too can take heart in knowing that we can overcome through Him.

How often have we heard sermons dealing with Romans 8:31-39 or heard it quoted as part of a lesson that nothing can separate us from the love of God? It would be difficult to find more inspiring verses, and this chapter includes a thorough logical analysis of this precious passage. "Things That Are Not Seen Are Eternal" (2 Cor. 4:16-5:1), Paul affirmed. This material emphasizes the results of keeping our attention fixed on unseen realities.

From 2 Corinthians 5:17 arises "All Things Become New," which demonstrates God's wondrous ability to cleanse and make fresh. Not too unrelated is the fact that God has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1:3). To these

encouraging thoughts is added another—the fact that God "is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20). Particularly instructive is the section subtitled "God's Power in Us." Other information includes some of the names and attributes of God. There are five chapters that treat verses from the book of Philippians. The first of these is by Ira Rice, and its title just happens to coincide with that of his autobiography: *Pressing Toward the Mark*, (the first two volumes of which are now available). In this book he examines Philippians 3:7-14. The next chapter is from Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice," followed by Philippians 4:7, which examines the peace that passes understanding.

The fourth text from Philippians is "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (4:13), which is studied in five sections. Some things that brethren could do collectively are suggested (309-11), although there is a misprint on page 310, which mentions a publication that should read *The Gospel Journal*. "God shall supply all your need" (Phi. 4:19) closes out these inspiring texts from this great book of the Bible. The final four chapters review the Christian's reward (2 Tim. 4:6-8), the great cloud of witnesses (Heb. 12:1), God's promise never to leave or forsake us (Heb. 13:5), and the apostolic invitation to cast all our cares upon Him (1 Pet. 5:7).

### **Phantom Verses**

There was no chapter in this year's book entitled "Encouraging Verses That Are Not in the Bible," but some come to mind. There is no verse, for example, that says, "All anyone needs to do to be saved is just believe," although many people seem to think it is in there (some erroneously think that John 3:16 proclaims this message). The rest of this theology reads thus: "You do not need to repent of your sins, and you do not need to be baptized for their forgiveness. You do not need to attend even one public worship assembly. You do not need to engage in any good works. You do not need to lead a single soul to heaven. You do not need to be particularly moral. You do not even need to think about God or Jesus very often. As long as you have at some time confessed that Jesus is Lord, that is all that is necessary for salvation."

Certainly this passage would be encouraging because it requires no commitment and binds no restrictions. This philosophy does not demand studying the Word or living the Christian life. This is just the kind of religion many people are looking for. What an

inspirational thought! The only reason it has not found its way into Holy Writ is that it is not true.

A second nonexistent verse is: "Whatsoever thou thinkest is right is right." Many feel, "These declarations about objective truth are annoying." This non-Scripture grants people the freedom of making up their own religion, which pleases most folks. Such a precept allows individuals to feel religious when they wish and to express it in whatever way they desire—or not. Most honest souls will say that it is incredibly bothersome to have to discern the difference between truth and error anyway. What an enlightening and uplifting approach!

A third thought is: "Doctrine does not matter." Who needs theologians spending endless hours thinking and studying, looking up words, checking commentaries, and then at last only offering up an educated guess anyway as to what certain difficult passages mean? Such men are frequently way too dull. With this philosophy they could desert their libraries and devote themselves more to the pursuit of happiness.

A fourth precept comes to us by way of the Beatles: "All you need is love." Now problems may arise when someone calls for a definition of the word. Love is a much better concept when left to the imagination. Anyway, love evokes all manner of emotions which would be totally ruined if submitted to logical scrutiny. What does it matter if no one knows what is meant by the term?

Finally, there is the soothing (though absent) verse that proclaims: "Everyone is going to heaven, no matter what he (or she) has done; no one is going to hell." Why, this precept gives us all a reason to celebrate! What a fantastic guarantee! This message, if true, would eliminate the need for much worry and stress, which are needless if there is no punishment. Guilt would become an obsolete remnant of an ignorant past. Even the conscience would become essentially useless and archaic. None of these encouraging verses, however, does exist in the biblical text, a fact which dissuades few from believing them anyway. God has, in fact, created us as free moral agents who are going to be held responsible for what we believe and practice. God does love us and is not willing that any should perish. Sin makes life difficult and uncertain, but the Word of God does encourage us along the way.

The book (which presents real encouraging statements in the Bible) may be ordered from the Bellview Church of Christ; 4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526. You may also order it from these fine bookstores: Valid Publications, Inc. (908 Imperial Drive, Denton, TX 76209); Christian Family Bookstore (4143B Ringgold Rd, Chattanooga, TN 37412); or Bible Resource Publications (PO Box 2357, Spring, TX 77383). The tape of the Open Forum dealing with issues of fellowship ("Can one church withdraw from another?") is well worth considering, also.

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## We Were Encouraged!

*Joe E. Galloway*

God being "the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3), one would expect His word to contain many comforting things. June 9-13 many of these *Encouraging Statements of the Bible* were discussed during the twenty-sixth annual Bellview Lectures. This was a very fitting follow-up of last year's series of studies, *Sad Statements of the Bible*.

Again this year, Keith Mosher began this series of Bible lessons with a word study—first on "encouragement." He well pointed out that its opposite (*discouragement*) suggests the lack of *courage*, pointing out that God encouraged Joshua to unswervingly follow His Word when He told him, "Be strong and of a good courage" (Jos. 1:6-7). This was followed with word studies on the words translated *encouragement* in the American Standard Version.

This excellent lecture was followed by 28 lessons on various encouraging statements and topics from both the Old and New Testaments. As is customary at the Bellview lectures, a selection of both well-known, experienced preachers, and lesser-known, younger preachers were used to deliver these sermons. As is always the case, these speakers were all known to be faithful men in both doctrine and life. It was obvious that each speaker had prepared well! In addition to the 29 lectures, three of the speakers also chaired an Open Forum session each weekday afternoon.

As was the case last year, these lectures are available in a hard cover book, in both audio and video-cassettes, and in a CD, which also contains all the lectureship books to date. An interesting *first* for many is the fact that for the first time this year's lectures

could be heard and viewed live on the Internet! These are now available for selection on the web-site of the Bellview church or on the web-site of Online Academy of Biblical Studies: [www.oabs.org](http://www.oabs.org). (*Editor's note: I greatly appreciate all the help of those associated with Online Academy of Biblical Studies ([www.oabs.org](http://www.oabs.org)) for their great expertise, and their willingness to help us get the lectures on the internet, both live and on demand.*)

We express appreciation to the elders, to Michael

Hatcher, and to all at the Bellview church who helped make these lectures possible. Many (as were my wife Barbara and I) were greatly encouraged by this excellent lectureship! We are already looking forward to attending the 2002 lectures next year. We encourage readers of *Defender* to make similar plans. (*Editor's note: Next year's theme is: "Beatitudes."*) We also encourage you to purchase and read the 2001 Bellview Lectures book, *Encouraging Statements of the Bible*.

218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743

Make plans now to attend the Twenty-Seventh Annual Bellview Lectureship

Date: June 8-12, 2002

Theme: Beatitudes

## "ARE YOU SURE?"

*Israel Crocker*

It is easy to be misled in our day. There are so many "scam artists" and persons looking to take advantage of anybody they can. These con men are very persuasive in their attempt to lure people to believe things that are not true. For example, the *scammer* may convince some person, who cannot inspect it for himself (maybe because of elderly age or illness), that his roof is in need of repair. The fraudulent character is fully aware that his scam is only to swindle thousands of dollars, even if it is from persons who desperately cannot afford the loss. This type of thievery makes any honest person angry.

This same situation can happen to a religious person. There are a lot of people who believe things that are not actually found in the Scriptures, because they have been taught by someone who is persuasive. Yet, if you ask them about their ideas, they are convinced their practices are pleasing to God based on what they have been taught.

Jacob was a man who experienced the same type of misleading from his sons. Although, Jacob's was not duped in a religious way, he serves as an excellent illustration of innocent people being misguided.

Jacob had twelve sons, which would become the

twelve patriarchs of the nation of Israel. One of the son's name was Joseph. "Now Israel [Jacob] loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of *many* colours" (Gen. 37:3). Joseph's brethren began to envy him because of their father's preference toward Joseph. Also, his dreams displeased his brethren in relation to their having to bow to him (vv. 7-8). His brethren became so envious of Joseph they finally conspired to kill him.

When they were away from Jacob tending his flocks, the brothers of Joseph take him and cast him into a pit. Instead of slaying Joseph, they sell him to the Ishmeelites which were traveling to Egypt. To cover their misdeed, the brethren of Joseph take his coat of many colors and dip it into goat's blood. They allow Jacob to believe that his favorite son was slain by an evil beast.

Please observe Jacob's response, "And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days" (Gen. 37:34). Jacob had received false information, and it caused him to react in such a painful way: "...and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his

father wept for him” (v. 35). The obvious problem with Jacob is his believing a lie. Will the reader please notice that Jacob did not desire to believe the lie. However, he was willing to trust his sons, and they used that trust to deceive Jacob. Some people will place their trust in a person instead of the message. No matter how we perceive a person, we should always confirm what we are taught by the Scriptures (Acts 17:11). Many once faithful brethren have been gradually lead away from truth because of their confidence in a departing preacher. Let us endeavor not to let any person of influence lead us away from the truth just because we value their opinion. (A point of balance: This does not mean we cannot trust any person of influence—1 Cor. 13:7.)

Another point of observation is Jacob’s extent of belief. Jacob truly believed his son was dead. There is no doubt of this because of his emotional reaction. However, just because Jacob believed something to be true did not make it the truth. People are the same way when religion is considered. They have always been taught a certain way, or they have strong emotional feelings toward a certain belief. Emotions are good in their proper context, but they should never be our source for truth. Jacob had very strong emotions about Joseph’s death, but his emotions were based on the

false information he received. There are some who are passionate in their defense of their beliefs, but their emotions are based on error, just like Jacob’s.

It was, of course, good news to Jacob when he learned the truth of his son being alive in Egypt. “And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: And Israel said, *It is* enough; Joseph my son *is* yet alive: I will go and see him before I die” (Gen. 45:27-28). Some who have believed a lie religiously, when they discover the truth, are not willing to receive it joyfully like Jacob. When we learn the truth pertaining to any matter, we should be exceedingly joyful and ready to place aside any falsehood we have formerly believed.

Are we sure we have been taught the truth? A Christian can go to the Bible and find every doctrinal concept and practice in the Scriptures. Yes, we can be sure. Yet, there are people who attend the assembly, who still hold to old feelings and convictions of persuasive men. Consequently, they have closed the ears to truth. Let us strive to only “speak where the Bible speaks.”

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## Updated Study Aid

The 1988-2001 books and *Defender* issues of 1994-2000 are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as “baptism for the remission of sins” in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$50 in which you receive all 14 books (less than \$5 per book). If you purchased the CD with the 1999/1998 books, you can receive an update for \$40 upon the return of the CD, or last year’s with 1988-2000 books for \$5.00 upon return of the CD. Postage/handling per CD is \$1.25. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church Of Christ.

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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

Volume XXX

August 2001

Number 8

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## A Closer Look at the Organization of the Lads to Leaders/ Leaderettes, Inc.

*Mark Mosher*

It has been my goal to inform people about the growing work of the Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes, Inc. It is a fast growing organization culminating each year with conventions in which young people compete in areas of speech, song leading, puppets, debate, Bible bowl, photography, etc. In the last five years alone these conventions have expanded from one held in Nashville, TN, to three separate ones held in Nashville, TN, Louisville, KY, and Orlando, FL. This organization is growing at an alarming rate and it boasts of a 20% growth rate annually. Currently a membership of 14,515 is posted on their web site (<http://www.lads-to-leaders.org/index.html>). It was also reported on their web site that there are intentions of going worldwide with this program. The conventions, which hosted thousands of students from twenty different states this past year, are so phenomenal that our brethren are caught up in the “good feeling” one gets when he is present. What I find even more shocking is the confidence and cooperation our brethren are placing in an organization that is not overseen by the church but is incorporated under a board of directors and a president.

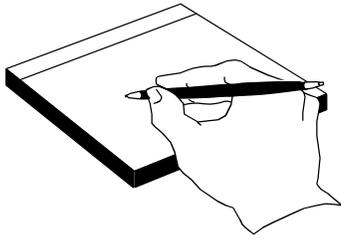
Cooperation among churches is a command of God. One should always be involved in such. Yet, should the church cooperate with an organization that is not the church? These very discussions were being made in the latter part of the 1800s after Alexander Campbell became the first president of the American Missionary Society (1849, Cincinnati, Ohio). During that time churches were sending money to the organiza-

tion which was sending out missionaries for the church. Parallel that with the organization of the Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes, Inc. Churches send money to register the children for competition. In connection with this there are workshops the organization will conduct at your congregation to teach you how to be successful in this program. Each workshop costs \$500.00 plus reimbursement for travel expenses. During this workshop they will have manuals, rules and awards books, curriculum guides, and other materials available for purchase. You can also order material through the mail, by phone, or directly from their website. To begin the Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes, Inc. program you will receive a large booklet that will tell you the programs you can be involved in and will give you the rules that you **must** follow. Therefore, the organization legislates to the church.

Please keep in mind, I am not opposed to church cooperation. Paul, the apostle, declared, “For *I mean* not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want: that there may be equality” (2 Cor. 8:13-14). Paul demands that when supplying the needs of others there be an equality. The term equality is from the Greek, *isotes*, which means, “fair-sharing or mutual helpfulness.” Paul, in conducting mission work, received financial help from more than one congregation (2 Cor. 11:8). Yet, he received that money from

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



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## Drifting

Years ago, J. D. Tant said, “Brethren, we are drifting.” Since the time when he made that statement, the Lord’s church has drifted much further from its moorings of God’s Word. In the previous months we have observed the change in the way people view God and the Bible. We then have looked at how some have changed the worship of the Lord’s church in several areas. Let us consider another aspect of our worship where we have seen some change what God instructed.

God has commanded that upon the first day of the week we are to give into a common treasury. “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor. 16:1-2). We first notice that this is an order or command. What Paul commanded the Corinthian church, he also commanded all churches (1 Cor. 1:2; 4:17; 7:17). Thus, this is just as much of a command for us as it was for them.

We see when they were commanded to give. The command is upon the first day of the week which is Sunday. This is the only day which God has authorized the church to take up a collection for the common treasury. Through the years there have been those who “passed the hat” anytime and any day they met. There is no justification for such practices.

We also observe in this **how** the church is to obtain its funds. It is to receive its funds by the freewill offering of men. The church is not to go into business and engage in business practices to obtain its funds. We have seen denominational groups doing this for years, but there is no authority for the practice. Others will force their members to pledge a certain percentage of their income and then make sure they meet their obliga-

tion. Again, there is no authority for this type of action. However, we would note that there is nothing wrong with pledging. All a pledge does is to state our intentions of contributing so much based on the present conditions. If those conditions should change our intentions concerning our giving will change. This is based upon the principle of our purposing or planning our giving (2 Cor. 9:7). Pledging is simply revealing what we have purposed in our hearts so the elders will have sufficient information to plan the work of the church.

There is some other questions regarding our funds and business dealings. Some hold that it would be sinful for a congregation to have a bank account which pays interest on the money that is in the bank. This would be proper because of the principle of good stewardship (1 Cor. 4:2; 1 Pet. 4:10) and what Jesus said to the one talent man (Mat. 25:27). Others would demand of congregations that when they purchase land for the work of the church, when they go to sell it (some have never even thought this far ahead) they cannot sell it for a *profit*. They demand that they sell the property for the same amount they purchased it for, even if the value has increased tremendously. This likewise would be a misuse of the funds placed within the hands of the elders. However, there is a difference in this and going into business to make money buying and selling.

Another practice we have seen in denominational circles is having cake or garage sales or selling candy or other things to raise funds. There have even been some “churches of Christ” who have begun practicing this. That is akin to going into business to raise funds and is not authorized by God’s Word.

In 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 we also begin noticing the way in which the Lord’s funds are to be used. The church at Corinth was to take up this collection to have funds available to meet the needs that arise in the church. The church has the right to spend its money for those things which deal with the work of the church (those things the church is to be involved in). The church is to be involved in evangelism, edification, and benevolence. We have generally agreed upon these as the work of the church and thus the church has the right to spend its money in those areas. There have been some who have tried to demand the churches do things in certain ways when the Bible does not demand such. The church is to worship God and thus it would be right to spend its money to facilitate that worship. However, some have been using the Lord’s money in areas where

there is no authority. They have provided recreation and entertainment for people. While there is nothing inherently wrong with recreation and entertainment, the Bible does not authorize the church to spend its money in this way (that is the work of the home). We, as the people of God, need to make sure we receive our funds in the proper way and then use them as God would desire.

Today there are also many departures relative to our singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. However, because I dealt with many of these in the November 2000 issue of *Defender*, I will not return and cover that material again, simply refer you to that editorial. MH

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

one congregation (Phi. 4:15). Therefore, we have an example of a sponsoring congregation.

But what about a corporation that is not the church legislating and cooperating with the church? Note what the late brother Thomas Warren stated about such matters:

In the Missionary Society, these churches send delegates down here to this Missionary Society. These churches—suppose we have four of them here—each send a delegate. When decisions are made by this body, they are bound on these churches back here, if a church refuse[s] to be bound by the decision it is considered to be disorderly. Let's suppose that congregation "A" sent this delegate down here to vote on a certain matter, and the elders told him to vote "no". But the other churches told their delegates to vote "yes". So, the Society as a whole, votes "yes"—three for and one against. This means that the "No" vote was nullified, and the church whose elders voted "No" was nevertheless bound by a "yes" vote. The only way such could be avoided would be for the church to withdraw from the Society. But so long as it is in the Society, the Society has such powers. Let me read to you what Brother C. R. Nichol says about the difference between a messenger and a delegate: "In the New Testament times the churches by means of messengers cooperated. A messenger is simply the bearer of a message. He has authority delegated to act for those sending him no more than to deliver the message entrusted to him." (Sound Doctrine, Volume Three, page 59). A delegate is one who is empowered by the body sending him to act in conjunction with other delegates in formulating plans of operation, binding on all the bodies represented. The body of delegates becomes a legislative body. Every church represented in that body [i]s obligated to every measure adopted." Now, I think that is a good explanation. It explains what is wrong with the Missionary Society: it is a legislative body with "every church represented in

that body obligated to every measure adopted.

Does the corporation of the Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes, Inc. legislate? Indeed it does. The Wesconnett Church of Christ in Jacksonville Florida, which is involved in this program, has been battling the use of the New International Version and all versions of the Bible at the convention. To this date that eldership has not been able to convince the board and president to change that policy. Now there are only two options they have: (1) They can get out of the convention, or (2) They can abide by the rules that violate their own understanding of truth and rule. Unfortunately, they have decided to abide by rules which violate truth and explain it in this way to the people involved by stating, "The use of such is not our policy but we will be using it at the convention." Therefore, the elders have no authority over such matters and in order to abide by the rules of the Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes, Inc. dictate and participate in their program, they must overlook truth.

Some have argued that the Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes, Inc. is an adjunct of the home. If this is the case then they should invite only the homes to be a part of the program. Instead, by their own admission, they claim to be doing the work of the church:

[Under the title, "The Goal of Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes"] The goal of the Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes is to **provide churches** with effective year-round youth (third grade through college) leadership programs that can adapt to **your congregational** needs. It is a program that can equip young people with the knowledge and skills to become **Bible school teachers, personal workers, effective speakers, and church leaders**; they can then take these talents into communities in need of Christ, even before they graduate from high school.

Though many congregations with the Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes programs boast a 92-100% retention rate of their young people, it is a program that goes beyond helping churches keep their youth faithful to the Lord. **It provides a way for churches to train their youth to be leaders for the Lord and His Church.**

Training our people **in the church** is an important matter to consider. This is an exciting time for the **Lads to Leaders ministry. We are growing** in number, and that means **the Lord's kingdom is multiplying.**

#### A CLOSER LOOK AT FELLOWSHIP

Let us notice a closer look at the fellowship aspect of the program. While the corporation boasts of over 2,000 students attending conventions and 400 congregations being involved in the program, one will notice a mixture of sound and unsound congregations (The lists can be found on their web site under each individ-

ual convention site listed under “Convention”). Some congregations have been marked because of their involvement in liberal activities. Yet there is cooperation and fellowship among these congregations with the sound congregations. Paul declared, however, that we are to come out from among them and be **separate** (2 Cor. 6:17). Paul again declared that we are to **avoid** them (Rom. 16:17). John proclaimed that we are not to bid them God speed (2 John 9-11). Paul did not proclaim that we are to avoid them on a local level but that that *does not* apply to the convention. Paul did not proclaim that we are to be separate *except* at the Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes, Inc. convention. John did not declare that we might not bid unsound brethren God speed *except* at the convention. Paul says we are to have **no** fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). This author had first hand knowledge that

both the founder and emeritus of the corporation has and continues to support unsound brethren. The church cannot follow the Word of God and support such!

It is my prayer that elders and preachers who are involved in this program will rethink their participation. The church only has the power to do God’s work and give God the glory (Eph. 3:21). May we not limit God’s power by supporting that which is outside the church.

*1508 Elm ST, Crossett, AR 71635*

*(Editor’s note: Brother Mosher has written a well documented book entitled “Is the Lads to Lead ers/Leaderettes, Inc. Really Good for our Children?” I encourage all to get a copy of it and give serious consideration to this organization. You may order a copy for \$3.00 postage paid by contacting brother Mosher at the address above or by calling 870-364-2321.)*

## ABOUNDING RUMORS

*David P. Brown*

The Bible teaches: “He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets; But he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth a matter” (Pro. 11:13). It also teaches: “A whisperer separateth chief friends” (Pro. 16:28). Moses wrote, “Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people” (Lev. 19:16). Again, from the book of Proverbs the warning: “He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets; Therefore company not with him that openeth wide his lips” (Pro. 20:19). And, once again from Proverbs: “A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; *and* a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue” (Pro. 17:4).

A person may know that God exists, that Jesus Christ is Deity, and that the Bible is the Word of God. He may know the truth concerning the plan of salvation. He may understand the church: its organization, work, worship, and mission. Furthermore, he may be able to defend the truth against error regarding these aforementioned matters. But, by living and dying a **gossip** and a **tale bearer**, he will exist forever in a devil’s hell.

Gossipy ears look for and encourage gossipy tongues and vice versa. Rumors are juicy morsels to tale-bearers. “Brother Add A Little More” is always an intimate companion of “Sister Don’t Breathe A Word Of This”; neither of these infamous friends are in fellowship with the “Right Honorable Brother and Sister Truth.”

Once a man found an object he did not recognize. He gave it a slight bump with the toe of his shoe and was startled to see the thing grow larger. His curiosity aroused, the man kicked the unidentified object harder. With the second more powerful kick the fellow was amazed to behold the strange object almost double in size. Hurriedly he picked up a stout pole and gave his newly found enigma a double-handed and resounding whack! In an instant the object more than tripled its original size. In a last act of desperation the poor man grabbed a large metal bar and with all his might he clubbed the monstrous object with a blow that would have killed an elephant. In abject horror the terrorized man stood transfixed as the monstrous thing swelled to a gigantic size. The panic-stricken fellow now fled the scene of battle. After some distance had been hastily put between the man and his newly created behemoth, he rushed breathlessly upon an old man who, from a safe distance, had been following the previous confrontation with much interest. Seeing the old man, the fleeing fellow gestured back toward his gigantic antagonist and gasped: “Do you know what that monster is?!” The old man calmly and deliberately answered his querist. “Yes,” he said: “**It is called a rumor.**”

When I was in the eighth grade, I obtained a compound fracture of my nose when the horse I was riding reared up and fell backwards on me. After spending a few days in the hospital I returned to school to find that

it was being rumored that both of my legs had also been severely broken in this “horse-wreck.” That poor little eighth grader never did feel compelled to verbally rebut the falsehood—**before the whole school he just kept right on walking!**

Concerning stopping a rumor the following pithy saying is very appropriate: “One can as well stop a rumor as he can un-ring a bell.” Many years ago a broken nosed eighth grader learned what the Roman, Cato, said: “We cannot control the evil tongues of others; but a good life enables us to disregard them.”

Yes, I know that all *talking about* people is not gossip. Faithful elders, parents, preachers, etc., must discuss character, personality, and qualifications of persons regarding their involvement in various activities. One of the chief reasons the church is in the mess it is in today is because not enough proper evaluation of persons has been done before placing them in key positions of influence and responsibility in the church. The same may be said of parents’ regarding their children. Hence, we may deduce that all *talking about people* does not constitute gossip.

One gossips when he or she routinely reveals personal facts to the detriment of the person talked about. Hence, there is a vile motive involved. Usually the gossipier is not overly concerned with the accuracy of the information that he or she scatters from “Dan to Beersheba.”

Some time ago I was given an audio tape filled with all manner of wicked accusations against a certain person in another state. Some of the matters dealt with on the tape stretched back over forty years. There was no way to verify whether the *witnesses* were credible or

that the evidence was *adequate*. However, these things made no difference to the people spreading it around. Moreover, they did not care whether these matters were true or, if true, whether they had been scripturally corrected or not. They thought it served their purpose, so they did it.

Though the tape has existed for around eight years, the subject of the gossip did not know the tape even existed until, in the presence of said person, it was played. The least these talebearers could have done was to have made the tape available to the subject of the gossip. Did they not know of the “Golden Rule?” Did they not desire to hear the other side? They sought one thing and one thing only—the destruction of a reputation. Such persons may not go to hell for a host of things, but their eternal destiny is as certain as the fornicator and idolater if they do not repent of their gossip.

This is not the first time I have received such trash from those who work overtime at being “spiritual idiots” while thinking of themselves as stalwarts of the faith. I am sure, human nature being what it is, I will receive other such garbage. Over a third of a century of preaching have placed a number of such tale bearing efforts in my hands. There is nothing Christian about any of them. By design they are malicious; their sole purpose is to vilify and defame.

The Bible teaches us how to expose false doctrine and wicked brethren. No precept regarding such efforts involve gossip and talebearing. The honest, sincere, faithful Christian will not engage in sin to expose sin.

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# THE LORD IS GRACIOUS

*Tim Smith*

“The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works” (Psa. 145:8-9).

This psalm is entitled “A Psalm of Praise: of David,” indicating both the nature or character of the psalm as well as its author. David penned the words in order that the God of heaven might be glorified and uplifted. In it David extols God’s grace, compassion, goodness, and power. For a few minutes let us examine the first phrase of the text set forth above.

## **The Lord Is Gracious**

It is sometimes suggested that there was no grace in the Old Testament, but such is utterly false! Our God has ever of old been a gracious God. Was it not His grace that spared Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, when they were separated from God’s presence but still allowed to live on earth? And what about Noah? Were it not for the grace of God there, we would not be here now! When man was at his lowest point, and the thought of his heart was only evil continually, and the wrath of God was kindled against him, hear Moses: “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (Gen. 6:8). We see the grace of God again in His dealings with Moses: “And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” (Exo. 34:4-7). God’s grace allowed Moses a second chance at receiving the law when he did not deserve one. David often set forth God’s grace: “For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psa. 84:11). Have we done anything to deserve such protection and provision? Of course, we have not. Hear Solomon: “Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly” (Pro. 3:34). The grace of God was there in the Old Testament, else there would

have been no New Testament.

In New Testament times the grace of God was magnified before men, and indeed personified in the Son of God: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. ...For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:14, 17). Jesus embodied all that is characteristic of God’s grace, being the perfect manifestation of its purpose; i.e., giving men a chance (they do not deserve) at salvation. Paul wrote: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Tit. 2:11). The writer of Hebrews incorporates the willingness of Jesus and the result of His grace into one passage: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9). One of the wonderful things about the grace of God is the willingness of the Father and the Son to extend it: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

Apart from the grace of our God salvation would be out of the question: “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved” (Acts 15:11). Grace and the application of the blood of Christ are connected by inspiration: “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:6-7). The question is forever settled by the same writer in the same letter: “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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10). Having sinned (Rom. 3:10, 23), we lost the right to life in heaven (Rom. 6:23). By grace Jesus offers us this opportunity, though we stand undeserving thereof. God had “before ordained” that His people should walk in “good works” (i.e., obeying the teachings of His Son, Jesus Christ). Men forsook Him and His Son, and now,

by grace, Jesus calls us back to those “good works” in order that we might live. When we accept His call (through obedience to the gospel) we are responding favorably to a “gift of God,” and though we “work out your [our] own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phi. 2:12), we still have not earned our salvation, for apart from the gift of God through His Son we would be forever banished to an eternity in Hell.

The grace of God comes with many rewards, including justification (Rom. 3:24), an opportunity to partake of the promise God made to Abraham (Rom. 4:16), access to Christ (Rom. 5:1-2), help in overcoming the devil (Jam. 4:5-7), help in all times of need (Heb. 4:16), and strength to overcome temptations (Rom. 6:1-2). The grace of God is offered to all men, and indeed it is His desire that all men avail themselves of its benefits (2 Pet. 3:9), but only the obedient will benefit from it: “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Cor. 15:10). God contributed the grace and Paul supplied the obedience, and the two working together saved him.

Great as it is, the grace of God can be (and often is) resisted. Consider: “We then, *as* workers together *with*

*him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor. 6:1). It can be rendered vain! It can also be frustrated: “I do not frustrate the grace of God” (Gal. 2:21). And some have already fallen from grace: “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4).

“But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). “Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen” (Gal. 6:18). If you would avail yourself of the benefits of God’s grace, obey the gospel! Hear and believe (Heb. 11:6), repent (Luke 13:3), confess (Acts 8:37), and be baptized properly (1 Pet. 3:21). Then be faithful (Rev. 2:10).

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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

Volume XXX

September 2001

Number 9

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com> E-mail: [bellview@bellviewcoc.com](mailto:bellview@bellviewcoc.com)

## STEM CELL CONTROVERSY

*Gary W. Summers*

Practically every day brings forth a number of articles dealing with stem cell research. From July 9<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> seven articles have burst onto the pages of Dallas area newspapers. Comments are also being voiced on radio talk shows and finding their way into e-mail correspondence. Some people may already be tired of the subject before they know what it is. So, what is it?

According to *The Dallas Morning News* (July 12<sup>th</sup>), *stem cells* are human cells which hold great promise for medical uses; they “can be used to grow new tissues, which may be useful for medical transplants” (all material and quotations from this article are taken from page 12A). Allegedly, if these stem cells come from an embryo, “certain undeveloped cells can develop into any of the body’s tissues—such as brain, muscle, blood, and skin.” So, what is the problem?

The problem is that the human embryo does not survive the extraction process; the embryo must be **killed**. This experimentation is worse than anything the fictitious doctor Frankenstein ever thought about doing. This entire technique is nothing more than science playing God. The human life that has been formed constitutes only fodder for “research”—someone upon which to experiment. One would think that any decent human being would recoil with horror at the very thought of such an atrocity, but alas! the American Medical Association, the American Association for Cancer Research, 80 Nobel laureates, and several politicians of both parties are in favor of it. Most pro-life agencies are opposed to it, along with those religious groups that have consistently opposed abortion.

But the debate is complicated by a procedure that already exists, primarily due to the fact that most people know nothing about how it works. Human embryos have already been created and are being stored in freezers all over the world. How and when did this nightmarish situation develop? While it would be of interest to find out the answer to that question, the fact is that they do exist. Steve Chapman’s article in *The Dallas Morning News* (July 17<sup>th</sup>) begins with this fact:

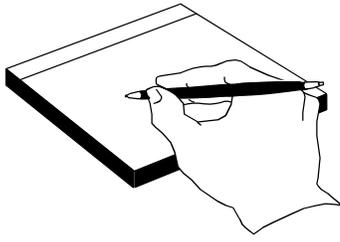
Hannah Strege is 2 years old, blonde haired and chubby cheeked, with a lively look in her eye. She is making an appearance in Washington this week so lawmakers can see one alternative to destroying human embryos to advance stem cell research.

Hannah, who was once a frozen embryo, might have been fatally dissected for scientific purposes, but she was lucky enough to escape that fate. Instead she was allowed to enter this world as the adoptive daughter of John and Marlene Strege, who couldn’t conceive on their own (11A).

These two paragraphs answer all questions about whether these frozen embryos constitute human life—they do. For that reason it is incredible that some “pro-life” politicians such as Orrin Hatch and Connie Mack are in favor of the destruction of these embryos. For years the Republican party has been the last bastion of defense for human life (only a very few Democrats have been pro-life), and now it looks as though many of them are selling out, urging President Bush to grant federal funding for this grotesque stem cell research. If he does, he will do worse than break a campaign promise. It will undermine any hope for reversing *Roe v. Wade*, and America’s epitaph can be composed.

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



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Hatcher**

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## Drifting

In previous articles we have noticed that the church has drifted and sometimes running headlong into apostasy. We have noticed how that the church has drifted concerning the nature of God and His Word. Then we noticed how that every aspect of our worship to God has been toyed with. Surely J. D. Tant's warning is apropos: "Brethren, we are drifting." In this article, let us notice the plan of salvation and how many have drifted from what God has said concerning man's part in salvation.

It is through the grace of God that man is saved. Paul wrote, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). He would tell Titus, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11). There is nothing which man can do to earn or merit his salvation. "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:9). To save sinful man, God sent His Son to save mankind. "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). Thus, our Lord died for every man. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).

Yet, that grace is conditioned upon man's faith. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). God, as the giver (the one who extends grace) has the right to impose conditions upon man, the receiver of His grace. Man's response is categorized under the general heading of faith. Faith here being the whole of the Christian's response to God (2 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:9). Let us briefly consider what the Bible teaches as to man's

initial response to God to become a Christian.

Upon hearing the proper evidence (Heb. 11:1, 3-8) we come to believe in God and His existence. "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). In addition to believing in the existence of God we must believe in Jesus as being God's Son. "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). We must also believe that Jesus died for our sins, the gospel. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

Jesus taught that man must repent or perish. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5). God has commanded all men to repent. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). The basic idea of repent is to change. It begins with a change in our minds to no longer live the way we have previously lived and to make the decision to live according to God's Will. This leads to a change in action. This means that we must stop any sinful conduct and restore things (as much as is possible) to their proper order. "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Mat. 3:8).

A faith not worth confessing is not worth possessing. Thus, we must confess our faith. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10). *Confess* comes from a word meaning to have a word together with. As it is applied here, it is to have a word together with God. God has said concerning Jesus, "This is my Son" (Mat. 3:17; 17:5). We then have a word together with God by saying that Jesus is God's Son. "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37).

Upon one's faith, repentance, and confession of Jesus as the Christ, one must be baptized for the purpose God said: the remission of one's sins. When the apostles were asked by the Jews what to do to be saved from their sins they responded by saying, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the

gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). One cannot obey God without doing **what** God says to do, **when** God says to do it, **how** He says to do it, and **for the reason** God says to do it. God commands man to be baptized (**what**). “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days” (Acts 10:48). He shows that we must do that after one believes, repents, and confesses Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (**when**). Then we are to be baptized (**how**). This action is not sprinkling or pouring but a submersion in the element of water. If God had wanted sprinkling or pouring He would have used a term which means to sprinkle or to pour. God did not use those terms. God said to be baptized for salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), for the washing away of our sins (Acts 22:16), to place us into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27) where salvation is (2 Tim. 2:10). These are not different purposes, but different ways of saying the same thing. The **reason** for baptism is to take one’s sins away.

Yet, there are many who were not and are not willing to abide by these simple conditions God has placed upon man to receive initial salvation. Some began teaching that man is saved by faith alone. Rubel Shelly stated, “It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation” (*Love Lines*, Oct. 31, 1990 Woodmont Hills church bulletin, p. 3). Denny Boultinghouse wrote, “Are we saved 100% by the grace of God? Yes ... Our salvation is completely by grace. We contribute nothing to our salvation” (“100% Grace”, *Image*, Dec. 1991). Yet, God obviously commands man to do certain things to receive salvation. We are saved by grace, but it is not grace alone. We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). Faith is man’s activity.

Some are teaching that as long as one is being baptized to “obey God,” without any understanding that it is taking away their sins, then their baptism is valid. Rubel Shelly wrote, “Surely there are individuals in practically all the denominations known today who have learned of Jesus, looked to him in sincere faith, turned away from their conscious rebellions against his will, and embraced him as Savior through their immersion in his name” (*I Just Want To Be A Christian*, 1984, p. 126). One of my former teachers at Harding College (now University), Jimmy Allen wrote, “It is my belief that the New Testament teaches when a penitent believer in the crucified and risen Savior is immersed in

water to fulfill righteousness or obey God, the Lord forgives his past or alien sins (although he may not know that sins are remitted or that the Holy Spirit is given at the time)” (*Rebaptism*, 1991, p. 39). Thus, they argue that one can obey God without doing **what** God said **for the reason** God said to do it. God said to repent and be baptized **for the remission of sins** (Acts 2:38).

Brother Allen, in the previous quote, mentioned the Holy Spirit being given. Another brother appears ready to bind something upon us that God does not bind. He has wondered if those who have been inadequately taught concerning the direct help of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the Christian have been scripturally baptized. While the direct help of the Spirit upon the Christian’s heart is itself a false doctrine, now we will possibly have an understanding of it bound upon us to become a Christian. Brethren, let us not be swayed from God’s clear, understandable, law of pardon for the sinner: God’s plan of salvation. MH

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(Continued from Page 1)

### **Arguments in Favor of Destroying Already-formed Embryos**

A perusal of the basic arguments for stem cell research will result in the discovery of four of them. The first one is that, since the embryos already exist; why throw them away? Undoubtedly, this is their best argument, and it lacks sufficient thought. Rephrasing this argument, it is really saying, “These embryos are going to be destroyed anyway, so why not let research profit from them?” Arlen Specter (Republican Senator from Pennsylvania) makes that very statement: “So, if it’s a matter of throwing away these embryos or saving lives with them, I think the answer is very clear-cut” (July 12<sup>th</sup>, *The Dallas Morning News*).

Is that the best question to ask? Why are we not asking: “On what basis has anyone created life, frozen it, and then arbitrarily destroy it by any method?” Science and medicine have been able to do wondrous things, but where did the authority to create life in the laboratory come from? And even more important, who makes the decision to destroy those lives that have begun? We are not **merely** talking about developing a strain of bacteria or a virus. We are talking about the creation of human life! Once this life has been formed, no one possesses the prerogative to say arbitrarily: “Okay, let’s destroy what we have created.” The power

of death can only lie with God; Joseph recognized that principle (Gen. 50:19).

All that this first argument in favor of stem cell research offers is a better, more useful means of destruction—much as the kidnappers of a rich woman saying, “Since they wouldn’t pay the ransom, let’s kill her and sell her kidneys on the black market.” After all, if they are just going to destroy this woman anyway, why not get some practical use out of her?

The second argument involves the long-discredited recapitulation theory. Mary Tyler Moore, who once turned the world on with her smile, is now turning it off with her open mouth. The July 12<sup>th</sup> article quotes her as saying, “The embryos that are being discussed, according to science, bear as much resemblance to a human being as a goldfish.” She really should avoid reading Michael Kinsley, who (if memory serves) has not been right on either a moral or political issue in decades. Kinsley wrote an article on this subject, which was published in *The Dallas Morning News* on September 5, 2000. He wrote then that a “goldfish resembles a human being more than an embryo does” (13A). Then he astounds the reader by writing:

We used to learn in high-school biology that “ontology recapitulates phylogeny”: The development of each individual being resembles the evolution of the species.

Apparently, these days that is regarded as unhelpful, if not inaccurate.

The recapitulation theory taught that, as an embryo developed, it went through all the stages of its past evolutionary development, including fish. Mr. Kinsley laments the fact that it is not still taught even though he realizes that it is inaccurate. Those infatuated with evolution would probably still teach that the earth is flat, if it somehow bolstered their beliefs. The recapitulation theory is not true, yet Kinsley is still grieving about losing the doctrine since it made such a great case for evolution. He wishes it would be revived—never mind that it has been demonstrated to be false.

Apparently, Carl Sagan felt the same way, because he referenced the theory as if it were true in a *Parade* magazine article written shortly before his death. He must have concentrated so much on outer space that he had not kept up with the findings of scientists in inner space. How interesting it is that some men who are supposedly governed by logic and evidence seem to have more of an emotional commitment to their theories than one based on reason.

The form that an embryo has while it is developing is irrelevant. What matters is what it is, and it is a

human being who, if not tampered with or destroyed, will develop into a baby.

Anna Quindlen, another liberal columnist, in an article *The Dallas Morning News* published on April 9<sup>th</sup> of this year, chided pro-life people for being opposed to stem cell research. She wrote:

One of the oft-used slogans of the anti-abortion movement is: “Abortion stops a beating heart.” There is no heart in this pre-implantation embryo, but there are stem cells that, in the hands of scientists, might lead to extraordinary work affecting everything from cancer to heart disease (13A).

Does that mean that Ms. Quindlen thinks that pro-life people have a legitimate argument against abortion, since she has acknowledged that the “fetus” has a beating heart? No, stopping a beating heart does not matter to her at all (unless, possibly, it would be the heart of a convicted murderer). She only refers to the pro-life slogan to make a point about stem cell research. But her attempt to turn our logic against us fails—for the simple reason that stopping a beating heart is only one aspect of the pro-life position, not all of it.

She admits another key point we make. She states that, when the embryos are not used, “they are the earliest undifferentiated collection of cells made by joining the egg and sperm, no larger than the period at the end of this sentence” (13A). But when is a new life formed, if not when the egg and the sperm unite? The size of it at its inception is irrelevant. Nothing further will be added to make this embryo a human being. Nowhere else along the line does it receive a shot of humanity. A new life has been formed at this point.

Kinsley argues that an “embryo feels nothing, thinks nothing, can’t suffer, and isn’t aware of its own existence.” Occasionally people are born without the capability of feeling pain. They occasionally sustain injuries and are bleeding without even realizing what has happened to them. Would Mr. Kinsley say that they are not human? Sometimes people lie in a comatose state with no self-awareness. Is it safe to dispatch them under those conditions? Who said that his definitions are correct for determining at what point an embryo becomes a human life? Will he join the pro-life movement, since “fetuses” can feel pain?

His *reasoning* leaves a chilling impression upon the discerning reader. He wants to know why it is so hard for opponents of stem cell research to accept the fact that “we start out as something less than human” and are transformed gradually. It may not make him nervous to describe a human being as less than human during some stages of life, but it does us. Will he agree

with the position Antony Flew espoused in his debate with brother Warren—that some individuals, who have lost their mental acumen may not be fully human?

The third argument is that embryonic stem cells are more versatile and productive than adult stem cells. This seems to be debatable for the moment, but even if it were true, would it not be better to use cells that would not require the life of their donor? What if, just for the sake of clarifying our thinking, it were the case that adult stem cells worked better than embryonic ones and that adults had to be killed in order to obtain them? Would it be all right to sacrifice a few people now and then so that laboratories scattered around the world could do research? If not, then why should human life be destroyed in embryonic form?

### The Emotional Argument

Those in favor of killing embryos for the value of their stem cells usually try to sway public opinion by means of an emotional appeal. They trot out examples of those now suffering who might be benefitted by this research. *The Dallas Morning News* published Anna Quindlen's April 9<sup>th</sup> article with a picture of Christopher Reeve in the midst of it—he being one person who might be aided.

They also published an article by Ruth Pennebaker on July 15<sup>th</sup> which focuses entirely on one of her close friends who might also profit. She writes: "I can't imagine anything more pro-life than to do everything possible to save their lives and countless others" (5J). The faulty assumption involved in this emotional appeal is that nothing of any **value** is being lost. To see that point, one need only ask, "Would it be worth it to save a friend's life by killing a total stranger and taking from that individual whatever was needed?" It would be wrong to do such a thing because we do not have the right to take **any** innocent human life.

A woman from Lake Dallas wrote to the editor of the *Denton Record-Chronicle* thus:

If a cure for juvenile diabetes is not found, my 18 year-old daughter, who was diagnosed at the age of 10, faces the possibility of blindness, kidney failure or a host of other serious illnesses (7-15-01, 16A).

No one could possibly lack sympathy for anyone in such a position, but are we sure that we want to proceed

purely on the basis of need? Suppose a child needed a life-saving operation which a loving parent could not afford. Would it be acceptable for that parent to steal the money? Perhaps, in the process of the robbery, it was necessary to kill the person as well. Or, in other words, "Shall we do evil that good may come?" (Rom. 3:8).

The next day another letter to the editor was published, which answered this woman's argument. Benjamin Dodson of Denton wrote:

While I understand that there are potential benefits to this kind of research, I do not believe that those benefits outweigh the inherent (and self-evident) evil of the practice.

Human life, even very young human life, should not be used as currency to pay for our comfort. Likewise, we should not use one evil to justify another: We cannot justify aborting babies and destroying "extra" embryos created for in-vitro fertilization for the sake of stem cell research. It is even more disturbing that scientists are now creating new embryos for the sole purpose of killing them.

If our society can justify this atrocity, what is next? Will we go back to experimenting on prisoners? Why not, if we are just going to put them to death anyway?

At least a few people see the truth of the matter. But will it be enough? If half of our citizenry has failed to realize that stopping a beating heart is wrong, how will they ever be convinced that it is wrong to destroy minuscule embryos—especially when they can be harvested to aid those who are sick?

Surely, there is another alternative—one which does not involve the destruction of human life. We ought to be satisfied in using the adult stem cells for research until a better system can be discovered. It may be hard to identify with frozen embryos. They are not cute and cuddly, nor are they likely to inspire people to want to protect them. But human life is human life, and whenever we decide that it is in some nondescript form, for which there is no fondness, we are embarking on a dangerous course, with implications we may not even recognize at this time. Human life is not something to toy with or to experiment on—unless someone wants to volunteer to be a guinea pig. At last glance, no one has bothered to check with the embryos themselves.

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# THE PROPOSED HILL-SIMONS DEBATE

*Kent Bailey*

Michael Hatcher, Editor of the *Defender*, recently requested a brief update regarding the proposed debate between Malcolm L. Hill, President of Tennessee Bible College and Wesley Simons, Evangelist of the Stoney Creek Church of Christ in Elizabethton, Tennessee.

This discussion was proposed by this writer resulting from the April/May edition of *Living Oracles*, a journal edited by brother Hill. While no disagreement exists with brother Hill regarding the biblical doctrine of fellowship, and we commend him in his stand against false teachers, we do have problems with his charges of inconsistency being leveled regarding some conservative brethren when he in principle has engaged in the same type of practice.

About one year ago brother Hill challenged brother Simons to debate a different proposition, however, when brother Simons accepted the challenge, brother Hill refused to debate. The case being that such did occur, as well as brother Hill devoting the amount of space that he did in the April/May edition of *Living Oracles* about brother Simons, this writer sought to arrange an acceptable format where propositions dealing with personal consistency regarding the concept of the fellowship question could be discussed.

As of now it appears that such debate will not take place. Brother Hill refuses to debate the aspect of personal consistency, but rather desires to debate whether one may fellowship apostates like Rubel Shelly. In reality the fellowship of liberals is not the issue at all. Indeed we certainly agree with him on that central point. The issue in this present controversy centers around personal consistency.

Brother Hill also insists that brother Simons would be an unworthy opponent for him to debate and desires rather to meet a college president, or any individual acknowledged as being influential within the Lord's church. If brother Simons is an unworthy opponent, then why did brother Hill issue a challenge on a different proposition about one year ago?

We do hope that brother Hill will reconsider his refusal to meet brother Simons in debate. Brother Simons is willing to negotiate proper rules calling for a gentlemanly and honorable discussion. The case being that brother Hill is the Editor of *Living Oracles* and is responsible for its contents, we do sincerely hope that

he will discuss with brother Simons the issue of personal consistency as it relates to biblical fellowship.

*3095 Harrison Road; Lenoir City, TN 37771*

*(Editor's Note: I emailed brother Hill on July 25 of this year encouraging him to accept this debate challenge. Receiving no reply, I again emailed him on August 25 mentioning that I planned on placing the information about the debate in Defender. Brother Hill responded on August 27 saying, "I have reasons for not meeting Wesley Simons in a debate on fellowship." However, brother Hill did not state any reasons for not accepting this debate challenge on his consistency on the subject of fellowship. Why is he trying to avoid meeting brother Simons in debate on this subject? One can only wonder.*

*Brother Hill then said, "I will, however, meet Curtis Cates, Garland Elkins, or Dub McClish in a debate on this subject." Why would he meet them and not accept the challenge that is already before him? Why should any of those three agree to meet him when he refuses to meet the one who has already accepted to meet him? Let him debate brother Simons first, then if he wishes to arrange other debates on his consistency, then let him do so.*

*Brother Hill has attacked many sound brethren identifying them as liberals because he believes they are inconsistent on the issue of fellowship. He has boasted about his and Tennessee Bible College's willingness to debate (on almost any subject). In the February 2001 issue of Living Oracles (which is devoted entirely to this subject), brother Hill writes, "We stand ready to debate the issue...This invitation is humbly extended to any brother in our brotherhood" p. 11. Now let him do it by accepting the challenge which is before him! Brother Hill concludes his letter to me by stating, "Please publish this when you publish what you say you are going to publish regarding Wesley Simons. If you do otherwise, then I will know you are not moved by fairness but by church politics." (Now, every word of his letter has been included in this response.) We will pray that brother Hill does what he said he would do in Living Oracles and accepts the debate challenge which is before him: the debate challenge brother Simons accepted and is waiting for him to accept.)*

# “BECAUSE HE BELIEVED IN HIS GOD”

*Tracy Dugger*

These words were spoken of Daniel after being delivered from the hungry den of lions. Our God is able to carry us through life's trials when we trust in Him with all our being. Daniel did this—he trusted in God and was delivered.

We live in a world where the righteous are often persecuted. Daniel is a prime example. Let us consider how inspiration describes his character and dedication. In Daniel 6:4: “Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.” The jealousy of the Babylonian officials raged against Daniel. These prominent officials undoubtedly took a fine tooth comb to the character of Daniel but could find nothing in which to charge him. Why? “Forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him” (Dan. 6:4c). He was faithful in carrying out his duty not only in the religious realm but in the secular realm. In Daniel 6:22 we read, “also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.” Daniel was righteous, honest, true, and of “excellent spirit.” Friends, this was a good man. Yet,

there were those who despised him and wanted his destruction! This has always been the case for our world. The innocent and righteous always are persecuted for their righteousness. Daniel is proof of such!

In response, did Daniel blame God, become pessimistic, or become unfaithful? No!!! Why not? **Because he believed in his God!** Daniel did not give up! He remained true to God throughout his entire life—a life that included much trial and anxiety.

In Daniel 11:12 we find a little more that sheds light on Daniel's ability to endure trials. Inspiration says that he **chastened** (disciplined) himself before God. This tells us that he was a deeply religious man. His mind was so focused on God that religious matters took precedence in his life (Mat. 6:33). Earlier in this verse, it was said that he *set* his heart to know and do. We too must realize that the Christian life is to be a deliberate and calculated one, not just an occasional interest.

The church needs more people who will overcome when faced with crisis, temptation, persecution, and discouragement. In short, we need more Daniels!

*520 Thicket Lane; Kyle, TX 78640*

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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

Volume XXX

October 2001

Number 10

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com> E-mail: [bellview@bellviewcoc.com](mailto:bellview@bellviewcoc.com)

## DENOMINATIONALISM AND THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

*Tracy Dugger*

The degree of spiritual damage denominationalism has done and is continuing to do is surely tremendous! Denominationalism *competes* with the one church of our Lord (Eph. 4:4). This competition would not be that important if it were not for the fact that the souls of men are at stake (Mat. 15:9, 13). The New Testament teaches that salvation is found inside the church (Eph. 2:16; 5:23). When sincere men and women seek salvation through some other religious institution than the one church, the seriousness is incomparable. **Denominationalism does not offer the church you and I can read about in the Bible. Instead denominationalism is a rival to the Lord's church!** This demonstrates that in denominationalism salvation cannot be found. The devil tries to use denominations to defeat the purpose God established for the church—reconciliation to God.

We learn in Acts 2, after Peter preached the gospel to the Jews in Jerusalem, they asked a very important question in verse 37: “Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” They wanted to know what to do to be saved. They could not have asked a more timely and important question. Peter explained in verse 38: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” To receive remission of past sins (salvation), the inspired Peter instructed them to repent and be baptized. This they did

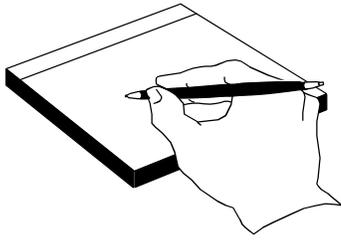
(v. 41). At this point they were saved. Then, notice a very interesting statement in the last verse of Acts 2: “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (v. 47). Here is recorded how one becomes a member of the church you read about in the New Testament—when one is baptized, the Lord adds that saved individual to the church. The idea of being *voted* into the church or *joining* a church is foreign to the pages of the Bible. The Lord adds the saved to the church. Baptism puts one into the church (John 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:13).

Question: **To which church did Jesus add these people to?** Was it the Mormon Church which was established in 1830? Was it the Nazarene Church which had its beginning in 1907? What about the Methodist (1729), Presbyterian (1536), Baptist (1522), Lutheran (1517), or Catholic Church (606—first Pope)? These and all other denominational churches did not exist in the first century. Therefore, Jesus did not and could not add the saved to any denominational body!

Paul, in dealing with the division of the Corinth church stated, “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” (1 Cor. 3:3-5). When one says, “I am of Luther,” and another says, “I am of John Calvin (Presbyterian

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## Drifting

In last month's article we noticed how that some had drifted concerning God's plan of saving man. When Christians pervert man's obligations in responding to God's grace, one of the results will be a perversion of God's doctrine of fellowship. Thus, we have witnessed a drifting away from the moorings of God's Word in the area of fellowship.

When brethren drift into teaching that one does not have to understand why he is being baptized and thus accepting the vague "obeying God" (has anyone ever been baptized to disobey God?), then they are not far from accepting as brethren all religious groups. The same can be said of those who are teaching that we are saved by faith alone. When this takes place, then we are going to accept all those who simply profess a belief in Jesus as God's Son, whether or not they have obeyed the Word of God. It was this type of thinking that led Jeff Walling to state: "But assume for just a moment the crazy concept that there may be some folks out in the world who, honest to goodness, love Jesus with all their heart, who would want to give him anything they have in their hands, but for whatever reason they are not fellowshiping in a building that says, 'Church Of Christ' on it. Now, just free your mind up for that bizarre possibility. Now, can you say with me, 'that we may be one'?...Jesus asks that we would throw a calf rope around all of those who just believe in him, and pray, and work, for the unity of all believers" (1990 Tulsa Soul Winning Workshop on a lesson on the Lord's prayer for unity in John 17). When one finally accepts the idea of grace alone salvation, it will not be long till they accept the doctrine of universalism and fellowship everyone.

Christ did establish the limits of fellowship when He prayed for the unity of believers. "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). Notice that it is simply based on belief, but belief through the Word the apostles preach. John writes, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:3-7). We now observe that our fellowship resides in God. When I have fellowship with God and someone else has fellowship with God, then we have fellowship with each other.

First John 1:3-7 also indicates for us the boundaries God has set for fellowship. Fellowship continues only as we walk in the light. If we fail to walk in the light, then we no longer have fellowship with God, and thus, no longer have fellowship with others. In John's next epistle he adds, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11). Those who desire to broaden the fellowship allowed by God pervert the *doctrine of Christ* to mean the doctrine about the deity of Christ and not the doctrine or teaching which He gave. This gives the *right* to fellowship anyone who simply claims his belief in Jesus as God's Son whether or not they obey His Word or not. Paul adds, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 The. 3:6). Any brother that gets out of step with God's Word (*walketh disorderly*) is not to remain in our fellowship.

A few decades ago a teaching arose (propagated by Leroy Garrett and Carl Ketcherside) which said there was a difference in gospel and doctrine. Supposedly gospel was that which dealt with the plan of salvation

while doctrine was everything else (worship, organization, Christian life, etc.). They taught that fellowship was based only upon gospel and that doctrine did not effect our fellowship with others. It was easy to show how that gospel and doctrine are used interchangeably and that this view of fellowship was erroneous.

In some ways Ketcherside and Garrett were ahead of their time, and in other ways they were the ones who prepared the way for what we see today. We had not drifted far enough at their time for brethren to accept and apply their teaching. However, when Rubel Shelly drifted away from the truth, brethren in general had drifted far enough to accept his version of their teachings. The difference was the terminology, not in the teaching. Instead of using gospel and doctrine, Shelly used big (or capital or upper-case) “F” as opposed to little (lower-case) “f” fellowship. The big “F” is the same as Ketcherside’s gospel, and the little “f” is the same as his doctrine. Ketcherside called his position “unity in diversity” or “fellowship without endorsement,” indicating that we can and should have fellowship with those whom we cannot endorse in their doctrinal errors. The end result has been complete fellowship with denominational groups. They have exchanged pulpits with denominations, not to correct their errors but to endorse and fellowship them.

Another area where sound brethren are drifting today is in the endorsement of activities of those who are liberal. As a sound congregation receives a meeting (Vacation Bible School, youth rally’s, or some other activity) notice from a congregation who is no longer holding to the Way of Truth, yet we go ahead and publicize it in our bulletins or on the bulletin board, and often we will also announce it from the pulpit and encourage the sheep to attend. How ungodly: encouraging the sheep to go and be devoured by wolves in sheep’s clothing! Yes, “Brethren, we are drifting!”

MH

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(Continued from Page 1)

ism),” and still another states, “I am of John Wesley (Methodism),” someone needs to ask: “**Are ye not carnal?**” (1 Cor. 3:3-5).

Earlier in the first chapter, Paul admonished the same Corinthians by stating:

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. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

This text implies the existence of a single body of belief and practice. It likewise implies the ability to understand that one body of belief. How is it that the denominational world can face themselves when they abide not according to this text; when they do not speak the same things? For instance, baptism is an example of a subject of great controversy in the religious world (not that it should be). How can the denominational world speak the same thing when one says water baptism does not save and another says it does? Or, it is not water baptism that we must be concerned with, but Holy Spirit baptism? Or, still, that baptism does not demand immersion, but sprinkling is permitted. The religious world does not even speak the same thing when it comes to a simple doctrine like baptism.

In discussing the importance of the one church, it grieves me to hear some state the philosophy that one church or faith is as good as another. Why do many hold to ideas in their spiritual lives that they would not dare hold to in their secular lives? Is one prescription medicine as good as another? When I return from the office to go home, is one house as good as another?

In attempting to show that this philosophy in religion is wrong, it seems that their interest in discussing the issue ends almost before it begins. Far too many are searching for a church using the subjective criteria of what feels good to them or what they prefer. They search for the wrong thing or search for the right thing (the church) in the wrong place—we must search and examine *the Bible* to find the right church (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

This is why it is our plea as members of the church of Christ is to call men to the Bible; to give up doctrines and creeds authored and invented by men which so divide the religious world. It is our determination to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent (1 Pet. 4:11). In the 1800s, men like Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, Racon John Smith, and many others saw the same thing we see today in the religious world—confusion and chaos! They determined not to reform denominational churches but to restore the original New Testament church by preaching the same gospel that was preached in the first century—without addition, subtraction, or

modification. This is exactly what was called for in the days of Jeremiah when Judah had apostatized (Jer. 6:10). These restorers called people back to the Bible! The results were amazing! By 1860, there were approximately 200,000 Christians who were part of the

Restoration of the New Testament church! The Restoration Plea is still very much applicable! Let us resolve to call men and women to the Bible that we may be Christians and Christians only!

520 Thicket Lane; Kyle, TX 78640

## SEX AND THE CHURCH

Gary W. Summers

Rumor has it that some members of the church do not like reading articles in the church bulletin relating to sex. Not only does our current society seem fascinated by the subject (to the point of preoccupation with it, at times), but God Himself felt it was appropriate to comment on matters relating to sexuality. Therefore, because God presents commandments concerning right and wrong sexual conduct, and because our current society seems to be partial to those things which God has legislated against, we occasionally spend time on the topic. Necessity takes precedence over preference.

And who knows how long we will be allowed to voice the biblical perspective? Winford Claiborne, former director of Freed-Hardeman's annual lectureship and current speaker for the *International Gospel Hour* recently said these words:

The state of New Jersey has recently passed a law which forbids anyone from speaking disparagingly of homosexuality. That is the law. How do they get around the first amendment? A Presbyterian church in the state of New Jersey took the state to court to challenge the law. The court upheld the state law in New Jersey (*Meeting the Challenging Tests of Life*, Jackie Stearsman, editor, 1998, p. 534).

Think of It! We discussed the subject of homosexuality in a recent bulletin, which also appears on the Internet. Will that be illegal, too? Pornography dominates the Internet; will we be prohibited from calling a sin a sin? Who would have ever imagined that anyone would have passed such a state law? And that it would be upheld? Is politics interfering with religion?

Brother Claiborne continues:

If you listen to our radio program...over a period of time, you will hear sermons on abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, homosexuality, adultery, fornication, and similar sins, but the day may come when radio stations will have to cut us off. In fact, some have already done so (534).

The example he cites is a radio station in Dalton, Georgia. The religious program had aired on that station for 39 years, but it was terminated because the manager is a homosexual. He removed all religious

programming because of what was being said about the agenda (534-535).

Biblical teaching on sexual matters must be set forth, as brother Claiborne has advocated. The entertainment media and the news media seldom, if ever, champion moral values. If Christians do not publicly uphold the truth regarding these things, how will anyone ever hear the other side?

Some may think that the public's flair for immorality has had no effect upon the church, but such a view indicates naivete. At this very moment, three situations can be cited in which members of the church are living together outside of marriage **and** are in fellowship with the church. One involves the daughter of a preacher who on weekends *entertains* a man to whom she is not married. Another involves a woman raising children who has invited a man into her home to live with them. The third involves an older couple in Illinois who uses economics to justify their cohabitation.

### Youth Offenders

According to *The Dallas Morning News* of June 27, 1998, "Texas Sees an Increase of Young Sex-Crime Offenders" (1A). A chart published on page 26A shows that there were 257 juvenile sex offenders in 1995, 312 the following year, 351 last year, and 541 thus far this year. Some of the offenders are as young as 10 years old with the largest group consisting of 14-year-olds.

The victims are, unfortunately, brothers, sisters, cousins, or friends of the family, and they may not be even a year old (1A). What is the explanation for this tragic situation?

"In today's world, children are exposed to so much sexual stimuli," said Gail Ryan of the National Adolescent Perpetration Network at the University of Colorado. "At the same time, the level of explicitness has increased. I think the risk of children learning and then beginning to practice behavior is increasing" (26A).

It is too bad that the members of the Supreme Court who failed to define pornography back in the '50s are not still around to see the results of their cowardice. In the past 40 years, the pornography

business has grown into a multi-billion dollar industry. In fact, according to a book published in 1987 (*Pornography: A Human Tragedy*, edited by Tom Minnery), the figure was then 8 billion dollars a year (31). First, there were magazines, and no one stopped their proliferation. Next videos came along. And now there is the Internet.

But what do all those things have to do with juveniles? Some experts on this subject have said that 70% of all pornography ends up in the hands of juveniles. This percentage may be inflated, but even if it were cut in half, the possibility that 35% of everything published and taped would be seen by adolescents is frightening. We are told in the same book that there “are more stores selling pornographic videos than there are MacDonald hamburger restaurants” (43).

But how do such materials find their way into the hands of young people? Children are naturally curious. If there is something they know is hidden away, they will find an opportunity to look for it. Or they may find the latest Playboy video by accident. That same inquisitive nature that causes them to examine these *forbidden* materials will lead some into trying out such things—not with a consenting adult or fellow teenager (which would be bad enough), but with someone younger and defenseless.

In 1957, the Supreme Court ruled that obscenity had never been a Constitutional right (88), but then left the definition so vague as to open the floodgates to the current situation. Now we are reaping the results of the Court’s indecisive foolishness.

### “Eros Redeemed”

The above title is from an article on the front page of the “Religion” section of *The Dallas Morning News* published (coincidentally?) on July 4. The story is datelined Berkeley, California.

Sex, lovemaking and eros usually aren’t church topics. But people packed the pews at St. John’s Presbyterian Church last week to hear best-selling author Thomas Moore talk about everything from erotic fantasy to sexual ecstasy.

“So we’re gathered in a church to talk about sex,” he says, triggering a wave of laughter. “It’s a good place”

(1G).

One cannot help wondering if the same people would have “packed the pews” to hear Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost or Jesus’ sermon on the mount.

Although Mr. Moore occasionally points out some truths that need to be mentioned, such as “our philosophy is basically narcissistic” (6G), he makes some comments that are *wacko* and fanatical (sorry, but these will not be repeated here; suffice it to say that he equates sexuality with spirituality).

Then there is this troubling sentence: “Religion usually tries to restrain sex, almost sees it as the primary evil” (6G). Realizing that Mr. Moore came from a Catholic background (and never heard the word sex until he was 26) may provide a clearer context for the above statement, but it remains dangerous nevertheless. His book (and presumably his seminar) covers a wide range of issues, and one wonders how his “religion usually tries to restrain sex” remark will be applied to fornication, adultery, and homosexuality.

The Bible deals with all of these. Although some, in the name of religion, have tried to repress sexual expression even in marriage, they contradict the Scriptures when they do so. There was no cause for guilt over sex in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:18-24), and there is none now: “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). God only *represses* intimacy between those He has not authorized to have it.

There is a need to teach what the will of God is concerning sexuality—especially in today’s society—even more so when members of the church are openly committing fornication and adultery, in many instances, with the approval of the church members (not unlike the Corinthians who were puffed up about the man living with his father’s wife). However, discussions of these topics should remain in the realm of matter-of-factness and not enter into what is lurid and suggestive, lest we find ourselves thinking along the same lines as those in the world—only in the name of religion.

312 Pearl Street; Denton, TX 76201

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Date: June 8-12, 2002

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# TWENTIETH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES

NOVEMBER 11 - 15, 2001

## “STUDIES IN 1 AND 2 TIMOTHY AND TITUS”

### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11

- 9:00 AM 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus—An Introduction  
Don Tarbert
- 10:00 AM The Qualifications of Deacons and Behavior in the Church  
(1 Tim. 3:8-16) Dub McClish
- 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
- 2:00 PM Answering False Doctrines: Does Paul teach that a bishop can drink no wine (KJV), but a deacon can drink a little (1 Tim. 3:3, 8)? Does Paul authorize and advocate the appointment of deaconesses (3:11)? Does Paul teach the doctrine of universal salvation (4:10; cf., 1:3, 6; Tit. 2:11)? Can uninspired men (“the presbytery”) impart spiritual gifts by laying their hands on others (4:14)?  
Brian Kenyon
- 3:00 PM The Explicit Warning of Apostasy (1 Tim. 4:1-9)  
Joseph Meador
- 4:00 PM Paul’s Final Charge (1 Tim. 4:1-22) David Watson
- 5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
- 7:00 PM Paul’s Thanksgiving for His Salvation (1 Tim. 1:12-20)  
Lester Kamp
- 8:00 PM The Qualifications of Bishops (1 Tim. 3:1-7) James Meadows

### MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12

- 9:00 AM Qualifications and Responsibilities of Elders (Tit. 1:1-16)  
Eddie Whitten
- 10:00 AM Answering False Doctrines: Are we saved, called, and pre-destined by grace alone, apart from any works whatsoever (2 Tim. 1:9)? Do the evils of society signal that these are “the last days” and that the Lord’s return is imminent (3:1)? Does Paul teach that nothing is inherently impure (Tit. 1:15; cf., Rom. 14:20; 1 Cor. 6:12)? Is it sinful for a woman to have a career or work outside her home (2:5)?  
Michael Light
- 11:00 AM Paul’s Charge to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:1-11) Goebel Music
- 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
- 2:00 PM The Qualifications and Work of Gospel Preachers  
Jerry Moffitt
- 3:00 PM DISCUSSION FORUM  
Should We Change Our Attitude Toward Homosexual Behavior and Practicing Homosexuals (1 Tim. 1:10)?  
Tyler Young
- 3:45 PM Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
- 5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
- 7:00 PM Warnings About Riches and a Final Charge (1 Tim. 6:3-21)  
B. J. Clarke
- 8:00 PM Sundry Exhortations to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:10-16)  
Terry Hightower

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

- 9:00 AM Salvation Through One Mediator (1 Tim. 2:1-7) Ken Ratcliff
- 10:00 AM Answering False Doctrines: Are the “righteous” not under law (1 Tim. 1:9)? Does Christ excuse sinfulness in and extend mercy to all ignorant unbelievers (1:13)? Does Paul require literal lifting of our hands when we pray (2:8)? Is it sinful for women to style their hair and wear gold and pearl jewelry and expensive clothes (2:9)?  
Tim Ayers
- 11:00 AM Duties of the Faithful Christian Soldier (2 Tim. 2:1-13)  
Dan Flournoy
- 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
- 2:00 PM Difficult Passages: In what circumstances can a woman teach, speak, or ask a question when men are present (1 Tim. 2:11-12)? In what sense will a woman be saved through childbearing (2:15)? Is a serving elder or deacon disqualified by the death of his wife or believing children (3:2, 12; Tit. 1:6)? Do the qualifications for elders and deacons allow for “moderate” drinking (3:3, 8; Tit. 1:7)?  
Robert Dodson

- 3:00 PM DISCUSSION FORUM  
Is There Such a Thing as a False Teacher? Robert Taylor, Jr.
- 3:45 PM Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
- 5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
- 7:00 PM The All-Sufficient Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-17) Winford Claiborne
- 8:00 PM Difficult Passages: How did Paul meet the first qualification of an apostle in Acts 1:21-22 (1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Tit. 1:1)? What is “the law” to which Paul refers, and in what sense is it not for righteous men (1 Tim. 1:8-9)? Is one saved before he learns the Truth (2:4)? Was Eve’s sin worse than Adam’s (2:12-13)?  
Garland Elkins

### WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14

- 9:00 AM Salvation Through the Grace and Mercy of God (Tit. 3:1-15)  
Tim Nichols
- 10:00 AM Difficult Passages: Must an Elder’s children still be living at home for him to be qualified (1 Tim. 3:4-5)? Must all of an elder’s children be Christians (3:4-5; Tit. 1:6)? Does having unfaithful children who have left home disqualify an elder (1 Tim. 3:4-5; Tit. 1:6)? By whose hands did Timothy receive a spiritual gift (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6)?  
Noah Hackworth
- 11:00 AM Paul’s Care for and Charge to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:1-18)  
Michael Hatcher
- 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
- 2:00 PM Duties Enjoined on Various Classes and God’s Grace Revealed (Tit. 2:1-15)  
H. D. Simmons
- 3:00 PM DISCUSSION FORUM  
Is Doctrine Important (1 Tim. 1:3-7, 19-20; 4:1-6, 13, 16; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; Tit. 2:7; et al.)?  
David P. Brown
- 3:45 PM Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
- 5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
- 7:00 PM Respective Duties and Roles of Men and Women (1 Tim. 2:8-15)  
Bobby Liddell
- 8:00 PM The “Workman That Needeth Not To Be Ashamed” (2 Tim. 2:14-26)  
Curtis A. Cates

### THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15

- 9:00 AM Instructions Concerning Elders and Slaves (1 Tim. 5:17-6:2)  
Don Walker
- 10:00 AM Difficult Passages: What is meant by *enrolled as a widow*, and why the age of sixty years or older (1 Tim. 5:9)? Why does Paul seem to condemn marriage for some widows, but recommend it for others (vv. 11, 14)? To what time does *the last days* refer (2 Tim. 3:1)? To what does *the washing or regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit* refer (Tit. 3:5)?  
Tommy J. Hicks
- 11:00 AM Timothy’s Personal Relationships and the Care of Widows (1 Tim. 5:1-6)  
Marvin Weir
- 12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK
- 2:00 PM Answering False Doctrines: Is the celibate state more virtuous than Scriptural marriage (1 Tim. 5:11)? Does Paul advocate “evangelistic authority” over elders and congregations (vv. 19-20; cf., Tit. 1:5; 2:15)? Does Paul authorize “social drinking” for Timothy (1 Tim. 5:23; cf., 3:8; Tit. 1:7; 2:3)? Does Paul teach that Jesus is the only person in the Godhead (1 Tim. 6:14-16)?  
Tom Wacaster
- 3:00 PM DISCUSSION FORUM  
Are There Any Scriptural Limitations on the Role of Women in the Church (1 Tim. 2:8-12)?  
Gary Summers
- 3:45 PM Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic  
Gary Summers
- 5:00 PM DINNER BREAK
- 7:00 PM The Challenge to Endure Persecution for the Lord’s Sake  
Ronnie Hayes
- 8:00 PM 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus—A Summary  
Darrell Conley

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# EXCEPTIONISM

*James D. Nash*

Exceptionism is one of the most dangerous false doctrines in the Lord's church today, and perhaps the most destructive doctrine with which it has ever had to deal. What is this bane to the bride of Christ, what is exceptionism? I would define it as the body of thoughts and actions that revolve around the central concept that states, "Surely I am the exception to the rule." The church is full of, and the pews are packed with, those who think that after all the preaching is done, after all the Bible classes are taught, after all the gospel meetings are concluded, after all the door knocking campaigns are finished, and after all the personal Bible studies come to a close, that surely God will make an exception for *me*.

Exceptionism says that whether or not I am baptized for the remission of sins to be added to the Lord's church does not really matter (after all I am a good person). Whether or not I make every effort to attend every service of the church does not really matter (sometimes I get tired or busy). Whether or not I live my life in accordance to God's Word does not really matter (Does He really expect us to live like that?). Whether or not I ever bother to take the gospel to anybody else does not

really matter (you know some are offended by it). Surely I will be the exception (me and my denominational friends and relatives).

Exceptionism presupposes that God not only can, but will, deny His own teachings and nature in order to save *me* (and the certain other people who I want to go to Heaven with me). The problem with this theory is that it is based in biblical ignorance and arrogance and has no hint of a shadow of a sliver of a shade of a foundation in God's Holy Word. However, while this doctrine is not supported in the Bible, it is rejected. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "if we deny *him*, he also will deny us: If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:12-13). God will not and cannot deny Himself to save us if we deny Him in obedience, living, doctrine, practice, service, attitude, love, evangelism, etc. God cannot make us His "exception." God is just, and this part of His nature will not allow Him to be a respecter of persons (Deu. 32:4; Acts 10:34). After all is said and done and this life has ended we must still answer to God individually and be judged by His Word (John 12:48). Those who expect to be God's little exceptions will be sorely mistaken.

*P.O. Box 272; Rising Star, TX 76471*

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The 1988-2001 books and *Defender* issues of 1994-2000 are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$50 in which you receive all 14 books (less than \$5 per book). If you purchased the CD with the 1999/1998 books, you can receive an update for \$40 upon the return of the CD, or last year's with 1988-2000 books for \$5.00 upon return of the CD. Postage/handling per CD is \$1.25. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church Of Christ.

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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

Volume XXX

November 2001

Number 11

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com> E-mail: [bellview@bellviewcoc.com](mailto:bellview@bellviewcoc.com)

## Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

*Michael Hatcher*

On Wednesday, October 10, 2001 brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr., started home after concluding a gospel meeting in Shepherd, TX. At Goodrich, TX., about 6 miles away, brother Rice ran into a truck and was killed. The passing of brother Rice will be mourned by all those who love the truth. He was certainly a great man of our time and will be missed by the faithful.

Brother Rice was a controversial figure. Most brethren knew him from the pages of *Contending For The Faith*. Brother Rice saw what was taking place in the church today, so he began reporting what brethren were doing. When he began, brethren knew enough about truth that they immediately knew the error once it was reported. Of course, many did not like what he was doing in the pages of *Contending For The Faith*, but no one could bring accusations against what was said: that it was not true. Many forgot that brother Rice was a newspaper-man, a trained journalist. Brother J. C. Choate wrote of brother Rice, “The critics of Ira Rice at long last must face up to the fact that they are dealing with a master journalist, not some journeyman apprentice....The next time the reader picks up a copy of *Contending For The Faith*, keep in mind that he is reading the copy of a born journalist who can smell the story a long way off, dig out the facts, who tells the story in technicolor. This is how Batsell Barrett Baxter described the writing style of Ira Rice in a personal commendation. It is not the rhetoric of Rice which upsets his critics, but digging out the facts and letting the truth fall where it will” (*Defender*, May 1998, p. 3). The liberals and change agents hated brother Rice and campaigned hard against him and *Contending For The Faith*. They could not deny the truthfulness of what was

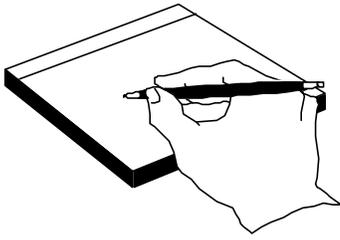
said, so they waged a battle against **how** he did what he did. Sadly, some brethren who were faithful fell prey to the tactics of the liberals against brother Rice.

Another area where brother Rice was well-known was mission work. At a young age he had the desire to take the gospel to the whole world. After working with congregations in Texas and California, brother Rice decided that the time was right to enter the mission field. To spread the truth to the world, he went to the Far East in 1955 and began working for the cause of Christ. After working successfully in the Far East, brother Rice came back to the states. However, his love for the work there never waned. While later in life opportunities arose for additional works to be done, brother Rice always put a priority on the work in the Far East. The additional works simply gave credence to the desire of Ira to take the gospel to the world. He also encouraged others to go into the mission fields. Many did not know (and others might have forgotten) that brother Rice is the one who encouraged brother J. C. Bailey to go to India. He also encouraged many to go into the Far East, and later Russia. However, brother Rice also showed a wisdom along that line. He knew that it was not good for a young man without experience to go into mission work. Thus, he would encourage young preachers to get the proper experience and knowledge and then go do the work. Possibly, and in all likelihood probably, there is no one in the Lord’s church today who has made a greater impact upon world missions than brother Rice.

These two attributes of brother Rice (his contending for the Faith, and his mission work) cause me to think of the apostle Paul. As one studies the life of the apostle

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## Drifting

J. D. Tant is well-known for his statement, “Brethren, we are drifting!” Having noticed that many have drifted regarding God’s plan of saving sinful man and that since they have lost their moorings concerning how one becomes a Christian and thus who is a Christian, we noticed the natural result is a drifting in the area of fellowship. Another obvious area in which we have compromised the Truth is when we consider the role of women in the church.

After God created man, he made woman as a “help meet” for him (Gen. 2:18). Thus we begin noticing the work God intended for the woman was that of being a helper to the man. When Adam and Eve sinned, eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, notice what God said to the woman. “Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16). God sets the role that both men and women are to have. It is a role which is consistent with the nature of each. Man’s role was to be one of leadership; while woman was to have a role of submission.

As we study the New Testament we observe these roles again reiterated. Paul speaks of the subject of authority to the Corinthians. Inspiration, through Paul’s hand, writes, “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God....For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man” (1 Cor. 11:3, 7-9). Headship is that of authority, thus the head or the one in authority over the woman is the man. Then he gives the reason for the

position of authority or headship as being the order and purpose of creation. Later as Paul deals with leadership roles in the church, he instructs the men to be the ones who have that leadership and women to take a role of submission. “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law” (1 Cor. 14:34).

As Paul writes to his son in the faith, Timothy, he gives instructions as to the role of men and women. “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Tim. 2:11-14). God states that the woman is not to take a leadership role over the man. Then God states two reasons for that role the He has given to women: (1) the order of creation, (2) because Eve was deceived in sin.

The background for what Paul writes is that we are to pray for all men (1 Tim. 2:1ff) and particularly for those in governmental positions. In that first verse Paul uses a Greek work equivalent to our word mankind (*anthropos*). He gives us the reason for praying for those in government: for the spread of the gospel. The gospel is to be spread because God’s desire is for all men (Greek *anthropos* again) to be saved and to that end Christ gave Himself to die for man. Paul then states that when men and women are together the male is to be the one leading in that prayer. “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” (1 Tim. 2:8). Here “man” is translated from a different word what Paul has used previously. Paul now uses the Greek word *aner* which means the man as opposed to the female, or the male sex. He is also very clear that “every where” (literally, “in every place”) when men and women are present, the male is to be the one leading the prayer. Then he discusses the role of the woman as being to learn in silence.

When we come to the leadership positions in the Lord’s church, God shows that it is the man who is to be the one in that leadership position. In the qualifications for elders and again in the qualifications for deacons, God states that the one to be an elder or deacon must be “the husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2, 12). Since a woman cannot be the *husband*, she cannot fulfill the qualifications for the work of an elder or deacon.

Yet, some have not been content to remain within the role God has given. Influenced by the radical feminist, some women left that submissive role to seize a

leadership role (both in the home and in the church). It began in small ways (as is always the case with departures) within small prayer groups (and generally in youth gatherings). They encouraged women to lead in prayers along with the men in direct violation of 1 Timothy 2:8. There was only a step between women leading in prayers in small groups and then leading in prayers in a larger group and then to the general assembly of the church.

From such a small start, other departures came. There were those who decided women should work in the ministry. At first this would only be in counseling and other such works, but it would not remain there. If they were going to be trained in the ministry, then they believed that they had the right to do everything, including teaching in Bible classes where men are present and preaching in the pulpit. Others decided that God's qualification that one be "the husband of one wife" did not really mean that, and thus women should also be given the right to be deacons or deaconesses. That again was only a small step to elderesses (as some elder's wives were already practicing their leadership roles only doing so through their husband). When a congregation did not have elders and deacons, they demanded their *rights* to be heard in the formerly men's business meetings and then to having their say in the decisions which were made.

For support of women taking leadership roles some will appeal to statements concerning the oneness of Christ. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither

bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). They argue that if there is neither male nor female, then there could not be different roles for males and females. Thus, whatever males can do, females can do (including being elders, deacons, preaching, etc.). They will tie in with this verse the passages saying that we are all one in Christ. Then, they will also add that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11). However, the problem with this argument is that they ignore the context of verses. All these verses deal with the issue of salvation. They are teaching that regarding salvation, all have the same right to be saved and that under the same conditions. It has nothing to do with the roles that God has given us to fulfill (whether in the home or the church). Each has a function to fulfill as specified by God and when one violates that function (role or purpose) God expects, then he sins in so doing. *MH*

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

Paul we read of his being always "set for the defence of the gospel" (Phi. 1:17), and his untiring and unceasing mission work. When one considers the life of brother Rice, these same two attributes stand out. Neither man would allow the slings and arrows of ungodly men to deter them in their work for the Lord. I am thankful that I have had the privilege of knowing and then being able to work with this giant of a man and faithful gospel preacher.

## Ira Rice Evangelist and Teacher

*Jerry Murrell*

When I first received news of the death of Ira Rice, I was shocked. Even at the advanced age of eighty-four, I had never contemplated Ira Rice's departing from this side of eternity where he is so desperately needed. Then I began to ask myself the question: "Where would the Lord's church be if brother Rice had never been born?" Would the work that has resulted in more than one million baptisms in India that began with brother Rice asking J. C. Bailey to go where he was needed have even started? Would there be as many Christians in Southeast Asia as there are today? Would Four Sea College have begun and continued unto this day (Yes, Christian Chronicle readers it still exists)? Would the "change agents" have swept the church even deeper into apostasy? These questions may be scary to ponder but they also point to the impact that one man had on the

Lord's church.

For those who did not know Ira Rice, I want to take a few minutes to let the reader know something about one of the most misunderstood men of this generation. This is not an attempt to defend brother Rice, though I would not hesitate to defend him if needed to do so, but it is simply to let the reader see glimpses into this man's life and work. Many people knew him far better than I, but I knew him differently. I never looked on him as an equal but as a teacher from whom I could learn much that would help me go to heaven. Come with me, and learn some lessons from the life of Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

### The Power of the Gospel

Brother Rice believed in the power of the gospel as much as any man I have ever met. Paul said that the gospel is God's power to salvation to the Jew first and

also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16). Jesus told us to take the gospel to “all nations” (Mat. 28:19). These words translate the Greek words *ta ethnos*, which as was first pointed out to me by brother Rice, means the gospel must go to all ethnic groups. Brother Rice truly believed that the gospel was for all.

Brother Rice understood this at a time when many Christians did not. Even when Jim Crowe was ruling the south one of brother Rice’s closet friends early in his preaching life, was the great Black evangelist R. N. Hogan. Brother Rice always opposed the sin of racism. In the second issue of *Contending For The Faith* he wrote, “moreover any discrimination against another because of his **race** just **has** to be **un-Christian**.” Then in commenting on “our colleges” not admitting black students in the past he wrote “It was un-Christian **then** the same as it would be un-Christian **now**” (February, 1970, 5). This was a view he never changed.

This view did not stop at the water’s edge. After World War II when many Americans were still struggling to overcome their feelings toward people from Southeast Asia, brother Rice was willing to take the gospel to them. It was not easy to raise money to take the gospel “way over there” (especially after the treatment our troops received in Korea; see Ira’s autobiography available for only \$20), but he did raise the money needed. Much good came from this work.

Brother Rice also carried out his mission work through other missionaries that he motivated to serve the Lord. Countless numbers of men have seen the need to take the gospel overseas after hearing brother Rice speak. Untold amounts of money have been raised to support these men through the letter writing, phone calls, and personal visits of brother Rice. Truly when one looks up the word missionary in the dictionary one should find a picture of brother Rice.

### The Purity of the church

In addition to his desire to take the gospel to the whole world in this generation, brother Rice was concerned about the purity of the Lord’s church. When he returned home from the mission field brother Rice began to see that the churches of Christ in America were different from they were when he had left. The most important and discouraging differences came in the areas of doctrine and practice.

In 1965 brother Rice moved to Hamden, Connecticut to take a crash course in Mandarin Chinese. While he was there, he attended church with a number of Christians studying in the Divinity school at Yale. These men were not “sound in the faith” and were planning to use the “Christian colleges” to conform the church to the

image of Karl Barth instead of Christ.

Brother Rice predicted in *Axe on the Root*, Volume I, that if something were not done soon, these men would use the Christian colleges to lead the Lord’s church into digression. Brother Rice wrote three volumes of *Axe on the Root* in which he documented the beginning stages of what would eventually become the “change-agent” movement. He began publishing *Contending For The Faith* in January 1970 to help keep brethren up to date on this movement. Brother J. E. Choate correctly observed that when later historians study what happened to churches of Christ during the late twentieth-century, *Contending For The Faith* will be their main source.

### Personal Reflections

#### *Have a Seat*

Ira Rice had a great impact on my life from the first time that I met him. From that day until now, he has been my teacher. My wife and I went on our first vacation together to Pensacola, Florida to attend the 1991 Bellview Lectures. I was in awe getting to hear all these great gospel preachers, who I had admired from afar, in person. Since the Bellview congregation so graciously provides lunch, we decided to eat at the building every day. Monday as we were looking for a place to sit. Brother Rice invited us to “have a seat” with him and W. R. Craig. While everyone at the lectures was friendly, no one took the kind of personal interest in us that they did. I developed a great appreciation for brother Rice as we ate lunch with him every day that week. I think I began to understand how Zacchaeus must have felt when the Lord took a special interest in him. From my teacher I learned to be interested in the brother of “low degree.”

#### *Rice Here*

Later I received a phone call from someone associated with the Herald of Truth trying to get me to order *Upreach* magazine for the community. We discussed the program and I discovered that besides soft preaching, there was a new problem with Herald of Truth. When I pointed out the compromising nature of the Highland church that had overseen the work, the solicitor informed me that Herald of Truth was no longer under that eldership but under a board.

After our conversation I phoned brother Rice. On the other end I heard those now familiar words: “Rice here.” I thought I had some facts that all “concerned Christians” needed to know. I remembered all the information I had discussed in my previous conversation but when brother Rice asked me the brother’s name I had spoken with, I could only remember his last name. When brother Rice asked me what this man’s role was with

Herald of Truth, I did not know. Brother Rice did not doubt my veracity but he told me that he could not print such a charge without documented evidence. Not having been trained as a newspaper reporter at one of the foremost Universities of this land, as brother Rice was, (University of Oklahoma) I did not know this. Gathering facts for a story was all new to me. My teacher taught me what documentable evidence was and how essential it was to a story.

#### *A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words*

In 1996 a number of brethren made a pact to meet at the Nashville Jubilee (it is interesting that Jubilee died the same year that brother Rice died) to see things on ground level. Soon after I arrived, I ran into brother Rice and Dorsey Traw who were walking together. Brother Rice had a camera and wanted to take a picture of me in front of one of the Jubilee banners. I told him that I knew of some better pictures he could take. I had been walking through the booths looking at books and had seen a booth for International Bible College and a booth for Freed-Hardeman University. He quickly followed me to take a picture of the Freed-Hardeman University booth. This picture was widely distributed, even though they had a booth at Jubilee in previous years, the picture seemed to make their booth *news*. The picture led to brother Adrian Doran, a board member at Freed-Hardeman University, getting a stop put to the University paying for a booth at Jubilee. Since lack of funds led to Jubilee's demise, I am thankful that brother Rice's picture made a small contribution to its downfall (and that his paper made an even larger contribution). My teacher taught me that some people have to see it to believe it.

#### *Life is Short and Prayer Should be the Same*

During that same Jubilee many of us went together to participate in one of brother Rice's favorite activities—eating. Brother Rice always liked ethnic food and he found a German restaurant near the arena. After the food came, someone called on brother Rice to pray. His prayer consisted of four words, "We appreciate it, Lord." He was not being flippant. He meant every word of that prayer. It is interesting that someone who has been called a Pharisee by his critics so many times, prays so unlike the Pharisees (Mat. 6:5-7). My teacher taught me that prayer is offered to God, not to the long-winded preachers around the table with you.

#### *With God All Things are Possible*

Brother Rice helped a few people who were native to other countries come to the United States to be trained to work more effectively for the Lord. One of the couples that he brought to Memphis School Of Preaching

was Alexander and Tatiana Nestkerin of Murmansk, Russia. After their arrival in the United States, it became apparent that they needed a car for their stay in the United States (for groceries etc.) Yet they had no funds to purchase one.

When brother Rice learned of this need, he took it as his job to fill it. Brother Rice began to ask preachers to announce that Alexander needed a car. One of the people he asked was Billy Bland who was preaching then in Independence Mississippi. Brother Bland responded, "We only have thirty people." Brother Rice retorted, "We only need one car." Incidentally, brother Rice had two car offers that weekend. Alexander used that car the rest of the time he was in school. From my teacher I learned, "Ye have not because ye ask not" (Jam. 4:2).

#### *You Cannot Warn Some Brethren*

Brother Rice spent more than thirty years warning brethren that liberalism was attempting to take over the church. For this, those that loved the truth appreciated him. For this, those that set out to change the Lord's church despised him. For this, those that want to straddle the fence read his words in private but distanced themselves from him in public. Much like Jesus, many prominent brethren who believed his words failed to act on them because of fear (John 12:42).

Ira Rice predicted that liberals were planning to use the colleges for a hostile takeover of the church. When he made this predication many brethren professed that they believed him (some of whom denounced him later when he continued to say the same thing, look at all the names who endorsed *Axe on the Root* and ask yourself where they all went in this battle with liberalism). In spite of this warning, over three decades later his predictions have come to pass. If brethren had really been warned and acted on that warning in the 1960s, where would the church be today? I am convinced that there would have been a small division then, perhaps about the same number that went with the Anti-cooperation movement. On February 5, 1970, Ira Rice rose in the Open Forum at Freed-Hardeman University and told brethren how to stop liberalism. He first advised that we mark and avoid false teachers (for the list of this advice see *Contending For The Faith*, February 1970). One could call this operation isolation. It is long overdue. If we had heeded his advice then, I am convinced that we would still be one of the fastest growing religious groups in the United states. My teacher taught me that **you cannot warn some brethren**. Good-bye teacher, until we meet again.

4340 Lylewood Rd; Indian Mound, TN 37079

# STICKS AND STONES

*Toney L. Smith*

As children we heard the song that said, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." We might have said those words back in answer to someone who had said something to or about us. And we might have even gotten some victorious satisfaction out of saying those little rhyming words. That was when we were small. Now, we realize that words do hurt.

Not long ago someone said to me, "Lies will not hurt you." I have yet to figure this statement out or to understand just what was meant. When lies are told and a character is wrecked, how can the hurtful words be taken back? The answer of course is that they cannot. Could this be why God hates a "lying tongue" (Pro. 6:17)? David described those who are involved in lying about others: "For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue" (Psa. 109:2).

Just today a good friend and faithful gospel preacher told me of a slanderous lie which has cut him to the very inner core of his being. This lie not only impugned his character, it also reflected upon his good wife. Without any foundation an individual has taken it upon himself to hurt and injure another. Lies are often used to tear down an individual or to tear down his respect and integrity among others. A liar is little and is simply following along in the footsteps of his father: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh

a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Why do some folk feel compelled to hurt others? It is not for the purpose of correction, for if this were the heart's desire an assembling of true facts would be needed. Then there would be a pleading for repentance. Could a lie told on another be interpreted as love for that person? The Proverbs' writer summed up the situation with these words: "A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin" (Pro. 26:28).

Lies do hurt. They have hurt my friend and his wife. No, they have not hurt their reputation with me and others who know their worth in the kingdom. The lie has not diminished my respect for them at all. But it does hurt to see others be hurt by irresponsible and hateful individuals. All who hear such things need to stop such slander in its tracks. We must never give an open ear to gossip and the lies that go hand in hand with it. Our words ought to build up, encourage, and yes even correct, but never should our tongues utter lies. Especially to the hurt of others!

*517 Gaylord Street; Dresden, TN 38225*

*(Editor's Note: I am fortunate enough to call this same person a friend and a brother beloved. Some will believe this liar (as they have in years gone by when he spread lies about another situation) even though there is no basis for his vicious statements. We pray that this apostate will repent of his sins along with retracting his lies about this faithful gospel preacher and his family.)*

## To Inform The Brotherhood

### Southeast Asia Started By Brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to inform anyone who needs to know, that the Bellview church of Christ has agreed to sponsor the work of brother Lee Davis to teach in the Four Seas College of Bible and Missions in Singapore. We are now his sponsoring eldership and he is our missionary for that work.

Brother Davis is scheduled to go to Singapore in January 2003 to begin his teaching assignment. If you can assist him in any way as he raises his support, it will be appreciated.

For several years brother Davis and his wife have been preparing themselves for this work by getting necessary education, preaching experience, etc. For the first few years it will not be possible for him to take his family with him,, although he will be in contact with them by means of computer video and periodic visits. After that period, he plans to take his family to Singapore.

We commend brother Davis to you for your support, and believe that he will do a good work for the Lord in Singapore.

*Signed by the Bellview elders: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, and Fred Stancliff*

## An Opportunity For You To Help In The Mission Work Of

The Lord Jesus Christ commanded his people to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15-16). Much of the world's population resides in Southeast Asia. As the often quoted percentage goes: "96% of gospel preachers preach to only 6% of the world's population." If we can train men in their own countries to preach the gospel, we go a long way to taking the gospel to the world. The Lord did not say, "Go into all the world, if you want to." Yes, if one has the opportunity and ability, then that person has the responsibility to go. Opportunities are provided by the providence of God and if we are not prepared to go, then we are to become prepared. An opportunity has arisen to help take the gospel to the world and specifically to Southeast Asia. Four Seas College trains people to go back into their country (the Four Seas area) to preach the gospel. Remember what Paul said to the Romans, the one who helps send the gospel into the world is just as vital to carrying the gospel to the world as the one who actually goes (Rom. 10:13-ff).

Lee Davis was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1963. He was raised in a Christian home. At eleven, he was baptized by John Jenkins (now deceased) the preacher at the Crossville Church of

Christ in Crossville, Tennessee. Lee preached his first sermon when he was seventeen, and has preached regularly after that. He is a 1985 graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching. He received a B.A. degree from the Alabama Christian School of Religion, (now Southern Christian University). He earned an M.S. and M. Div. (cum laude) from Southern Christian University as well. He is now working on his D. Min. from the same institution. Lee has been preaching for twenty-one years and has served churches in Tennessee, Louisiana, and Alabama. He is currently the preacher for the Wartburg Church of Christ in Wartburg, Tennessee, and is a faculty member of the Online Academy of Biblical Studies directed by brother Tom L. Bright.

Lee has been involved in mission work to Southeast Asia for several years now. Lee made his first overseas mission trip in 1989 when he went with brother Ira Y. Rice Jr., and several other brethren, to preach the gospel in that area. Brother Rice had asked Lee to come and teach at Four Seas College in 1987. At that time it was not possible for him to do so. However, Lee went on several missions trips with brother Rice over the years. He went with him to Russia in 1994 for a three week trip, and also made two other Southeast Asian trips with brother Rice, the last being in 2000. They were scheduled to go again this December until brother Rice's untimely and tragic death. In December of 2000, at the Annual Asian Bible Lectureship in Manila, brethren Ira Y. Rice Jr., and David Chew (President of Four Seas College in Singapore) invited Lee to consider the work at Four Seas again. After much prayer and thought, Lee agreed to come to Singapore.

In June of 2001, Lee approached the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ in Pensacola, Florida, with the idea of their being his sponsoring congregation. After several conversations, it was determined that the Bellview congregation would sponsor

Lee in his work in Southeast Asia. Lee has determined to make a five year commitment to the work there with a re-evaluation at the end of that time. He will teach two sessions at Four Seas per year (approximately 6 months). He will coordinate the program that is taught in English while brethren Chew and Kwan will begin a new program in Chinese, for the Chinese speaking students. The time Lee will not be in Singapore will be spent back in the United States reporting to congregations and raising support. While in Southeast Asia, he will work with the Jurong church and other sound works in the Southeast Asian Area.

Lee will begin a limited schedule in the Spring of 2002. His plans are to start the full schedule in January of 2003. Lee will then teach from the first of January to the first of April. He then will come back to the United States for the summer and to Singapore at the first of September. He will then return to the States just before Thanksgiving. While in Singapore he will live in an apartment that Four Seas College will provide for him.

He has been married for ten years to the former Patricia Crabtree of Crossville, Tennessee. She is an adoption counselor and is very much involved in helping others adopt children. They have six adopted children themselves: Brandi, Lindsey, Brad, Alex, Ryan, and Ross. Until it can be arranged otherwise, his family will live in Crossville, Tennessee where Lee's and Trish's parents live. Lee is in need of your financial help to do this good work. Brother Rice was able to know about Bellview's acceptance of Lee's sponsorship before he died and was glad that his work at the Four Seas College would continue in Southeast Asia. He needs a travel fund of \$2000, and a one time supply fund of \$5000. He needs monthly support of \$4000. If you can help in any way, please send your contributions to the Bellview Church of Christ earmarked for "Lee Davis Southeast Asian Mission Fund"

## Updated Study Aid

The 1988-2001 books and *Defender* issues of 1994-2000 are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$50 in which you receive all 14 books (less than \$5 per book). If you purchased the CD with the 1999/1998 books, you can receive an update for \$40 upon the return of the CD, or last year's with 1988-2000 books for \$5.00 upon return of the CD. Postage/handling per CD is \$1.25. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church Of Christ.

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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