

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXXV

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July

October

February

May

August

November

March

June

September

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(This article was written for the Eighth Lubbock Lectures in 2005. In August of that year I received this note from the lectureship director: “You are hereby notified that your invitation to speak in the Eighth Annual Lubbock Lectureship is rescinded. Your name and picture will not be included in any of our advertisements, and your manuscript will not be included in the lectureship book. Yours truly, Tommy J. Hicks, Director.” This was one of three positions which was going to be discussed relating to “the gift of the Holy Spirit” in Acts 2:38. Since it was not used for their book, I am producing it here with just a few minor changes. Because of its length, I will break it up into several parts.)

The Gift of the Spirit Was the Ability to Work Miracles

Michael Hatcher

INTRODUCTION

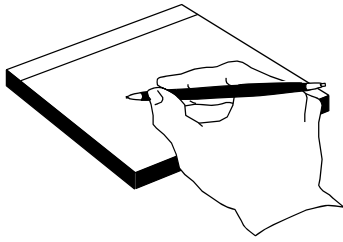
It is a pleasure to deal with the subject of Acts 2:38 and what this author believes this passage to teach. This scribe realizes there are several views concerning the latter part of this verse. The men presenting the other two views (Personal indwelling view and the view that it means salvation) are highly respected by this writer. These views are not and have not been considered a matter of fellowship; and rightly so. These three differing views do not affect our respect for the Word of God, our worship, how we live our lives in service to God, or anything else which would affect our soul’s salvation. Each one believes that the only way the Spirit works on the heart of the non-Christian or Christian today is through the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). However, when one begins to advocate a direct **work** of the Spirit on the heart of the Christian in conviction, conversion, or sanctification, it is then a fellowship matter. If any were advocating the miraculous activity of the Spirit today, then, again, it would be a fellowship matter.

The view being set forth by this writer might seem strange to the reader at this time. When this

author first heard this position, he was amazed that any Gospel preacher today would hold such a position as this. Thus, this scribe came to this conclusion neither easily nor quickly. Yet, it is the position which this author has defended for many years now. After coming to this position, this penman learned that this position is not as unusual as some might think (and as this author thought). There have been numerous Christians over the years who have held to this view.

While truth is not determined by who holds to a particular view and who might not, yet to counteract what some have contended (that this is a new or novel view), allow me to mention a few respected Bible scholars who have presented this view of “the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Brother Franklin Camp quoted some men of the Restoration Movement as holding to this view (131-32). He first quotes Alexander Campbell as saying that both Acts 2:38 and 10:45 are miraculous in scope. He quotes from one of the oldest extant works of the Restoration Movement, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, where T. W. Brents argues for the miraculous. He quotes David Lipscomb as saying that it is possibly the miraculous

Notes From The Editor



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manifestation of the Spirit, and then quotes H. Leo Boles as saying that this is what Peter meant. In more recent days, men such as Guy N. Woods have stated that was his understanding and that he had set the position forth in public writing. Brother Robert R. Taylor wrote on the subject setting forth this view in the 1980 Fort Worth lectureship book on the Holy Spirit. So this view is neither new nor novel; highly respected men have long held to this position concerning “the gift of the Holy Spirit” in Acts 2:38. While no one should accept this view simply because others (either in the past or today) have, there are good and compelling reasons for accepting and holding to this position.

MODERN-DAY MIRACLES

Upon hearing this view, many think that it offers support for, and some even think that it is advocating present-day miracles. Those advocating this position are opposed to the Pentecostal movement and the modern-day miracle-working frauds (which includes all those who claim to work miracles today). (Surely no one would think of accusing men such as those named previously: Campbell, Brents, Lipscomb, Boles, Woods, Taylor, etc., of believing in modern-day miracles.) The age of miracles has ended. This is evidenced by at least three avenues of proof. First, there is no purpose for miracles today. The purpose of miracles was basically to confirm the Word (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:1-4). This confirmation of the Word would include inspiration and revelation of that Word. Second, there is no means for miracles today. The apostles (and the house of Cornelius) are the only ones who received miraculous powers directly from God. All others received the power to work miracles indirectly—they had to have the apostles lay their hands on them (Acts 8). Third, the clear statements of the Bible: 1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Ephesians 4:7-16.

(For a more detailed study of this see the author’s chapter: “Miraculous Divine Healing Today,” *God Hath Spoken, Affirming Truth and Reproving Error*, ed. Curtis A. Cates, Memphis, TN: Memphis School of Preaching, 1999, pp. 447-490.)

Since we have the completed revelation of God’s Word today, there is no need for miracles. The age of miracles ceased with that completed revelation. Even if they did not end there, we would not possess that ability today, as there are no apostles today to pass on miraculous powers. However, the apostles were there on the day of Pentecost and it was the time of miracles, so they could lay hands on others and impart to them miraculous powers. We need to remember that this was said (and later written) during the first century, and not the twentieth (or twenty-first) century.

CONTEXT

In understanding any passage of Scripture, one must consider the context. Many have used the adage, “A verse taken out of its context becomes a pretext.” In considering the context, it is important to consider the understanding of those who heard the words. People often suggest that we should approach this as to what the natural and normal conclusion **we** should draw. It seems like a better approach would be to consider how the ones who were there on Pentecost and actually heard what Peter said would understand it. While this might not always be the correct understanding, it would more than likely be correct.

Policy Statement

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

* * * * *

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

With this in mind, let us go back to the great commission as recorded by Luke. The apostles were to preach repentance and remission of sins “among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:47-49). We see this being repeated in Acts 1. That promise was the promise of Holy Spirit baptism, which was promised and given to the apostles (4-5), and He also told them they would “receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (8). After recording the death of the traitorous Judas, there is the selection of one to take Judas’ place. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4). This is the fulfilment of what Jesus had promised His apostles.

Upon these events taking place, a crowd gathers. “Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language” (Acts 2:6). Why was the crowd gathered? It was because of the miraculous events taking place with the apostles—even though they did not understand all of what was taking place at the time.

As Peter begins his sermon on this occasion, he informed the crowd of what was taking place—that this is the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. He then quotes Joel: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your

young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:17-21). It is obvious that many of the things Joel mentions deals specifically with miraculous powers: pouring out of the Spirit, prophesying, visions, dreaming dreams, wonders, and signs. It is also obvious that more than the apostles (who were the only ones performing miracles at this time) were under consideration in Joel’s prophecy: all flesh, sons, daughters, young men, old men, servants, and handmaidens. The pouring out of the Spirit in Joel included many more than just the baptism of the Spirit, which was limited to the apostles (Acts 1:2-5).

Peter then preaches this great Gospel sermon proving and convincing the Jews that Jesus was God manifested in the flesh (Mat. 1:23; 1 Tim. 3:16). He convicted them of their sin of crucifying the Son of God and preached that God had made Him “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). They realized their sin and asked what they needed to do. Peter’s response is that they must repent and be baptized. They are then promised the remission of sins and they are promised the gift of the Holy Spirit. In light of what had taken place: the Spirit coming on the apostles, their demonstration of miraculous powers, the promise of the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh; how could the auditors, when Peter says they would receive “the gift of the Holy Ghost,” think anything other than the promise of miraculous powers? Additionally, if Peter intended to convey anything other than the promise of miraculous powers, surely he would have expressed his thoughts differently (remembering that the words he spoke were given to him by the inspiration of God).

For your information:

Everyone knows about the hurricanes which struck our area the past two years, not only here in Pensacola but also in surrounding areas. As a result of these hurricanes, there has been an influx of people coming into Pensacola. First there were workers to help repair things here, then there were evacuees from surrounding areas. One of the results of this inflow of people was the rising cost of motels. In addition to those costs, there has also been a considerable increase in travel expenses. After considerable thought and prayer, the elders have decided to cancel the Bellview lectureship for the time being or at least make considerable changes to it. We express appreciation to all those who have supported the lectureship and this congregation through the years, and in the future it might be that we return to having the lectureship.

This statement of policy is from April 1972 "Defender" and was signed by the editors.

Editorial

Statement of Policy

To avoid as much misunderstanding as possible, let us say a word about our motives in plainly discussing controversial subjects and pointing out error in the *Defender*. We have no malice or ill will toward **anyone**. We have no envy, bitterness or hatred that moves us to publish this paper or deal with any particular matter. We do not have a contentious spirit, a belligerent attitude, or a quarrelsome disposition. We have no "chip on the shoulder" and we are not simply looking for a wrangle, fuss, or argument.

But realizing that only the truth (John 8:32; 17:17) can make one free and keep one free from sin, while error condemns (2 The. 2:10-12), and prompted by a love, interest, and concern for all men everywhere, especially for our brethren, we strive to point out error and present the truth. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" with "great plainness of speech" (2 Cor. 5:11; 3:12). We try to be fair, kind, and Christ-like in contending "earnestly...for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

Sometimes we become someone's enemy because we tell them the truth (Gal. 4:16), but it is not our desire or purpose to offend. We regret that it ever

becomes necessary to identify individuals who mislead people (1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18). However, our love for the lost and for brethren who may "err from the truth" (Jam. 5:19) will not allow us to sit idly by while false teachers lead them astray (Mat. 15:14) and apostasy besets the church.

Hence, we shall continue to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12) by disrobing the wolves of their sheep's clothing, exposing Satan's ministers who make a pretense of being God's ministers (2 Cor. 11:13-15), pointing out what we believe to be a departure from the "old paths" and the "ancient order of things" as set forth in the New Testament, trying to keep the church pure and undefiled by doctrines and inventions of men, and by calling upon all Christians to "Abide in the doctrine of Christ" in their work and worship in the Lord's church.

If any man judges our motives contrary to that which is stated herein after reading it, we shall consider it to be a deliberate misrepresentation.

(This is so well stated that I decided to reproduce it and simply to add that these are my feelings as well as the original editor's feelings.) *Michael Hatcher*

Voices from the past

This appeared in "Defender" March 1972.

Pot Shots

George E. Darling, Sr.

Counterfeiters in the Church

Our government is on guard continually in an endeavor to protect itself and the American people from counterfeiters. They use every means known to science to catch every counterfeiter and to put him in prison. They make their designs so intricate that it is almost impossible to duplicate them, and they print the money on paper that is a secret formula to prevent anyone from "making money." Even with all this precaution, there are counterfeiters that are so good at their chosen profession of deceiving the government that they reap millions of dollars annually in our nation.

What would you think of a government agent who would deliberately work with a gang of counterfeiters, sharing in their profits, while he was being paid by the government to protect us? What would you think of

Mr. J. Edgar Hoover if he called in a "specialist in counterfeiting" to teach his agents how to cheat the government while they drew a salary from the government to protect it?

That is exactly the position of the preacher and elders who make up the programs where they invite men whom they know are teaching a false doctrine (whether they teach it from the pulpit, orally, or by their practice in life).

If it is right that our government seeks to find out the counterfeiters and prosecute them, it is just as right that elders and their "**Program Committees**" be careful what kind of men they put into the pulpits and on the programs to teach the unsuspecting public that comes to hear them speak and teach. Counterfeiters in money, only cause us to lose **dollars**. Counterfeiters in

the **spiritual realm divide the Lord's Body** and cause men and women to lose their lives for Christ and their souls throughout eternity.

Brethren, the woods are full of religious counterfeits in these days of compromise, days when some are trying to give people a painless religion with no charter or discipline.

Diplomats in the Pulpit—Sinners in the Pews

“Our preacher is so diplomatic and discreet!”—well, well, ain't that sumptin! Some uninformed and misinformed church members think that being diplomatic and discreet is something new. But a long time ago a nation of people were demanding that variety of preaching from the prophets of God.

Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever. For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits (Isa. 30:8-10).

God answered them in these words:

Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and rely thereon; therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly in an instant (Isa. 30:12-13).

That does not sound like “smooth things,” does it?

These diplomatic preachers are the ones who can stand in the pulpit and preach (?) with the “beer guzzling tobacco worms” occupying the front row, the card sharks and “liquor license holders” in the second row, and the dancing, worldly minded strip-teasers, and lodge members on the third row, and be just as silent on sin as the tomb. They will pronounce you a diplomat and will favor a high salary. If a man wants to be a diplomat in a church where a small faction of the wealthier members have decided to rebel against the eldership and the preacher, disrupt the whole church program, and publicly humiliate the name of Christ and His church in the community, just look off into space and speak about something you think will “tickle their ears.” If you are supporting some “**worthy cause**” (?) such as “Campus Ministry,” your diplomacy and discreetness will be liberally rewarded.

If you are preaching in a church whose baptized membership knows far more about the dress of the entered apprentice candidate than they do about the qualification of elders, whose membership puts the

lodge ahead of the church and the teachings of the lodge above their confession of faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God; if you are really discreet, more than likely, the lodge members will get together (they stick tighter than fleas) and who knows, they might even recommend that you be considered for the Chaplain of their lodge. Then too, if you are diplomatic enough you will get along well with the dirty story telling, dancing, card playing, and profane membership of that lodge who in turn will come in and run the church into the dirt while they pay you well to “ramrod the show.”

When called to speak at a meeting of the local Ministerial Alliance, by being discreet and diplomatic, you can be recognized as the “dynamic leading clergyman of your denomination” (But brother, do not cut loose and tell the poor souls the truth, for it you do you will be evil spoken of—even called indiscreet).

If you are officiating at a lodge funeral where you know the Masons are going to tell the folk present that the dear departed brother has gone to meet the “Supreme Architect of the Universe” (G.A.O.T.U.), while they promise him eternal life by the placing on the casket of acacia branches, be sure to be diplomatic and let the ignorant folk there believe that Masons and other lodge members are going to heaven **another way**. If you are discreet and diplomatic you may form an alliance with the undertaker and in time you will have a sizeable income from diplomatically lying at lodge funerals.

It is the popular thing to be diplomatic and discreet. You can get along with your neighbors and with the enemies of God for a while. But in Malachi 2:1-3 God's prophet speaks the truth—very undiplomatically:

And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith Jehovah of hosts, then will I send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will rebuke your seed, and will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your feasts; and ye shall be taken away with it.

That **was not** diplomatic, but God has seen fit to record Malachi's sermon, while the diplomatic priesthood has not one sermon of theirs recorded. Misdeeds that they had perpetrated were exposed, but their slipshod infidelity is buried with their shame.

Oh, God help us to rid ourselves of these “**discreet diplomats**” and to realize that we are servants of God, sworn, charged, and commissioned to serve Him, **first**,

last and always.

The church had never such influence over the world as in those days when she had nothing to do with the world.

The way to preserve the peace of the church is to preserve the purity of it.

Many are in that uncertain state of health that

makes them too frail to go to church on Sunday morning but just well enough to go for a joy ride Sunday afternoon.

We shall have all eternity to celebrate the victories, but we have only a few hours before the sunset to win them.

Deceased

A Small Look at the Big Problem of Peer Pressure

David B. Smith

Everyone is subject in some degree or another to the sway of their own environment. This is a fact of life. But caution must be extended in regard to the implication of such a statement, since all influences are not equal. It is more than a little rash to say that all outside pressure is wrong (or bad for the soul). Clearly, environments are different; the people with which one surrounds himself are different. So it is fair to say that not all influences are wrong. Even a quick read of the Bible will produce the conclusion that members of the Lord's church are to provide positive influence for both each other (1 Cor. 11:1; Phi. 3:17; 1 The. 1:7-10) and for members of the world (Mat. 5:13-16). But aside from this positive influence, Christians (and for that matter, all men) are at constant odds with a negative force—popularly labeled “peer pressure.” A “peer” is merely an equal, which carries a very loose meaning. “Peer pressure” is therefore that negative sway (in the spiritual/moral sense) to conform to the world and be something other than what the Christ requires.

With this definition, it is easy to understand why no one is exempt from peer pressure. It is folly to state that peer pressure is an exclusively *teenage* dilemma, as some sources tend to suggest. Nor is peer pressure a vice to Christians only. All men feel the effects. After all, numerous men in the world have been dissuaded from obeying the Gospel by the dissenting voices of friends and/or family members. But it is more pronounced for the Christian, since he is the one fighting against the pull of ungodliness.

Peer pressure is no respect of persons among members of the Lord's body. Elders, for example, receive this negative influence in healthy doses: to become overlookers instead of overseers, to become slack in the performance of their duties, to become enamored by money and numbers to the exclusion of real growth, et cetera. Preachers also feel the pull of peer pressure: to become the popular back-slapping,

social-mixing, storyteller who tickles the ears of each audience, or to be generic and “value-neutral,” even to replace needed meditation with full-time recreation. So more people feel the pressure than just teenagers. But, to be fair, teenagers face the pressure in a way that seems more distinct and intensified. Perhaps it is better to say that teenagers are a primary target, since their minds are more impressionable at this stage of life and regarding those that are Christians—they are *novices* in the faith. Smoking, the consumption of alcoholic beverages, the use of illegal drugs, premarital sex, attending dances, profanity, the selfish convenience of vain religion, and such like are just a few of the seemingly innumerable pressures faced by a teenager (especially a teenager who is a member of the Lord's body).

So how does it work? Since it is influence, it appeals to and draws away the heart of man (Jam. 1:13-15). The heart is the battlefield; and peer pressure seeks to petrify one's desire for God—captivating interests, desires, and passions. But be aware that, as a tool of the devil, the lure is cunning and veiled. It will never advertise itself as an element of destruction, rather the opposite, and once the heart has been captured, everything else follows. Activities change; language begins to resemble the godlessness of evil influences; life starts falling apart. Here is a sample of what accompanies peer pressure:

1. Biblical authority is devalued and/or dismissed. Peer pressure attempts to poison man against the goodness of God Almighty. Through bad influences, the devil seeks to make God unreliable, unreasonable, unjust, and incredibly subjective.

2. Peer pressure aims to keep men miserable. No man can be satisfied with himself if his goal in life is to *fit in* or be popular or acceptable to the world. Focus is lost, and the joy of being satisfied (Heb. 13:5-6) is replaced with a black hole with no bottom.

In the end, there is a Bible solution to the problem. There is a way to fight back, to resist, and to overcome.

Notice the following:

1. Since the appeal of peer pressure begins with the mind, then the prevention must start here. Peer pressure is an issue of affection, of deciding where one will place his/her loyalties. Loving God with all of the heart, mind, soul, and strength (Mat. 22:37-38) necessarily inheres a complete disdain for the world: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15-16). Trust is the other great necessity—here, the knowledge that God is greater than the wicked one (1 John 4:4). Knowing that "God is able" will go a long way in helping the Christian to fortify his mind against the lure of peer pressure.

2. Additionally, the Christian must learn the value of a negative answer: learn to say "no" and really mean it. Is this not, after all, what is meant by the inspired command through James, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jam. 4:7)? Peter echoes the

same, "Whom resist steadfast in the faith" (1 Pet. 5:9). For those who may doubt the power of this approach, consider the example of Joseph in Egypt (Gen. 39:7ff) and Jesus in the wilderness (Mat. 4:1-11). Saying "no" actually works!

3. Since most of the peer pressure one faces is received from friends/associates, there will have to be caution in the friend-selection process. There is truth to the old adage, "there is safety in numbers," as long as the number is comprised of the right type of people. Solomon recorded, "a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Pro. 13:20). So naturally, surrounding one's self with unscrupulous men is foolish and will result in the type of influence one should seek to avoid. Life is hard enough without compounding the problem of poor associations.

There seems no better way to conclude these thoughts than with this inspired statement: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.... 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). May God help every saint to shun the wrong and do the right.

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Updated CD

The 1988-2005 books, all *Defender* issues of 1970, 1972-2004, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$70 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25 (total is \$71.25) in which you receive all the lectureship books (less than \$4 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the previous CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Voices from the past:

This appeared in “Defender” February 1979

We Don't Want No Trouble

William S. Cline

We are well aware that the above title is not correct English because it contains a double negative. However, it is totally correct with regard to what is being said by many in the brotherhood, and it perfectly captures the attitude of a great host of brethren who are in the leadership of the church.

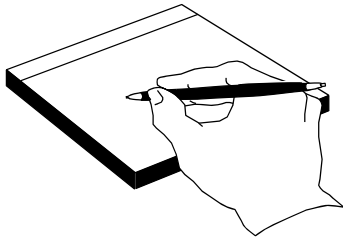
It seems that many brethren “**Don't Want No Trouble**” when it comes to *false teachers*. It absolutely amazes one to notice the freedom that false teachers have today. There was a time when brethren would at least fire a man for teaching false doctrine, and even if they did give him a hypocritical recommendation in order to move him and his false doctrine to an unsuspecting congregation, they at least took *some* stand against the false teacher and his doctrine. What should have been done with regard to such teachers was rarely done. Such men should have been corrected and shown the way of the Lord and if they then refused to repent they should have been marked as false teaches and fellowship should have been withdrawn from them. But most brethren did not do that, even though that is what the Bible teaches because they didn't **want no trouble**. Today we see even less action being taken against the false teacher. Whereas at one time the false teacher was usually fired, today, in many quarters he is allowed to continue in his false ways and stay *in the pulpit* and *on the payroll!* When questioned regarding such, brethren usually say, “Well he is such a good man in so many ways, and he is so well liked by most of the

congregation that we think it wise to let things ride for right now. Our contribution and attendance are doing well and we **don't want no trouble**.” Literally translated that says, “We are more concerned about *money* and *numbers* and a *camouflage peace* than we are the truth.” Thus, the false teacher continues to have the support and the audiences of the church for his work of spreading the cancer of false doctrine.

It also seems that brethren “**don't want no trouble**” when it comes to keeping the church pure within its membership. The world has run after the material things of life until the spiritual and moral seem to have precious little left in our lives. This life has had its influence on the church to the point that we think a man's life **does** consist of the things which he possesses (see Luke 12:15). We value gold far more than we value God, and **seeking the kingdom first** has come to mean “Not missing the Lord's supper any more than you can help it.” The moral standards in the church have been lowered to where, in some congregations, one can do almost anything his heart desires and still remain in fellowship with the brethren. Things that are accepted today would have caused no small stir in the church 15 or 20 years ago. We have “progressed beyond the doctrine” to the point where deacons can have dances in the basements of their homes and brethren say nothing about it. The moral standard in the church has been lowered to where elders attend social functions where alco-

(Continued on page 3)

Notes From The Editor



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100 Years

This year marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the recognized division between the Lord's church and the denomination of the Christian Church. Some apostates within the church are planning on joint services and other joint activities with the Christian Church. Some are planning to attend such activities as the North American Christian Convention and some will attend the Restoration Forum or the Stone-Campbell Dialogue or other such activities with the Christian Church. Then we have places such as Abilene UnChristian University and Tulsa Soul-Damning Workshop which are planning to have Christian Church preachers on their programs. This is nothing new for either of these programs for they have been moving that way for many years now. While it is our desire that they repent, without such repentance it will be far better for the Lord's church if they would simply remove themselves from any association with us.

However, unity movements with this denomination and the Lord's church have taken place on different occasions through this century of division. There was a unity meeting between the two groups arranged by James Deforest Murch and Claude Witty back in the late 1930s. Brother H. Leo Boles effectively ended that effort with his lesson where "he spoke for one and one-half hours in a very firm manner. He declared how the division developed, how it has progressed and especially how the Christian Church had become another denomination, as admitted by some of its own writers. Brother Boles stressed the necessity of following the Word of God as the only way to have unity. He declared, 'You know where you left the Churches of Christ, hence you know where to find them. Come back and unity is the inevitable result'" (Coats 371). At that time, at least for the most part, members of the Lord's

church and those who preached for the church were unwilling to compromise for the sake of unity. The Christian Church was not willing to give up their sin for the sake of unity.

While this attempt did not make much headway, there arose another attempt led by Alan Cloyd along with Don DeWelt. From August 7-9, 1984 they held a "Restoration Summit" to once again try for unity. In this *summit*, there were fifty representatives from each side invited. However, the ones selected to *represent* the Lord's church were mainly those who were ready and willing to compromise. At this meeting, Alan Cloyd removed a tract containing brother H. Leo Boles speech and apologized for its presence. From this *summit*, there were other unity meetings held along with a paper promoting unity—*One Body*. With the liberalism and lack of Bible knowledge in the Lord's church today, this unity movement has made its inroads into the Lord's church.

Today, because of these factors there are many congregations who will be lost to the cause of Christ and begin to openly fellowship this denomination. These congregations began to compromise years ago and once you start compromising in one area, there is simply no stopping point. Thus, they are ripe for the taking by the denominational world.

What brother H. Leo Boles said years ago is still just as true today as it was then. The Christian Church left the Lord's church even before the recognized distinction was made by the census bureau. They left what the Scriptures teach and lost their respect for the Word of God. This loss of respect for God's Word is what lead them to bring in the mechanical instrument of music into the worship. However, this same disrespect for God's Word will result in bringing anything in that is not specifically forbidden. The *liberals* of the Christian Church (yes they are all liberals because they take liberties with God's Word) realized the position they were in and finally split again becoming the Disciples of Christ (fundamentally there is no difference in the two groups, only the degree of liberalism).

The Christian Church left the safe moorings of God's Word and if they want unity, they need to obey the Gospel and begin having the proper respect for God's Word to do only what is authorized by God. The Lord's church is standing today right where it was when it began on Pentecost of Acts 2. It has not changed and works only by the authority of God's Word. When we once begin to compromise (in this or any other doctrine), then there is only a *hair's breath*

between us and total apostasy (as took place resulting in the recognized division by the census one hundred years ago).

MH

Work Cited:

Coats, W. Wayne. "Unity Movements and Their Lessons for Today." *Christian Fellowship*. Ed. Michael Hatcher. Pensacola, FL: Bellview, 1998. 357-95.

(Continued from page 1)

holic beverages are served and in some cases it has been a fact that elders of the Lord's church have served as *bar tenders* and not one single, solitary thing has been done about it! We have seen the church move away from the Bible in moral standards to the point that one elder held a dance in the basement of his home for the teenagers and allowed beer and whiskey to be served. Several young people got drunk but that man, without one word or act of repentance, still serves as an elder today. In congregations throughout the land social drinkers lead the prayers, wait on the Lord's table, and teach in the classroom; dancers, gamblers, and people with filthy mouths remain "members in good standing" without one word of rebuke; and whoremongers, fornicators, and adulterers fill every position in the church from elder, preacher, deacon, and teacher to members. Why isn't something done about it? Why aren't these people withdrawn from and the church purged of the filth and sin that continues to spot its influence in the community? The answer is truly a preponderance one—"we don't want no trouble." In many congregations we have men in the leadership and by leadership we are presently referring to elders, preachers, deacons, and other influential men who are spineless amoebas and intestine-less wonders when it comes to standing for what is right. Just as heaven must surely rejoice when God's people stand for the truth, every saint in hell must have a holiday when God's people refuse to stand for that same truth.

We likewise seem to have brethren that "don't

want no trouble" when it comes to preaching the Gospel. These brethren are evangelistic and want to see everyone in the world converted. At the same time they want everyone in the world to *like* them and to think highly of them. They have not learned that one cannot preach the Gospel as God would have us to and at the same time be popular with every worldly, denominational, and devilish person in the world. Thus, these brethren have "watered" down the Gospel. They are more concerned about the *favor of man* than they are the *favor of God*. They say that we should preach Jesus and leave the church out of our teaching. They say that doctrine is not all that important and that when one stresses doctrine and the church he just drives people away. They have their "Soul Talks" their "Dialogue" meetings and their "Soul Confrontations" but they don't preach and teach the Gospel. They "ape" the denominationalist and constantly talk about "**sharing Jesus**" to the point that it almost makes one want to vomit. They refuse to note that the Bible speaks of preaching Christ and not of **sharing Jesus**. They do all of this and much, much more to seek the approval of the denominational world. They want to be *accepted* and by all means at any cost they "**don't want no trouble**" with the religious world. Many brethren are truly in tune with a new song which says, "I want to go to Fantasy Island where everyone's smiling at me." Debating is made fun of and those who stand four-square for the Gospel of Christ are criticized as being dogmatic, legalistic, and unloving.

Brethren, may we always be careful of our attitude and the way we present the truth of God's Word. But may we also always preach the truth and if that causes trouble then trouble will just have to come, and, if need be, camp on our front porch. Remember it was Elijah, God's anointed prophet, who stood unwavering for the truth that was referred to by wicked Ahab as the "*Troubler of Israel*."

Deceased

"He who will not reason is a bigot;
He who cannot is a fool;
And he who dares not is a slave."

Sir William Drummond

Spring 2006 Lectureship

“Anti-ism—From God or Man”

February 26 - March 2, 2006

David P. Brown, Lectureship Director

Sunday, February 26

9:30 AM	“A Failure to Understand How to Ascertain Bible Authority Can Produce Anti-ism—The Difference in Obligations and Options”	David P. Brown
10:30 AM	“Examples of ‘Anti-ism’ in the New Testament”	Jason Rollo
NOON MEAL PROVIDED BY THE SPRING CONGREGATION		
5:00 PM	“Anti-Bible Classes Doctrine”	Wayne Blake
6:00 PM	“Why ‘Anti-ism’ is Sinful”	Lynn Parker

Monday, February 27

9:00 AM	“A Review of the ‘Whitten-Lanier Debate’—A Discussion of Classes and Woman Teachers”	Bruce Stulting
10:00 AM	“Anti-Located Preacher Doctrine”	Geoff Litke
10:00 AM	“The Importance of Women Knowing Their Bible #1” (Ladies Only)	B. J. Rollo
11:00 AM	“Is There Biblical Authority to Eat in the Church Building and If There Is Such Authority, Does That Same Authority Authorize Gymnasiums and the Like?”	Roelf Ruffner
1:30 PM	“A Review of the ‘Wallace-Ketcherside Debate’—Located Preacher”	Tim Kidwell
2:30 PM	“The Anti-Orphan Home Doctrine Refuted”	Paul Vaughn
3:30 PM	“A Review of the ‘Britnell-Woods Debate’—Orphan Homes”	John West
6:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 PM	“Congregational Cooperation and the Sponsoring church Doctrine”	Darrell Conley
8:00 PM	“A Review of the ‘Bigham-Highers-Bigham Debate”	Randy Mabe

Tuesday, February 28

ALL DAY OPEN FORUM. SUBJECTS: Apologetics Press, Dave Miller, MDR as taught by Stan Crowley, The Gospel Journal Board’s involvement in the departure of Dub McClish as Editor and David B. Watson as Associate Editor from TGJ along with related topics.

The Spring elders, Kenneth D. Cohn and Buddy Roth will moderate the forum. The format for the forum will be as follows: Beginning at 9:00 a.m. there will be a 20-minute speech followed by a 20-minute question and answer period with a 10-minute break between sessions. We will break for Lunch from 11:50 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. The forum will resume at 1:30 p.m. and conclude at 4:20 p.m. with the same format as the morning sessions. Following the dinner break there will be a panel discussion with time for questions and answers during the 7:00 and 8:00 p.m. sessions. The speakers in the forum will be composed of those who accept the Spring elders’ written invitation, which invitation was mailed to them by certified mail with return receipt.

Wednesday, March 1

9:00 AM	“Anti-Located Preacher Doctrine”	Michael Hatcher
10:00 AM	“A Review of the ‘Porter-Waters Debate’—Number of Cups in the Lord’s Supper”	Gary Summers
10:00 AM	“The Importance of Women Knowing Their Bible #2” (Ladies Only)	B. J. Rollo
11:00 AM	“Anti-Woman Teacher Doctrine”	Lee Davis
1:30 PM	“Saints Only Doctrine”	Ken Chumbley
2:30 PM	“Some Implications of ‘Anti-ism’”	Terry Hightower
3:30 PM	“A Review of ‘Lectures on Cooperation’ by Thomas B. Warren”	John M. Brown
6:30 PM	SINGING	
7:00 PM	“Are We ‘Instrumental’ Brethren?”	Daniel Denham
8:00 PM	“A History of ‘Anti-ism’ since the 19 th Century to the Present”	Dub McClish

Thursday, March 2

9:00 AM	“Is Opposing Support for Colleges from the Church Treasury Is Not ‘Anti-ism’?”	Stacey W. Grant
10:00 AM	“Are We Practicing ‘Anti-ism’ Because We Will Not Fellowship the Denominations?”	Lester Kamp
11:00 AM	“The ‘One-Cup’ Doctrine Refuted”	David Smith
1:30 PM	“A Review of the ‘Cogdill-Woods Debate’—Orphan Homes and Cooperation”	Danny Douglas
2:30 PM	“Anti-ism is Not God’s Answer to Liberalism”	Darrell Broking
3:30 PM	“The ‘Hats and Hair’ Doctrine Refuted”	Jerry Murrell
7:00 PM	“Are We Holding a Form of ‘Anti-ism’ Because We Oppose False Doctrine and False Teachers in ACU, OCU, Harding, UI, FHU, Lipscomb U, and the Like?”	Dave Watson
8:00 PM	“Are we Occupying an ‘Anti’ Position When We Oppose The Church of Christ Disaster Relief Agency?”	Kent Bailey

(The was written for the Eighth Lubbock lectures in 2005. In August of that year I received this note from the lectureship director: "You are hereby notified that your invitation to speak in the Eighth Annual Lubbock Lectureship is rescinded. Your name and picture will not be included in any of our advertisements, and your manuscript will not be included in the lectureship book. Yours truly, Tommy J. Hicks, Director." This was one of three positions which was going to be discussed relating to Acts 2:38. Since it was not used for their book, I am producing it here with just a few minor changes. This is part two of this series. I would encourage you to go back and review the first part in the January issue. All endnotes will be placed in the final installment.)

The Gift of the Spirit Was the Ability to Work Miracles

Michael Hatcher

THE WORDS

Many have also said that the Bible is its own best interpreter. Thus, as one studies this subject, he should allow the Bible to speak for itself. One way of doing so is to consider the words which the Spirit chose to use in the passage.

"Gift"

The first word which needs to be considered is *gift* (from the Greek word *dorea*). This word is used six times in connection with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament (it is used in other places other than the six we will consider here but not in connection with the Holy Spirit). Since the first time is the text under consideration and we are trying to determine what it means here, we will omit it from our study at this point.

The second occurrence of this word relating to the Holy Spirit is Acts 8:20: "But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." While it is here called "the gift of God," the context shows that it is the miraculous activity of the Holy Spirit. The Samaritans had been converted to Christ by the preaching of Philip, who had performed miracles in their sight. The apostles send Peter and John to Samaria to impart unto them miraculous powers by the laying on of their hands. Simon saw that through the laying on of the hands of the apostles, miraculous powers were imparted to others. Simon offered money to Peter to have this power to lay hands on another and impart miraculous power. Upon this offer, Peter responds with the statement of this text. The "gift of God," then, refers to the ability to impart miraculous powers to another individual.

The next time it is used in Acts 10:45: "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." This is the conversion of Cornelius and those at his house. To convince the Jews that the Gentiles were also subject to the Gospel, the Spirit comes upon them in a miraculous

way, allowing them to speak in tongues. The *gift* associated with the Holy Spirit in this context is, without question, miraculous.

The next time it is used is when Peter, and those who had gone with him, was rehearsing what took place at the house of Cornelius. He states, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17). The *gift* spoken of by Peter is the miraculous powers which the apostles received on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Cornelius and those with him had received a "like gift" in that they received miraculous powers (specifically, the power to speak in tongues) and receiving those powers directly from God without the intervention of the apostles (the laying on of the apostles' hands). Again, *gift*, when used in connection with the Spirit, is miraculous in nature.

The other two passages are in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. The first of these two is Ephesians 3:7: "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power." The context here also shows that the "gift of the grace of God" is miraculous in nature. In verse three Paul discusses the revelation God gave to him. This revelation came by direct miraculous power (Gal. 1:11-12). Then in verse five he discusses how that the mystery of Christ had been revealed to the apostles and prophets as they were speaking by the Spirit. There is a revelation which the apostles and prophets received and spoke by the Spirit, all indicating the miraculous nature of the Spirit. When we come to verse seven, Paul mentions that he was made a minister, which is equivalent to his apostleship. Thus, "the gift of the grace of God" was the apostolic gift of the Spirit that Paul received as an apostle. Then "the effectual working of his power" means the miraculous power that belonged to Paul as an apostle. Again, *gift* is used for miraculous powers.

The last time *gift* is used in connection with the

Holy Spirit is Ephesians 4:7: “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Again, considering the context, this use of *gift* must be considered miraculous. The grace that has been given (“the measure of the gift of Christ”) is the same as “gave gifts unto men” of verse 8. This is a summation of the miraculous gifts stated in verse eleven. He did this when He ascended up on high by sending the Spirit to the apostles. This is what Jesus stated to the apostles: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7). The going away is the same as the “ascending up on high” (v. 8), “ascended” (v. 9), and “ascended up” (v. 10). Then the sending of the Comforter (John 16:7) is the same as “that he might fill all things” (Eph. 4:10), which is the same as the “grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (v. 7). This is, thus, dealing with the miraculous powers which Christ gave to some when He ascended back to heaven.

In studying each passage the Greek term translated *gift* is used in association with the Holy Spirit, it refers to the miraculous (to which this author believes all would agree). It would seem strange, at best, to then approach Acts 2:38 and assign the word some meaning other than miraculous.

“Receive”

The word translated *receive* is used numerous times in the Scriptures. It is used several times relating to the Holy Spirit and carries with it the idea of miraculous. Consider some of these passages. Jesus used *receive*: “(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” (John 7:39). This is the first time *receive* is used regarding the Spirit and is looking forward to Pentecost (when He will have been glorified and ascended back to heaven) and the miraculous when the Spirit would be given to the apostles.

After the resurrection and prior to the ascension, Jesus appears to His apostles and says to them: “Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained” (John 20:21-23). This is John’s record of the Great commission and the promise of inspiration

(miraculous powers) to the apostles.

In Acts 8, Philip went to Samaria and preached the Gospel to them. When they obeyed the Gospel, the apostles sent Peter and John to Samaria. It is here that we find *receive(d)* used twice in connection with the Holy Spirit: “Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8:15-17). Here it refers to the Samaritans receiving miraculous powers by the apostles laying hands on them. Brother Franklin Camp mentions concerning this passage: “This is the first time anyone is said to have received the Holy Spirit since Acts 2. I do not mean that others had not received miraculous endowments before this, because they certainly had. Philip could not have preached and performed miracles in Samaria without a miraculous endowment. What I am saying is that this is the first time the Bible specifically mentions someone receiving the Holy Spirit since Acts 2. The first recorded instance after Acts 2 of someone receiving the Holy Spirit was a miraculous reception. It is well also to keep in mind that this is an instance of Christians receiving the Holy Spirit during the period of the miraculous” (140).

The next time it is used is Acts 10:47. We considered the context of this verse previously as being miraculous in nature. The house of Cornelius had miraculous powers given to them directly by God, enabling them to speak in tongues. Peter refers to their receiving miraculous powers as having *received* the Holy Spirit.

The next usage by the beloved physician regards the men of Ephesus (Acts 19). Paul asked the twelve men if they had *received* the Holy Spirit (v. 2) since they had believed. They responded by saying they had not so much as heard if there was a Spirit. Paul then asked them into what they had been baptized and they responded with John’s baptism (v. 3). He then taught them the truth concerning Jesus and they were baptized in the name of Christ (v. 5). After their baptism, Paul then laid hands on them and imparted to them the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit here is miraculous powers, because they spoke with tongues and prophesied (v. 6), both of which are miraculous in nature. Thus, when Paul asked them if they had *received* the Spirit, he was referring to miraculous powers.

There are two other passages outside of Acts which

need to be considered briefly regarding *receive* with the Holy Spirit. Paul inquired of the Galatians if they had *received* the Spirit through the Law of Moses or through faith in Christ (Gal. 3:2). The context of this passage is the miraculous powers which they had received through the laying on of the apostle's hands. This power to impart miraculous powers to them not only proved Paul's apostleship, but also that Christianity was superior to Judaism and they should not return to it. That this refers to the miraculous is evidenced by what Paul writes in verse five: "He therefore that supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (ASV). Paul had "supplied" the Spirit to them (imparted to them miraculous powers by the laying on of his hands), proving that he was an apostle of Christ. The Galatians had not received miraculous powers from the Judaizing teachers, but from Paul. This is what Paul was pointing out to them by the question: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (v. 2).

Then John mentions the *anointing* they had received in 1 John 2:27. John writes, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is

no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (1 John 2:27). The *anointing* which they had *received* was of a miraculous nature. The evidence of this is seen in the verse itself. They did not need any man to teach them because they were inspired. They had spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-12) enabling them to know and teach the truth. Those spiritual gifts were in the early church for that very purpose until God's revelation was completed (1 Cor. 13:8-13).

Here are seven passages which all use *receive* (Greek word *lambano*) in connection with the Holy Spirit. In these seven cases, receiving the Spirit is used to convey the meaning of miraculous. When one comes to Acts 2:38 and Peter says, "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," why would we think of anything other than the miraculous? Additionally, if God is wanting to express the miraculous, why would He not use the terms which He used here? As brother Camp stated, "Put together the six times the word 'gift' is used with the eight times the Bible speaks of people 'receiving the Spirit,' and my conviction is that the 'gift of the Spirit' means miraculous, as established by the Bible. If these arguments do not prove it, I must confess that I do not know how to prove anything by the Bible" (147).

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

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(The was written for the Eighth Lubbock lectures in 2005. In August of that year I received this note from the lectureship director: “You are hereby notified that your invitation to speak in the Eighth Annual Lubbock Lectureship is rescinded. Your name and picture will not be included in any of our advertisements, and your manuscript will not be included in the lectureship book. Yours truly, Tommy J. Hicks, Director.” This was one of three positions which was going to be discussed relating to Acts 2:38. Since it was not used for their book, I am producing it here with just a few minor changes. This is the last of the three parts. I would encourage you to read or review the first two parts.)

The Gift of the Spirit Was the Ability to Work Miracles

Michael Hatcher

THE PHRASE

The phrase, “the gift of the Holy Ghost” is found twice in Holy Writ. If we allow the Bible to be its own best commentary, then when we find the phrase in Acts 2:38 found in another place, then it would give good evidence that what it means at that location is what it means in Acts 2:38. We have used this approach in dealing with the denominational world for years. We see “for the remission of sins” in Acts 2:38 and we show the denominational world that this must mean that “for” is looking forward to and not because of by showing that is its meaning in Matthew 26:28: “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” We correctly point out that Jesus did not shed His blood because we already had the remission of sins, but He shed His blood so we might have the remission of sins. We correctly allow Matthew 26:28 to explain Acts 2:38. Many who will use this in dealing with the denominational world concerning “for the remission of sins” will *balk* at its use when applied to “the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

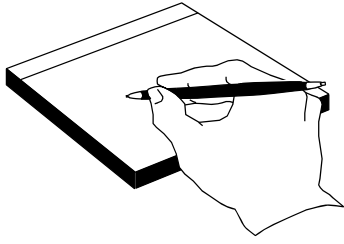
“The gift of the Holy Spirit” is found two places in the Bible, both in Acts: Acts 2:38 and Acts 10:45. When we consider the passage in Acts 10, we must conclude that it is miraculous. Peter goes to the house

of Cornelius as instructed by God. When he arrives and hears Cornelius’ rehearsal of events leading up to his sending for Peter, Peter begins preaching the Gospel to those assembled there to “hear all things that are commanded thee of God” (v. 33). It then states: “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God” (vv. 44-46). The beloved physician records that the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles, then described it as the Gentiles had the gift of the Spirit poured out on them. Notice what he says about this situation, which shows that it was miraculous in nature: the Gentiles were able to speak with tongues. That power to speak in tongues shows that the “gift of the Holy Ghost” was miraculous in nature. (The author does not know anyone who would deny this to be the case.)

If we absolutely know (as we do) that “gift of the Holy Ghost” is miraculous in nature in Acts 10:45, then why would we think it is anything other than miraculous in Acts 2:38? The only difference is that

(Continued on page 3)

Notes From The Editor



**Michael
Hatcher**

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“I Forced Myself”

Saul had been named as King of Israel. He gathered his forces to go fight the Philistines. The Philistines had “thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which *is* on the sea shore in multitude” (1 Sam. 13:5). Samuel (the priest of God) was going to come and offer sacrifices for the Israelites. Saul “tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him” (13:8). Yet, as we see here, Samuel delayed his coming. We also observe that the people, that is Saul’s army, was scattering. Saul felt like he had to do something, and he was in such a bad situation. The Philistines were there to battle against him (and they might attack at any time), his army was scattering, he had not offered burnt offerings to God, and Samuel delayed his coming.

This is a really bad situation, and if Saul does not do something he will lose the people. Thus, “Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering” (13:9). Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin “of which no man gave attendance at the altar” (Heb. 7:13). Saul did not have authority from God for his action of going in and offering the burnt offering (God authorized the Levites to do this action). However, look at what would have happened if he did not act! He simply **had** to do **something**. So he offered the burnt offering. Then Samuel came: “And Samuel said, What hast thou done?” (1 Sam. 13:11). Saul began offering his excuse for offering the burnt offering: “Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the

LORD: **I forced myself** therefore, and offered a burnt offering” (13:11-12). In offering his excuses, Saul blames everyone but himself for his actions. He blamed Samuel for his delayed arrival, he blamed his soldiers for beginning to scatter, he blamed the Philistines, he blamed the sacrifices which needed to be made, and he blamed God for requiring such sacrifices and that He only authorized the Levites to do such.

This sounds amazingly familiar to what I am hearing today by many individuals. Because of the situation, we had to do something (which is nothing more than situation ethics), otherwise we would lose the congregation. This is heard from the standpoint of elder reaffirmation/reconfirmation. We are being told by some who say that they are opposed to the process of reaffirmation/reconfirmation (that is if it is done on a regular basis or is done to remove scripturally qualified elders) that because of the situation (specifically at Brown Trail both in 1990 and then again in 2002) within the eldership and with the congregation, that they had to do something or else they would lose the congregation (and the preacher training school). Therefore, they forced themselves to practice this unauthorized action. Now, the one who preached the sermon advocating this action (Dave Miller) is placing the blame on the elders (supposedly he was simply following what they established), the congregation (they would have scattered), and God (He did not give us any instructions as to **how** to remove an unscriptural elder in a bad situation). He, along with those who now are forced to support him so they can support Apologetics Press, are in the exact situation as that of King Saul of old—blaming everyone else and taking no responsibility in the matter. What they need to do is to **repent**. Stop defending the practice (especially based upon the situation and purpose), stop defending yourself (yourselves), stop blaming others, and repent for teaching false doctrine and practicing unauthorized actions (sin)!

An important question in this, and one which I have been asked by some is: How do you get rid of an unscriptural elder? First, we should not do something for which there is no authority from God! Some have claimed that it is a matter of judgment (expediency), however before something can be a matter of judgment (expedient) it must first be authorized! Reaffirmation/reconfirmation simply is not authorized and is actually contrary to the nature of the organization which God instituted.

The answer is to do what God said in the matter. That answer is found in Paul’s letter to Timothy:

“Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (1 Tim. 5:19-20). Consider what God has here instructed. This is being written to a preacher. It is being written about elders. God has already established the qualifications for being an elder (1 Tim. 3). However, God is now dealing with those who are presently elders. He deals with those who serve well: “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward” (5:17-18).

However, as we all know, sometimes elders are not what they should be (as is the case with the situation at Brown Trail in 1990). What is to be done then? First, all things **must** be established properly. Timothy (the preacher) should not listen to innuendos, rumors, etc. Nor should he act upon things which are simply matters of judgment. However, when sin is proven by adequate evidence, then Timothy (the preacher) was to take action. *Sin* is in the present tense showing that this is continual action. He is to rebuke the elder and that is to be done before everyone. *Rebuke* is defined as: “1. To scrutinize or examine carefully, *bring to light, expose set forth...* 2. to bring a pers. to the point of recognizing wrongdoing, *convict, convince* someone of someth., *point someth. Out to someone...* 3. to express strong disapproval of someone’s action, *reprove, correct...* 4. to penalize for wrongdoing, *punish, discipline*” (Arndt 315). We now know what God says is to be done.

Let us make the application. When an elder continues to sin (implying that he refuses to repent of such sin) and it is proven (the mouth of two or three witnesses), then the preacher is under obligation to *get up in the pulpit* (this is to be done before everyone) and expose his sin. The purpose of this would be to bring him to the point or recognizing his wrongdoing and, thus, repent. If this fails to bring him to repentance, then it would be the preacher’s responsibility in disciplining him (leading the congregation in withdrawing fellowship from him). The problem is that we have too many preachers who do not have the backbone to do what God said to do. Instead they find ways to escape the responsibility God gave them and instead devise their own ways to get rid of elders which God never authorized (reaffirmation/reconfirmation process).MH

ENDNOTE:

Arndt, W., F. W. Danker, and W. Bauer. ἐλέγχω. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

(Continued from page 1)

with Cornelius, the miraculous power came directly from God, while those who heard this statement on Pentecost would come by the laying on of the hands of the apostles.

PARALLEL PASSAGES

Those who hold this position often hear the argument that if this position is true, then it would follow that miracles would also be for today. They reason that since repentance and baptism is still valid today for the remission of sins, that if this position is true, then when someone today repented, and was baptized they would not only receive the remission of sins, they must also receive “the gift of the Holy Ghost,” or miraculous powers. However, these same individuals have no difficulty with Mark 16.

Consider the parallel between what Jesus stated beginning in Mark 16:15 and the record of events in Acts 2. In the great commission Jesus stated: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.” (Mark 16:15-20). Notice these things about the commission: (1) they were to preach the Gospel; (2) the hearers needed to believe; (3) the hearers were to be baptized; (4) those who believed and were baptized would receive salvation (that is salvation from past sins); (5) miracles would follow.

Now consider the events of Acts 2 in relationship to Mark’s account. The Holy Spirit comes upon the apostles (vv. 1-4) and the crowd gathers (vv. 5-13). Peter explains that this is the fulfilling of Joel’s prophecy (vv. 14-21) and begins preaching the Gospel to them. In preaching to them, Peter is instilling faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (vv. 22-36). They demonstrated their faith and conviction of sins when they asked what they needed to do (v. 37). Peter instructs them they need to repent and each one needs to be baptized to obtain the remission of sins. It is at this point the statement of our discussion is uttered, that

they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Notice a comparison with the points noted previously from Mark 16:15-20: (1) Peter and the apostles preached the Gospel to the people; (2) the hearers were brought to belief in Jesus as the Son of God; (3) they were informed of their need to repent (while not specifically mentioned in Mark's account, it is in Luke's account); (4) they were also informed of their need to be baptized; (5) those who repented and were baptized would receive the remission of sins (salvation from past sins); (6) those who repented and were baptized would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. When one considers the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, why would one not understand the phrase to have reference to miraculous powers, as in Mark 16? Robert Taylor noted, "In Acts 2:38 people are promised remission of sins upon meeting the specified conditions of repentance and baptism. Then they are promised the miraculous gift of the Spirit enabling them to perform what was promised in Mark 16:17-18" (182).

Acts 2:38 also parallels Acts 3:19, which reads: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." In both passages, there is the command to repent. Next, there is the command to be baptized, which is the same as saying to be converted (turn again—ASV). Upon these actions there is the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Then there is the statement of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit in 2:38, and times (seasons—ASV) of refreshing from the presence of the Lord in 3:19. There are those who contend that this is a personal indwelling of the Spirit; however, they immediately state that He does not do anything for them except through the Word of God. They admit that the only way they know that He is in them is by the Word. How could such be a time of refreshing from the Lord? This offers no blessings whatsoever to the Christian. Brother Guy N. Woods mentions that it "(a) gives them no awareness of his presence, (b) teaches them no truth, (c) offers them no protection against accepting error, (d) and requires them to resort to a book nineteen hundred years old to learn his will through study when he is actually there and in direct contact with the heart (understanding) at the time!" (56). Yet, this statement makes perfect sense if one understands it as referring to miraculous power which would be imparted by the laying on of the apostles hands.

"GIFT OF..."

There is another aspect to the phrase "gift of the

Holy Spirit" which needs to be considered. When "gift of X," where "X" is a person's name and not a thing, then it always means the gift which that person gives. It never means that the person named in the phrase is the gift given. "Gift of God" is found eight times in the Bible (Ecc. 3:13; 5:19; John 4:10; Acts 8:20; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 7:7; Eph. 2:8; 2 Tim. 1:6). In not one of these eight times is the gift God Himself—it is always something which God gives. "Gift of Christ" is found one time, Ephesians 4:7, where it is something which Christ gives; Christ himself is not the gift. There are two times "gift of the Holy Ghost" is found (Acts 2:38; 10:45) and once where *gift* is in the plural instead of the singular (Heb. 2:4). In these three instances, the Holy Spirit Himself is not the gift unless Acts 2:38 is the exception.

Additionally, we find a few times where gift is used with a pronoun (which is a substitute for a noun). Numbers 18:11 speaks of "their gift," referring to the heave offering. Other offerings are mentioned in Leviticus 23:38 ("your gifts") and Numbers 18:29 ("your gifts"). Daniel told Belshazzar to "let thy gifts be to thyself" (Dan. 5:17). There are three times we find it in Ezekiel 20: "Their own gifts" (v. 26) and "your gifts" (vv. 31, 39). While there are other verses, this writer would challenge anyone to find one time where the phrase "gift of [person, or pronoun]" means the person is the gift.

Some have appealed to the statement in Thayer as evidence that the person is a gift when Thayer mentions: "with an epexegetical gen. Of the thing given... Acts ii. 38; x. 45" (161). According to Thayer, here is a situation where the Holy Spirit is the gift. When one uses Thayer for evidence that the Holy Spirit Himself is the gift, they need to realize that Thayer was a Unitarian. Being a Unitarian, Thayer did not believe that the Spirit was a person but, rather, a thing. Notice the quote again where he says "of the **thing** given" and not "of the person given." Others follow suit with Thayer and state that it is the Spirit that is given: "in Acts 2:38, 'the gift of the Holy Ghost,' the clause is epexegetical, the gift being the Holy Ghost Himself; cp. 10:45; 11:17" (Vine) or "w. gen....*receive the Spirit as a gift* Ac 2:38; cp. 10:45" (Arndt 266). It is interesting that each one also includes Acts 10:45 where we know that it is miraculous powers which were given, and not the Spirit Himself. Again, we would challenge any to find the phrase where "gift of [person, or pronoun]" means the person is the gift. However, they cannot find such!

ACTS 2:39

Peter goes on to state: “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39). What is the promise here? Some would have you believe that it is salvation, while others believe that it is the Abrahamic promise, but these do not fit what this verse says (as this author will set forth). It is much more logical and consistent to view the promise as applying to Joel’s prophecy of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This, again, meets the context of the passage and the people’s expectations from what has been said.

The *promise* in Acts 2:39 refers back to the promise mentioned in Acts 2:33 (this is the only other time *promise* is used in Acts 2). Peter has just said: “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2:33). What is the promise of Acts 2:33? It obviously has reference to the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and refers back to the prophecy of Joel, with which Peter began his lesson (Acts 2:16-21). This is what the apostles were promised (Acts 1:4) and received (Acts 2:1-4). However, Joel’s prophecy was not limited to the apostles. The apostles must receive the baptism of the Spirit to fulfil the rest of the prophecy. Now this is the context of the statement; why would we understand it any different than what the context determines?

Notice the parallel between Peter’s statement of Joel’s prophecy and what he says in verse 39. Joel has said that the promise was to “you”—the Jews; this would be the same as the “you” in verse 39. Joel says that their sons and daughters would prophesy—this is the same as “your children” of verse 39. There are some who, at this point, want to apply “your children” as being a perpetual promise, or a promise that includes all their posterity. However, notice the contrast when the writer intends for this to mean their posterity and when they only mean the next generation. Joel shows us the contrast when he begins his book with: “Tell ye your children of it, and *let* your children *tell* their children, and their children another generation” (Joel 1:3). See how this is contrasted with what he writes concerning the outpouring of the Spirit with only “your sons and your daughters” (Joel 2:28). If Joel was wanting to convey a perpetual promise, he would not have said simply “your sons and your daughters,” but would have added to that like he did earlier in the book.

Also notice the phraseology as spoken by our Lord in discussing the destruction of Jerusalem: “But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children” (Luke 23:28). How is “yourselves, and for your children” in this passage any different than what Peter says in Acts 2:39, “you and to your children”? Neither has reference to future posterity, but only to the next generation (their immediate children).

The last phrase in this verse causes many to think that it applies to all Christians of all time: “as many as the Lord our God shall call.” *Call* is often equated with Paul’s statement: “Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 The. 2:14). However, the two *calls* are not from the same word. “Called” in 2 Thessalonians is from the Greek *kaleo*, while in Acts 2:39, “call” is from the Greek *proskaleomai*. When speaking of the Gospel call (a call to salvation), then it is *kaleo*. However, the call of Acts 2:39 (*proskaleomai*) is a more restrictive call. Swanson states of this word, “call to a task” (GGK4673) and Arndt writes, “call to a special task or office” (881). The word in Acts 2:39 is also found in Acts 13:2, which also shows the restrictive use of the word. Notice what is said: “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:1-2). There is a larger group (six prophets and teachers), yet *called* refers to the smaller group (Barnabas and Saul) who would be going to the Gentile world. This same word is also found in Acts 16:10 where Paul and Luke are appointed for the work in Macedonia: “And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them” (Acts 16:10). Paul and Barnabas were already called (*kaleo*) to salvation; now they were being called (*proskaleomai*) to the performance of this specific task or office. “The basic meaning of the term is ‘to call to oneself’ and is used thirty times in the New Testaments, but never to refer to the calling of a sinner to Salvation—UNLESS ACTS 2:39 IS THE ONLY EXCEPTION! If all other twenty-nine occurrences are never so used, and if the call to salvation normally uses the word *kaleo*, is it not probable that something other than a call to salvation is under

consideration in Acts 2:39?" (20). This would be a limited call (just like the other occasions) of those who had received salvation and are now being called to receive miraculous powers. That limited call would be to those who would have the apostles lay hands on them to impart miraculous powers.

This corresponds to "as many as" which denotes a smaller more select group than the larger group. Price and Cosby state, "An interesting feature about this word is that it is used to denote a smaller, more select group being contemplated, whenever it is found in combination with a larger group" (21). They then give three examples (Matthew 22:9, John 1:12, and Acts 4:34) and state that the list could be greatly enlarged. They continue: "there are two groups under consideration—a larger and a smaller—with the term 'as many as' designating the smaller, more restricted group. Likewise in Acts 2:39 there are two groups under consideration: those bidden and those not bidden by God" (21). In the case of Acts 2:38-39, those bidden by God are those who will receive miraculous powers by having the apostles lay hands on them (the smaller group). This is consistent with the entire passage.

CONCLUSION

The view presented by this writer is harmonious with everything within the context. It harmonizes with the words as they are found elsewhere in the Scriptures.

It harmonizes with the phrases found in the Word of God. It harmonizes with the time-frame of the first century (since the apostles were there and could impart miraculous powers). While the other views of this passage do no damage to God's Word, this understanding is the most reasonable view one can hold.

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Old Copy

George E. Darling, Sr.

In the November 24, 1932 issue of the *Gospel Advocate* there appeared an editorial by Foy E. Wallace, Jr., that I think is worthy of reprinting for the readers of the *Defender*, in that I believe it well states the policy of this paper. May God help us when we get to a point that all of our religious papers will no longer be organs to promote truth and expose error both in and out of the church (G. E. Darling, Sr.).

The church of the New Testament grew when opponents of the truth beheaded its exponents. The church of the past century grew when our own pioneers waged relentless war on error in denominations, when the doors of public buildings were closed against them, when persecution was bitter, and when courage was an essential quality in the man who would preach the Gospel. Imagine the preachers and editors that have graced the pulpit and page in the past generation steering clear of disputed issues! Where would the church

be today? The church of this generation will become languid in compromise, if not entirely lose its identity among the humanisms of the day, if the non-combative policy some brethren urge should be adopted.

Those brethren who think the policy of exposing error in or out of the church too drastic and who believe a course of less resistance and severity should be pursued would do well to look up some old files of the papers and see how the men whose memories are cherished and whose praises are yet sung wrote and preached a generation ago. We often hear it said, "We need a Lipscomb, a Sewell, a Benjamin Franklin, at the helm today." True, indeed, and if they were here to do the steering, certain forms of error gaining currency in our own ranks could not get a start.

And some good but misinformed, brethren would have us keep GOSPEL ADVOCATE free of all

disputed issues. That is too much like trying to preach Christ and say nothing about baptism. The Bible itself is full of disputed issues. Jesus disputed with every class of errorists of His day. Paul was both an offensive and defensive fighter. His words to that perverter of the Way, named “Elymas,” who sought to turn Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, verbal volcanic eruption: “O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” Too harsh, too harsh, Paul; you ought to preach in love! If Gospel preachers today should preach like Christ and the apostles preached, it would give some of the brethren creeping paralysis.

It will not bid a fair future for the church of Christ when brethren in large numbers come to maintain an apologetic attitude toward the truth, or oppose exposition of error, or object to the discussion of disputed issues.

Keep in mind, brethren, the above was written in 1932. It was needed then, and oh, how it is needed today. Too many of our editors are applying the “soft touch.” Their papers could do worlds of good for the cause of Christ if they would weld their pens against the liberalism that is engulfing the church. How confus-

ing it must be for some who accidentally get their hands on *Contending for the Faith*, *First Century Christian*, *The Defender*, *Words of Life*, *The Bible Way*, and **only a few more** of our papers that have the courage to expose and combat the forces of evil in and out of the church, to then read the **big** papers (thousands of subscribers) and see articles by the promulgators of heresies. Is this endorsement by association? It is amazing, to say the least, to look back 30-35 years and note the difference in the “leading journals” of our brotherhood. We believed in “**disputing**” then. Today we are trying to play both ends and the middle. Is this what is meant by the “middle of the road”?

Deceased

Editor's Note: What was written years ago by brother Darling holds true today also. While some of the papers he mentioned do not even exist today, we do have some which are not afraid to enter the fray and take a stand for truth. Sadly, so many of our papers today are taking out all the opposition to error and refusing to expose error and sin within their pages. They have taken a feel-good attitude and avoid any and all controversy in what they publish. As brother Darling said, they could do so much good, but they do not.

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Voices from the past:

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Religious Controversy

Alexander Campbell

Many good men whose whole lives have been one continued struggle with themselves, one continued warfare against error and iniquity, have reprobated religious controversy as a great and manifold evil to the combatants and to society. Although engaged in a real controversy, they knew it not; but supposed that they only were controversialists who were in debates and discussions often. Had they reflected but a moment, they would have discovered that no man can be a good man who does not oppose error and immorality in himself, his family, his neighborhood, and in society as far as he can reach, and that he cannot oppose it successfully only by argument, or, as some would say, by word and deed—by precept and by example.

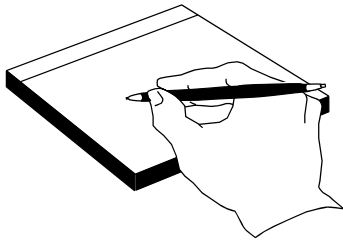
There can be no improvement without controversy. Improvement requires and presupposes change; change is innovation, and innovation always has elicited opposition, and that is what constitutes the essentials of controversy. Every man who reforms his own life has a controversy with himself. And, therefore, no man who has not always been perfect, and always been in company with perfect society can be a good man without controversy. This being conceded, (and who can refuse to concede it?) it follows that whensoever society, religious or political, falls into error; or rather, so long as it is imperfect, it is the duty of all who have any talent or ability to oppose error, moral or political, who have intelligence to distinguish, and utterance to express, truth

and goodness, to lift up a standard against it, and to panoply themselves for the combat.

But yet, plain and obvious as the preceding remarks maybe, many will contend that religious controversy, oral or written, is incompatible with the pacific and contemplative character of the genuine Christian, and promotive of strifes, tumults, and factions in society, destructive of true piety towards God and of benevolence towards man. This is a prejudice arising from the abuses of controversy. Admit for a moment that it were so, and what would be the consequence? It would unsaint and unchristianize every distinguished Patriarch, Jew, and Christian enrolled in the sacred annals of the world. For who of the Bible's great and good men was not engaged in religious controversy! To go no farther back than the Jewish lawgiver, I ask, What was his character? I need not specify. Whenever it was necessary, all—yes, all the renowned men of antiquity were religious controversialists. Moses long contended with the Egyptian magi. He overcame Jannes and Jambres, too. Elijah encountered the prophets of Baal. Job long debated with the princes of Edom. The Jewish prophets and the idolatrous kings of Israel waged a long and arduous controversy. John the Harbinger, and the Scribes and Pharisees, met in conflict. Jesus, and the Rabbis, and the Priesthood, long debated. The Apostles and the Sanhedrim; the Evangelists and the Doctors of Divinity; Paul and the

(Continued on page 3)

Notes From The Editor



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One Church?

The Lord's church has come under attack once again. While our hearts go out to the Winkler family, and those who loved and cared for him, at the death of Matthew Winkler. However, others are now using this tragedy as a means to attack the church. A good illustration of this was the piece they had on the Nancy Grace show. On one of her shows they had a Baptist Church *Pastor*, Tom Rukala, to tell everyone that the Lord's church is a "borderline cult." A couple of days after this, they had the apostate Rubel Shelly to *represent* the church (although from what I have read, she did not give him much of a chance). However, in this article I want to deal more with some of the comments made by Mr. Rukala.

Rukala stated that the church is "relatively new" and that it was started about 150 years ago by Alexander Campbell. This is either out and out lying or simply a statement from ignorance. Either way, it is a misrepresentation. The Lord built His church (Mat. 16:18) on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Those who obeyed the commands of our Lord in being baptized for the remission of their sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38-41) were being added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:47), the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16). Alexander Campbell came on the scene way too late to start the church of Christ. The church had been in existence for centuries before he was even born.

Did Alexander Campbell start the church? As just noted, the church had been in existence centuries before Campbell was born. Those who are members of the Lord's church would challenge anyone to find any doctrine which we teach and practice which originated with Alexander Campbell. Actually, what Campbell believed and taught is of no more importance than what any other person believes and teaches. If what Campbell believed and taught corresponded to what the Bible

teaches, then we should believe it and practice it. However, if he believed and taught something which is not in harmony with God's Word (as there are some), it should be rejected. The same principle is true of any man. While we should appreciate the work which Alexander Campbell did in calling men to return to the Bible, we should never follow any man—only Christ.

Mr. Rukala also stated, "They claim that they are the only ones going to heaven, and all other people are condemned to hell." This is more of a claim that others express to bring about prejudice against the Lord's church. However, I would answer it that we believe that anyone who obeys what God says in His Word will be saved, all others will be lost ("condemned to hell"). The Bible teaches that Christ brings salvation to those who **obey** Him. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9). Those who do not obey the Gospel will be lost. "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 The. 1:6-9). It then becomes incumbent upon us to examine and see if the religious group teaches and obeys God's Word. If a religious group follows what is authorized by the Bible, then they are that one church you read about in the pages of the New Testament, and that one church which Christ will save (Eph. 5:23). However, the prevailing thought today (and as presented by Mr. Rukala) is that a religious group can disobey God and still go to heaven (as long as they hold the "traditional Christian view" concerning salvation).

Concerning salvation (and the "traditional Christian view"), Mr. Rukala said, "all those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved because we're saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again." This is actually a true statement of which the Scriptures agree, although his misinterpretation of this is what we could not agree with). The Bible does teach we are saved by God's grace. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11). We must look to what God has done in sending Christ to die for sinful mankind for our salvation. It is also through our faith. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest

any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9). Faith can be used in two ways (both of them relating to our salvation). Faith can be used in a specific sense in that it is a mental assent. We must believe in God (Heb. 11:6), in Christ (John 8:24), and that He died for our sins (Mark 16:15-16). However, faith can be used in a general sense dealing with the entirety of man’s response to God. Peter uses it this way when he writes, “Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls” (1 Pet. 1:9). Here faith is being used for the entire Christian life that culminates in eternal salvation. Thus, we are saved by grace through our faith.

Salvation is given to all those who call on the name of the Lord. Peter quotes Joel as saying, “And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). Paul writes, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13). Anyone who would deny that salvation is given to those who call on the name of the Lord deny the clear teaching of the Scriptures. The question is **how** do we call on the name of the Lord? It is not simply an audible calling. Jesus stated, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 7:21). The only way to call on the name of the Lord is in obedience to His Will. After Paul tells us that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom. 10:13), he goes on to say, “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?” (Rom. 10:16). Peter lets us know how to call on the Lord’s name in that very first Gospel sermon. He told them that whoever called on the Lord’s name would be saved (Acts 2:21). When the people who heard that were convicted of Christ’s deity, they cried out, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” (2:37). They had already been told—call on the name of the Lord (2:21). However, Peter tells them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). To be saved (have the remission of their sins) they had to call on the name of the Lord. The **only** way to call on the name of the Lord was by repenting and being baptized for the remission of their sins. This is confirmed for us in Acts 22:16: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Thus, while Mr. Rukala states that which is correct, when he ridicules the necessity of baptism, his interpretation is totally off-base and sinful.

There were other misrepresentations made concerning the Lord’s church, but the sad part is that many

will believe these misrepresentations and do so without any investigation. However, it does present us with some opportunities to teach others. Let us make sure we afford ourselves of each opportunity to do so. *MH*

(Continued from page 1)

Sceptics, engaged in many a conflict; and even Michael fought in “wordy debate” with the Devil about the body of Moses; yet who was more meek than Moses—more zealous for God than Elijah—more patient than Job—more devout than Paul—more benevolent than John?

If there was no error in principle or practice, then controversy, which is only another name for opposition to error, real or supposed, would be unnecessary. If it were lawful, or if it were benevolent, to make a truce with error, then opposition to it would be both unjust and unkind. If error were innocent and harmless, then we might permit it to find its own quietus, or to immortalize itself. But so long as it is confessed that error is more or less injurious to the welfare of society, individually and collectively considered, then no man can be considered benevolent who does not set his face against it. In proportion as a person is intelligent and benevolent, he will be controversial, if error exist around him. Hence the Prince of Peace never sheathed the sword of the Spirit while he lived. He drew it on the banks of the Jordan and threw the scabbard away.

We have only to ask how we inherited so many blessings, religious and political, contrasted with our ancestors some five hundred years ago, to ascertain of what use controversy has been, and how much we are indebted to it. All was silent and peaceful as the grave under the gloomy sceptre of Roman Pontiffs under the despotic sway of the Roman hierarchy until Luther opened the war. The Roman priesthood denounced the “ruinous errors” and “damnable heresies” of Luther, the “*deadly influence*” of the tongue and pen of the hiersiarch; but they fasted, and prayed, and denounced in vain. No crocodile tears “over the souls of men;” no religious penances for “the church in danger;” no invocation of “all who loved Zion;” no holy co-operation of “the friends of evangelical principles,” could check the career of this reforming Hercules. Bulls of excommunication assailed him as stubble would Leviathan in the deep. “He feared no discipline of human hands.” All was impotent and unavailing. The fire then kindled, though oft suppressed, yet burns.

The controversy begun by Luther, not only maimed the power of the Roman hierarchy, but also impaired

the arm of political despotism. The *crown*, as well as the *mitre*, was jeopardized and desecrated by his herculean pen. From the controversy about the *rights of christians* arose the controversy about *the rights of men*. Every blow inflicted upon ecclesiastical despotism was felt by the political tyrants.

Religious controversy has enlightened the world. It gave new vigor to the mind; and the era of the Reformation was the era of the Revival of Literature. It has enlightened men upon all subjects—in all the arts and sciences—in all things—philosophic, literary, moral, political. It was the tongue and pen of controversy which developed the true solar system—laid the foundation for the American Revolution—abolished the slave trade—and which has so far disenthralled the human mind from the shackles of superstition. Locke and Sidney, Milton and Newton, were all controvertists and reformers, philosophers, literary, religious and political. Truth and liberty, both religious and political, are the first fruits of well directed controversy. Peace and eternal bliss will be the “harvest home.” Let the opponents of controversy, or they who *controvert controversy*, remember, that had there been no controversy, neither the Jewish nor the Christian religion could have ever been established; nor had it ceased could the Reformation have ever been achieved. It has been the parent of almost all the social blessings which we enjoy.

If, indeed, all mankind were equally in love with truth, equally rational, equally intelligent, and equally disinterested, we might have only to propose a change for the better, and all would embrace it. But just the reverse of this is the true history of society. He is but little experienced in the human heart—he knows but little of the world, who imagines that what appears clear, wise, and useful to *him*, appears so to *all*; or that it is only necessary to support truth and goodness by unanswerable arguments, to render them universally triumphant. The more clearly and forcibly an unpopular truth is argued, the greater will be the dislike to it by all who are interested in representing it to be an error. Melancthon was for a time the subject of an illusion of this sort. He once told Luther that so clear were his apprehensions, so deep his convictions, and so forcible his arguments, that he could soon convince all Germany of the truth of the Reformation principles. He became an itinerant, and commenced a campaign against the priesthood. On returning from his first tour Luther said to him, “Well, Melancthon, what speed?” “Alas!” replied the young reformer, “old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon.”

A little experience will convince the most astute

that the clearness and force of argument will not subdue opposition. It very frequently provokes the greater resentment. The adversaries of the Messiah are proof of this. So were the aristocrats in the late Virginia Convention. Orpheus could, by his music, as easily have caused the oaks to follow him, as could the republicans, by their arguments and demonstrations, have caused the oligarchs in power to consent to extend equal rights and immunities to the proscribed casts in this commonwealth.

When error has but a single ally in the corruptions of the human heart, it is very formidable; but how strong when pride, passion, and interest become its auxiliaries! To overcome these, reason and logic must be strong indeed, and rhetoric most persuasive. Pride, ambition, and selfishness, are all powerful allies of error. Hence double, triple, and quadruple the evidence necessary to *convert* a layman, will not often *convince* a priest. The pride of the understanding is the most invincible of all sorts of pride, and more especially when religion is the problem. A bigoted sceptic, a prejudiced sectary, and an interested priest, are more without the pale of reason, are more beyond the reach of controversy, than the errorists of any other school. But while error lives, and falsehood has an auxiliary upon earth, controversy will be necessary, and argument indispensable.

When controversy proceeds from benevolence it will be more successful and less injurious to the comfort of them who are engaged in it. But when argument and debate are dictated by resentment, prompted by pride, or controlled by the lust of power, the hearts of the combatants must be polluted, and their passions inflamed. The wrath of man never did, and it never can, effect the righteousness which God requires; nor can it promote the happiness of man. When we love truth for its own sake, and when our efforts to maintain it proceed from brotherly kindness and love to all men, then we will plead its cause with force and with success; and then, and then only, will we be sanctified and blessed in the work. But a controversy for opinion, or for truth, instituted by vanity, by the pride of understanding, or the lust of power, will pollute the heart, aggravate the passions, sour the temper, and terminate in vain jangling. But because it has been *abused* shall we desist from the *use* of it? This would be to make a covenant with death, and an agreement with destruction. This would be to live in vain, and to die without honor. This would be to depart from the example of the Confessors, Martyrs, and Apostles of Jesus, and to renounce our allegiance to the King eternal, immortal, and invisible. For so long as error in principle and in

practice exists, so long will it be the duty and the felicity of the intelligent and the good to oppose it: and as long as there are conflicting creeds, sects, and divisions among religionists, so long will it be our duty to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.

But never was there so much need to study the “*suaviter in modo*,” and the “*fortiter in re*,” amiability in the manner, and firmness in the purpose, as in the defence of truth. We must conciliate the passions, while we besiege the understanding. We are not to suppose all our opponents to be knaves and impostors, to be interested and obstinate. We must remember that in this world of weakness and of error the good and the virtuous are often found enlisted under the banners of error. There are honest differences of opinion, and men equally sincere and virtuous on both sides of every question. This must never be lost sight of. It is nevertheless true that our great models, the Prophets and Apostles; nay, the Saviour himself, though often mild as the genial influence of Spring, were sometimes severe and surly as the Winter’s blast. At one time, and amidst one class of opponents, they were as gentle as the balmy zephyrs on beds of violets; at another time, and amidst other opponents, they were like the mountain storm roaring through the cliffs. Soft and persuasive were their words and arguments to those who appeared honest in their convictions, but severe and tart were their reproofs to such as appeared obstinate in

error. Hence Paul, who instructed his son Timothy to imitate him in all things, admonished him to instruct some opponents “with all meekness,” and “sharply to rebuke and confute” others. So did Peter and Jude in their epistles. “Make a difference,” says Jude, between those “who are complainers, who walk according to their own lusts, whose mouths speak great swelling words, and admire men’s persons for the sake of gain”—“have compassion upon other errorists;” “save them with fear, hating the garments spotted by the pollutions of the flesh.” No man ever spoke more severely of certain teachers than Peter in his second epistle. We must, in all our controversies, make the same differences. When we find persons like Balaam, obstinately intent on covetous courses, for the sake of others we must not spare them. But courtesy and benevolence will be our best guides; and a good example will often achieve more than a thousand arguments.

To your posts, then, O Israel! Remember you have enlisted not for *six months*, like some of our sectarian militia; but you have vowed allegiance during the war. “Fight the good fight of faith.” Keep your eyes upon the Captain; and when the conflict is over he will cover you with laurels which will never wither, and bestow upon you a crown of righteousness which fadeth not away.

Deceased

A Little Compromise Results in Big Problems

Jerry Murrell

Much of what we are teaching our children today could be called the art of compromise. When you are a child and another child wants to play with your toy, someone will begin to teach you how to compromise. Compromise is not a bad thing as long as you are playing with your own toys. However, hopefully, you also learned that you have no right to let someone borrow the toys that you have borrowed (what the Bible calls stewardship). You also learned that when an authority figure spoke and told you where you could play (say in the house) you had no right to tell another child that you are willing to disregard that instruction and go play in the yard (when you had not been allowed to go play there). If you are not the one in authority, you have no right to compromise the instructions of another.

Another problem with compromise is when compromise starts, there is rarely a good stopping place. Some in the churches of Christ are getting ready to

attempt reunification with the Christian church. 2006 is seen as the year to make a push in this direction because the census bureau first recognized that the one religious group had become two in the 1906 census.

The source of the division was a differing way of looking at the Bible. Some understood that if God told us what to do, and how to do it, we could not carry out the command by any method other than how He had authorized us to do so. Others said, when God has told us what to do and how to do it, the what is more important than the how, so man is at liberty to carry out the command in another way of his own choosing. The two big issues, resulting from these two distinct ways of looking at the Bible, which led to division, were mechanical instruments of music being added to the worship and the use of the newly organized American Christian Missionary Society to do mission work. Some said, God has said to worship (the what) and to do so by singing (the how). Others said only the **what** is

important (worship) not the **how** (so they added organs, melodeons, and other instruments to their worship). Some said God has told us to evangelize (the what) and who is to send out missionaries (the church). Others said, that God is only concerned with **what** is to be done (mission work), so we can create a new organization above the local church to carry out the evangelization of the world. The problem with reunification is not that we do not want unity, but some of us are unwilling to compromise truth for the sake of unity. If these brethren have their way, unity will result while the Christian Church will continue to ignore God's prescribed pattern for the work and worship of His church.

One of the leaders, in writing and preaching against this previous apostasy, was David Lipscomb. Many began to attack him as some kind of spiritual killjoy. Lipscomb was said to be behind the times. The problem for Lipscomb, and others who believed what he believed, was that God has communicated His will to man in a final form (Jude 3), and, therefore, man has no right to change God's Word in any way (cf. Rev. 22:8-9). Lipscomb also correctly understood that to open the door wide enough to let an organ into our worship the door would be open so wide as to allow many other changes in worship. If the standard was, "God did not say not to do it," one could also bring into the door additional elements for the Lord's supper (I notice at birthday parties that cake and ice cream draw a bigger crowd than unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine). This would be the case even though God has commanded that we take the Lord's Supper (the what) and He also told to take unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (the how).

What many advocates of the "updated worship for the 1870s" did not see was that they had to give up the very concept of biblical authority to have religion their way. As Lipscomb was being attacked in 1896, F. W. Smith, of Franklin, Tennessee, sprang to his defense. Note his words: "If the brethren of this state refuse to support David Lipscomb in his advocacy of the truth, the time will come when women will occupy your pulpits, and sectarians will have undisputed sway." Think about those words being written before the turn of the last century. Oh how many people thought that Smith was crazy to make such a claim? They argued that such would never happen.

Now, let us fast forward to our day. In 1968, the Christian Church divided again. Today, one group calls itself the Independent Christian Church, while the other part calls itself the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Let me quote to you from an August 10, 2005

article concerning these Disciples of Christ.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) became the first major U.S. Protestant denomination to have a woman as its leader when it elected Sharon Watkins to serve as president for the next six years. Watkins, 51, has served as senior minister of Disciples Christian Church in Bartlesville, Okla., for eight years, according to a July 26 release by Disciples News Service. A graduate of Phillips Theological Seminary and Yale Divinity School, Watkins received overwhelming support as more than 3,000 delegates stood to register their "yes" votes for her during the denomination's General Assembly in Portland, Ore. When no one stood to oppose her, the crowd erupted in applause.

The convention was preceded by "The Gay, Lesbian and Affirming Disciples Alliance" sponsored "pre-assembly event called 'Jesus Calls Us ... OUT,' which was scheduled to be held at First Christian Church in Portland." You might ask, "How could a people whose ancestors were once in unity with the church of Christ get so far off of course?" The answer is simple. If you have ever tried to sight a rifle you understand. If you get your rifle sighted to the point that it only misses the target by one inch at 15 feet that sounds pretty good. However, that means that at 30 feet you are two inches away from your target. At 300 feet you are 20 inches away from your target. In the U.S. Army you have to shoot at a target 300 feet away to qualify. If you are one inch away from center mass at 15 feet, you will never be able to hit your target at 300 feet. As you move further away from your starting point, your aim is shown to be worse and worse.

The people in the late 1800s who rolled the mechanical instruments into their worship would have been appalled to know the place to which their compromise would lead. Yet, still today, we are being called to make a small compromise in the truth here, to cut a small corner over there. Before you compromise you need to ask two questions: (1) If we make this compromise what will be the end result? We need to be concerned about what kind of church we are leaving to our grandchildren. If you give Satan one inch, he will soon be your ruler. (2) Am I simply compromising my preference, or am I being asked to compromise where God has spoken (Heb. 1:1-3)? If God has spoken, I have no right to offer anyone any compromise. Let us never put a question mark, where God has placed a period. If we do, we can know from the past that big problems will be the result.

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Defender



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Godly Mothers

Marvin Weir

The world in which we live is in deplorable condition. With lack of respect at an all-time high, depravity running rampant, and the anti-God movement in full swing, where would this nation be without the influence and example of godly mothers? Tribute is hereby given to all mothers who are followers of Christ and dedicated to being the “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” (Mat. 5:13-15).

The power wielded by the Christian wife, mother, and grandmother is surely a source of concern for the devil. On the other hand, it must give Satan great joy to see women flaunt their God-given roles in favor of worldly standards. Instead of “silly women laden with sins” (2 Tim. 3:6), this world sorely needs women who will “adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment” (1 Tim. 2:9). The inner beauty and integrity of godly ladies will always shine far brighter than silver and gold.

Godly mothers are always careful to make spiritual matters a top priority. It is important for mothers to be concerned with all the activities of her children. She desires for her children to be successful in school and in all the legitimate endeavors they pursue. A godly mother, however, knows that spiritual matters **must** take priority over secular matters. She believes in the Scripture that says, “But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness” (Mat. 6:33), and thus she diligently does such when schedules conflict with the assembly of the church. Children learn very early what is most important in their lives! Godly mothers will seek to instill in their children the

value of things above instead of the value of things below (cf. Col. 3:1-2).

The Lord said it best in stating, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also” (Mat. 6:19-21). Godly mothers are deeply concerned about their children’s heart!

Godly mothers are cautious as they journey through this life. They clearly understand that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Some mothers are more interested in glamour and grace than they are in eternity and truth. Those who encourage their daughters to dress immodestly, dance, and flirt with the world can expect trouble.

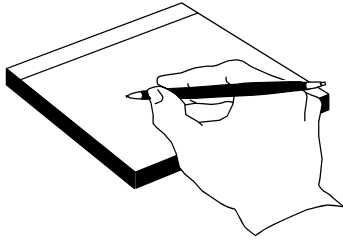
The wise man said, “Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; *But* a woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised” (Pro. 31:30).

The wise man also said that “a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother” (Pro. 10:1). One definition for *foolish* in the above verse is “arrogant.” A son is always arrogant who defies God and chooses the ways of the world instead of the godly advice of his mother. Parents of younger children need to remember: “The rod and reproof give wisdom; But a child left to himself causeth shame to his mother” (Pro. 29:15).

The apostle Paul was persuaded that the “unfeigned faith” in young Timothy “dwelt first in” his

(Continued on page 3)

Notes From The Editor



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Care

The apostle Paul had rehearsed many of the physical sufferings he had endured as a Christian and apostle of Christ. He then makes the statement: “Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (2 Cor. 11:28). This is a much different attitude than what we find in many in the Lord’s church today—including preachers, elders, and members. The attitude we often see today is that if it is not in our congregation, we need to stay out of it and do not even want to know about it. We need to concern ourselves with this congregation, not what is happening elsewhere.

Seems that brethren would have learned from years gone past, but seems we either quickly forget or we do not learn the lessons. Just a few decades ago the Crossroads/Boston heresy arose. This attitude of not being concerned because it was not in our congregation led to the spread of this divisive heresy and literally hundreds of congregations within the brotherhood dividing. There were many brethren who were sounding out a warning. In spite of the warnings many elders and preachers had the thought that it was not in this congregation, so they ignored the warnings to their own detriment.

However, consider another scenario that could have taken place if all brethren had the attitude of Paul as expressed in 2 Corinthians 11:28. What could have happened if when Crossroads and Chuck Lucas **first** began espousing their false doctrine, if preachers and elders over the entire brotherhood had raised up an opposition to their teaching and practice? It might have produced repentance on the part of those advocating the false doctrines and prevented hundreds of congregations from splitting.

The false doctrines that have filled the Lord’s

church concerning divorce and remarriage have filled many congregations with adulterers and caused congregations which once were in fellowship with each other to no longer enjoy that fellowship. What would have happened instead of many brethren taking the attitude that this is not our fight, or this does not concern us, if all preachers and elders came out publicly for the truth and exposing the error and refusing to fellowship the error that was being perpetrated on the brotherhood? We will never know because far too many left the fight for truth to a few individuals, and, no doubt, many used the excuse that it did not affect them or their congregation or that it was not their fight. When individuals first started teaching these error, it might not have directly affected their local congregation. However, it has since affected all congregations of the Lord’s church today.

We observe the same type of action taking place when a congregation withdraws fellowship from a preacher. Other congregations simply do not want to get involved or say that it was their problem, so they end up continuing to fellowship the preacher. Instead, if they would honor the withdrawal, then it might end up with the salvation of their soul. However, the withdrawn from has been strengthened in his sin by the support of others. This leads not only to the damnation of the one withdrawn from, but also those who continue to fellowship him. (Yes, there are times in which a man, or congregation, are withdrawn from unscripturally. Then everyone should call on the ones who practiced an unscriptural withdrawal to retract it and repent.)

Consider with me a couple of thoughts along this line. When one obeys the Gospel of Christ and becomes a Christian, the Lord adds him to the church (Acts 2:41, 47). To which church does the Lord add us? Realize that *church* is used in at least three different ways: (1) the church universal, (2) the church in an area, and (3) the local congregation. To which of these does the Lord add us? When we become a Christian, are we not added to the church universal (we might also join a local congregation)? By the very nature of being a part of the church universal, those things which affect the church affect us. Is it not an ungodly attitude to think since it does not affect the local congregation of which I am a member, that I should not be concerned about it? Is it our duty to keep the church pure, but only if it involves this church? The church universal can go to hell in a handbasket without us lifting a finger to help because it does not impact this congregation. While we would never express such, that is the result of

such thinking that it is not our fight, we need to stay out of it, etc.

God has given us the obligation to restore those who sin. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). "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). Do these passages **only** apply to those who are in the local congregation?

When the church at Corinth began to have groups say that they were of Paul, Apollos, Peter, or Jesus; did Paul say that it was a local issue so he would not get involved in it. Later when they had a man who had his father's wife, did Paul say that since that situation only affected that congregation, it was not his fight? Paul had not been to Rome, but he dealt with problems in the church at Rome. Many other illustrations could be used to show this point, but let us always be concerned with all souls. Let all of us have that attitude expressed by Paul, "that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). MH

(Continued from page 1)

mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5). These ladies took the necessary time to instill in Timothy virtues that would serve him well throughout his life on earth

and into eternity. It is true: "A wise son maketh a glad father; But a foolish man despiseth his mother" (Pro. 15:20).

Godly mothers are concerned about the spiritual well-being of her family. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and other godly ladies took time to pray (Acts 1:14). Godly mothers will pray in behalf of their families. There is power in prayer.

Proper concern demands that a mother say "No!" to certain requests made of her. She never desires to be the wrong example or improper influence.

A godly wife and mother realizes the power of "chaste behavior *coupled* with fear" and the "meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:2, 4). This world needs mothers whose first concern is to please the true and living God.

Godly mothers are candid. They never apologize for the Lord's church, and they are quick to point out the terrible consequences of sin. Godly mothers understand: "Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people" (Pro. 14:34). They also know that bad habits are dangerous, and that one can become "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). Thus, the words of "you may not go there" or "you may not do that" are often heard from the lips of godly mothers.

May all who have godly mothers realize the tremendous blessing that is theirs! Let us always encourage and honor those mothers who have the conviction to steadfastly worship and serve God.

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Parable of the Date Palm Tree

Don Tarbet

Surely the date palm tree was among those created in the beginning to adorn the beautiful Garden of Eden. We recently learned of the discovery of a first century date palm seed from the land of Palestine. Before going into the significance of this, let us look at the history of the date palm tree. Its Hebrew word was *tamar*. Tamar was the wife of Er, the son of Judah. Er died, and as a widower she attracted Judah who fathered two sons by her. Tamar is also the name of a village around the Dead Sea. The Greek word for the date palm is *phoenix*, which we can identify with the city of palm trees in Arizona.

The palm tree is associated with peoples of ages past, as the very existence of man depends largely upon its presence. It is natural that such trees would be

considered sacred in Arabia and Syria from the earliest ages. In Palestine, the palm leaf appears as an ornament upon pottery for nearly 2000 years before Christ. It was also used as a decoration of the temple among the Hebrews. It is a symbol of beauty (1 Kin. 6:29-35), and of the righteous man (Psa. 92:12-14). It has been used on Jewish coinage for centuries, and is currently on the Israeli's 10 shekel coin. The *honey* of the "land of milk and honey" has often been considered to be the date palm.

In Palestine today, the palm is much neglected with only a few groves along the coast. It once flourished on the Mount of Olives (Neh. 8:15). Jericho was once known as the city of palm trees, as it is mentioned when Moses was upon Mt. Nebo (Deu. 34:3). Two

times reference is made to the city of palm trees (Jud. 1:16; 3:13), and Jericho is said to **be** that city (2 Chr. 28:15). The palm tree is associated with rejoicing (Lev. 23:40; Neh. 8:15). It is associated with victory, as palm branches were used to escort Jesus into Jerusalem (John 12:13). The victorious are pictured as standing before the Lamb in white robes and palms in their hands (Rev. 7:9). Josephus refers to the preciousness of palm trees in his historical works.

Loss of the Original Date Palm

It is said that with the coming of the Roman army during and around A.D. 70, that the palm tree was basically destroyed as the army plundered the land. Then, with Rome's further march during the Dark Ages to recover Palestine from the Moslems, the palm tree was virtually wiped out. The palm trees in Palestine today are said to be those that were imported from America in the 20th century by way of Asia.

Date Palm Seed Found

On August 1, 2005, CBS news gave the story of the lost date palm seed that we shall now relate to you. However, in June 2005, the story had already been made public in the *New York Times* in an article by Steven Erlanger. The account is now recorded on the Internet. In A.D. 73, there were almost a thousand Jewish zealots holed up on Masada—a fortress that one of the Herods had built. These Jews died by their own hand rather than be captured by the Roman army. While there, they had food, among which was evidently date palms. In the 1970s, Masada was discovered and its ruins unearthed. On level 34 of the dig, several date palm seeds were found, obviously from the dates eaten by the Jews. These seeds were kept in a drawer until a few months ago. Dr. Sarah Sallon, while operating a project on Mid-eastern medicinal plants, asked for some of these seeds. She was given three. A snip of one of the seeds was taken for Radiocarbon dating, which showed it to be 1,990 years old, plus or minus 50 years—making the age of the seed to range from 35 B.C. to A.D. 65—just before the Roman invasion. She gave the seeds to Dr. Elaine Solowey, a botanist, who soaked the seeds and then planted them. Six weeks later, the ground began to crack and a small date palm from the first century seed began to come forth.

The first two leaves did not look good, but the third was an obvious date leaf, but the plant appeared as if it had a hard time getting out of the ground. Today, the date palm is about 12 inches in height. An incredible story! Our own investigation has uncovered no information to discredit this account.

The Parable

In thinking of the date palm, its loss, and its restoration from an **old** 2000 year old seed, clearly reminds us of the **church** of our Lord, that had its beginning in Jerusalem in the first century. Jesus built it (Mat. 16:18), and He is its head (Eph. 1:22f; Col. 1:18). Congregations then were known as “churches of Christ.” But, again it was the **Romans** that contributed to its apostasy. The Roman emperor Constantine forced the early church to have a major conference in A.D. 325 to settle a dispute. Eventually the church was made the official religion of the land **by** the Romans. Then there was the development of the Roman Catholic Church, which had its first “pope” in A.D. 606 in the person of Boniface III. Then, it was after the dark ages that there arose such men as Martin Luther, who objected to the corruption in Rome, and set out to “reform” that body. This effort resulted in Luther being excommunicated and, in turn, the coming forth of the Lutheran Church in 1530. Luther begged his followers to **not** use his name but the name “Christian.” Shortly after this, Henry VIII, king of England, wanted a separation from his wife Catherine (that he might marry Ann Bolyn), but the Pope refused to grant it. At this point, Henry separated the “church” in England along with its money, and established the Church of England, with him being its head. Then, through the teachings of John Calvin, the Presbyterian denomination came into existence shortly thereafter. The Methodist denomination later sprang from the Church in England. The door was open. Other denominations began to emerge, such as the Congregational Church in 1608, the Baptist in 1611. Many of the founders of these denominations later objected to the fruits of their labors, but their tracks could not be retraced.

John Calvin actually taught that baptism was **not** rightly performed in sprinkling or pouring, as well as did John Wesley and Martin Luther. Calvin and Wesley also believed the Lord's Supper should be weekly. Both believed that “Christian” was the only name the disciples were to wear, and that singing should be **without** the accompaniment of instrumental music.¹ These men are not our authorities, but they agree because the New Testament speaks so plainly on these matters that churches of Christ advocate today.

The Church Restored

After these denominations came to America, they brought the divided spirit of religion with them. Many preachers around 1790 and afterward, agreed that the **only** way back to the true church was **not** through a

reformation of Rome or any other religious group, but to a return to the teachings of the New Testament—the original **seed** of the kingdom. Just as the true date palm can be brought back through its **seed** that has been found, so can the church be restored. We cannot reform the American palm and make **it** like the original date palm of Palestine. Neither could reformers reform Rome or the denominations that arose out of protesting the destructive work of the apostate church. **Only** by going to the seed could the original church be restored.

No date palm is like the original date palm of Israel. No fruit is quite like that of Israel. Remember the 12 spies that found a cluster of grapes in Palestine that was so large it took two men to carry it? Even today, the “barren” soil of Palestine brings forth some of the best fruit on earth with the proper watering. Then, there is no church like that which began in Jerusalem around A.D. 33.

The Bible is said to be *imperishable* seed. Peter said we are “born again, **not** of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23). When Jesus gave the parable of the kingdom in Luke 8, He stated that the **seed** of that kingdom was the “word of God” (Luke 8:10-11). Jesus also stated that heaven and earth will pass away, but His **Word** will “not pass away” (Mat.

24:35) and “the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). He **also** said that in the last day we are going to be **judged** by what He has stated in His Word (John 12:48). The dead are pictured as being judged **by** that Word in Revelation 20:12.

Now, if “corruptible seed” (such as the date palm of the first century), can be preserved, planted, and bring forth “after its kind” (Gen. 1:11) **even after 2000 years, why** is it difficult to believe that the “incorruptible seed” of the Word of God is **still** powerful today? One can be born again **of** that incorruptible seed (1 Pet. 1:23). **As** that seed (the Spirit’s Word) is planted into the good hearts of men and women, it leads them through repentance and the waters of baptism where one is baptized **into** Christ to become God’s child. This is that birth of the Spirit and the water described by Jesus in John 3:3-7.

We appeal to the world today to return with us **to** that precious seed, and allow God’s kingdom to thrive even today.

Endnote

¹Statements by these men and others can be found in the tract *They All Agree*, by Clyde P. Findlay, or by going to the Internet, at www.bible.ca/H-music.htm, in the article What Early Christians Believed about Using Instrumental Music.”

215 W. Sears; Denison, TX 75020

Voices from the past:

This article appeared in “Defender.” February 1972

In These Days of Love Everybody

George E. Darling, Sr.

The preacher who, in reality, when put to the test, believes nothing, unless it be “live and let live”; usually stands for nothing, or at least for less than he professes to believe. He looks for worldly friendships and makes a special appeal for those in the “money bracket”; seeks the easy way; sails with the wind, floats down stream; is a hail fellow well met; runs in the middle of the road; carries water on both shoulders; smiles a sickly smile and sweetly talks of peace even with the Devil; is blown about by every wind of doctrine, especially if it looks as though it will be more popular and more money will come in from that source; forms an unholy alliance with the “would be scholars”; ceases to speak out on worldliness; becomes a denominational lover and steers clear of saying anything that might cause one of them to realize that they are lost; refuses to expose sectarianism’s damnable false beliefs; invites the “faith only” heretics and “Jehovah’s Witnesses” as well as the

“Sweet Spirited” Campus Evangelism affiliates to occupy his pulpit; refuses to preach what God’s Word teaches on marriage, divorce, and remarriage; and smiles on the Devil’s method of entertaining lost souls. That person cannot understand why a faithful Gospel preacher stands out against such things nor can he understand why any preacher would separate himself from a preaching brother of long acquaintance, because of **conviction**.

Conviction that is built on the Word of God does not change in order to advance the man who stands behind what he believes. The losing of friendships, held dear through the years was the lot of Paul, and it will be the lot of every man who steadfastly refuses to “let the bars down” and fellowship everybody and everything that claims to be “Sweet Spirited.”

Let us remember in these days of **love everybody** (even the Devil, if he smiles sweetly and publicizes his

humility) that God's Word is still our standard, and if it means that we lose every friend we ever had on God's green earth for the sake of Christ and His church, then so be it.

Some people can be quite *chummy* with a preacher who is unfaithful to his marriage contract. One who is **so nice** he cannot live in the same house with his own wife of his youth is dealt with very tenderly. They can show mercy and hobnob with preachers who deny the simple and plain teaching of the New Testament. (Of course under their breath they do not agree with him, doctrinally, yet allow him to address the congregation week after week?????).

They can be merciful and friendly with the biggest compromisers that exist on the face of the earth and do it with impunity, even going so far as to place such on programs in prominent places, thus jeopardizing every soul that hears them. They can be kind and merciful with preachers who are as worldly as the devil. They can be *tolerate* with those who are rebellious, as factious as Hymenaeus and Alexander, deceitful as the Archangel of hell, and as big a liar as Belial. These love everybody advocates who are so merciful with the

deliberate and well-known wrong doers are so quick to draw the trigger on any person, preacher, elder, deacon, teacher, or whatever, who says, "No, I am going to take my stand on the Bible, taking its truth, refusing to become a partaker in their evil ways." There is no **mercy or love** for that man. He is to be cast out from that time on. He is accused of being evil-spirited, narrow-minded, egotistical, overbearing, unkind, hard to get along with, having a "fat lip" and a "quick pen," and anything else that will do him injury to the one with whom they speak.

Sin is referred to at least 689 times in the Bible, and the preacher who condemns sin in any sinner, is either going to cause that one to **repent** or **rebel!** No true Christian expects to be shown love and mercy from the sinner who is caught in his sins, and rebels and determines to continue in them. According to the Word of God, sinners go to hell because they will not repent of their sins, and that includes the lovely and lovable sins of the "heavy contributors" in the church who want to live as the devil but still want to shut the preacher's mouth on the subject of their sins.

Deceased

The Company I Keep

Bill Brandstatter

Throughout the Bible the company a person keeps has been very important. Paul states a universal principle in 1 Corinthians 15:33: "Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (ASV). Indeed this has been the case in every generation.

Consider that God's people were forbidden to marry pagan tribes. God knew that being around idolaters would turn them away from God. This was a great problem with Solomon. "But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;...And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart" (1 Kin. 11:1, 3). Had he not so closely aligned himself with sin and with the foreign women and the ways of the world, he would have stayed strong for God. James stated a great truth that applies to Solomon and many today: "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jam. 4:4).

The company we keep is, therefore, important to God. The company we keep is also important to the church and the elders. When Paul spoke to the Ephesian eldership, he told them: "Take heed therefore unto

yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). *Take heed* means the eldership needs to be watching the church much like a shepherd watches his sheep to make sure that a wolf does not devour them.

What kind of company do you keep? Are you found often in bars, drinking, dancing, around people of a rough nature. It is God who knows your heart. God knows you better than you do. What does God think of the company you keep? He did not like the company Solomon kept. God tells us that we are not to be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14). Paul is simply advising of an unequal alliance with people who are not Christians. Paul, no doubt, knew about Solomon, and did not want Christians to turn away from God.

Let us all beware of the company we keep. God loves us. He wants all of us to be in Heaven with Him. He desires that we follow His ways. We cannot do that if we let the wrong people influence us. If we stray God is willing to welcome us back (1 John 1:7-9).

313 Circle Drive; Vienna, IL 62995

31st Annual Bellview Lectures

The Home

June 9 - 11, 2006

	Friday, June 9		2:00 PM	Selecting a Mate	Michael Shepherd
7:00 PM	God's Word the Standard for the Home	Wayne Coats			
8:00 PM	Man's Role in the Home	John West			
	Saturday, June 10				
9:00 AM	God's Law on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage	Paul Vaughn			
10:00 AM	Woman's Role in the Home	Hal Smith			
11:00 AM	Evolution's Effect on the Home	John West			
	<i>Lunch Break</i>				
1:00 PM	Dating	Jerry Murrell			
				Sunday, June 11	
			9:00 AM	Children Are to Obey Their Parents	Jerry Murrell
			10:00 AM	What Does it Mean to Love	Paul Vaughn
				<i>Lunch Break</i>	
			1:00 PM	Parents Are to Train Their Children	Hal Smith
			2:00 PM	Liberalism's Effect on the Home	Wayne Coats

Bellview Lectures Information

HOUSING

If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

MEALS

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

AUDIO, VIDEO TAPES, AND DVD

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes, video tapes, and DVDs. They may be purchased during the lectures or by mail order afterwards. If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

BOOKS

There will *not* be a lectureship book published for the 2006 Bellview Lectures. Previous lectureship books still in print will be available for purchase. See the order form on the reverse side of this brochure.

EXHIBITS

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of the Bellview elders and available space.

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.

This year's lectureship has been changed from previous years. There will *not* be a book published, however, DVDs, video tapes, and audio tapes will be available. The books-on-CD will also be available for update to reflect the addition of the 2005 *Defender* issues.

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXXV

June 2006

Number 6

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

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Did God Really Make Things “Fuzzy”?

Lynn Parker

Imagine this now—one God, one faith, one Spirit but multitudes of interpretations on doctrinal matters. Indirectly, many blame God for the confusion by claiming, “It’s impossible for us to understand the Bible alike.”

Remember, God “is not the author of confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33). In a sermon titled: “How To Study The Bible,” our prodigal brother Max Lucado takes upon himself the prerogative of God to establish the platform for religious unity. Max says that the only religious essential upon which all must agree is the “death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.” But Lucado does not stop there. Carefully read this excerpt:

And the question surfaces, “Can you and I be in fellowship or in unity and disagree on any issue in the Bible?” And my response to that is, it depends on the issue.

If you and I do not agree on the cross of Christ, if you think that Jesus was a good man who died a bad death, I don’t think we stand in the same spirit of unity. Does that make sense?

But if you and I agree that Jesus was the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, that He died a bodily death, and rose on the third day, and He’s returning again, and He sent His Holy Spirit to hold us together, and His grace is sufficient to wash away our sins, I think we can be in unity, regardless of how you or I might feel on some secondary issues. Secondary not meaning unimportant, but secondary in comparison to the cross.

It’s not surprising to you, for me to tell you, that right here under this roof, you’re worshipping,

you’re breaking bread, partaking of communion, singing songs with people with whom you’d probably have disagreements on certain things. You would disagree with me; I would disagree with you. You’d be wrong; I’d be right, but we could all worship together. [Laughter] No, I’m just waking some of you up!

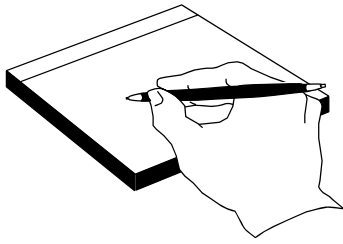
The point is this: unless we understand this principle of priorities in the Bible, the church cannot remain united. Does that make sense?

Unless we understand the principle of priorities in scripture, the church cannot remain united. Either we’ll say there’s nothing about which we need to agree, and we’ll water down everything, or we’ll say we all have to agree on every little thing and there’ll be no unity at all.

It seems to me the proper response is, there is one area—absolute essential upon which we must stand in common ground, shoulder to shoulder, hand to hand, and that’s the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are other things, which godly people throughout centuries, with towering intellects have talked about and discussed and still not quite come together in agreement on, and my thinking sometimes is well maybe God left that just a little bit fuzzy to teach us to get along with each other—just to help us to learn to accept each other, to be patient with each other, and to learn to grow in love. We do not compromise when it comes to the cross. We don’t budge there. There are matters of essential doctrine. There are matters of controversy. We will discuss those—sometimes vigorously. But we can’t divide over those.

(Continued on page 4)

Notes From The Editor



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Split The Church

We are now hearing a lot from some brethren who have a desire to support a known false teacher that what he taught and practiced is not something which we need to split the beautiful bride of Christ over. They state this as if they are the ones who determine when a matter is something to split the church over or whether it is not something to split the church. They are determined in their wisdom that the matter of reevaluation/reconfirmation of elders is not something over which to split the church. How do they know this? Just ask them—they have determined it. They have taken it upon themselves to determine matters that are fellowship matters and what matters are not.

While these brethren have taken it upon themselves to determine fellowship matters, God is the one who actually determines what is or what is not a fellowship matter. It is our duty to ascertain what God has determined. How do we determine what God has decided concerning fellowship? When we correctly ascertain Bible authority, we will also understand those matters which “split the church.” We learn that those in fellowship with God are those whom I am to fellowship (1 John 1:3-7). This means we cannot fellowship one who is not a Christian (John 15:1-15). We also find that if one sins against us personally and will not repent then fellowship with that person is severed (Mat. 18:15-2). The Scriptures also reveal that when one involves himself in immorality then we cannot fellowship that person (1 Cor. 5). A divisive person after a first and second admonition is to be rejected (Tit. 3:10-11). Then one who teaches doctrines which are false are to be avoided—we are not to fellowship them (Rom. 16:17-18). We are not to remain in fellowship with any Christian who does not continue to remain in the teaching of Christ (2 John 9-11).

In the 1970s, brother James D. Bales came out with a doctrine which, if accepted, would have allowed fornicators to continue to have fellowship in the Lord’s church with the faithful. After brother Bales, other brethren came out with other doctrines to allow those unscripturally divorced to remarry (supposedly with God’s approval) and remain within the fellowship of the church. Faithful brethren stepped up to the plate to oppose these false doctrines which were introduced into the church. However, there were brethren who clamored that the doctrines which were introduced should not split the church. However, faithful brethren recognized that these doctrines were a perversion of the morals God established. Those who wanted to advocate and practice these doctrines could not remain within the fellowship of the Lord’s church. Faithful brethren preached the truth and if the church split, they had to let the church split. Truth and morals were at stake. Yet, some still say that these doctrines and practices should not be a matter over which to split the beautiful bride of Christ, and those of us who stood for the truth were accused of splitting the church over an issue that some stated should not split the beautiful bride of Christ.

Through the years there have been those who pervert different aspects of the Lord’s church. There have been those who have perverted the plan of salvation. God gave us the wonderful gift of His Son to save us from our sin (John 3:16-17). He gave us His Word so we would know what we had to do and how we must live (Tit. 2:11-14). Some (K. C. Moser, Rubel Shelley, among others) came along and advocated that we are saved by grace alone. Others have taught that salvation comes as a result of faith only. Then there are some who are teaching that one does not have to know why they are being baptized (that it is for salvation), but only do it to “obey” God (who would this exclude?). There were faithful brethren who opposed such false teachings which perverted God’s plan of saving man. When these false teachers refused to repent of their false doctrines, the faithful of God refused to fellowship them. The false teachers and those who continued to support them loudly proclaimed that this was not something over which to split the precious bride of Christ. Yet, faithful brethren realized that this was a perversion of the church and its plan of salvation so they continued to preach the Word and expose the error and when they refused to repent, they had to allow the church to split.

There are others who have perverted the worship of the church. There have been those groups who

perverted the day in which one is to partake of the Lord's Supper. The Bible authorizes Christians to partake of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Sunday). Yet, some brethren came along and began partaking the communion on Thursday night (since that was the night which our Lord instituted the Supper), then on Saturdays, and then other days. Faithful brethren preached the Word of God showing there was no authority in partaking the communion on any day other than Sunday. When brethren continued to practice this error, the faithful could no longer fellowship the errorist. Yet, we had brethren proclaim that this was not something over which to split the treasured body of Christ. However, faithfulness to God and His Word demanded such because they were perverting the Lord's Supper.

Around 150 years ago some Christians brought the mechanical instrument of music into the worship of the Lord's church. The practice of using the mechanical instrument of music to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs grew. Faithful brethren fought the practice and proved from the Scriptures that there was no authority for such practice and thus it was sinful. When the perverters of the worship of the church continued in their way, the faithful could not fellowship them and remain faithful to God. This led to the division which was officially recognized by the census in 1906. Yet, there were those who loudly proclaimed that this was not something over which to split the wonderful bride of Christ. We have those today who are seeking unity with the Christian Church denomination who do not believe it is right to use mechanical instruments of music in worship today, but they do not believe this is something over which to split the church. Because of these brethren's compromise with those who would destroy the worship of the Lord's church, the faithful do not extend fellowship to either those who would pervert the worship or those who would compromise with them (2 John 9-11).

Around 1980, Waymon Miller wrote a book titled *The Role of Elders in the New Testament Church* in which he argued that elders have no authority except by example. In 1977 Reuel Lemmons, then editor of *Firm Foundation*, wrote an article titled, "Who Calls the Shots?" and then in 1980 continued to endorse the false doctrine that elders do not have any authority except by the example they set. Around the same time frame, Alvin Jennings, of "Star Bible Publications, Inc.," wrote a book titled *3R's of Urban Church Growth* and in 1985 expanded his thoughts in the book *How Chris-*

tianity Grows in the City. In these books Alvin Jennings advocated a single eldership over every congregation in a city. Both of these doctrines are an attack upon the organization of the Lord's church. Faithful brethren withstood such false teachings as these and when those who advocated such refused to repent, the faithful withdrew fellowship from them. While there were some who cried that this should not split the church, the faithful knew that these (and those who supported them) were perverting the organization of the beautiful bride of Christ.

However, for some reason it seems that once faithful brethren will no longer take this aspect seriously enough to withdraw their fellowship from those who would pervert the organization of the beautiful bride of Christ. They are willing to withdraw fellowship from those who would pervert the morals of the church, the plan of salvation which God instituted, and the worship we are to offer to God, but when it comes to the organization of Lord's church regarding the re-evaluation/reaffirmation doctrine, they are now willing to give certain individuals a "free pass." These brethren are now saying what others said about the morals, plan of salvation, and worship of the church: this is not something over which to split the precious body of Christ. If the morals of the church is worth withdrawing fellowship over, then why is not the organization of the church? If the plan which God instituted is worth withdrawing fellowship over, then why is not the organization of the church? If the worship of the church is worth splitting the church over, why is not the organization of the church? If the organization which God ordained within the precious body of Christ is not worth splitting the church, then why are any of these other things worth splitting the church?

The truth is that all these doctrines and practices are worth holding to the truth and when one perverts them to withdraw our fellowship from that perverter of truth. However, those who hold to the truth of God's Word and expose the false teacher are not the ones who split the church. Those who are splitting the beautiful bride of Christ are those who teach and practice the false doctrine and those who uphold the false teacher. Not only are they splitting the wondrous institution established by our Lord, sadly for them, they are on their way to eternal destruction. We plea with all those who have perverted the organization of the church by teaching the reaffirmation/reconfirmation doctrine and those who are supportive of those false teachers/practitioners to repent before it is too late for their souls.

MH

(Continued from page 1)

Did you get that? Max Lucado tells us that there are two areas in the Bible: the “one area” which is an “absolute essential” is “the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Everything else is in the “fuzzy” area. Max says that “towering intellects” have discussed the other matters (the “fuzzy” area) for centuries and failed to reach agreement. He tells us that “maybe” God left these things “a little bit fuzzy” intentionally.

Now to suggest that God intentionally left doctrinal matters “fuzzy” is to wrest the Scriptures, and it displays gross Bible ignorance on the most fundamental level. Max Lucado suggests God may be the cause of disagreement. The Bible teaches that God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). And, too, Bible truth is available to both the uneducated and to Lucado’s “towering intellects.” Disagreement among smart theologians does not mean the truth cannot be ascertained. It simply means that their love for truth was not there (2 The. 2:10-13). Most will be lost eternally (Mat. 7:13-14). The truth is available to all (John 17:17). It is ascertainable and understandable (John 8:32), but it is ignored or rejected by those with and those without college degrees.

What “principles of priorities” has Max found that categorizes the commands of God as primary (essential) and secondary (optional)? I have been in corre-

spondence with a homosexual “Music Minister” who claims to believe in Christ, the cross, and God’s grace; he also believes that homosexuality is perfectly acceptable to God. Now we cannot help but wonder if Max Lucado will call homosexuality a “secondary” issue and extend fellowship to the “Music Minister.” After all, Lucado says that he can fellowship anyone who stands with him “shoulder to shoulder, hand to hand,” on “the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Max Lucado sees division among those professing belief in Christ and seeks to lower the bar; that is, he replaces God’s standard of fellowship with his own looser version. Make no mistake—Lucado understands that many religious people will be left out of heaven if the criteria for fellowship with God and His children includes such things as baptism for remission of sins (Acts 2:38), the pattern for Christian worship (Acts 2:42; Col. 3:17), the organization for the church (1 Tim. 3; Heb. 13:17), and being a member of the one church for which Christ died (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-5; Acts 20:28). That is untenable to Max Lucado, even though Jesus said as much in Matthew 7:21-23. Too, book sales would not be near as lucrative among a small group of the saved (wink).

Is the truth of God’s word fuzzy? Only to blinded eyes (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

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Voices from the past:

This article appeared in “Defender” February 1973

Preach the Word and Let 'Er Split

George E. Darling Sr.

If preaching the truth of God’s Word to a thing that calls itself a church will split it, then for the Lord’s sake, “Preach the Word” and let her split. The only thing that the pure Word of God will drive out of a church is the Devil, and he has no business being in the Lord’s church anyway.

I have never been in a church when it split. I have been in some that should have divided long ago. I have been closely associated with congregations that have split over the preaching of the Truth. The Devil and his Cohorts were driven out, and the church has had one of the sweetest, most peaceful periods of work one can imagine. They have more than half of the membership present at mid-week services. Twice as many ladies now attend the Ladies Bible Class. The church is active in a training program for the young people. A preachers

class numbers around fifteen young men. The Sunday services have more members in attendance. The evening service has as many as the morning service (sometimes more) for the year around. Contributions are up—above what they were when the unruly ones left. In fact the **split** has helped the church that I have in mind to grow.

If preaching against worldliness will split the “church” (?) then turn loose the power of the Word of God and Let 'er Split. When you rid yourself of the boozers, the women chasers, the dancers and the gamblers, the rebellious, unruly, and the belligerents, you will have done the church a favor. You cannot build the “Ship of Zion” out of rotten timber. It seems that some are trying to do this. They are taking into their fellowship anything and everything that claims to

be a Christian. The cast-offs are welcomed. The Devil looks on with his smile of approval when he sees known adulterers accepted as members in good standing, or an admitted whoremonger and gambler waiting on the Lord's table. If a few denominationalists are accepted now and then, the old boy laughs with glee!! Brethren, we cannot build much of a fortress out of rotten wood. Preach the Word and clean house.

Everyone likes peace, but peace at the price of godliness and righteousness in the Lord's church is not peace—it is treason. The preacher who does not speak out against evil is a traitor, he is treacherous, and he is a disgrace to his vocation. We must stop this denominational **back scratching**.

Let the preacher who evades the question of worldliness by saying, "Of course I am against it and the congregation knows that I do not approve of it, but

if I say anything about it from the pulpit, it would **split** the church wide open," remember that Samuel rebuked Saul, Nathan rebuked David, Elijah rebuked King Ahab, John the Baptist rebuked Herod, Stephen rebuked the Jews, and Paul rebuked Peter at Antioch. These men are honored **now**, but it was a big decision for them to make when they made it. They did what was right, and we honor them now. One of these days our great grandchildren are going to be looking at our records. They will honor us or they will sneer at our cowardly name. Reproof has become a lost word in too many pulpits because the preacher fears the people more than he fears God. Preach the Word, if it splits the church; thank God for the dead wood that has been removed. Let 'er split!!!!

Deceased

Support Your Local Postman

Gary L. Grizzell

When the postman delivered you a letter you did not like (say a bill for an unpaid debt), did you smack the postman? No, of course not. We would never misbehave like that. We understand the postman was just doing his job, delivering the mail. Likewise, when a faithful gospel preacher preached a stinging message from God's Word that did not seem to "sit well"—did you ask: "Was the message the truth?" or did you smack the postman? "Well, he did not make it clear" or "He did not say it just right to suit me" or some other pride-filled excuse does not change the truth of the message which was preached. Others may take a martyr position when confronted with their sin. Some would rather engage in a pity-party than to repent (Luke 13:3). Misplaced sympathy is the goal of such manipulators.

Me Repent?! That Is For Other Folks—Not Me!

You and I will not be so naive as to deny the fact that people (generally speaking) resist and resent being corrected. When we are truly and clearly in error on a matter (tell the truth) do you like to admit it? It is not pleasant to us. It goes against our grain. To accept that one has truly been wrong and has nobody else to blame but himself or herself, may misguidedly lead to finger-pointing at the messenger **or someone!** Bearing justified guilt appears to be too much with some. But that is just the point, Jesus will bear our sin if we will repent and ask for forgiveness (Mat. 11:28-30; 1 John 1:9). This is the Bible's way, God's way—the scrip-

tural way to deal with guilt. Get it covered by the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7)! Remember those great people highlighted in the Bible, who, when confronted with their sin, repented? A king named David was guilty of great sins and repented when the *postman* (messenger) delivered the *mail* (message). David, the only individual described as a man after God's own heart responded to this correction by saying, "**I have sinned**" (2 Sam. 12:13; 1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). David did not blame the prophet Nathan, or Bathsheba, or anyone else. He could easily have done that. He was even in a position to have the postman's head decapitated! Yet, he courageously faced up to his own past and present disobedient behavior. Nathan, being faithful to God and his calling as a *postman*, delivered the **needed** message, as opposed to the convenient message (2 Sam. 12:7—"Thou art the man").

In our community today we recognize that a postman does not have a choice about which letters to deliver. In fact, we hold him to it! He must deliver them all, including ours! In the spiritual realm this same principle accounts for the reason the apostle Paul told the Ephesian elders that he had "kept back nothing" which was profitable in his public preaching and private teaching (Acts 20:20). Yes, Paul was a faithful *postman*. He did his job by preaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

What of Peter, the great apostle to the Jews? **Did he blame the rooster** who reminded him of his sin of

denying Christ? Interesting, Peter did not try to harm or kill that rooster (Mat. 26:75). He did go out and weep bitterly. This led to his being used of God in a great way. **Friend, what rooster are you blaming today for your sin?**

The Blame Game

The blame game was played out by our long ago parents and has been revealed to be mere foolishness (Gen. 3:12-13). Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent and the serpent was probably proud to take the credit. Romans 15:4 teaches this (and other accounts of action in the Old Testament) was written for our learning. Have we learned? Blaming anyone or anything other than self when self is to be blamed is irrational, counter productive, and without merit.

The King Herod Syndrome

The King Herod syndrome is still alive today. Herod's irrational, stupid response of chopping off the messenger's head, instead of repenting, is recorded for all to read and learn the lesson (see Mat. 14:1-12, John told Herod he was in adultery and to put away his "wife"). Today, let us avoid such a truth-denying, soul-damning attitude and support our local *postman* (messenger of God's Word). The local *postman* may be a faithful preacher or he may be an elder in the church.

Whoever it is, let us determine to repent when the **message from the doctrine of Christ** is shown to contradict our lives (2 John 9-11). (Note: We, however, are never to receive a message of error, that is, if it is not found in harmony with God's Word). To repent refers to having a change in one's mind/attitude towards one's sin, resulting in following the Biblically defined direction. Is that really too much to ask of one who professes to have obeyed the gospel from the heart (Rom. 6:17-18)? Is it too much to ask of one who professes to be putting first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mat. 6:33)? Do it to please God. Do it for your soul's salvation. Do it for your example. Jesus teaches that eternal perishing is inevitable when damnable error goes uncorrected in our lives (Luke 13:3). That error may be in the form of immorality, lukewarmness, belief of false doctrine, or bidding Godspeed to false teachers (Gal. 5:19-21; 2 John 9-11; Eph. 5:11).

Receiving The Spiritual Mail

Would it not be much better to receive the spiritual mail of the gospel maturely like an adult, than to receive it irresponsibly like a rebellious child? Let us all determine to support our local *postman*.

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A Time Will Come When the Faithful Will See Their Enemies No More

Marvin Weir

The Israelites were God's people, and He had promised to be with them. Moses made sure the people understood their relationship with God, saying:

Know therefore this day, and lay it to thy heart, that Jehovah he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else. And thou shalt keep his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days in the land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, for ever (Deu. 4:39-40).

God said to Moses, "Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever" (Deu. 5:29)!

The children of Israel were in Egyptian captivity and at the mercy of their Egyptian taskmasters. After witnessing God unleash ten plagues upon His people, the Pharaoh reluctantly let the Israelites start their

departure from Egypt. Pharaoh quickly had a change of heart and made ready "six hundred chosen chariots" (Exo. 14:6-7) to pursue the Israelites. "And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto Jehovah" (Exo. 14:10). It was at this time that Moses told the people that the time was coming when they would never again see their Egyptian enemies (Exo. 14:13). May we as members of the Lord's body learn from this incident the great lessons contained therein.

First, great changes may occur very quickly! The Egyptians were pressing the Israelites one moment and the next moment they were overwhelmed by the Red Sea. To escape the Egyptians, the "children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left" (Exo. 14:22). After God's people were **safe**, Moses was told to stretch "forth his hand

over the sea,” and “the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so much as one of them” (Exo. 14:28).

The warning is clear today to those who rebel against God. The Hebrews writer records: “Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:12-13). **Sin may appear to be profitable, but such is far from the truth.** The Psalmist was perplexed at the wicked people’s ability to prosper until he “went into the sanctuary of God, And considered their latter end. Surely thou settest them in slippery places: Thou castest them down to destruction” (Psa. 73:17-18). One moment all can appear to be well and the next moment one will find his feet swept out from under him as he faces the judgment.

Second, our opportunities may suddenly vanish!

The Egyptians had witnessed the tremendous power of almighty God. The plagues were for the purpose of making believers of the Pharaoh and his people. Instead of believing in the true and living God, the stubborn Egyptians rebelled against Jehovah.

The apostle Paul said, “Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2). Many put off until tomorrow what they know they should do today. **Tomorrow may never come!** The apostle to the Gentiles also made it clear: “The invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, *even* his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse” (Rom. 1:20). How many more opportunities will you have to obey the Gospel or to correct a sinful lifestyle?

Third, one’s self-confidence can lead to ruin.

The Egyptians followed after the Israelites, but they trusted in the strength of their own flesh. In so doing,

they rushed to the place of their destruction. The Bible reminds all today to “let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). The Bible emphatically teaches that “the wages of sin *is* death” (Rom. 6:23). No matter how confident one might be of success, he is doomed to failure who does not choose to partake of the abundant life (John 10:10).

Fourth, the separation between God’s children and the children of the world will one day be forever finalized. As the children of Israel stood in fear, Moses said to them: “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever” (Exo. 14:13). The day had come when Israel would never again have to fear the Egyptians.

There will also come the day when the faithful child of God will never again have to fear “the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life” (1 John 2:16). The snares of the devil will have forever been defeated. The godly and ungodly have nothing in common (2 Cor. 6:14-17), and the great gulf that will separate the two cannot be crossed (Luke 16:26).

Fifth, we learn that we cannot deliver ourselves!

The strong arm of **God was needed** to deliver the children of Israel from the Egyptians. Today the saving power of God is manifested in Christ Jesus, His only begotten Son (John 3:16). The Lord came to this world to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Christ is “able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

The Israelites had to obey God and flee the land of Egypt. Today **all must obey God** and flee worldly sins. The Gospel is God’s saving power (Rom. 1:16). **Will you give up the sins of the world and obey the Gospel while it is still today?**

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“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

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“The Crux of the Matter”

David B. Smith

Within the pages of the book, *The Crux of the Matter*, a scenario is presented of growing animosity between members of the hypothetical “Cityside Church of Christ.” In this congregation, certain changes are taking place to the satisfaction of some and to the dismay of others. Kevin, the “youth minister,” is introducing new songs that favor those typically sung at summer camp, allowing the women to sing additional melodies, and has even introduced a “worship team”—a group of two men and two women who stand on the *stage*, having each a microphone, and who raise their hands, close their eyes and lead the congregation in the song service. “Sister Duncan” is presented in the book as representing the generation of days gone by. She is offended at the practices that are now taking place at Cityside and perceives the push for change as an attempt to alter the identity of the church. On the other hand, “Robert Morgan” and his family see this change as a breath of fresh air. Until now, he viewed worship as traditional—even outmoded. The songs, sermons, and practices of “Sister Duncan’s” day simply are not relevant to him. Accordingly, he and his wife Cindy (and children) have been visiting the First Community Church lately, and believe that the new changes are good for both the appeal of the church to the community and for keeping their children interested in spiritual things. The authors Childers, Foster, and Reese then comment that this scenario, though hypothetical, is not too far for many extant situations and then ask: “What’s a church to do?”

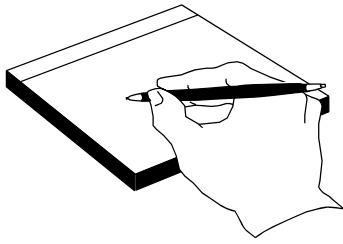
The answer, which follows in the remainder of

the chapter, is not as balanced as the writers would have one to believe. In fact, the true colors of the authors bleed through the page and manifest the bitter spirit of liberalism that exists as the very reason for the real problems in the scenario presented above. While the writers do make a few pertinent comments about attitudes, it is the overall tone of “unity in diversity” with which the faithful find fault. After asking the question above, the writers comment, “In a few tragic places, the church splits into two or more congregations, dividing friends and families and, surely, breaking God’s heart” (219). But, do not forget that this is set in the context of a problem in which women were being placed into the leadership of the church and where actions of crass emotionalism are being displayed. Yet, such violations of Scripture are dismissed as mere matters of opinion and that any separation of people over such issues is sinful. (The writers attempt to hide the real issue by suggesting that items such as the style of a song and women leading worship are both matters of opinion. Obviously, the former is a matter of indifference, but the latter is not.) With a blistering attack on the authority of the Scriptures, the writers conclude:

We may all believe in the full authority of the Bible, but those who work to preserve the integrity of its historical and theological contexts have certain advantages in understanding its meaning and application. But frankly, many of the issues at Cityside do not have precedent in Scripture. Both sides can cite passages. Both

(Continued on page 3)

Notes From The Editor



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Loyalty

Loyal and any of its different forms is not found in the KJV or the ASV (it is found in the NKJV and some others). Yet, the concept of being loyal or loyalty is found throughout the Bible. Loyal is defined by Webster as: “1: unswerving in allegiance: as a: faithful in allegiance to one’s lawful sovereign or government b: faithful to a private person to whom fidelity is due c: faithful to a cause, ideal, custom, institution, or product 2: showing loyalty.” The principles of faithfulness and allegiance are often found in God’s Word. Let me consider five areas in which we as Christians should be loyal.

First we must be loyal to our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Our Lord is to come first in our lives. Jesus will not accept a divided loyalty. We cannot put anything above Him and service to Him. “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me” (Mat 10:37-38). The world and the things of the world cannot come before our love for and service to Him (Jam. 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17). So often we try to divide our loyalty between Christ and something or someone else. Christ will not accept such divided loyalty: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mat. 6:24). Divided loyalty is disloyalty. If He is not first and foremost in our lives, then we are ashamed of Him. Jesus stated, “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38). This statement not only

includes Him, but also His Word.

Just as we must have loyalty to Him, we must have loyalty to His Word. This actually flows from loyalty to Him. We cannot be loyal to Him without being loyal to His Word. Jesus stated, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). The denominational world long ago gave up on God’s Word to follow their traditions. The liberals among us have done the same thing as the denominations and would make the Lord’s church nothing more than a denomination among the denominations. They rebel against what they call the traditions of the churches of Christ (God’s Word) and desire their own ways instead. They have no real loyalty to the Bible; they do not mind adding to or taking away from the Scriptures. If following the Scriptures suits their purpose, they will follow it, however if it does not, then they have no difficulty putting it aside. With so many, there is no longer a compelling desire to do only what God has authorized through His Word.

The third area where we must have loyalty is to the church universal. Jesus taught, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33). Often “the kingdom of God” refers to God’s reign over all things He has created, but here it refers to the church. In describing those troubles that he had gone through, Paul then adds: “Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (2 Cor. 11:28). Sometimes we get so caught up in our own congregation that we end up denigrating other faithful congregations. While we should withdraw our fellowship from congregations that no longer hold to the old paths, we need to give our support and aid to those faithful congregations in our area. What has happened through the years is that congregations get to where they are only concerned with their own congregation and getting more members there, so they will try to steal the members away from another faithful congregation. This has led to a competitive spirit between congregations instead of a cooperative spirit. A cooperative, encouraging attitude should be expressed between faithful congregations within the local area, but we should also be concerned with the faithful congregations the world over. Notice as Paul would write to congregations how he would inform them that he was praying for them all the time. We should have the same care and concern for the church universal as our Lord did and as Paul expressed. This will also include standing firm for the Truth and against all error

wherever and whenever it might be found, and never harboring false teachers or teachings (2 John 9-11).

The fourth area is closely associated with the previous but is in need of its own discussion and is in the area of loyalty to the local congregation. Some seem to have absolutely no loyalty for the congregation of which they are a member. There are a few who have such disloyalty to any local congregation that they want to be *floating* members, never placing membership with any local church. Then there are those who are members of a congregation, but seem to always be out of town on weekends and plan other activities when the congregation has a Gospel meeting, lectureship, family Bible school, etc. These type of Christians have no loyalty to the local church of which they are a member.

Finally, we should be loyal to our brethren. It seems at times that some brethren are looking to attack and destroy other brethren. These seem to always be looking for the bad or evil in brethren and immediately believe the worst in them (and sometimes they will invent things if they cannot find something). Being loyal to our brethren will include standing up for those faithful brethren who are falsely accused and defending them. I believe we see this principle in what Paul writes to Timothy: "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" (2 Tim. 4:16). However, loyalty to our brethren will never include ignoring sin in their life. This is why Paul would confront Peter (Gal. 2:11ff). Loyalty to brethren would compel us to do what we can to restore an erring brother. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). "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).

There are many other areas in which we should be loyal. Loyalty is a trait which is much desired today, yet often missing. The Christian's loyalty must be to God and His Word first and foremost. When we are loyal in that area, then loyalty in other areas will follow. MH

(Continued from Page 1)

can argue from Biblical examples. Both can claim the argument of scriptural silence.... Something else is needed, something that is the crux of the matter (220).

What follows is a brief summary of 1 Corinthians, with an emphasis placed upon Paul's statement that he was determined not "to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (2:2). The writers then allude to a number of subsequent illustrations: songs that mention "the cross," Bill Love's slanderous book titled *The Core Gospel*, and the lack of emphasis on "the cross" in the preaching of the Stone/Campbell movement. These men further suggest that the little emphasis placed upon "the cross" is the source of division and controversy. "The Cross"—this is the "crux of the matter" (228). And, so, the book suggests, the emphasis that faithful saints have placed upon form and structure in the church has been the wrong emphasis altogether. "This focus," they contend,

has contributed significantly to the assumption of many that all Christians should look alike, that all assemblies should be alike. In other words, we take "being of like mind," using a familiar expression of the Apostle Paul, to mean uniform practices and beliefs (238).

Based on such reasoning, how could one contend for anything other than "unity in diversity?" Thus, the writers present that "within the restoration heritage is a strong thread of unity in diversity" (238). They continue, "Perhaps this is a time to tell the stories of our heritage, to remind us of where we came from, of how people of considerable disagreement were able to worship together and love one another" (238). The basic contention is that as long as people agree on "the cross," nothing is truly worthy of disagreement or should cause separation of brethren. But, is this right?

Perhaps those of such a persuasion have not truly been convinced of the origin and beginning of the Lord's church. The church of the Christ is not the product of the American Restoration movement! She is the product of God, eternal, and established on the first day of Pentecost, next succeeding the Lord's ascension. She is built upon the Savior Himself, by means of the doctrine taught by inspired men (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph 2:18ff). While a study of the American Restoration movement may prove interesting with regard to establishing trends or viewing examples of the types of controversies that existed, or to learn vicariously from mistakes or otherwise, et cetera, what difference does the Restoration movement make upon the truth? What does it matter to the church today that some people years ago practiced unity in diversity? Those that did were wrong! What establishes the pattern for the church are the statements, examples, and implications found in the Bible, not post-Bible history.

Unity is based upon the Truth—the total body of doctrine (John 17:17-23; 2 John 9-11). Hence, whatever definition is provided for Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 2:2 must include every promise of the Gospel, every warning of the Gospel, every command of the Gospel, and every fact of the Gospel to be believed. To say that as long as men agree upon “the cross,” defining “the cross” as the mere crucifixion of Jesus, hardly suffices to accord with the true definition; simply put, it is false doctrine. For, what of the burial, the resurrection, the ascension, or the coronation? All of these are essential, but are not literally “the cross.” If these can be included in “the cross” (and, they are), then so must every facet of the New Covenant of the Christ, since the coronation of Jesus inheres the law to which all men are amenable and by which the church is governed. Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 2:2 is merely demonstrating the motivation behind his every action; it cannot be taken to mean that the “crucifixion” is the only element upon which men must agree to establish or maintain fellowship. Naturally, then, if all Christians are of the “same mind” (1 Cor. 1:10), and the Truth is the standard of that oneness of mind (John 17:17-19; 2 John 9), then every belief and practice will be the same. It is true that in nonessential matters people will have differences of opinion, but there can be no differences in matters of doctrine. “Sister Duncan’s” concern, in the scenario, is a warranted concern, since many of the practices now engaged at the “Cityside Church of Christ” are not supported by Scripture. If the

Cityside congregation should split over these issues, then the people who have encouraged and introduced the unscriptural practices are the ones at fault for the division—not those who believe and stand for the truth of the matter. God’s displeasure is over the evil and those who practice it, not the righteous who boldly and kindly uphold the New Testament pattern. If hearts are as they should be, then those who have encouraged and introduced the error will repent of their evil ways and prevent a split in the congregation. If not, then the righteous are justified in their separation from the wicked (1 Cor. 11:19).

The biblical model calls for men to crucify themselves with the Christ and let the Christ reign over the heart by means of the Truth (Gal. 2:20; Psa. 119:105). This means that agreement is more than upon the fact of Jesus crucifixion; it includes every command to be obeyed, every fact to be believed, every promise to be received, and every warning to be heeded. What differences of opinion may exist are no problem, as long as brethren agree upon the truth. What problems may exist are dealt with appropriately by the standard of the Gospel. So it is that respect for the Law of the Lord, motivation by the Scheme of Redemption, and the practice of all things by the authority of the Christ, that is the true “crux of the matter.”

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Voices from the past:

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Guilt by Association

William S. Cline

Is there such a thing as guilt by association? When brethren, especially preachers, continually seek the services and fellowship of those who are known false teachers, is there any justification in questioning their doctrinal soundness? Brethren, if the New Testament is going to be our only rule of faith and practice, then lines are going to have to be drawn and their boundaries adhered to!

The New Testament teaches that the false teacher is to be marked (Rom. 16:17). If any man does not obey the teachings of the Christ, we are not to have any company with him (2 The. 3:14). We do not need to wait until judgment to find out who the false teacher is

so that we can mark him. We have the responsibility to make that decision here and now!

In 2 John 10-11 John wrote, “If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into *your* house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works” (ASV). May we all understand that **to give countenance and sanction to a false teacher is to share his guilt**. How judicious and cautious the Christian must be! **In this passage God forbids us to do anything that would in any way encourage or support the false teacher and his doctrine!** There is such a thing as guilt by association and the doctrine of Christ plainly

teaches it.

Someone may counter, “Jesus associated with sinners” (Luke 15). Yes, He did, but His association with them was in **no way an encouragement, an endorsement, or a support of them in their sin!**

By Silence

We may share the false teacher’s guilt by SILENCE. Not long ago I heard a preacher tell a story about **Jesus talking to a young man and telling him to shave off his beard!** Before the service was over the man was forced to make correction of the false doctrine. To have remained silent would have been wrong for every supporter of the truth in the audience.

By Contribution

We may share the false teacher’s guilt by private or church CONTRIBUTION. How many brethren privately supported the false teachers in Campus Evangelism? Have they repented and asked for God’s forgiveness? How many churches supported the false teachers in Campus Evangelism? Have they **publicly acknowledged their sin** in supporting that work? Have they repented and asked for God’s forgiveness? To contribute to the false teacher is to share his guilt. The only salvation for any who have so sinned is repentance, confession and prayer.

By Defense

We may share the false teacher’s guilt by DEFENSE. I have sat in meetings where men defended some of the known liberals in the brotherhood. Their very defense of them was to mark themselves. I have heard elders, deacons and preachers defend the TEV perversion of the Bible to the point that they simply became ridiculous. The false translations (a discussion of the TEV was carried in the April issue of the *Defender*) were defended in writing as being nothing but shortcomings! When we defend the false doctrine and/or the false teacher we share the guilt.

By Approval

We may share the false teacher’s guilt by APPROVAL. We have heard people praise false teachers. We have heard sermons which contained false doctrine referred to as great preaching. We need to learn that approval or endorsement aligns us with the error. [Just this past week (Nov. 9, 1974) we listened to a preacher praise lessons delivered at a campus seminar which contained error—he called them “great messages.” Tho he taught no error in his sermon he gave his approval to false doctrine/and consequently became as wrong as

those who had preached the error. **A full coverage of that seminar at Gainesville, Florida in August of this year, including the false doctrine taught and the speakers will be carried in the next issue of the *Defender*.** We regret that the article was not finished so that it could be carried in this issue.—WSC]

And More

There are other ways we may share the false teacher’s guilt. We may share such guilt by INDOLENCE, UNCONCERN, PUBLIC COUNTENANCE, INWARD APPROBATION, OPEN APOLOGY and ASSISTANCE. We must be careful of our soul’s welfare in its association with the false teacher.

Perhaps one of the most common ways brethren align themselves with the false teacher is in their obvious disobedience to John’s command to “receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed” (2 John 10b—KJV). As we have already noticed this forbids the Christian from doing anything that would encourage or support the false teacher. This was one thing that brought about the death of Campus Evangelism. Their insistence in placing men on their staff and using men in their seminars who were liberal in their teachings brought about an awakening throughout the brotherhood. The money was cut off and Campus Evangelism died.

Today we see the Campus Ministries following the same course of action. They are using the **same men** that Campus Evangelism used who are still teaching the **same doctrines**. When brethren point out their fault in doing this they **cry the wail of persecution** and say they are being accused of guilt by association. **May it be understood here and now that** any campus ministry, any congregation of the Lord’s church, any retreat, any Bible camp, any college lectureship and any other group in the church who uses men who are false teachers are guilty by association and are partakers of their evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

Churches need to examine the man they secure for gospel meetings. If they have already scheduled men who have now turned out to be liberals, they need to write them and tell them their services will no longer be needed and tell them why they aren’t needed. And gospel preachers, check on the places you go. Some of the liberal churches are using sound gospel preachers in their meetings. The same can be said for many of the seminars. They sprinkle the staff of lecturers with a few sound speakers. Brethren, have you ever considered

your association with such? Have you considered that your name and soundness are possibly being used? Have you considered the fact that your appearance on such seminars or in such meetings may be causing brethren to question your soundness?

We appeal for all who are concerned about the truth to carefully examine their association with others and be **certain** that they neither **encourage** nor **support** the false teacher. Some may say, “Wouldn’t you

go preach in a Methodist church?” Yes, I would, but my sermon would demonstrate beyond question that I neither supported nor endorsed them in their denominational error. And it is very doubtful that I would ever be asked to speak for them a second time.

In matters of opinion let us cultivate the widest liberality; in matters of doctrine let us cultivate **uncompromising firmness**.

Deceased

Domestic Abuse—A Case Of Misplaced Values

Tracy Duggar

Domestic abuse is a serious problem, not only in our nation, but throughout the entire world. News reports are frequent from both the national scene as well as the international. Police officers are often called to help settle disputes between husbands and wives. Such calls are the dread of these “peace-officers” because of the high incidence of injury. Domestic abuse is a clear sign of misplaced values. Two of the most prevalent are spousal and child abuse.

No wife (or husband) should have to endure physical abuse from their marriage partner—from the one whom is supposed to be honoring and respecting them. Oh, how little value *wife-beaters* place upon their bride! Solomon stated long ago, “*Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing*” (Pro. 18:22). By their practice, such bullies, would have to contend this to be a false statement. Later within the same inspired book the following discourse can be found:

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price *is* far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants’ ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise *is* good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household *are* clothed with scarlet. She

maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing *is* silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen, and selleth *it*; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honour *are* her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue *is* the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband *also*, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain: *but* a woman *that* feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates (Pro. 31:10-31).

This grand tribute to womanhood will not allow such abusive treatment as is found in some households today.

Consider also Ephesians 5:22-33:

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his

body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

A correct application of Ephesians 5 will not permit spousal abuse. It has no room for such selfishness and lack of control. Imagine the impact upon America an intense study and exercise of these passages would have!

Perhaps a worse kind of abuse on the domestic scene is that of child abuse. What is more innocent and precious than a little child? Hear the words of Jesus:

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.... Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence (Mat. 18:1-6; 19:13-15).

Child abuse is a shameful act. In the United States, three million children are physically abused each year. More than a million are sexually abused. For children

under 4 years of age, abuse is the leading cause of death. Despicable crimes against children could be extensively reported from any daily newspaper. Justice cries out! Surely such unrepentant people will receive great judgement (2 Cor. 5:10).

The Psalmist wrote, "Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is* his reward. As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth. Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them" (Psa. 127:3-5). This man sees their value. No person can hold this philosophy, as stated in these verses, and at the same time abuse a child. No person can do to a child what is being reported and hold them in high esteem. To ill-treat such an innocent creature made in the image of God is surely an example of misplaced values.

What about abortion? I would be remiss in my duty not to mention this moral issue. It is truly child abuse of the worst sort! If anything is unnatural affection surely the plague of abortion falls under this category (Rom. 1:31). In our country, just the mention of child abuse rushes social workers to these homes with threats. Why is it that the same voice of concern cannot be heard from this group when the unborn are massacred upon a daily basis? Why is it that a former first lady of the United States speaks out in defense of children's rights but actively promotes the infanticide we call abortion?

If biblical principles of responsibility to God and man, personal temperance, and love and respect for others were applied in these circumstances a tremendous decrease in domestic abuse incidents could be witnessed. The leavening influence of these and other spiritual principles is just what is needed in America! Let us speak out against such crimes against God and man!

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

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Stand Fast Or Compromise

Dub McClish

The whole point of a soldier's being well-armed is not for the parade ground, the reviewing stand, or mock maneuvers, but for the field of combat. The reason we are to “take up the whole armor of God” is that we “may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand” (Eph. 6:13). *The evil day* is best understood as the day of combat, trial, temptation, persecution, or opposition. The real spiritual battles are the frequent, often daily, encounters the Christian soldier faces as he takes up the cross **daily** to follow his Commander-in-chief (Luke 9:23). In the daily fray is where the armaments and weapons supplied by the Lord are required. Each of us will stand or fall spiritually for the most part, not in one great, pitched battle, but in the daily skirmishes that add up to the prolonged warfare.

We have a responsibility to stand and fight. Rather than cowering, compromising, or running from the foe, we are to “resist the devil: and he will run from us” (Jam. 4:7). We are not to “give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:27) by surrendering or abandoning the Truth. We are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). We, like Paul, must be “set for the defence of the gospel” (Phi. 1:16). Soldiers of Christ are obligated to “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3). The worthy spiritual warrior must be “stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). We are ordered to withstand the devil without compromise in our faith (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

When one staunchly stands for the Truth while those about him are retreating, compromising, and

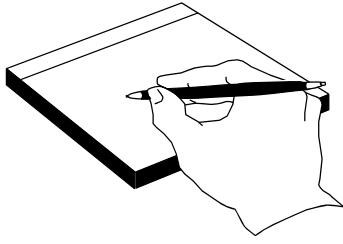
even deserting the blood-stained banner of the heavenly kingdom, he will encounter suffering. The Satan-dominated **world** will see that the faithful soldier pays a price for his dedication. Likewise, the **brethren** whose position of compromise and desertion is exposed by the bold and resolute soldier will turn their *guns* on him. Among the many perils Paul had to contend with were “perils among false brethren” (2 Cor. 11:26).

The temptation to compromise Truth and righteousness in order to avoid financial loss or to favor our kindred, close associates, or those in places of prestige and power in the kingdom is very strong. Some have found one or more of these temptations irresistible. We have seen men who once taught the Truth on marriage, divorce, and remarriage suddenly “discover” a *loophole* concerning Matthew 19:9 when a son or daughter became involved in an unscriptural divorce and remarriage. We have known of preachers who at one time boldly preached the Truth on such moral evils as dancing, drinking, and immodest apparel, suddenly become mute, deciding these were not important “issues” when worldly brethren threatened their employment. We have known elderships that have sought to muzzle preachers on certain subjects for fear of losing brother and sister “Moneybags” whose money they were counting on to help pay for the church building. We have seen school administrators betray faithful brethren and loyal friends in order to placate certain contributors to their schools.

We are also aware of brethren who at one time

(Continued on page 3)

Notes From The Editor



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Hatcher**

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Compromise

Years ago I remember my dad illustrating the way in which error and apostasy creeps into the church. He would draw a horizontal line on the chalk board which he said represented truth. He would then go back to the beginning of the line and begin tracing the first line. Then he would ever so slowly begin creeping away from the original line. It was almost imperceptible at first, but would slowly move away till the two lines were far apart. The second line represented how apostasy creeps into the church. He would then emphasize how that apostasy never came in directly in opposition to truth. This reminds us of the what the Hebrews writer states: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip” (Heb. 2:1), or as the ASV has, “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away *from them*.” This shows the ease of slowly drifting away from the truth. Generally people are not going to go to sleep one night sound in the faith (or the congregation they attend) and wake up the next morning totally apostatized. It is a slow process that begins by compromising on small things. However, once you compromise in one area, there is no stopping point. Notice a couple of examples of this principle.

Paul warned the Ephesian elders “Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30). As one observes the history of the church, he sees how that the papacy resulted from a very slow drifting away. The papacy did not come in overnight. The Lord’s church began about 33 (some would say 29, or 30, but does not matter for the point I am making here). It took a few years before the church spread to other parts of the world and then some more time before elders were

appointed in congregations. At the end of Paul’s first missionary journey, he was going back through congregations he started and they appointed elders. “And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed” (Acts 14:23). Paul’s statement to the Ephesian elders was during his third missionary journey (about 54-57). It was not until 606 that Boniface III proclaimed himself universal pope—the full-blown papacy. It took over 500 years for the apostasy to become total (the entire Catholic papacy)—it did not happen overnight. Yet, the principles for the papacy began very early in the church. It began with a very little bit of compromise concerning the eldership. At the time, no one would have imagined what that first compromise would result in. For centuries now, there is simply no return for the apostasy which began way back when. However, what would have taken place if when the first signs began to be seen, instead of compromising, those brethren would have taken a strong stand and refused to compromise in the smallest of details? The church might have been saved from the throws of apostasy. Sadly, they compromised in those little details and once it began, there was no way to reverse it with the end result the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church.

There were attempts to reform that Apostate Church, but they all failed. Finally, some realized the need to restore the original as God had designed it. It did not take long before some no longer wanted to be restrained by only what God authorizes. To satisfy their selfish desires they brought innovations into the Lord’s church. One of the first unauthorized acts was to bring in the mechanical instrument of music into worship. Moving the instrument into the worship was not simply an overnight occurrence. It took a period of time to get some accustomed to the instrument. They began compromising just a little at first, till they gave up any opposition to the instrument in worship. However, as is the case with compromise, once they compromised in one area, there is no stopping point. This compromise continued till the Christian Church denomination resulted. However, they could not stop the compromise and they ended up splitting their denomination because some were willing to compromise on any and every point of doctrine while some wanted to hold the compromise to just a few areas. However, they had no defense, for once you compromise in one thing, there is no basis for holding to God’s Word in any area.

If people would hold the line against the first hint

of error and never compromise in any aspect of Truth, then apostasy would be stopped dead in its tracks. No doubt this is why the Bible continues to exhort us to be vigilant and be watchful. Paul especially exhorts elders in this regard: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31). They have a special work in watching for our souls so they must be especially watchful. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17).

However, Paul gave instructions to the young preacher Timothy (thus to all preachers) for their need to watch. "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. 4:2-5). Is it not interesting that the admonition to "watch thou in all things" comes on the heels of the turning from the truth and unto fables? No doubt Paul realized that when you start compromising in one thing, there is no stopping the compromise.

Then God expects every Christian to watch and be vigilant. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Paul gives the admonitions to "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13). Each Christian is ultimately responsible for himself, so each one must continually be watching and make sure he never compromises in even the smallest matters. *MH*

(Continued from page 1)
faithfully exposed and opposed various errors in doctrine and practice (and blushed not to name their

perpetrators), but who abruptly ceased doing so. These not only grew silent concerning certain errors (e.g., elder reaffirmation/reconfirmation), but they began pronouncing said error harmless and endorsing and embracing its principal perpetrator. They have gone so far as to say now of the error they once opposed: "It is not worth dividing the church over." (By this statement they imply that they still consider it to be error, but just not *serious* error. They are also implying that those who **do** oppose it **are** guilty of dividing the church.) Instead of continuing to confront this error and its chief advocate in the church (who continues boldly to say, "I would do it again"), several brethren have compromised not only their former convictions, but the Truth of God's Word. If the elder reaffirmation/reconfirmation practice constituted doctrinal and practical error from April 1990 until early 2005, what caused it no longer to be error after that time? If that doctrine and practice no longer constituted error after the spring of 2005, what rendered it unauthorized before that time?

The case of compromise described above involves the desire of certain brethren to support an institution so much that they are willing to call "darkness" *light* and "good" *evil*. They have proved themselves unwilling to withstand the director of the institution in his error by calling on him to repent. Those who have thus compromised have depicted those of us who have refused to compromise on this issue as "radicals," "unbalanced," "toxic," "a negative faction," "neo-antis" who are afflicted with a "devil disease," and similar complimentary terms. They have accused us of causing "rupture in the fellowship of the church."

Contrary to the behavior of all such compromisers, Paul perfectly exemplified the trait of determined faithfulness, yea, heroism, even when personal and public confrontation were required. When he addressed those who compromised with error in the Galatian churches, he pointed out that he sought not the favor of men, but of God, and that were he seeking to please men he could not be Jesus' servant (1:10). He made it plain that his convictions in and loyalty to the Truth were not grounded in any men, not even in the other apostles (1:11-19). Paul was not swayed in his convictions by the behavior or reputations of others when those others strayed from the Truth. In describing his part in the great Jerusalem discussion over the binding of circumcision, he told of his utterly uncompromising attitude on that occasion. After labeling the errorists as "false brethren privily brought in" (2:9), he then stated of them: "To whom we gave place in the way of

subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But from those who were reputed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth not man's person)—they, I say, who were of repute imparted nothing to me” (vv. 5-6).

Note the noble example of Paul: He gave no place to the grievous error of the Judaizers because the Gospel Truth and the destiny of souls were at stake. He was not swayed by those in lofty positions “who were reputed to be somewhat,” not practicing respect of persons, even as God refuses to do. Paul cared not about protecting or preserving anyone who was in error, regardless of his *connections*, academic qualifications, abilities, or the value of the organization he might direct. The Truth was at stake, and he refused to compromise it, regardless of the friends or associates he might lose in the process.

Paul was so completely loyal to the Lord and His Word that he would not even allow a fellow-apostle to compromise the Truth without opposing him: “But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation” (2:11–13).

We have seen in a year's span a lamentable tapestry of compromise woven by and among some once-

stalwart brethren. Instead of “resisting him to the face, because he stood condemned,” a few who are “reputed to somewhat” have given their imprimatur to a documented false teacher in order to support the institution he directs. As Peter did till Paul confronted him, these compromising few have carried away a large number of brethren in a long parade of compromising dissimulation behind them. Had these “reputed to be somewhat” brethren withstood the false teacher after the manner of Paul (as some of us have continued to do), our combined efforts might have brought about his repentance. Instead, because of the compromisers, the false teacher feels secure and comfortable in his error, once-congenial brethren have become estranged, and the kingdom suffers.

CONCLUSION

Compromise on matters of obligatory Truth is not an option for faithful soldiers of Christ. It represents spiritual treason and sedition. There is no place for it in the kingdom of Christ, regardless of the cost of remaining steadfast. Paul encouraged Timothy (and us) from his prison cell as he was facing death: “Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2:3). Such soldiers have the heartening promise of the Lord: “Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you” (Mat. 5:11-12).

908 Imperial; Denton, TX 76201

Voices from the past:

This article appeared in “Defender” November 1974

Attitude Toward False Teachers

William S. Cline

God has always had to deal with the false teacher. From the early morning of time there has been the **false** doctrine to counteract the **true** doctrine of God. God told Adam and Eve **not** to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but the devil said they should **eat** and become as God. The next few thousands of years of man's history reads like a broken record. God has given **truth** by which man was to be governed but the devil and his angels have sought to allure men away from God with **false doctrine**.

When Peter wrote his second epistle, he was concerned with false teachers in the church. In chapter two

he gave a scathing rebuke of those false teachers and told what their end would be—eternal destruction. We wonder if we cannot learn from Peter or Paul or James or Jude or many in the Old Testament who set the **trumpet** to their **mouth** or the **pen** to their **hand** and denounced the sins of the false teachers.

A tendency of men is to be tolerant of those who advocate new ideas and doctrines until they have been tested by the masses. In the religious world, which is woefully divided, we see such tolerance in the existence of more than 300 separate religious organizations. Within the Lord's church we have not done much

better! False teachers have reared their ugly heads and we have been **slow** in denouncing them. An advocate of “**love and understanding**” cries that we must give them time. But we would ask, “Time for what?” Time to subvert whole houses? Time to divide churches? Time to lead multitudes away from the Lord?

While the Christian is to manifest love and understanding, he is also to manifest **diligence, vigilance, and militance** against the false teachers and their doctrines. Did not Paul tell Titus that the mouths of the false teachers **must** be stopped?

God hates the false teacher and every false way. “The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity” (Psa. 5:5). If the child of God is to be like God in his attitude toward false doctrine, then he must hate that doctrine. “Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; *and* I hate every false way” (Psa. 119:128). The great apostle Paul, the one who manifested such love, concern and compassion toward all men, especially his own brethren, denounced the Judaizing teachers in Galatia with

his arresting statement: “I wish those who unsettle you would mutilate themselves! (Gal. 5:12—RSV). Thus we can see why Paul said that anyone who taught false doctrine was to be accursed (Gal. 1:6-9). Men of God were **never slow** to denounce error and neither should we. It is a mark of ungodliness to allow error to have free course. J. Sidlow Baxter, a denominational Bible scholar, writes, “When easy-going kindness lounges in the place of righteous indignation, and allows Christ-dishonouring false doctrine to play havoc inside the Church, kindness has ceased to be Christian, it has become disguised disloyalty, camouflaged cowardice, and a moral wasting disease.”

We should always seek to convert the false teacher from the error of his way so that his soul can be saved in the day of the Lord, but at the same time, if conversion is not possible, we should manifest the attitude of the Lord and set our face against them that do evil, for the Lord hates every false way. It is time for the church to **LOVE the truth and HATE the error.**

Deceased

Some Things I Learned From William S. (Bill) Cline

Tim Smith

I am writing this article knowing that I cannot cover all that I learned from brother Cline, and that brother Cline is not the standard of Judgment to be respected in the Great Judgment when all men shall answer for the things done in the body. However, inasmuch as brother Cline respected the Scriptures, and seeing that some today have sought to associate his name with causes that are not worthy of support by faithful brethren, I thought I would reflect on the days I spent at the Bellview Preacher Training School, over which brother Cline served as director when I was there, and discuss some of the things he taught me.

I learned from brother Cline that all sin is bad—even when men who seem to be somewhat among us like a particular sin. Say there is a preacher who likes to make up things and insert them into the work of a local church—things not authorized by the Bible—that is sin. Even if someone who has a following and thinks himself above questioning, it is still sin. Sin condemns. Repentance will free those who love that sin and call bad good, but it will do them no good to merely circle the wagons and deny and evade and wish it would all go away. Brother Cline was a very firm believer that sin is bad.

I learned from brother Cline that fellowship with

false teachers is wrong. It does not matter who the false teacher is; the faithful cannot fellowship him. Do you remember the *Defender* back when brother Cline first started working with it? Did he not oppose all false teachers—even when he got mail and phone calls suggesting that he not do so? Did he give in to *big* names? No! He refused to fellowship false teachers—period. (Bro. Michael Hatcher continues the high standard of the paper.)

I learned from brother Cline that consistency is essential. We cannot apply one rule to one group and another rule to some other group. We must respect and hold all men to the Standard of God. Many times I recall him upbraiding some false teacher for his inconsistency. He did this in print, in the classroom, in the pulpit, and face to face with the false teacher.

Brother Cline was the director of a Preacher Training School and the editor of a Religious Periodical, both of which relied on money donated by brethren all over, and yet still he refused to compromise with error. He named names and respected the lines of fellowship drawn by the Lord in the Scriptures. It was never about raising money—it was all about saving souls and preparing men to go forth with the Word to preach it in

its simplicity and its truth. He could have raised more money if he had compromised, but had he so behaved I would not be as comfortable with his spiritual standing before God as I am now.

Brother Cline is gone. I miss him. I wish I had spent more time with him and not had been such a brash young man back then. I cannot bring him back, but I can remember what he taught me and I can continue in the same tradition he walked in. I will not

participate with false teachers. I will not overlook some sins just to please others. I will not be inconsistent in my application of the Word. I will try to save souls even when others about me are seemingly more interested in creating some sort of “buddy-hood” based on cronyism and dollars-donated.

I sure wish he was still alive—and there are some among us who are pretty lucky that he is not.

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Water to (Intoxicating) Wine?

Brandon Renfroe

During my last semester in college, in order to satisfy the requirements for a biology major, I enrolled in a class on plant ecology. The course proved to be much more interesting than I had anticipated, as it was taught by a *lay* Episcopalian minister who did not mind mixing in the occasional religious discussion with his lectures on photosynthesis. As I later learned, he also did not mind mixing an occasional alcoholic beverage. In fact, he seemed to enjoy debunking my classmates’ perceptions of how ministers should conduct themselves. When one student expressed surprise over the fact that he drank, he remarked, “Jesus didn’t turn water to Welches, he turned water to wine.” He was suggesting, of course, that our Lord turned water into an intoxicating beverage. His remark was as wrong as he supposed it was witty.

Did Jesus turn *water* into *wine*? Yes and no. Yes, our Lord turned water into *oinos*, a Greek word for “wine,” indicating a beverage made from the juice of the grape, whether fermented or non-fermented. No, our Lord most certainly did not turn water into *wine*, as we think of it today; that is, the intoxicating variety.

In John 2, we learn that our Lord and His disciples graced a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee with their presence. To summarize that familiar story, suffice it to say that some time after their arrival, Mary, the mother of Jesus, remarked to her Son, “They have no wine” (2:4). Knowing somewhat of her Son’s miraculous abilities, perhaps she hoped that He would quickly rectify the embarrassing situation, for, as McGarvey noted, “Shortage of provision when guests are invited is considered a sore humiliation the world over” (115). Mary then said to the servants, “Whatever he saith unto you, do *it*” (2:5). We are told that there were six stone waterpots nearby, each containing two or three “firkins” apiece. (In case you have forgotten your firkins-to-gallons conversion ratio, one firkin is the

equivalent of about nine gallons.) Jesus then instructed the servants to fill the waterpots with water, which they did, filling them up to the *brim*. After He turned the water to wine, Christ told the servants to take the gift to the ruler of the feast—likely “one of the guests, who, according to ancient custom, was chosen to preside over the festivities” (117). Upon tasting the wine, the ruler remarked, “Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now” (2:10). Truly, our Lord did “all things well” (Mat. 7:37).

It is at this point that we must ask the question: “Did Jesus turn water into an intoxicating beverage and then encourage others to partake of it?” It is, to this writer, shameful for anyone who professes even a nominal allegiance to Christ to allow for such nonsense. That such is suggested by denominational members, such as by the Episcopalian minister, is perhaps not too surprising. But when such is suggested—or at least not repudiated when suggested—by members of the body of Christ, it is sad indeed. Recently, a member of the Lord’s body—and preacher, no less—suggested to me that we “simply cannot know.” Though he went on to say that he did not *believe* such (water-to-intoxicating wine) to be the case, it was simply *beyond the realm of knowledge* for us today. After all, he would suggest, *oinos* can refer both to intoxicating and non-intoxicating beverages, depending upon the context. Such an attitude is nothing more than agnosticism gone to “seed.”

While it is certainly true that the context plays a role in determining the type of *oinos* under consideration, we are not at the mercy of pro-alcohol, pseudo-intellectual contextual critics in this instance. One need simply turn to Habakkuk 2:15 to find out whether or not the Son of God encouraged the consumption of

alcoholic beverages. Notice: “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to *him*, and makest *him* drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!” Clearly, it was a violation of the Old Covenant—the covenant that Jesus lived and died under—for one to give his neighbor *drink*—that is, to give him an intoxicating beverage. Some today are teetering dangerously close to the cliff of blasphemy, if not fallen off headlong already, when they suggest that the *wine* our Lord made was (or even *may have been*) intoxicating. To affirm that Christ *may have turned* water to intoxicating wine is to affirm that Christ *may have sinned* in Cana! Did the Son of God sin at the wedding feast? Did the Son of God sin **at all**? No and no. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, **yet without sin**” (Heb. 4:15). “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who **did no sin**, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Pet. 2:21-22).

We might think of it thus:

1. It was sinful to put one’s neighbor to the bottle (Hab. 2:15).
2. Christ never sinned (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22).
3. Therefore, Christ did not put those at the wedding feast in Cana to the bottle.

There are some today who would evidently argue that while no *guile* was found in our Savior’s mouth, plenty of intoxicating wine was. Remember the firkins-to-gallons ratio (nine firkins to one gallon)? There were six water pots at the wedding feast in Cana, each holding two or three firkins apiece. Assuming the lesser value—2 firkins per water pot—our Lord produced **108 gallons** of wine (2 firkins x 9 gallons x 6 water pots). Assuming the greater value—3 firkins per water pot—Jesus produced **162 gallons** of wine (3 firkins x 9 gallons x 6 water pots). Does anyone with even a

semblance of honesty really believe that it is possible to imbibe such a tremendous quantity of wine and *not* become intoxicated? Remember, the first “batch” of wine had already “ran out” (John 2:3)!

Further, consider this: while hanging on the cross of Calvary, Jesus was offered, “vinegar to drink mingled with gall.” We are subsequently told, “and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink” (Mat. 27:34). McGarvey notes: “This mixture of sour wine mingled with gall and myrrh was intended to dull the sense of pain of those being crucified or otherwise severely punished... Jesus declined it because it was the Father’s will that he should suffer. He would not go upon the cross in a drugged, semi-unconscious condition” (724). Knowing that our Lord refused a sense-dulling beverage when He *needed* one most, is it logical to believe that He would have partaken of a sense-dulling beverage—which intoxicating wine absolutely is—frivolously? Of course not.

Both those who propose that Christ made an intoxicating beverage and those who suggest that we simply cannot know evince severe disrespect for the Word of God, for the person of Christ, and a woeful lack of even the most rudimentary Bible knowledge (Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 2:15). May we never accuse the sinless Son of God of not only committing sin Himself, but also aiding and abetting the sin of others. It is sad, really, to even have to pen such an admonition.

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“Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder” (Pro. 23:29-32).

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Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

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The Spiritual Growth Workshop

Gary W. Summers

Preliminaries

It would be wonderful to think that everyone who wears the name Christian is acting in the best interests of the Savior, the fact is that such is not the case—and never has been. An inspired and well-known apostle wrote: “But there were false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction” (2 Pet. 2:1).

Notice that the Israelites always had their share of false prophets. Satan always distorts the truth to cause people to sin; he has done so since the beginning (Gen. 3:1-7; John 8:44). The devil accomplishes his purposes through lies, which is why his servants are referred to as false teachers. Peter assures us that such men existed in the church in the first century and that they would continue to plague the body of Christ.

Paul said to mark or “note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17). He did so himself by mentioning even in the Holy Scriptures the names of Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:17-18). Therefore, there is not only a precedent to do what this article does, but there is an obligation to do so.

A second preliminary point needs to be made. We want to note the efforts of those brethren who have tried (and continue to try) to get less heretical brethren invited on this program. These are greatly appreciated, and in some cases they have been successful in getting a false teacher removed. The task is too great, however, and those in charge of the workshop have simply repeated the worn-out chorus: “We’ll get better speakers next time.” It is obvious, from those invited to come, that such will never actually be the case; these are simply meaningless promises.

Apology

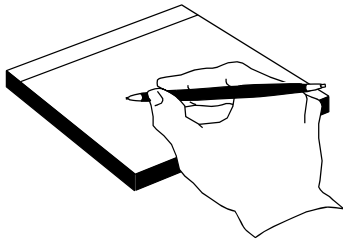
In fact, if those in charge were serious about having sound speakers on the workshop, they would apologize for all the error that has been taught in the past—telling people what the errors were—and start fresh with those who have reputations of presenting scriptural messages. One speaker in the past, for example, was a theistic evolutionist, which is a doctrine that denies the integrity of the Scriptures. Due to continued opposition, they quit inviting him, but where is the attempt to set the record straight? This same individual, in his publication, recommended the book by Edward Fudge, called *The Fire That Consumes*, which denies that hell is eternal in duration. Hell is a serious biblical doctrine to challenge. One wonders what Jesus saved us from—if not eternal punishment. Why was such an individual even invited in the first place?

But let us get to something more recent. The last Workshop in 2004 had, among others, Flavil Yeakley and Randall Harris. This latter individual co-wrote *The Second Incarnation* with Rubel Shelly, which this writer reviewed as the June 26 and July 3, 2005 issues of *Spiritual Perspective* (the author’s weekly bulletin). Harris is now a professor at Abilene Christian University, which fact says enough, all by itself. Yeakley tried to blur matters of faith and matters of opinion as if there is some sort of middle ground, when in fact it is one or the other. He further stated: “The New Testament does not authorize instrumental music,” but then added that it is not a salvation issue. Since when has unauthorized worship not been a salvation issue? God illustrated that it was when He slew Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2). Where is the apology for leading brethren astray?

To demonstrate this problem more fully, we quote from what we published in the *Spiritual Perspectives* of February 27, 2005.

(Continued on page 3)

Notes From The Editor



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Solutions

Anyone who keeps up with the brotherhood knows that within the past year and a half there has developed a split among generally faithful brethren. Even though the division has only been within the past months, the seeds for that split were planted well over a decade ago. However, it is not the intention of this article to deal with the problems which have caused this schism to occur, but instead to offer a scriptural solution to the situation. I will explain that these are my suggestions to begin to solve these problems, and while I realize that not everyone will agree with these suggestions, I do know that these suggested solutions will be according to what is right by the standard of God's Word.

The seeds of this division go back to what was practiced at Brown Trail Church of Christ in 1990 when Dave Miller preached the sermon and they performed the reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders. Brother Miller needs to repent of this sinful sermon and practice. A simple statement of repentance such as: "I am sorry for preaching the sermon advocating the reaffirmation of elders and repent of what was said in that sermon. The practice of reaffirmation of elders is wrong and I repent of all my actions involving such." The next problem with brother Miller is his statements concerning *intent* of marriage. Again, this can be solved in a simple way. Words to the effect of: "In answering some questions, I simply mis-spoke concerning this matter. While I believe that one must intend to get married for there to be a marriage, one might intend to get married and their purpose be wrong. Yet, in that situation they are married both legally and by God. I am sorry I mis-spoke concerning that issue and ask my brethren to forgive me." The third area of concern is appearing in congregations which are no longer standing for the old paths. This is a real problem because it should be obvious that a person cannot know every congregation in the brotherhood which might ask him to come speak. I realize that I do not know all the solutions to this problem. However, if brother Miller (and those associated with Apologetics Press) agrees to seriously consider any signed and documented charges against a congregation and then will meet with the elders (or men) of that congregation specifically about those charges

and then if found to be true will not return there until corrections are made, this would be a good starting place. Surely this can at least be a good starting point to discuss this issue among faithful brethren and work out a satisfactory arrangement for all faithful brethren.

That which brought much of the problems to the forefront was the release of Dub McClish and Dave Watson as editor and associate editor of *The Gospel Journal*. Everyone realizes that the board of directors had the right to accept the resignations of these brethren or even release (fire) them outright. Everyone also realizes that it is not possible to return these men to that position. However, there are at least three problems which have arisen from their release. The first problem is the way brethren McClish and Watson were treated by the board (of which I was on at the time). The members of the board did not treat these men with the same consideration as they would have desired to be treated (remember the golden rule?). A simply apology from the board would suffice to resolve this problem. The other two problems are connected (and go back to brother Dave Miller). The first of these is the reason behind the release (resigning) of brethren McClish and Watson, and the second is the fellowship being extended to a marked false teacher (brother Dave Miller). Prior to McClish and Watson's removal, *The Gospel Journal* refused to accept advertising from Apologetics Press (also from Gospel Broadcasting Network) because brother Miller, a marked false teacher, had been hired by brother Bert Thompson. Upon the release of brother Thompson, this marked false teacher was then made director. (*The Gospel Journal* would not accept advertising from Gospel Broadcasting Network because of their support of brother Miller.) Immediately after McClish and Watson's removal, *The Gospel Journal* began running advertisements for both organizations (Gospel Broadcasting Network in the first issue and Apologetics Press in the third issue after the change in editors). This is very simply a violation of God's Word: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" (Eph. 5:11). The apostle John puts it: "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). When one violates God's Word, they need to repent. Therefore, the board of *The Gospel Journal* needs to repent of their support for a marked false teacher (Dave Miller) and for their support for those who have supported him. A statement along the following lines would help: "Brethren, please forgive us. We sinned in supporting brother Dave Miller and Apologetics Press (the organization which he directs). We will no longer support those brethren and organizations which are lending support to this false teacher until such time as he repents. (1) He must repent of his false doctrine concerning elder reaffirmation and for engaging in that unauthorized practice. (2) He must repent of his teaching concerning intent of

marriage. (3) He must end his practice of appearing at liberal congregations and lending his support to them.”

Those associated with Memphis School of Preaching have given support and defended a marked false teacher in Dave Miller. Because of their support of and their defense of the marked false teacher Dave Miller, they have sinned. They violated the passages just mentioned (Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11). They should have stood against the false teaching and teacher, but instead they compromised the truth of God’s Word. As such they need to repent of their sin. A statement as the previous one relating to *The Gospel Journal* would again be appropriate. “Brethren, please forgive us. We have sinned in defending and supporting the marked false teacher brother Dave Miller and the organization which he directs, Apologetics Press. We will no longer defend or support either him or the organization which he directs until he repents of his false teaching regarding elder reaffirmation and engaging in such practice, his marriage intent teaching, and his appearing in liberal congregations. We also will no longer defend or support those who have given their encouragement to brother Miller until they repent of their sins.”

Then there are also those associated with Gospel Broadcasting Network. These brethren, like Memphis School of Preaching, have supported and defended the marked false teacher Dave Miller violating the same passages of Scriptures as the others. A statement like that from Memphis School of Preaching or *The Gospel Journal* is necessary from these brethren. However, there is another problem with those associated with Gospel Broadcasting Network. The elders overseeing this work (Highland Church of Christ in Dalton, GA) unscripturally withdrew fellowship from the elders of the Northside Church of Christ in Calhoun, GA. The Northside elders were taking a scriptural stand in opposing the use of the marked false teacher Dave Miller and his associates on Gospel Broadcasting Network by the elders at Highland. At the end of their correspondence the Northside elders released the correspondence to allow others to see the position taken by the elders who oversee Gospel Broadcasting Network. Upon the release of that correspondence, the elders at Highland in Dalton, GA, unscripturally withdrew fellowship from the elders at Northside in Calhoun, GA (they specifically stated it was not from the preacher or the congregation, but how can you withdraw from the elders without also withdrawing from the rest of the congregation?). This unscriptural withdrawal must also be taken care of by the Highland elders repentance. Again a statement such as the following would do. “We retract the unscriptural withdrawal of fellowship which we initiated against the Northside elders. This action was wrong and was selective of the Northside elders without those who are in fellowship with them (the Northside congregation, preacher, along with other congregations and individuals who continue to fellowship them) and, as such, was a violation of Biblical teachings.” Since Highland sent their unscriptural withdrawal to numerous congregations, they should likewise send a letter like the above statement to those same congregations to make it right.

If these events would take place (and I pray that they will) then brethren can start the process of ending this schism which has taken place among generally faithful brethren. This would at least be a start to that process because there would be many other individual problems that would have to be settled, but this would at least be the starting point to where these things could take place. Do I really believe that these things will take place? While I pray that it will, I do not expect it to happen. For some there is too much pride involved. Solomon wrote, “*When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.... Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.... Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall*” (Pro. 11:2 13:10; 16:18). Others are simply sticking their finger in the air to see which way the wind is blowing. Some are simply playing politics and following whoever they think can help them the most. There are some who are simply following the money. They need to remember what Paul wrote, “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:9-10). Additionally, there has been a concerted effort not to put anything in writing. In a conversation Dave Miller had with Paul Middlebrooks, brother Miller told brother Middlebrooks that Curtis Cates and Bobby Liddell, along with other brethren Miller trusted, had advised him not to put anything about this in writing. Why, brethren? Brethren, let us get these issues resolved in a way which pleases God. If any individual or organization wishes to make things right in a God approved way by making repentance of their sins, we will gladly open up the pages of *Defender* to them to allow the brotherhood to know of their repentance and begin a healing process. We pray to that end. *MH*

(Continued from page 1)

The two speakers from whom we will quote are Flavil Yeakley and Ray Fulenwider. Flavil Yeakley is an author and researcher who is currently a professor in the College of the Bible and Religion at Harding. Ray Fulenwider has degrees from Abilene Christian University and has taught classes at Harding, ACU, Pepperdine, Oklahoma Christian University, and David Lipscomb.

Fulenwider made it plain that the use of instrumental music was not a matter of fellowship: “There is no way I could look these people in the face and say it’s a salvation issue. I just can’t do it. I think they’re gonna be in heaven.” What Fulenwider cannot bring himself to do, a few thousand of us can: “The use of instrumental music is a salvation issue, and those who use it (despite the fact that they have no authority to do so from the Word of God) will be lost.” Furthermore, the majority of us will also tell Fulenwider to his face that he too is lost.

A question was asked about allowing women to serve on

the Lord's Table. Flavil Yeakley's first response, rather than consider any Scriptures, was "LaGard Smith says that it sends the wrong message." Why does Yeakley think anyone is interested in what LaGard Smith thinks? He has totally discredited himself in his recent books on **fellowship** and **hell**. Smith is willing to fellowship beyond what the Scriptures enjoin, and he has declared that hell is annihilation rather than eternal punishment. He is a false teacher, advocating doctrines that will cause men to lose their souls. Why, then, does Yeakley cite him with approval? Despite what Workshop speakers might **claim** about standing for the truth and being solid in matters of faith, they do not themselves do so.

Ray Fulenwider frequently complimented Rick "Abuhi" Atchley and the Richland Hills mega-church, which has been apostate for years. In 1991, for example, in his book *Behold the Pattern*, Goebel Music published a picture of Richland Hills' marquee. It asked the question: "Are you looking for an independent community church?" Atchley was fellowshiping denominational folk as brethren even at that time, and since then Richlands Hills has appointed deaconesses, although they refer to them as "special servants." Atchley has no problem with instrumental music in worship, and said that he would dedicate himself to breaking down barriers of fellowship between churches of Christ and the Christian Church. Yet, he is hailed at the Spiritual Growth Workshop as a great leader and example.

The 2006 Program

Not only has no one apologized for the false doctrines taught in 2003, but this year's list of speakers has not improved. But before providing some profiles of these men, we want to mention a defense that is sometimes used to justify having them on the program. Frequently, one hears the rationalization, "Well, he won't be speaking on marriage and divorce." Whoopie! Does this compare to Paul objecting to Hymenaeus and Philetus being on the Spiritual Growth Workshop in Ephesus and being told, "They won't be speaking on the resurrection"? Should Diotrefes be invited to speak, so long as he does not deal with "How to Maintain Absolute Control over a Church" (3 John 9-10)?

The point is that a false teacher is a false teacher. He should not be invited to speak, period. In truth, he is more dangerous if he adheres to the truth in a number of areas because many will think that, if he is sound in so many areas, he is to be trusted in all matters. In other words, if he upholds those New Testament teachings that: (1) one must be baptized for the forgiveness of sins in order to be saved, (2) one must worship with the one body of believers, (3) God has appointed men to exercise leadership in the home and in the assembly, (4) elders are to be the overseers of the work of the church, etc., but thinks instrumental music in worship is all right, many may be more likely to follow him in his digression than one who denied all of those truths.

One other consideration that should be mentioned is that we ought not to be quick to call someone a false teacher. If he holds a view that is different in some area, not on a vital

subject like salvation, worship, church organization, or a major doctrine, such as the Deity of Christ or the resurrection, then he may not be a false teacher—especially if he is not primarily known for that position. Those who have written books on their heresies or spoken repeatedly on those subjects (or refused to meet with brethren to discuss their views) are most likely false teachers. Below is a list of men, which have either taught error publicly or are known to be false teachers.

Ralph Gilmore

Brother Gilmore has a terrific sense of humor and is always interesting to hear, but some of his views indicate instability. In 2003 this writer and his wife were present for the Open Forum at Freed-Hardeman University conducted by Ralph Gilmore. He made atrocious comments on four subjects that his well-known predecessors, Alan Highers and Guy N. Woods, would never have made. At that time the Brown Trail Church in Fort Worth, Texas, had recently initiated a "re-evaluation of the elders" process (after having promised for a decade that they would not do so again). Students from Brown Trail were present at the lectures; one of them may have asked this question: "Is it possible for there to be a reaffirmation, or should elders be reconfirmed after so many years?"

Gilmore's first response was, "Okay. This is certainly in the area of speculation, but I'll tell you what I think." How can such a process be in the area of speculation? Did Jesus or the apostles authorize re-affirmation? They did not! Without biblical authority for such a practice, why would anyone even consider it? We have no command, no example, and no implication that such ought ever to be done. Gilmore later gave his opinion:

But I think part of the problem is that we've seen elders as a lifelong, honorary position, which it is not. It is a functioning position; there's no such thing as an ex officio elder. Therefore, I don't think that it's wrong to reaffirm elders or let it be known that an elder is gonna serve for five years or ten years and then, according to the principles of Acts chapter 6, let there arise from the congregation hopefully a wellspring of support. I know this makes elders, perhaps, feel a little bit vulnerable, but preachers—hey, welcome to the club.

While Gilmore is correct in saying that being an elder is a **functioning** position rather than a lifelong, honorary one, there remains no authority for future elections or term limits. A man must meet the qualifications to become an elder. If he becomes unqualified, it is the responsibility of his fellow elders to convince him to resign, since they, by definition, are to watch over the flock. See the complete article on this subject on our website (www.spiritualperspectives.org 4-13-03).

Second, Gilmore tried to justify praying to Jesus on the basis of Acts 7:59 and Revelation 22:20—neither of which are prayers. See the two articles on our website dated 5-21-06 titled "Praying to Jesus" and 4-27-03 titled "Praying to Jesus?"

Third, Todd Deaver, who is well-known at Freed-Hardeman (and who holds to his father's "**direct** influence of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian" error) came

to the microphone in the Open Forum to speak about praying to the Holy Spirit. He said:

Let me just offer one observation. Possibly, one of the reasons that you don't ever find, in the New Testament, worship being directed specifically to the Holy Spirit is that the Spirit is viewed in the New Testament as being within the Christian and helping him to offer it—his worship. For example, in Jude, verse 20, you have a reference to praying in the Holy Spirit. There are several other passages that talk about the same thing.

John 4:24 refers to worshiping in the Spirit. I believe that's the Holy Spirit there. He is in the Christian (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), helping us in our worship. He is interceding for us within our hearts (Romans, chapter 8). And so, possibly, how that's supposed to be looked at in the New Testament is that the Holy Spirit is not in heaven receiving our worship but is in our hearts helping us to offer the worship.

Gilmore's first response was: "Todd, that's a great point." No, it is not even a good point—let alone a great point. It is just plain wrong! Most everyone (especially commentators) know that worshiping in spirit refers to attitude and sincerity—not the Holy Spirit. See more information on our website (5-11-03 article titled "Is 'In Spirit and in Truth' the Holy Spirit").

The worst of Gilmore's inaccuracies involved a direct contradiction of the Word of God. The following question was asked: "To what extent should you as a Christian respond to false doctrine that is believed, taught, or practiced? Please explain that in light of Matthew 16:12 and what Jesus did."

After some introductory comments, Gilmore said:

So now, to a lot of folks, then, that means, "See there? He's directly, specifically calling down the Pharisees as false teachers. He's drawing this to the attention of them, and therefore, you know, it's not wrong for me to go identifying false teachers for the rest of the brotherhood."

These are people, as one article I read, who are sin-smellers, and they are the inspection—let's call them the inspection experts for the brotherhood. They are therefore there to see who is doing false, and if there is, let me report this to the rest of the brotherhood.

You know, in Matthew 16, that's not how Jesus handled that. But He did say, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." And they said, "What are you talking about?" "Well," Jesus said, "You know I have fed 4,000, and you know I have fed 5,000. All right, so now why is it that you cannot understand that I'm telling you to beware of this attitude?"

What? Anyone who knows the text had to be shocked by this "interpretation." First, it was not just the leaven of the Pharisees; it was the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Second, and most important, when Jesus explained to His disciples what at first they did not understand, He did not say that the leaven represented **attitude**; Matthew 16:12 records: "Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the **doctrine** of the Pharisees and the Sadducees" (emphasis GWS). (See the article on our website titled, "The *Leaven* of the Pharisees" 3-30-03, for a complete response.)

Gilmore's analysis is a great example of twisting the Scriptures away from what they actually say into something that was never intended at all. Yet, Ralph Gilmore will probably be one of the least objectionable speakers at the

2006 Workshop. Many are far worse.

Howard Norton

In 1981, Oklahoma Christian University obtained a paper called *The Christian Chronicle*. Howard Norton was appointed editor. The claim is made that, under his leadership, this monthly paper grew from a readership of 4,000 to more than 100,000. What it was before Norton assumed control is uncertain (to this writer), but it has been regarded as catering to liberals ever since. Norton has worked with Oklahoma Christian University (now an Abilene Christian University wannabe) and Harding Graduate School of Religion. He has spoken at Pepperdine and David Lipscomb (both very liberal institutions). This is not a matter of just one questionable association, in which case some slack might be given. Norton habitually moves in these circles and stands condemned by 2 John 9-11, if nothing else.

Harold Hazelip

J. E. Choate wrote the following about Harold Hazelip in the *Firm Foundation* in November, 1996:

Over a ten year period, President Hazelip has loaded the DLU Bible faculty with theologians who endorse the principles of postmodern theology, and the practices of the cultic charismatic churches identified with the Vineyard Movement, the Kansas City Prophets, the "Third Wave" Pentecostal movement.

Such a statement is shocking indeed as it pertains to both of these errors. Postmodernism is a philosophy which primarily allows anyone to believe anything; any aberration, therefore, is to be granted equal validity. In other words, ultimately, error equals truth. The charismatic movement is equally deadly in that, ultimately, they are their own authority, since God is speaking directly to them. Whenever something becomes true—not because the Scriptures teach it, but because an individual believes and is convinced that it is so—then no standard of authority exists. The objective word is replaced by: "Whatever I think is right is right."

Wayne Coats wrote the following in May of 2002: Back when Harold Hazelip was deceiving the hearts of many by babbling heresy as a Herald of Truth speaker, in sermon 986 titled "The Search for Truth" Harold opined, "We are [assuming] that it—the Bible—is the inspired Word of God, though this certainly is also an area in which we should be open to whatever facts are pertinent. Any observer of religion is aware that our [problem] is a legitimate one. This is not an affirmation of the Bible's inspiration but a tenuous [assumption] fraught with legitimate problems and I suspect to whatever pertinent facts may emerge. To help us understand and believe, God has promised the Holy Spirit.... When he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak on his own authority but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come—John 16:13. The Spirit of Truth has come. He is waiting to guide you into all the truth if you will let him in."

Brother Coats responded appropriately in his article by saying: "Such blasphemy! Such ignorance!" First, we do not **assume** that the Bible is inspired—the Bible teaches that it is inspired (2 Tim. 3:16-17)! Has Hazelip failed to notice all the times that the Bible claims to be inspired? Has he never come in contact with all of the archaeological or scientific evi-

dences that show the genius of the Scriptures?

But second, God did not promise **us** the Holy Spirit in John 16:12-13. That promise was made to the **apostles**, to whom Jesus was specifically speaking: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (John 16:12-13).

In fact, the Holy Spirit did grant them all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Christians today learn these truths from the apostles, as they taught (through the pages of the New Testament) what was revealed to them directly by the Holy Spirit.

To suggest that Jesus was telling **all** Christians that the Holy Spirit would **tell each one of us** the truth (because the Bible might not be reliable) is accurately termed **ignorance** and **blasphemy**. It does, however, fit in with the philosophies of postmodernism and Pentecostalism. The Holy Spirit revealed New Testament doctrine to the apostles, who spoke it orally, and wrote it down for the entire world to read. God has preserved it so that people anywhere in the world today can read the Gospel and be saved if they will obey it. Errors such as those taught by Harold Hazelip are not only fundamentally fallacious; they lead to just about every other type of error imaginable.

Prentice Meador

This writer heard Prentice Meador speak at a Shults-Lewis Open House back in the early 1990s when he told the crowd how he hoodwinked the older members of the Prestoncrest congregation where he preaches into accepting singing during the Lord’s Supper. He evidently was pleased with his own cleverness in accomplishing that goal—especially since the older members were the only ones who had enough sense to object. Apparently, the younger members of the congregation did not know enough to ask for authorization of the practice.

Meador is another one who fellowships liberals. “He serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of Abilene Christian University and on the Chancellor’s Council of Pepperdine University,” according to a Website about him. In 2003 Meador was asked to be a guest chaplain for the U. S. Senate, which he did the following year. Meador was introduced by Kay Bailey Hutchison, (pro-abortion senator from Texas). She praised his service and the work of the Prestoncrest Church and mentioned that he was a member of the board of trustees of “a great university, Abilene Christian University, in Abilene, Texas.”

Meador said: “I was so proud to be from Texas and to be connected to ACU.” The fact is, two of his children graduated from ACU, and he has served on the board more than 20 years. It would take several pages to list all the errors associated with Abilene Christian University: the books and articles they have published, the lectureship speeches, etc., over the past twenty years. The Firm Foundation has published several articles about ACU for more than a decade. See a few articles

on our Website (2-04-01 titled “The Crux of the Matter: Faulty Assumptions” and 3-23-03 titled “Art, Campolo, and Oprah,” for starters). Consider the articles about “The Unity-Committed Church” (6-23-96, 6-30-96, and 7-07-96).

Mark Smith

One of the local speakers from this area is Mark Smith with the West Orange Church of Christ in Winter Garden. About two years ago, a man visited South Seminole from that congregation. After worship, he praised the sermon, saying he had not heard one like it in a long time. Then he asked, “What would you say to elders who have said, regarding instrumental music, that the New Testament doesn’t say **not** to use it?”

My response was immediate: “I would tell them they are not qualified to be elders, if they know so little and cannot reason any better.” It is unthinkable that men who have been appointed elders would be such novices as to not have studied Biblical authority and how it operates. This man confided over the next few visits that his wife was the one who really wanted to go there but that he did not enjoy it. He ceased driving all the way over here because of poor health.

Last June (2005) I had a debate with Olan Hicks in North Carolina—just south of the Virginia border. When we met, he asked where I was currently located. Then he asked, “Where is Winter Park?” Once he knew its proximity to Orlando, he said, “I’ve held one of my marriage workshops at Metro in Oviedo.” I told him that none of the other congregations in this area fellowship Metro because they are so liberal. Without hesitation, he informed me, “West Orange does. In fact, I’ve held a marriage seminar for them, also.” Some in this area already knew that Winter Garden was not overly concerned about unscripturally divorced and remarried couples, but Hicks’ comments confirmed it. In fact, it is no secret that liberal members from congregations in this area, when they desire a more “progressive” church, go to Mark Smith and West Orange.

For those who might be unfamiliar with Olan Hicks, his doctrine allows anyone, Christian or non-Christian, to divorce and remarry as many times as they wish—and still be acceptable to God (see the seven articles on our website that deal with his doctrine, beginning with October 9, 2005). West Orange has unscripturally divorced and remarried couples as members. They hosted Jeff Walling on October 10, 1999; Walling has been known far and wide as a false teacher for decades. In fact, Goebel Music wrote 25 pages about his fellowship with denominations in *Behold the Pattern*, published in 1991. Not surprisingly, College Press (a publishing house for the Christian Church) promotes his materials, along with those of Rubel Shelly, Rick Atchley, Max Lucado, Lynn “big, sick denomination” Anderson, and Mark Henson. The West Orange website also advertises Winterfest, a liberal youth activity.

David Lane

David Lane is from the Marsalis Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas. He is on tape as equating baptism to a marriage ceremony a la F. LaGard Smith, which implies that a person is saved when he believes, rather than when he is baptized.

He is associated with Jack Evans and Southwestern Christian College and the belief that those outside of Christ are not amenable to God's marriage laws. Brother Charles Orr, who works with the West Orlando Church of Christ, was present in Detroit a few years ago when David Lane argued that a brother (**who had admitted he had no Scriptural right to remarry and put it in writing**) should be baptized a second time and allowed to marry again, which action occurred. This *agreement* was shameful and a plain denial of the Holy Scriptures. Brother Orr may be contacted for more information on this speaker.

Steve Puckett

John writes that Christians should not fellowship those who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11). If the apostle John had possessed the technology for a website, it is doubtful that he would have had links to Diotrephes or to one operated by Hymenaeus and Philetus. Yet when one looks at the website of the Melbourne Church of Christ, with whom Steve Puckett works, one finds links to Abilene Christian University, Pepperdine, Rochester College (so liberal that they changed their name from Michigan Christian College), David Lipscomb University, and others.

They also have another category on their website, which advertises "Other Christian Sites." These include:

- * John Mark Hicks Publications
- * College Press
- * Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University
- * Center for Church Growth
- * Tulsa Int'l Soul-Winning Workshop.

John Mark Hicks helped begin the Cordova Community Church in the Memphis area in the year 2000. He taught at Harding University Graduate School of Religion from 1991-2000 and is currently at David Lipscomb University. He too is published by College Press, which is the next listing (identified earlier). The others listed are known for many things, but being sound and biblical are not among their attributes. So many of Puckett's associations are known to compromise the truth, but we can hear his own words from an article he wrote for his church bulletin of November 15, 1998, titled, "When Am I Saved?"

This question really should be asked, "When were you saved?" No person has ever been saved other than through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). You were saved through this

righteousness of God. God chose you to be his through Jesus before you were born (Ephesians 1:4-14).

This clear teaching of Scripture strikes at the heart of the myth that says, "God did his part. Now I must do my part." When it comes to salvation, there is no human part. We play absolutely no role whatsoever in the saving of our souls....

Do these sentiments sound like Rubel Shelly, who said that it was a scandalous and outrageous lie to think that we could add one whit to our salvation? Or does it sound like the gracists among us who say that salvation is 100% God's doing and 0% ours? He even calls the **fact** of our response a myth. Peter did not preach this "grace only" doctrine on Pentecost. He told those who had crucified Christ that their part in salvation was to **repent and be baptized**. Not only is Puckett's teaching on salvation Calvinistic; so is his misapplication of Ephesians 1 to **individuals** rather than to the **church**. The article is supposed to deal with **when** we are saved, but it mostly deals with **how** we are saved. He finally gets to it in the last paragraph.

The baptism of a believer is significant, then, because at his or her baptism the believer acknowledges that Christ saved him or her from sin by his death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism does not itself save or provide forgiveness, rather it pictures the saving and forgiving act of God through Jesus (Romans 6:1-4).

Max Lucado or any other Baptist preacher could not have said it any better. They all affirm that a person is already saved before being baptized; baptism is just a public declaration of what has already occurred. Steve Puckett has made it clear where he stands.

Outrage

Where is the outrage of brethren in this area that people like these are invited to speak and tell the church about spiritual growth, when many of the speakers, past and present, do not even believe that baptism is essential to salvation, will fellowship the use of the instrument and the denominations that use it, as well as teach and practice the precepts of Calvinism?

It is clear that many Christians in the central Florida area are suffering an identity crisis, and it is time that they figure out who they are. Those who know what the Bible teaches ought to be **outraged at those who have adopted denominational doctrines and practices and are attempting to mold the church of our Lord into their image.**

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

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“Eight Steps to Spiritual Success”

David B. Smith

The world is full of its “twelve-step” programs, designed to better the lives of men. “Do this” or “don’t do this.” There is little doubt that some advice found in such programs is beneficial, only because the principles first originated from the pages of the Bible. Everything else—that is, everything out of harmony with the principles of the Sacred Text—is useless. Man will never prosper with advice different than that given by Jesus. Paul even warned of vain philosophies: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8). There is a philosophy from the Christ, an outlook that allows man to fulfill his purpose for existence (Ecc. 12:13-14). The Bible, of course, is that way to success. It is the inspired Word of God that 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). However, one can draw a list from the Lord’s sermon on the mount—His *eight-step* plan to spiritual success. Jesus’ beatitudes (Mat. 5:3-12) provide the equation for a healthy walk with God. So much is implied in the beatitudes that the list itself summarizes what should be the goal for every man. If this *eight-step* program is implemented, nothing will be left undone in Christianity—either in action or in attitude.

Depend Completely on God

“Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 5:3). This first requirement in the Lord’s list is the key to the rest; without this, none of the others work. Jesus uses the *ptochos*,

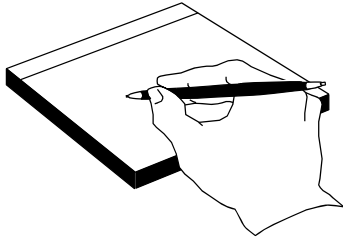
the strongest term in the Koine Greek language for “dependence.” In fact one who fit this level of dependence relied wholly on society; it spoke of a man who had nothing. Thus, it is translated *beggar* in numerous passages (Mat. 19:16-22; Luke 16:19-31). By this term, and its use in context, Jesus emphasizes the need for proper attitude rather physical poverty. While some great men in the Bible had nothing, all great men in the Bible were poor in spirit (Gen. 13:8-9; 41:16; Exo. 3:11; Jud. 6:15; 2 Sam. 7:18; Isa. 6:5). “Poor in spirit” should not be confused with “poor spirited” or “spiritual poverty” or “low self-esteem,” et cetera. “Poor in spirit” is the attitude of submission, service, humility, and such like. Man must learn to depend on God, for only then will he be ready for the next step.

Be Sorry for Sins

“Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted” (Mat. 5:4). “Mourn” (Gk. *pantheo*) is the strongest word for grief in the New Testament. It typically describes the type of grief evidenced when one mourns for the dead. Barclay actually renders the phrase, “blessed is the man who mourns like one mourning for the dead.” It is an all-encompassing grief that cannot be hid. Here, that mourning is over sin. Jesus does not speak here of “cookie jar” sorrow or “cry babies,” but genuine grief because wrong has been committed. Is there anything more pitiful than a heart incapable of sorrow for sin? When man reaches the point of total dependence on God, then he will grieve immeasurably when he severs himself from the only thing that truly matters to him because

(Continued on page 3)

Notes From The Editor



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Judgment

There is a day coming in which every person will be judged. This day is the judgment day. This is a day which God has appointed. After Paul informs the Athenians of their (and everyone else) need to repent, he gives the reason for that need: “Because **he [God] hath appointed a day**, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). However, no one knows when that day will be. “But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.... Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.... Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Mat. 24:36, 42; 25:13). Since no one knows when that day will come, our Lord gives us the admonition to “watch.”

Since God has appointed this day, it is an appointment which we all will meet. In Acts 17:31 Paul goes on to say “in the which he will judge **the world.**” To the Corinthians, Paul wrote, “For we **must all appear** before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). There are appointments we might make in the here-and-now which we can break, but this is one we cannot escape. We will meet this appointment whether we want to or not.

Even though this appointment will involve every person to have ever lived, it will be individual in nature. Notice in the passage to the Corinthians that Paul says, “every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body.” John emphasizes this aspect also when he writes, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand

before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, **according to their works**.... And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give **every man** according as his work shall be” (Rev. 20:12; 22:12). This shows the individual nature of the judgment. I will not be judged by what you do, neither will you be judged by what I do. Additionally, I will not be judged by what my parents, wife, children, or other family members do. I might be a member of the most faithful congregation in the world, yet I will not be judged by what they do but what I do. I might be a graduate of a faithful college or school of preaching, but I will still be judged not by what they do but what I do. I will be judged only by what I do and no one else. My judgment is based upon what I do and no one else.

The judgment which takes place at this appointed time will be impartial. When man judges, he often does so based upon things other than what he should. This will not be the case when we meet God in this judgment. God is not biased or subjective in His judging. Peter declares, “And if ye call on the Father, who **without respect of persons** judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear” (1 Pet. 1:17). God will judge but it will not be done with the showing of partiality to one over another—no matter how important that person might be in his own or others eyes. God will consider the heart while man often looks on the outward. “But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).

The standard of that judgment is God’s Word. Jesus stated, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: **the word that I have spoken**, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak” (John 12:48-50). Those words are contained in the Gospel: “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ **according to my gospel**” (Rom. 2:16). The standard of judgment is not going to be what the pope might decree, or some council, or creeds and disciplines. The Bible alone is that standard. Preachers,

elders, or deacons are not the standard for our judgment. However, neither are colleges and their presidents and Bible department heads, schools of preaching and their directors and teachers, nor the heads of big programs and the dictates which they all might make going to judge us on that last great day.

We will be judged by what we do in this life. Notice some of the statements we have already seen: “the things *done* in *his* body” (2 Cor. 5:10), “according to their works” (Rev. 20:12), “according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12), “according to every man’s work” (1 Pet. 1:17). To this we will add that it includes “the secrets of men” (Rom. 2:16) to which we would add what Solomon wrote, “For God shall bring **every work** into judgment, with **every secret thing**, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil” (Ecc. 12:14). We are also judged by what we say. Jesus said, “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Mat. 12:36-37). If my life measures up to the standard of God’s Word, then I will be acceptable to God.

Our life measuring up to the standard of God’s Word is the only thing that matters in our life. One can be successful in the business area, but if he does not meet that one success, he is a failure. One can be greatly respected by the church in general, but if he does not measure up to the standard of God’s Word, he has failed (and it be much worse if he takes others with him). Truly, the only thing in life that matters is attaining a home in heaven with God. Jesus asked the question: “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). Are you really ready for that great day of judgment? The song we often sing aptly makes this point:

There’s a great day coming, A great day coming,
There’s a great day coming by and by;
When the saints and the sinners shall be parted
right and left, Are you ready for that day to come?

There’s a bright day coming, A bright day coming,
There’s a bright day coming by and by;
But its brightness shall only come to them
that love the Lord, Are you ready for that day to come?

There’s a sad day coming, A sad day coming,
There’s a sad day coming by and by;
When the sinner shall hear his doom, “Depart, I

know ye not,” Are you ready for that day to come?

Are you ready? Are you ready? Are you ready
for the judgment day? Are you ready? Are
you ready for the judgment day?

MH

(Continued from page 1)

of sin.

Be Level-headed, Patient, and Kind

“Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Mat. 5:5). Greeks often contrasted certain words to illustrate the force of another. For example, *agape* (love) would be contrasted with hate to show the depth of true love. The same is true of “meekness” (Gk. *praos*), the natural opposite of “pride” or “arrogance.” Therefore, *meek* corresponds to other ideas like gentleness and consideration. It was one of the greater ethical terms known to Greeks, which they used to describe men that were self-controlled, men who were always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time, and true scholars who knew their own weaknesses and ignorance (allowing them to be great students and grow in their deficiencies). Meekness is characterized by patience (e.g., Jam. 1:19) and honesty. It is therefore described as “strength clothed in humility.” Meek people are certainly not a “push-over,” but neither are they venomous and harsh.

Stay Hungry for the Truth

“Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Mat. 5:6). The context of this requirement helps develop the force of the *hungering and thirsting*. Jesus began with “poverty” (v. 3), which must mean this “hungering and thirsting” are equally extreme. Man must constantly seek to be righteous through diligent study of the Scriptures and subsequent application. Rumors, speculation, hearsay, and such like are never good enough for those hungry for truth. Notice though, in the Lord’s list, honesty comes before the acceptance of truth. Men must be both honest and desirous of truth.

Be Benevolent Physically and Spiritually

“Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Mat. 5:7). The Old Testament background for this word no doubt weighs heavily on the application by Jesus in His sermon. God had always expected mercy (Lev. 19:15; Deu. 1:17; 10:17; Hos. 6:6; et al.), but the people instead oppressed the poor, took advantage of the helpless, showed prejudice in judgment, et

cetera (Amos 2:6-16). With that well-known background, Jesus employs a word that was generally defined by two concepts: almsgiving (relieving the needs of others) and the pardon of injuries (forgiveness). The physical part of the term is easier, it seems, than the spiritual. People seem far more willing to offer a plate of food than whatever forgiveness a situation demands. To be successful, men must be willing both to apologize and forgive.

Keep the Heart Clean

“Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Mat. 5:8). Since the heart is the source of all action (Pro. 4:23), it must be the beginning point of purity. As a man applies the pure Word of God (Pro. 30:5; Psa. 12:6) to his soul, his is purified (1 Pet. 1:22). No man can say he loves God and is following the Lord’s *eight-step* program to success if he is viewing pornography, trashy movies, and such like. A life of joy only awaits those who set their minds on pure things (Phi. 4:8).

Seek Peace with Others

“Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Mat. 5:9). Unity is a beautiful thing (Psa. 133:1) and must be desired per God’s demand (Eph. 4:1-3). While the Lord does not advocate tolerance or “softness,” He does intend that men put aside hindrances like jealousy, pride, bitterness, and hatred and practice things like selflessness, patience, and other like qualities. Please notice: purity comes before peace (Mat. 5:3ff; Jam. 3:17; John 17:10-

22). Peace does not, therefore, come at any price. Men can only have peace between themselves as they are walking with God (1 John 1:3, 7).

Be Prepared to Suffer for Righteousness

“Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Mat. 5:10-12). Persecution is the natural outcome for a man who practices the first seven steps of the Lord’s program. If men are resisting the worlds vices—like drugs, dancing/proms, premarital sex, cheating, lying, et cetera—there will be persecution in one way or another. Please be aware: it is possible to be persecuted for the wrong thing (1 Pet. 4:14-16). Suffering is not in itself divine approval. But blessed is the man who is persecuted for doing what is objectively right and shunning what is objectively wrong.

For the man who employs this *eight-step* program there is waiting the kingdom of heaven, comfort, the inheriting of the earth, fulfillment, mercy from God and others, the ability to “see” God, the ability to be called the children of God, and a great reward in heaven. Is this not real success? Yes, it is; and this sweet life is available to all who will follow the Lord’s words. Put it to work today!

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"A Certain Element"

William S. Cline

Gospel preachers are no different from anyone else. They have to "Fight the good fight of faith" so they can "lay hold on eternal life." Constantly they have to "take heed" to themselves and their "doctrine" for in so doing they save themselves and those things that would **try** the preacher and seek to **allure** him into and/or away from his mission of preaching the Gospel of Christ.

In pointing out the anxieties that he had as a preacher of the Word, Paul enumerated many of the things that had befallen him in the ministry. In summation he said, "Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). Besides those things, Paul had a thorn in the flesh to buffet him and to keep him humble, and though he besought the Lord three times concerning that thorn he could not have it removed. He suffered to preach the Gospel.

We briefly mention these things to point out that a Gospel preacher does not always have things as **easy** as some would like to think that he has. In addition to matters such as this, there are other things of a different nature that make the life of a Gospel preacher **unbearable** as far as some men's stamina is concerned. There have always been brethren who did not really love the Truth and when it was preached **hard times** were sure to come. Today is no different from past generations unless it is that today we have **more who are less interested** in the pure, pointed, powerful Word of God. Possibly in every congregation there are a few who do not want the whole counsel of God preached, and they are not so timid as to not let their **whims** be made known. Thus, when a preacher of the Gospel speaks out against some of the damnable sins in the individual, the congregation, or the brotherhood, these "tickle my ears, preach unto me smooth things" brethren begin to grumble, mumble, gripe, and complain. They huddle on the parking lot or church yard like a football team receiving instructions from a quarterback and talk about the preacher, his preaching, and how they can get rid of him. Thus they become the devil-like murmurers that have always been around to cast the **fiery darts** of gossip, ridicule, rail, derision, and animosity at the preacher who is doing right in the sight of God (See

Luke 15:1-1).

Usually it does not take long for this disgruntled bunch to gain enough influence and courage to bring their gripes before the eldership, generally in some underhanded way, and either the elders or the preacher is put on the spot. Since many elders do not want to be **caught in the middle** of such an occasion, they find it *expedient* to release the preacher and go about their task of finding a new preacher so the **pack** can have fresh meat to chew on.

Within the last few days this writer has discussed this problem with some who have had first hand experience in such matters. One Gospel preacher, for a large congregation, was called in by the elders and complimented for his preaching and his firm convictions. However, he was told that in spite of his good qualities he needed to look for a new place to go this summer because there was **a certain element there that he did not appeal to!!!**

It is not enough to take heed to self and doctrine! It is not enough to preach the Word in season and out of season! It is not enough to give one's self wholly to the ministry! One also has to be careful to **seek out that certain element** in every congregation and be **sure that he appeals to them** for if he does not it is "pack your bags and move on." **This has to be the absolute end!** No wonder Gospel preachers are quitting and going into selling insurance, hot dogs, cars, candy, or what-have-you. Over ten years ago a well-known Gospel preacher told this writer that he was sick and tired of the welfare of his family depending upon the whims of a few of the brethren. Perhaps most of us can sympathize with him. May God forbid that a preacher's acceptability in the pulpit depend upon his ability to satisfy some brethren's whims or appeal to a "certain element" that has no more conviction and stability of faith than a cork tossed to and fro on the storm tossed sea.

It has long been observed that **some** elders are far more concerned about the **dollar** in the collection plate and the **number** in attendance than they are the **spiritual welfare** of the congregations over which they serve. If you want to get the elders **upset** just get into the collection plate or the attendance roster and you can

really do a **first-class job** of upsetting. It does not take a Solomon to observe this for we have some cranks in the church who have a mouth, about six times the size of their brain that have been in the “preacher running off” business for years. They have learned to hold out the dollar, threaten to leave and complain about the preaching, and the moving van automatically comes rolling into the preacher’s driveway. Numerous works have been hurt, thousands of preachers have been moved, and many a devil has been encouraged by a Gospel preacher’s inability to appeal to a certain element.

It is interesting to notice how these “certain elements” acquire such **influence** as to upset whole elderships, entire congregations, and keep scores of preachers on the move. Just notice the next time this happens in your area. One or more of the following attributes will be present. (1) The “certain element” is **financially** influential. As a general rule, elders and congregations do not become upset with what the poor think. They are not important when it comes to running the show. But let the affluent begin to complain and all attention is focused upon their gripes. (2) The “certain element” has a **loud voice**. There will be at least one spokesman that *whines* continually. He will be the official *poll taker* monitoring the chronic complainers and will constantly inform the elders of the “many” who are “deeply concerned.” Pious language and anxious concern become the thing of the day and this element will air their complaints to anyone they can get to listen. (3) If the “certain element” has neither **money** nor **mouth**, they have relatives. Some congregations have situations where a large percentage of members

are relatives. If this “relative clan” becomes the “certain element” neither the preacher nor the elders have a chance. Blood is thicker than water and it is stronger than what is **right** and **truth** in **religion**. The three attributes listed above may not be the only three where we find the “certain element” seated, but we would venture to say that most of them are lodged there.

There are a lot of people who have made a **worshipping society** out of the church of our Lord. They want things to suit them, and they are not concerned about conducting themselves to please the Lord! Right and wrong, truth and error is of no major concern to them, but happiness, enjoyment, self-satisfaction, and ease of conscience are. They seek to **shape and mold the church** with all of its components to fit their fancy. When a preacher comes along that does not fit their mold, knows no favorites, and preaches the Word, wavering neither to the left nor the right, he becomes the object of the **ramification project**, and if they can have their way he is moved on. The preacher of the Truth is considered the “trouble maker” and the general consensus in this sin-sick brotherhood has been—“move the preacher and solve all our problems.” May God grant us preachers, elders, and members who will not give in to the loud mouth, spineless, biblically languid, and unconcerned “certain element”!!!! The only thing that will save our souls, the church, and this nation is: “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). We need men who are not only willing to **stand** for the Truth; We need men who are willing to **die** for it.

Deceased

A More Sure Word of Prophecy

Terry Townsend

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 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. 1:19-21).

We live in a world that is at war with God’s Word. There are those who despise it and are against everything it stands for. There are those who distort and twist it to their own destruction. There are those who disregard it and claim that it is unreliable or irrelevant.

God’s Word has, for the most part, been forsaken in our society. It has been ripped from our schools, rejected by our government, replaced within our homes, and removed from many pulpits across this land. It is time God’s inspired Word is restored to its rightful place!

Contrary to popular belief, the Bible is reliable, relevant, and steadfast! Thus, it behooves us to study and submit to it! Peter makes this argument in his second epistle. In this section of sacred Scripture, the apostle makes the case for its **authorship**—God (2 Pet. 1:20-21). No Scripture of either Testament came of private interpretation; i.e., of one’s own inventive skill as a thinker. God, through His Spirit, guided these men

into all truths (2 Sam. 23:2; Jer. 1:9; Mat. 10:19-20; John 14:26; 16:13). God used these men as vehicles by which to reveal His Will to the world. Thus, the channels of revelation are as follows: **God-Christ-Holy Spirit-Inspired Men-Written Word** (cf. Rev. 1:1-2, 11). God's Word is verbally and plerarily inspired; i.e., the Bible is inspired in its words and in total completion—in absolute entirety (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Second, Peter shows the **accuracy** of God's Word. He writes, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy" (2 Pet. 1:19a). The transfiguration scene confirmed the Messianic prophecies and made clear the deity of Jesus Christ as God's beloved Son. Seeing Moses and Elijah (God's spokesmen in time past) conversing with the Lord, and then hearing that sweet voice from heaven declare, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Mat. 17:5), further verified the validity of the prophetic Word. The Bible is sure, steadfast, firm, and 100% accurate. Over 2,000 prophecies of old have been fulfilled; thus, the Word of God is reliable because it is accurate!

Finally, Peter **admonishes** his readers to "take heed" (2 Pet. 1:19b). He admonishes his readers to give close attention to the Word of God. This is to be a continuous action on the part of those who hear. The

writer of Hebrews summed it up this way: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*" (Heb. 2:1-3). Peter, along with the Hebrews writer, admonishes us to seriously consider and examine God's Word. It is reliable and true; therefore, we must take heed!

Peter, as he recalls the events surrounding the Lord's transfiguration, undoubtedly pondered within himself the words of God—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; **hear ye him**" (Mat. 17:5). We must **hear** Jesus, for He is God's last will and testament (Heb. 1:1-2). His Words will be that which will judge men in the Last Day (John 12:48). We can believe and obey the Bible, for it is authored by God Himself; it is accurate and without contradiction; and it is the only true source of Divine admonition. Indeed, we have a more sure word of prophecy!

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Voices from the past:

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Majority Rule And Matters Of Faith

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

Some brethren who advocate majority rule in voting in the church say that they do not believe in majority rule in “matters of faith,” but in matters that are not of faith the vote of the majority should be the basis of determination.

But when is a thing a matter of faith, and when is it not? Who shall decide, and how, whether it is a principle of faith or a mere expedient? Shall we vote on what shall be voted on? Innovations are never considered matters of faith by those who introduce them. That is true of all innovations all the way down from the organ to voting on elders. Advocates of instrumental music in worship have always insisted that it is only an expedient, not a matter of faith. Shall the majority decide by vote whether the organ is a matter of faith or not, and then leave it to the will of the majority whether we shall have it or not? If elders can be deposed and elected by congregational voting, then what if a majority should decide to dispose of the eldership entirely and have no elders at all?

The eldership is itself a matter of faith, and everything the Bible says about them is against the majority-rule contention. The divine arrangement requiring elders in every church is against the majority-rule idea. Why have elders, if the church is to be governed by a vote of its members? Only a chairman or an election board would be needed. The qualifications of elders as laid down in the New Testament is against the majority-rule idea. It would have those without qualification ruling by vote over

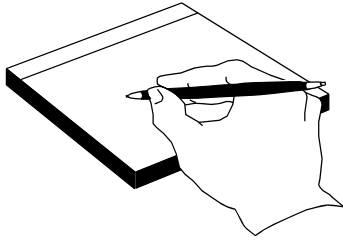
those who have the qualifications. Then why have them? Their descriptive titles, the terms describing the office or work of elders, are against the majority-rule idea. They are called “elders” (men of age, experience), “bishops,” “overseers,” “shepherds,” and “pastors.” Majority-rule would have inexperience ruling over experience, the flock ruling the bishops, the sheep tending the shepherds, and the people teaching their pastors. It reverses the entire system of New Testament church government (Acts 20:28).

God’s wisdom is seen in committing the welfare of the church to the elders of it. The New Testament does not teach congregational government. It is a government by elders, whose duty in matters of faith is to enforce the teaching of the New Testament, and in matters not of faith their province is to determine the course of wisdom and expediency, with all sentiments and angles considered, and follow that course. Is it not reasonable that elders should know better what course to pursue in the affairs of the church than a majority of the members? If matters of faith shall be executed by the elders, surely they should be able to decide matters of less importance. But if it is contended that matters of faith are already decided by the New Testament, and matters which are not of faith should be decided by vote of a majority, then when do elders rule at all? Again, why have them?

Preachers sometimes say that if a respectable

(Continued on page 3)

Notes From The Editor



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Be Of Good Cheer

Cheer is found eight times in the New Testament. Jesus uses it on three occasions in encouraging others to “be of good cheer.” We can learn a lot from these three occurrences. The first regards the man sick of the palsy. His friends bring him to Jesus for Jesus to heal him. “And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Mat. 9:2). We might be tempted to say that this man had nothing to be cheerful about, yet Jesus tells him to be cheerful. Surely he was not to be cheerful about not being able to walk (palsy). He told him to be of good cheer because his sins were forgiven. Forgiveness of sins brings joy to an individual. Those on the day of Pentecost “gladly received his word (Acts 2:41), after being baptized the Ethiopian “went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39), and the Philippian jailor “rejoiced” after obeying the Gospel (Acts 16:34). We learn that outward circumstances do not affect the joy that the Christian possesses. Even though in a prison cell Paul would write to the Philippian brethren “Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice” (4:4), and then writes, “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content” (4:11).

The second time, Jesus had come to the apostles walking on the water. The apostles thought that it was a ghost and cried out in fear. “But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid” (Mat. 14:27; cf. Mark 6:50). Companionship with God brings joy. John shows the joyous nature of companionship with God when he writes, “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 1:4-7). John wrote so we might have a full joy. Complete joy comes from fellowship with God. However, fellowship with God can only continue as we walk in the light. When we deviate from the truth, then we no longer have that joy which comes from our fellowship with God. When one walks in darkness, he can claim to have fellowship with God all he wants to but that fellowship has been severed. Part of that joy comes from our fellowship with other Christians (those in fellowship with God). If God no longer has fellowship with an individual and I continue to fellowship one whom God does not, then I lose that fellowship with God also and thus the joy which comes from that companionship.

The third time we find Jesus using this is when He was speaking to His apostles prior to His death. He informs them: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). In Christ we have peace. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). We will have peace with God because we have the forgiveness of sins. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). Because we have peace with God, we also will have peace with self. Consider the statement in John 14:27: “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” We then try to have peace with others. Paul writes, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18). We will have peace with whatever circumstances we might find ourselves in. Again Paul would write, “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Phi. 4:11-12). The Christian has a peace that this world will never know. “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phi. 4:7).

Then we are to be of good cheer because Christ has overcome the world. Likewise, when we are faithful to

Him, we will be overcomers also. However, we are only victorious when we are in Christ. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). Paul writes, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:58). However, this victory only comes to those who have been forgiven of their sins and then have continued fellowship with God. John would write, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5). Then he would inform us, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:7). Let us make sure that we inherit all things by having the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ and continue to walk in the light so we might have continued fellowship with God. MH

(Continued from page 1)

minority opposes them they will resign. But when has a preacher ever considered a minority that *opposed* him respectable? The preacher who takes a work upon the invitation of the elders of the church should submit to their counsel when the time comes to make a change. But when a preacher who advocates majority rule fails to hold the majority, *his rule* is to pull off a minority and start a factious congregation. Then what becomes of his majority-rule doctrine?

Majority-rule in matters of *any kind* in the church is wrong. The principle is wrong. The church is to be ruled by the wisdom, judgment, and discretion of the elders. Any other system will work havoc in any church.

A recapitulation of the evils of majority-rule is in order as a further warning to churches against this enemy to congregational peace and unity.

First: It does not discriminate between experience and inexperience, nor regard knowledge as anything. It thus violates the New Testament principle that some by experience are more capable of discernment, possess more knowledge than others, and should teach, while others of less experience and knowledge should be taught. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every

one that useth milk is unskilful [without experience] in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12-14).

Second: It makes elders subject to the church instead of the church being subject to the elders and reverses the New Testament principle: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17).

Third: It is the parent of the ballot, or vote, method, and becomes the occasion of politics, electioneering, instructing children and young people "how to vote," all of which results in division of sentiment and is contrary to the New Testament injunction: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

Fourth: It encourages preachers to disregard and ignore the elders and cater to the wishes of a majority in the church. Thus it has come to pass that any preacher of average ability and personality can work up a sentiment against the elders in almost any church and with his majority-rule doctrine divide the church, in flagrant violation of the New Testament command to "know [recognize] them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (1 The. 5:12-13). Some opposition to elders in Paul's day must have called forth this timely admonition.

Fifth: It breeds anarchy in the church, leaves the church in a state of uncertainty, without permanent leadership, and is against the New Testament admonition to the elders to "take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers [bishops], to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Arguments against unqualified elders do not apply here, because the same contingency can and does exist, and is even more likely to exist, with the majority-rule. It is not the cure for the condition.

Sixth: The demand for the majority-rule always comes from an uninformed and unruly element in the church, not from pious, consecrated people who are

contented to worship God in spirit and in truth, or from preachers who think that to be “the minister of the church” is to hold office of high authority and who do not respect the authority of elders over them. It is, indeed, strange that these preachers will recognize the authority of elders when the elders *engage* them, but refuse to recognize the authority of the same elders when it is thought best for them to leave. Such preachers *take* work with a church upon the *authority of the elders*, but insist on staying with the church by *majority* rule. Almost any preacher who is “a good mixer” can put it over with women, young people, and generally

indifferent members whose interest has been revived to “take sides.” This is a perversion of everything the New Testament teaches on the duty of members of the church to the elders. “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility” (1 Pet. 5:5).

Seventh: In short, the majority-rule heresy is entirely too political to be Scriptural. Politics in government is bad, but in religion it is sad.

(*Gospel Advocate*, December 1, 1932, pages 1280-1281)

Deceased

How Shall They Hear?

Brad Green

All faithful members of the church of Christ are concerned with the fact that lost souls are dying everyday. God entrusted His people with the duty and obligation of taking His saving message to “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). Many faithful and sincere individuals have questioned whether they are doing enough to fulfill that responsibility. Certainly, ensuring that the entire world hears the Gospel would be an unconquerable task if it were left to only one individual. However, it is not left to just one person, “For the body is not one member, but many” (1 Cor. 12:14). The Bible clearly teaches that each individual is to do his/her part and by doing such, the whole body is edified.

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (Eph. 4:15-16).

This Bible principle is further explained when paralleled with the work of elders in the Lord’s church. An elder is placed in charge of

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake (Tit. 1:9-11).

Logically, no one would expect one elder to convince all the gainsayers of the world. Nor would anyone espouse that one elder must stop the mouths of all false teachers. Paul told Titus, “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders **in every city**” (Tit. 1:5). God’s plan, in organizing the church, is that a plurality of elders oversee the local congregation of which they are members. Thus, the eldership, made up of more than one elder, makes decisions for that local congregation and is in charge of protecting the flock which they oversee. If every eldership does its job as God has designed, then each congregation, and therefore all of the flock of God, will be protected and fed spiritually. The grave responsibility of overseeing the children of God was not given to just one man nor just to one eldership. Each individual eldership, doing its part, “maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:16). This is the reason there is no need and would be sinful for a man-made organization to serve as a board of directors or “super-overseer” of the church. It is the reason there is no need and is sinful for a man-made service organization, like the so-called Churches of Christ Disaster Relief, Incorporated to do the work of benevolence and disaster relief on behalf of the church. It is the reason there is no need and would be sinful for a humanly devised earthly headquarters—each eldership oversees its own locality and answers to only one head, Jesus Christ. This parallel being made, one can understand that spreading God’s Word to the whole world is not the responsibility of one man nor one congregation, rather a responsibility of all Christians working together in their local communities. If each congregation will do its part in spreading

the Word of God, the Word of God will be spread. Those who claim that the local congregations of the church of Christ are incapable, inadequate, and unsatisfactorily equipped to do the works commanded by God blaspheme the holy bride of Christ—the church for which He died!

Some have taken this question, “how shall they hear?” and have implied that without them, the goal of preaching the Gospel to every creature cannot happen. They are wrong. If every individual Christian and each individual congregation will do the work of evangelizing their own communities, the Word of God will be taken to all parts of the globe.

Many false teachers spread their poison over the airwaves and through electronic technology and beg people to send them donations. This plea seems to work because these televangelists are still on the air. Why? They have successfully convinced many that without their program, the Word of God (as they pervert it) will not get shared to the rest of the world. With that stated, it is important that the church of Christ also take advantage of modern technology to defend the Truth and to counteract the damage being done by denominations who are using these same mass media. However, the church does not need televisions nor radios to spread the Gospel to all the world. The church must also always be careful only to do such things as are authorized by the Bible. I spent nearly seven years working in local television news as a photographer. I had the opportunity to meet and work with individuals who truly wanted to inform the public of the day’s news, fairly and accurately. Unfortunately, I also met and worked with individuals who simply loved seeing their face on television. Their only purpose was to be seen by others, to become known, to be famous. Sadly, I fear that some in our brotherhood today fall in that latter category. They are using television and radio for their own glory and not for the glory of God. On the other hand, many faithful preachers and congregations have had great influence and results in their local areas by using television and radio. Electronic mail and telephones have made it easier to contact those who are sick or erring in an extremely expedient way. Modern technology, therefore, is a very valuable tool to be used for the cause of Christ.

Nevertheless, it is not, never has been, and never will be the best way to convert the lost, restore the erring, nor to edify the saints.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in

him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Rom. 10:14-15).

God’s plan, from before the foundation of the world, was that men *be sent* to preach the Gospel to others. Though television and radio are expedient methods for spreading God’s Word, it is not the best way and must not be considered the only way. The best method for converting the lost is for a Christian to make a personal visit to that individual and teach him face to face. The best way to help the erring is by going to him and teaching him personally. The best way to edify the church of Christ, the body of the saved, is to teach and preach to them in person. Otherwise, why assemble on Sunday when one could flop down in front of the tube to hear a sermon. God’s design was not for electronic media to do the job of a preacher. His design was for preachers to do the job of preachers.

Some want to scare us with numbers and statistics, and want to claim that there is no way to spread the Gospel to the whole world merely by having each local congregation evangelize its own community. The Holy Spirit of God disagrees: “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went **into all the earth**, and their words **unto the ends of the world**” (Rom. 10:17-18). In the first century, the Word of God was proclaimed to “all the earth” without television and radio. Jesus sent twelve men to preach that the Kingdom was at hand “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mat. 10:5ff). That was a profound undertaking, but they succeeded. The first Gospel sermons were preached by twelve men on the first Pentecost after the death, burial, and resurrection of the Christ (Acts 2). Some three thousand souls were added to the church that day (Acts 2:47). As those three thousand dispersed back to their homes, they taught others and the church prospered. Even when Satan attacked children of God with persecution, the church prospered because “they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). It was not the work of one man nor one congregation that successfully spread the Word to all parts of the earth, rather it was by the work of each and every Christian. The Word of God did not have a problem being spread in the first century without electronic media, therefore, it should be no problem today.

How shall they hear? They shall hear the same way they have heard since the beginning of time—by the mouths of men.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son (Heb. 1:1-2).

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 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. 1:20-21).

Holy men of God preached God's message to the world. Today, men who have studied the inspired words of the Bible, which God's men penned and has been providentially preserved for us, preach that same saving Gospel to the world.

Let us resolve to study God's Word and "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet.

3:15). The Word of God spoke the world and all that is in it into existence (Gen. 1:1; Neh. 9:6).

By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast (Psa. 33:6-9).

The Word of God still stands and the Word of God will continue to be preached around the world not because of the efforts of one individual or group, but because of all faithful Christians and the congregations of which they are members doing their part for the kingdom of Christ. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Let us not be frightened by the call to evangelize the entire world. Let us all fulfill our roles as members of the body of Christ.

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Chief Priests and Scribes

Alton W. Fonville

Seeing the title above, suggests a class of people who are of the *elite* and most educated people of the time. You would even think of them as the most dedicated to the cause which they represented. They are the very ones who should know and understand what the Old Testament Scriptures taught regarding the coming Christ and His mission. But, there is another side to this sad equation. Let us look into that other side.

Who was responsible for the biggest part of the

trouble which Jesus had in teaching while He was on earth? Who was it that tried every trick in the book to entrap our Lord, proving that He was teaching a doctrine which was contrary to the Law of Moses? Who was it that plotted and even paid the 30 pieces of silver to identify Christ so they could put Him on trial and kill Him? Who were the *bad guys* which prompted Luke to write, "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared

the people” (Luke 22:1-2)? Or, for Matthew to write, “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (Mat. 16:21)? Yes, the answer to each of the above is the same—the chief priests and scribes, along with the elders in Israel who were supposed to know the Book. It becomes a little more clear why Jesus kept asking the people so many times, “have ye not read?” Education, with a lot of “letters” after your name does not guarantee faithfulness to God. It did not back then and it does not today. Many who should know better, are the very ones who are loudly boasting their “soundness and faithfulness,” while at the same time, having fellowship with those who are clearly in error—both in the church and in denominations.

Certainly, the chief priests, scribes, and elders could have known and should have acted differently had they not been influenced by other things which came first in their lives. They were looking for a *position* in an earthly kingdom which was not to be. Old Testament Scripture had been twisted to their own destruction. Our priorities are clearly seen today also. Who gets the glory for the work we do means more to

us than seeing that the glory goes to God Who deserves it. Our actions always speak louder than our words.

Because of ignorance and envy, those “elite leaders in Israel” dragged Jesus to Pilate and after mock worship to Him, pleaded for the crucifixion of the Son of God and the releasing of a known murderer. Abundant evidence was available, but it was being ignored and they went on their way to try and rid the world of this man who was teaching a “new doctrine.” It did not work in the days of Christ. God’s will had to be accomplished. Scripture had to be fulfilled, and it was. Even today, much of the world is still looking in vain for promises to be fulfilled, which were, two thousand years ago. The innocent are still being *crucified* and the guilty are still going free. It seems as though we would learn from history.

If we would only read and study God’s Word and rightly divide it as we are commanded, we would understand that when Jesus died, it set us free from that Jewish law and its burdens which had to be accomplished annually, and Jesus is now our High Priest forever. He went through the veil once for all time, and established His perfect priesthood. We do not need to look for a new priest today. “Have ye not read?”

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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