

# *Defender*



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

*Volume XXVIII*

*1999*

January

April

July

October

February

May

August

November

March

June

September

# Defender



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

Volume XXVIII

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## THE CHRISTIAN’S RESPONSIBILITY TO “CONTEND FOR THE FAITH”

*Steve Miller*

We are able to know when people depart from the faith and go into error. “We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6). We are able to recognize those who have left us. We are exhorted to “try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Then we are commanded to refuse to bid false teachers and apostates of the one faith “God speed” (2 John 9-11).

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

We are facing a similar situation in the church today that our brethren faced over a hundred years ago. It is true that “history repeats itself.” We should pay close attention to history and learn as much as we can from it.

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

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

Jude urged strongly that the brethren “contend for the faith.” The problem of false teachers necessitated the urgency of this admonition (Jude 4). Jude reveals that

“certain men crept in unawares.” This parallels the words of Jesus: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mat. 7:15). These words coincide with Paul’s warnings (Acts 20:28-30), as well as Peter’s (2 Pet. 2:1-2).

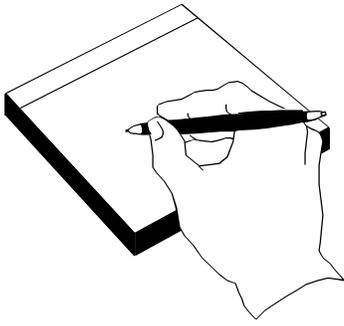
Members of the body of Christ have been exhorted to contend, defend, uphold, preach, teach, and live the Word of God. In the past, children of God were not afraid to stand up to false teachers and false doctrine and expose the corruptness of such.

The Bible is full of examples of godly men defending the will of God.

### PROPHETS

The Bible gives us many examples of prophets, apostles, and faithful disciples of God who defended the will of God that was revealed to man. What is your attitude toward the truth of God? Are you a compromiser or a defender of God’s Word? Let us notice these examples of men speaking God’s message. The prophet Isaiah rebuked Judah for her rebellion. “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me....Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward” (Isa. 1:2, 4).

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# Notes From The Editor

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Hatcher**

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## No Delight

Jeremiah is a book that is in many ways sad. Jeremiah came on the scene just prior to Judah's destruction by God at the hand of the Babylonian armies directed by Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah prophesied during corrupt times. As an example of the times consider his words, "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;...Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen *it*, saith the LORD....And they have built the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded *them* not, neither came it into my heart" (Jer. 7:9, 11, 31). There were sexual orgies in Baal worship in which they were engaged to such an extent that they had lost their sense of shame. "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time *that* I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD" (Jer. 6:15). Wickedness and corruption were everywhere and the leaders were unconcerned. "For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered" (Jer. 10:21). Thus, God commissions Jeremiah to call the people to repentance and pronounce doom upon the nation for their sins.

In the midst of the decree setting forth Jerusalem's destruction, Jeremiah informs us of one of the basic reasons they are doomed. God had given them His Word and guidance, but they refused to listen. "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear *is* uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto

them a reproach; they have no delight in it" (Jer. 6:10). To a great extent, the evils observed during the days of Jeremiah are seen today. One (of the many) basic reasons is the same as given in this passage by the inspired prophet. Let us observe some applications today.

### Socially

The world in general does not want to hear God's Word. When we apply the Scriptures to situations today, the world considers them a reproach and certainly find no delight in it. Consider the prevailing views today on the drinking of alcoholic beverages. The Bible clearly condemns such, even what some people incorrectly call social drinking (Pro. 20:1; 23:29-32; Hos. 4:11; Amos 6:1, 6; Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:9-11; Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4:3-4). When a person takes one drink, he is one drink drunk.

The acceptance of homosexuality seems almost complete in our society. Soon it might be illegal to speak out against the perversion. They are one of the most powerful lobbying groups in our nation. One who speaks out against this action becomes a social outcast who is a hatemongering homophobe. Yet, the Bible is clear on this subject (Gen. 2:18, 22-24; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Deu. 23:17-18; Mat. 19:4-6; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 2 Pet. 2:6-8; Jude 7), but people do not want God's Word.

## 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.

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

There are many differing subjects in which we could call attention to the fact that many people in our society do not want God's Word. They do not want to hear anything about fornication, adultery, pornography, dancing, improper speech and taking the Lord's name in vain, modesty, etc.

### **Religiously**

This may sound like an odd category. One would think that if a person was religious, then he would desire to hear the Bible. That should be true, but ones believing that it is are sadly mistaken.

Those in **denominations** do not want to hear the truth on baptism and its necessity for our salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18; 1 Pet. 3:21). They refuse to hearken to the Scriptures teaching pertaining to the one church. Jesus came and built only one (Mat. 16:18) and shed His blood for it (Acts 20:28). Paul informs us that there is only one body (Eph. 4:4) and that body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). They do not like being informed that no denomination is a part of that one body which is the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16).

They will not hearken to the Bible's teaching on the organization of that one church (Phi. 1:1), a plurality of men (called by various names such as: elders, pastors, shepherd, bishops, overseers) overseeing the expedient matters of the congregation. These men **must** meet the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Nor will not give ear to worship of the church (there are only five acts of worship: singing and that without mechanical instrumental accompaniment, Lord's supper, prayers, preaching, and contribution).

There are also many in the **Lord's church** which refuse to hear the Scriptures. There are many who will not hearken to the Bible's teaching concerning the (mis)use of alcoholic beverages. They want to drink a little and claim as long as they do not get drunk, then it is alright. Some do not appreciate hearing that Scriptures teachings concerning the uniqueness of the Lord's church, the organization, and worship of the church. They wish to change what the Bible teaches about these matters and others.

Many do not want to hear about, much less discuss, the Bible's teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. This is oftentimes viewed as: I have my opinion and you have yours and we will never agree, thus let us ignore this subject. They refuse to hear God's Word in Matthew 5:32; 19:9, that there is only one exception to God's marriage law of one man for one woman for life.

Anyone who divorces for some cause other than the one exception given by our Lord continues to commit adultery and to be saved in the last day must stop his sin of committing adultery.

The liberal change agents are refusing to hear the God's message recorded in the Bible concerning fellowship. They are constantly going to denominational groups, not with the idea of trying to convert them from the error of their way, but to extend fellowship with them in their sin. They have a hatred for God's message of not extending fellowship to those who walk in darkness (Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11). These few examples are sufficient to illustrate the message.

Truly the words of Jeremiah are apropos for today. God has spoken (Heb. 1:2) through His Son, but many have uncircumcised ears and will not hear. They find no delight in God's Word and consider it a reproach; it has become a by-word to them. As long as we remain in this condition, we will not prosper. We must learn to hear the Word of the Lord. Jeremiah pleaded with the people of his day: "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD" (Jer. 22:29). We must plead with people to do the same, and make sure that we always humbly submit to that word.

*MH*

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Note: We appreciate all those who have been fellow laborers in this great work especially from a financial standpoint and those who have sent articles to us. As you know, the postage rates have gone up again, and have hit especially hard those who do bulk mailings. While we will keep this paper free to anyone in the United States, we do appreciate those who can and will help by sending us some financial aid. There are some other ways in which you can help. If you move, be sure to send us a change of address. If your address changes (because of a 911 situation or something similar) please send us the change. If you do not read the paper or do not wish to receive it, let us know so we can send it to those who want to receive it. These things will save us a substantial amount of money. Thanks for your help.

*MH*

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

Nahum prophesied a warning, "God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies" (Nah. 1:2). Prophets and men of God warned the people of this world that God will judge His enemies and bring His

wrath upon them.

### APOSTLES

The apostles set a pattern for us to follow in speaking God's truth. As we study the New Testament, we find warnings concerning obedience to God's will that were being proclaimed throughout the land in days of old. When the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees told Peter and John "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus," they "answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:18-20). They told people of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Peter warned about false teachers and encouraged Christians to follow the divine pattern and expose and refute error (2 Pet. 2:1-3). The apostle John also gave warnings against men departing from the faith (1 John 4:1).

The apostle Paul condemned sin and error as he preached the gospel. Will the liberals among us call Paul a "watchdog" or "policeman"? Jesus revealed to Paul that his mission was "to open their eyes, and to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of

sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18). Paul set an example of showing the Divine way that pleases God. Paul was set "for the defence of the gospel" (Phi. 1:7, 17) and exposed error (Rom. 16:17-18; Acts 20:29-30).

### JESUS CHRIST

Our perfect example, Jesus Christ, called names. He called sin just what it is—sin. Our Lord charged the righteous to preach boldly in truth and love. In Matthew 23 Jesus called the Pharisees and Sadducees: hypocrites, blind guides, fools, blind, serpents, and vipers. Jesus spoke plainly enough for the people to get the point! "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phi. 2:5). We must follow Jesus in order to be pleasing to God!

Jesus is the source of truth. "For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). He taught the truth that sanctifies (John 17:17) and that can set men free (John 8:32).

The Bible gives us many examples of men of God standing for truth and right. Let us follow faithful men of God as they followed Jesus Christ. We will not fail if we follow the Only Begotten Son of God!

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Make plans to attend!!!

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Date:

June 12-16, 1999

Theme:

# WORLDLINESS

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## “Pentecostalism”

February 28 - March 3, 1999

David P. Brown, Lectureship Director

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### Sunday, February 28

|          |   |                  |
|----------|---|------------------|
| 9:30 AM  | A Review of the Woods-Franklin Debate on Holy Spirit Baptism and Miracles | Ira Y. Rice, Jr. |
| 10:30 AM | The Design and End of Miracles  | David P. Brown   |
| 4:00 PM  | The United Pentecostal Church   | Lynn Parker      |
| 5:00 PM  | Romanticism—the Philosophy Behind Pentecostalism                          | Joseph Meador    |
| 6:00 PM  | What is the Meaning of “that which is perfect”?                           | Bobby Liddell    |

### Monday, March 1

|          |  |                  |
|----------|--|------------------|
| 9:00 AM  | What is the “Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International, Inc.”? | Roddy Covington  |
| 10:00 AM | Water Baptism—Not Holy Spirit Baptism—Is the One Baptism                 | David Baker      |
| 11:00 AM | A Review of the Wallace-Vaughn Debate on Miracles and the Godhead        | Tom Wacaster     |
| 1:30 PM  | Where is the Evidence for Miracles Today?                                | Pat McIntosh     |
| 2:30 PM  | What Does 1 Corinthians 1:6-8 Teach?                                     | Charles Collette |
| 3:30 PM  | Pentecostalism and the Godhead<br><i>DINNER BREAK</i>                    | Clifford Newell  |
| 7:00 PM  | Contradictions in the Various Doctrines of Pentecostals                  | B. J. Clarke     |
| 8:00 PM  | The Doctrine of Direct Divine Illumination                               | Jesse Whitlock   |

### Tuesday, March 2

|          |  |                               |
|----------|--|-------------------------------|
| 9:00 AM  | Miracles of Christ   | Tom Hicks                     |
| 10:00 AM | A Review of “The Acts of the Holy Spirit in the Church of Christ Today”<br>The Godly Woman, or True Spirituality—Part 1” (Ladies’ Class) | Eddie Whitten<br>Irene Taylor |
| 11:00 AM | Nashville Jubilee and Pentecostalism   | Gary Grizzell                 |
| 1:30 PM  | Experiences Are Not Authoritative  | Billy Bland                   |
| 2:30 PM  | Miracle of the Apostles<br>The Godly Woman, or True Spirituality—Part 2 (Ladies’ Class)  | David Jones<br>Irene Taylor   |
| 3:30 PM  | The Baptism of the Holy Spirit<br><i>DINNER BREAK</i>  | Noah Hackworth                |
| 7:00 PM  | A Review of the Woods-Hicks Debate on Holy Spirit Baptism and Miracles   | Robert Taylor, Jr.            |
| 8:00 PM  | You Can’t Have the Tongues Without the Snakes  | Ronnie Hayes                  |

### Wednesday, March 3

|          |   |                 |
|----------|---|-----------------|
| 9:00 AM  | Biblical Spirituality Versus Emotionalism   | Toney Smith     |
| 10:00 AM | Atheists and Pagans Can Speak Gibberish   | Gary Summers    |
| 11:00 AM | What Do 1 Corinthians 13:9-13, Ephesians 4:8-14 and Romans 12:6-8 Have in Common? | Daniel Denham   |
| 1:30 PM  | The Nine Miraculous Gifts   | Lester Kamp     |
| 2:30 PM  | Old and New Pentecostalism  | Michael Light   |
| 3:30 PM  | Pentecostalism Undermines the Authority of the Bible<br><i>DINNER BREAK</i>       | Michael Hatcher |
| 7:00 PM  | Miracles of the Old Testament   | Curtis Cates    |
| 8:00 PM  | The Destructive Consequences of Pentecostalism                                    | Dub McClish     |

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# THE CHURCH IN TRANSITION

*Adron Doran*

Many of our brethren are speaking and writing about making changes in the church to make a transition into the coming twenty-first century. They justify their claim that the church must effect changes in certain areas because society is in the process of change so as to meet the challenge of the next century. The social order has changed throughout the ages and will continue to change in response to the will of men. However, the church is neither a social institution nor the creature of society. The church is a divine institution purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ whom God made head of the body. The church, therefore, is subject to the stipulations which God places upon it.

The role of woman has changed in the social fields of education, government, business, and professions. This is no reason or excuse, though, to advocate and instigate changes in the role of women in the church. The social order has renounced the authority of the Scriptures, but this is no reason for the church to propose and adapt a new theology that changes the interpretation of the Bible. The church is supposed to be the agent to change society and not one that reacts in accordance to societal influences.

The apostle announced to the church in Rome the criteria by which we should pursue spiritual matters: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

The Holy Spirit claims that the church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was in the eternal purpose of God the Father (Eph. 3:7-12). The ancient prophets pointed to the time and place for the establishment of the kingdom of God (Dan. 2:44; Isa. 2:1-4). The Son of God Himself promised that He would build the church (Mat. 16:13-19).

In due season the purpose of God was realized, the prophecies were fulfilled, and the promises were kept on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem in the year A.D. 33. The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles after they had been endued with power from on high to execute the Great Commission (Mark 16:15; Acts 2). The power of God was wrought in Christ whom He raised from the dead and gave Him to be head of the Church (Eph. 1:18-23).

Following the sermon delivered by the apostle Simon Peter, three thousand gladly received his word, were baptized, and in the same day were added unto them (Acts 2:41). Doctor Luke adds the observation that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). The ancient order of things was set forth by the apostle's doctrine in which the early saints continued steadfastly (Acts 2:42). That order has obtained throughout the centuries and men should not tinker with that system in the close of the present century.

## **Transition To Christianity**

God intended for the Jews, Gentiles, and heathens of the first century to make a transition from their foreign state to Christianity. God mandated this difficult transition from Judaism and false gods to a new system. The apostle Paul told the Colossians that God blotted "out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). This was a well-planned transition into a state where salvation was brought to all men in the church through the blood of Jesus Christ. There is no other period in human history comparable.

## **Transition To Catholicism**

In spite of the warnings by the apostles to the church against apostasy, the body of Christ began a slow and gradual process of falling away during the third and fourth centuries. The result was that the New Testament church was transformed into the Roman Catholic Church. The apostate church reached its height in ecclesiastical and civil political powers in 1215 with the meeting of the Fourth Lateran Council in Rom. The papacy had become full grown and monarchs were made subject to it. The pope was declared to be the Vicar of Christ and authorized to speak *ex cathedra*. This transition held sway during the period of the Dark Ages.

## **Transition To Protestantism**

The apostate church made the transition from the complete denomination of the Catholic Church to the system of Protestantism during the 1500s and 1600s. The Italian Renaissance and the European Protestant Reformation brought about this transition. Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wycliffe, Ulrich Zwingli and

others sought to reform the false teachings and the corrupt practices of the Catholic Church. However, they did little more than effect a transition into denominationalism and sectarianism. This state of religion gave rise to various human creeds and confessions of faith which obtain to this good day.

### **Transition From Reformation To Restoration**

The state of conflict, division, controversy, and contention, in which the apostate church found itself, gave rise to efforts to restore New Testament Christianity. The church had lost its identity and the gospel of Christ had lost its power and significance. Individuals were called by the names of men who led the Reformation.

The first efforts to restore the New Testament church were made in Scotland by John Glas, Robert Sandeman, Greville Ewing and the Haldane brothers. They effected a break with the Church of Scotland in the 1700s and went about establishing independent churches that would take the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice.

The process of the Restoration Movement was more perfectly executed in America under the leadership of Barton Warren Stone in Kentucky and Thomas Campbell and his son, Alexander, in Pennsylvania during the early 1800s. By accepting the motto to “speak where the Scriptures speak and remain silent where the Scriptures are silent,” they were able to bring about a transition from Protestantism to New Testament Christianity. They were prepared to eliminate from the teaching and practice those things that are not contained in the Bible and to refuse admission of those things into the worship of the church on which the Bible is silent. This was a most significant transition which the church made in an effort to restore “pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father” (Jam. 1:27).

### **Transition To Innovations**

The associates of Barton Stone and Alexander

Campbell came together at the Hill Street Church, Lexington, Kentucky, on January 1, 1832, to bind themselves in a more perfect union. The representatives agreed with Raccoon John Smith in his keynote address when he said, “God has but one people on this earth. He has given them but one book. Let us come to the Bible alone, which is able to give us all of the light we need.”

The Stone-Campbell movement united and advanced on the basis of that principle as Christians only and as the corporate body of Christ. However, by 1849 a delegate assembly of restorers met in Cincinnati, Ohio, and organized the American Christian Missionary Society. Many of the restored congregations became society churches while others remained non-society churches. A decade later (1859) one of the self-styled liberals within the movement, L. L. Pinkerton, introduced a mechanical instrument of music into the worship of the Midway, Kentucky, church. Their innovation further divided the churches into society-organ churches and non-society and non-organ churches. In the main those congregations that affiliated with the missionary society and introduced the organ into worship became known as Christian Churches while those which rejected both continued to be known as church of Christ. When the gate to innovations was opened, the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ movement went into a full-fledged denomination. The transition from a biblical position to a non-biblical position proved catastrophic to the church.

### **History Repeats**

We ask our brethren, the light of history, and ourselves, why would some today lead the church into unscriptural changes under the guise of transition? We can meet all of the challenges of a new century without changing the doctrine of Christ and the practices of the New Testament church. We can deal effectively with societal changes by keeping the “ancient landmarks” and walking in the “old paths.”

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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

Volume XXVIII

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## MEN WHO SHOULD QUIT PREACHING

*Danny L. Box*

Our Lord in Mark 16:15 instructed us to “go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” The first century Christians, in obedience to this command “went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4), and the results of their labor is recorded in Colossians 1:23 “*be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven.”

Today, even though “the harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few” (Mat. 9:37), there are some men who should quit preaching. Due to their efforts, the church of our Lord is in disarray, and getting worse as the days pass. Many congregations have split or are being split, elderships undermined, and members young and old led off into apostasy because of the havoc wrought by these men. Let’s look together now at some men who should quit preaching.

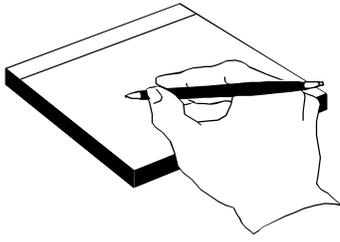
**The man that will not declare the whole counsel of God should quit preaching.** Many preachers of today will proudly stand up and say “I preach the truth!,” but brethren and friends, there is a world of difference between preaching the truth, and preaching “the whole counsel of God.” A man could preach the truth for years and never preach against anything. He could preach sermon after sermon and never touch on anything negative that might cause someone to be stirred up. Many might say that certain subjects are better left untouched because it might offend someone, but brethren, those subjects must be preached. If we are ashamed of the gospel, or afraid of the gospel, we should get out the pulpit as fast as we can, and let men who are not afraid to preach all the Word take our

place. What did Paul say in Acts 20:26-27, “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”

**The man who would not set a good example should quit preaching.** Paul, when he wrote to the young evangelist Timothy said, “be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation [manner of life—ASV], in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). Has that entreaty changed for us who preach today? The preacher must be pure in all things; his life above reproach because people are looking to the preacher and at the preacher for an example. Precious souls have been lost because of the example set by the careless preacher. Even though we also are only human, the world expects more from us, and we must strive to be the best we can be. Paul finishes his entreaty to Timothy like this: “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Tim. 4:16). Brethren, take heed to your example, for the souls of men depend on it, and if you would not set the good example please quit preaching!

**The man who would pervert the gospel of Christ should quit preaching.** Paul wrote the following to the church at Galatia: “But there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you  
(Continued on Page 3)

# Notes From The Editor



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## Membership

Recently I obtained a track which a congregation sends out to people who move into town. It welcomes them to Pensacola and informs them a little about their congregation. One section in particular interested me. It was headed "How Can You Become A Member Of This Church?" Let me quote the entire section: "There are a couple of different ways you can express your desire to become a member at Gateway. You can indicate your desire on a 'visitor' card during one of the Sunday assemblies. Or you can call the church office and speak to one of our ministers or even 'e-mail' them. It is as simple as that! In response to your interest we will then be visiting with you about what being a member at Gateway entails and addressing any questions or concerns you might have."

I will readily admit that I have not called or e-mailed them concerning this statement and what they might say to someone who responds. However, let me write my own statement as to "How to Become A Member of the Church."

When God created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, there was complete harmony and fellowship between God and man. Man sinned by violating God's command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:1-6). God is holy being "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). Being holy, He cannot fellowship sin "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13a). Thus, sin separated man from God. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:2). Paul informs us that the wages or end result of sin is death. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Paul also reveals that all men have sinned (Rom. 3:23).

Man could do nothing in which alleviate his sin problem. He cannot do works whereby he merits his salvation. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith" (Rom. 3:27). Paul also writes, "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:9). Man, to be saved, must rely upon the grace of God. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11). Because God loves us (1 John 4:8), He sent His Son to die for sinful mankind. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). Christ took the punishment of sin for us, becoming our propitiation. "For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pet. 3:18). Through the blood which Christ shed upon calvary's tree, man can be saved. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). "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 1:7). "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1:5).

Man must appropriate the blood of Christ for his sins. First he must hear God's Word. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45). Through hearing man must come to believe. "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). For without man's faith, he cannot be saved. "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). This faith also involves faith in Christ.

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24).

Upon the faith that he possesses, he must repent of his sin. “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47). Repentance is a change of heart, making a decision to turn away from sin and turn and live according to God’s will, and a subsequent change in life.

A faith that is not worth confessing is not worth having, therefore he will confess his faith in Jesus as God’s Son. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:9-10). The conversion of the Ethiopian gives us an example of this confession. “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37).

It is at this point that a person is ready to be immersed in water for the remission of his sins. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). “The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21). It is at that point that the Lord adds him to Christ’s church. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls....Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:41, 47). He does not join a denominational group; he is a member of the church of Christ.

Why the welcome track mentioned previously could not state these simple facts is beyond my understanding, and I will not try to guess as to why they did not.

However, they should have stated what man must do to be a member of the Lord’s church. Let us proclaim these simply truths to all men everywhere. *MH*

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(Continued from Page 1)

than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:7-9). Pretty serious entreaty is it not? Any man that would pervert the Word of God should be “shaking in his boots,” because they will get what they justly deserve at judgment. Also, any congregation of people, or eldership who supports those who would preach a perverted gospel will also face the consequences at judgment (2 John 9-11). Brethren, if you have perverted the gospel of Christ, please quit preaching, and repent of this grievous sin before it is too late. Paul talks about men who would pervert the truth in Titus 1:11 when he states, “Whose mouths must be stopped.”

**The man who is lazy should quit preaching.** A little boy, when asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, replied that he wanted to be a preacher. When asked why, his reply was that because preachers only had to work one day a week. As humorous as this seems, this is the way that some preachers approach their responsibility. They stand before the congregation Sunday after Sunday and their sermons are lackluster and not very edifying because they have put little or no effort into them. Brethren, preaching the gospel, if done according to the way God wants it, is hard work. Many hours must be spent in prayerful preparation before you stand before the congregation. Each sermon must be prepared with the thought in mind that it might be the only one ever heard by someone in the audience. It should be informative, instructional, and filled with love. To do all of this, it takes effort on the part of the preacher. Years ago in one of my Bible classes, the instructor told us that to have an effective sermon we should spend one hour in preparation for each minute our sermon was in length. This is a good rule of thumb in preparation of a sermon because of the grave responsibility before us in preaching the gospel. Brethren, if you are lazy and not willing to “labor” in the vineyard you need to quit preaching.

**The man who does not want to work under the oversight of an eldership should quit preaching.** In God’s order of church affairs, the elders have the oversight, then there are the deacons to serve, the evangelist, and the membership. The elders are instructed to take heed to the flock, to oversee it, and to feed it (Acts 20:28). It is the elders’ responsibility and

duty to be sure that the church functions according to God's divine pattern. Today though, we see so many preachers leading or encouraging groups of members as they try to undermine the scriptural authority of the elders. In some cases it is so the preacher can have the "preeminence." How sad! What did Paul say to us? "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17). How can any man say that the elders have "no authority except what the congregation gives them," after reading this verse and after reading other verses that give the qualifications and describe the office of an elder. Preacher friends, if you don't want to work under an eldership, then you need to quit preaching, because this is ordained of God.

**The man who is in preaching for the money should quit.** I firmly believe that "the workman is worthy of his hire," and I do not believe that it is wrong to receive money for preaching as some might advocate. However, no man is fit to preach who loves the money more than he does the work. As a preacher of the gospel, we are not to "make merchandise" the preaching of the gospel. I recently heard of a gospel preacher who, while trying out for a job, stated how much he would be willing to take the job for, and then stated that this amount would only be for the pulpit preaching, if they wanted him to visit the hospital, or the delinquent, or anything else, it would cost them more. This is sad, but the saddest part of this whole story is that the elders of

this congregation hired him! Preacher friends, if you are "preaching" only for what you can get out of the brethren, please quit before it is too late.

**And finally, the man who does not love the souls of man should quit preaching.** If we love the souls of all men we will be doing everything we can to preach and teach them the truth, that they might be saved. We will also be wearing a path to the doors of the delinquent trying to restore them. We will be inviting our neighbors and friends to the services, or trying to set up personal Bible studies with them. Paul was as concerned about the lost, that on one occasion he stated that he would be willing to lose his own soul if doing that might save the soul of another. Brethren are we that concerned about the lost? We can look across our neighborhoods, our towns, our states, our countries, and our world, and see truly that "the fields are white unto harvest." Are you willing to go into the "fields" and labor for the Lord? If not, please quit calling yourself a preacher, because a preacher is to love the lost enough to try to save them.

My dear preacher brethren, I would encourage you to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim 4:2). I would also encourage you to "do the work of an evangelist." Brother, are you willing to do this? If not, please **QUIT!**

*10985 Country Haven; Cottondale, AL 35453*

## HE LIED, HE CHEATED...AND WE DON'T CARE!

*Pat McIntosh*

The long-awaited day has finally arrived. After months of accusations, lies, speculation, and political jockeying, President Clinton has admitted to having had an "inappropriate sexual relationship" with Monica Lewinsky. This came as no big surprise.

This admission was met with a variety of responses from a cross-section of society. Some of these responses helped paint a vivid picture of just how far this country has slipped from its moral moorings. Several of the news reports which followed the national broadcast of his admission were from various sites throughout the country. The responses from that group were relatively indicative of others which I have seen nationally. Some voiced their obvious displeasure and their opinion that he should resign for various reasons. Those reasons ranged anywhere from the fact that his position is that

of being a role model to the embarrassment of having had this "dirty laundry" aired on a worldwide level. Other responses were more reserved in their judgment, but they did agree that this situation was, at the very least, one with which we should be concerned.

The responses which cause me the greatest concern were those in defense of his actions. There were some who admitted his actions were wrong, but remained supportive because of the "great job" he was doing as our President. Others excused his inappropriate actions by indicating he was "merely human" and simply failed to control himself in a time of temptation. A final response was worded by either a congressman or senator who simply stated, "We will support him no matter what happens."

These responses and the lack of objective support

for them are indicative of the immoral nature of the vast majority of society today. I find it sad to see that many in our country have reached the stage that such actions are viewed as being commonplace. What are we, both collectively and individually, as children of God to do in such a situation?

First, we must continue to both proclaim and live the powerful standard portrayed in God's Word. There has never been more of a time when God has needed "earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7) to "stand in the gap before me for the land" (Eze. 22:30). So many of the viewpoints presented by society today manifest either an ignorance of (Hos. 4:6) or a total rejection of God and His will for men (Rom. 1:28). We must strive to promote those spiritual truths and the power of which they are comprised (Rom. 1:16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).

Then, we must be those who draw upon the power of prayer. In such areas, prayer serves at least a two-fold purpose. God, through Scripture, has assured us of the effectiveness of fervent prayer on the part of faithful believers (Jam. 5:16). These prayers should include our families, government officials, and all who can be participants in turning things around. Another purpose of this prayer is for our own comfort and peace while living in an evil generation (Phi. 4:6-7).

Finally, we must be reminded that God is both just and sovereign. It would be easy to look around us and

see so many worldly people with great wealth, position, and influence and develop misconceptions as to who is in control. Looking at the events of the past few decades could cause some to become depressed in the world's apparent success. However, the popularity, prestige, wealth, and position of the world will not be the final standard by which all things will be judged. God's Word will judge (John 12:48). All men will stand before God at the judgment (2 Cor. 5:10). True "success" will be seen in the faithful of our day taking their places with the faithful of all ages in our eternal rest with God.

We cannot compromise in the face of these concerns today. Yes, the vast majority today are satisfied with our secular leadership. Yes, the morals of today have dipped to a depressingly low depth. Yes, there are those who laugh in the face of those who uphold the moral standards portrayed in the Bible. In the face of these sad truths, we **must** continue to be diligent with our mission. The majority of the world is lost and has little time for or concern with God's saving message. We must continue to be His light-bearers in the face of these concerns. The true day of reckoning is yet to come.

*P.O. Box 1072; Highlands, TX 77562*

## Press Release

The Southwest church of Christ is pleased to announce that the eighteenth annual Southwest Lectureship will be held April 11-14, 1999. The theme for this year's lectureship is *As For Me and My House*. Speakers from several states have been invited to come and lecture to an expected record number of brethren who will gather in Austin from across the nation to attend this year's lectureship series.

Some of the speakers for this year's lectureship series are: Barry Grider, John Moore, Rick Brumback, Don Walker, Carl Garner, B. J. Clarke, Don Tarbet, Paul Sain, Monte Evans, Dub McClish, Curtis Cates, along with others.

Some of the lectures deal with serving with lowliness of mind, with gladness, with a vision for the future, and that we will serve the Lord. Others will emphasize prayer in the family, the fruit of the Spirit, the grace of Christ, the truth on Marriage/Divorce/Remarriage, the love of Christ and His judgment. Some of the lessons will deal with promoting regular stewardship, regular

worship attendance, singing praises to Jehovah, harmony in the church, world evangelism, and sound gospel preaching.

During the lectureship, exhibits of various brotherhood publishers, mission efforts, and works from around the country will be on display (*upon prior approval*). In addition, the sermons and lessons delivered during this series will be published in hard-back book form and will be available during the lectureship along with audio and video tapes of this year's as well as past Southwest Lectureships. The annual Southwest School of Bible Studies Supporters' Dinner will also be held on lectureship Tuesday. For further information regarding this dinner, please contact Joseph D. Meador, Director. Recreational Vehicle and camper spaces are available at the Southwest building. For additional information and accommodations, you may contact: Southwest church of Christ, 8900 Manchaca Road, Austin, TX 78748-5399. Phone (512) 282-2438 or Fax (512) 282-2486.

# “Worldliness”

June 12 - 16, 1999

| Saturday, June 12 |  | Tuesday, June 15   |   |
|-------------------|--|--------------------|---|
| 7:00 PM           | Denying Ungodliness And Worldly Lust<br>Noah Hackworth | 9:00 AM            | Dancing<br>Roger Jackson                    |
| 8:00 PM           | Living Soberly, Righteously, And Godly<br>John Moore   | 10:00 AM           | Purity Of Mind, Life, Speech<br>David Brown |
|                   |  | 11:00 AM           | Backbiters And Gossips<br>David Hester      |
|                   |  | 12:00 PM           | Lunch Break                                 |
|                   |  | 1:30 PM            | Pornography<br>Gene Burgett                 |
|                   |  | 2:30 PM            | Hedonism<br>B. J. Clarke                    |
|                   |  | 3:15 PM            | Open Forum<br>Dub McClish                   |
|                   |  | 4:00 PM            | Dinner Break                                |
|                   |  | 7:00 PM            | Denominationalism<br>Dub McClish            |
|                   |  | 8:00 PM            | The Media<br>Jerry Murrell                  |
| Sunday, June 13   |  | Wednesday, June 16 |   |
| 9:00 AM           | Causes Of Worldliness<br>Clifford Newell               | 9:00 AM            | Abortion And Euthanasia<br>Tim Smith        |
| 10:00 AM          | Examining One's Life<br>Tommy Hicks                    | 10:00 AM           | Purity Of Mind, Life, Speech<br>David Brown |
| 11:00 AM          | Lunch Break  | 11:00 AM           | Anger, Hatred, And Malice<br>Marvin Weir    |
| 2:00 PM           | Materialism<br>Ira Y. Rice, Jr.                        | 12:00 PM           | Lunch Break                                 |
| 3:00 PM           | Wastefulness<br>Eddie Whitten                          | 1:30 PM            | Stealing<br>Guss Eoff                       |
| 4:00 PM           | Humanism<br>Daniel Denham                              | 2:30 PM            | Fornication And Adultery<br>Curtis Cates    |
| 5:00 PM           | Dinner Break   | 3:15 PM            | Open Forum<br>Curtis Cates                  |
| 7:00 PM           | Immodest Apparel<br>David Baker                        | 4:00 PM            | Dinner Break                                |
| 8:00 PM           | Alcoholism, Smoking, And Drug Use<br>Danny Box         | 7:00 PM            | Disobedience To Parents<br>Jesse Whitlock   |
|                   |  | 8:00 PM            | Consequences Of Worldliness<br>Ronnie Hayes |
| Monday, June 14   |  |                    |   |
| 9:00 AM           | Homosexuality<br>Kent Bailey                           |                    |   |
| 10:00 AM          | Purity Of Mind, Life, Speech<br>David Brown            |                    |   |
| 11:00 AM          | Pride<br>Joel Wheeler                                  |                    |   |
| 12:00 PM          | Lunch Break  |                    |   |
| 1:30 PM           | Covetousness<br>Wesley Simons                          |                    |   |
| 2:30 PM           | Envy<br>Flavil Nichols                                 |                    |   |
| 3:15 PM           | Open Forum<br>Garland Elkins                           |                    |   |
| 4:00 PM           | Dinner Break   |                    |   |
| 7:00 PM           | Gambling<br>Garland Elkins                             |                    |   |
| 8:00 PM           | Lying And Corrupt Communication<br>Bobby Liddell       |                    |   |

## Bellview Lectures Information

### HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a “first come, first served” basis (call our office at: 850/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Sauffley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following motel is available nearby and is providing a *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway) offers the following price (tax not included) \$45—1 to 4 people per room; a restaurant is located in the motel. Their phone number is 850/453-3333. When checking into the above motel, show them this brochure announcing this special rate, or when calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are attending the *Bellview Lectures*.

### MEALS

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

### EXHIBITS

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

### AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

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

### BOOKS

The lectureship book, *Worldiness* will be available to those attending the *Bellview Lectures* at a reduced rate. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price prior to June 30, 1999, or afterwards at the regular price. It will contain thirty chapters and approximately 450 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

### TRANSPORTATION

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

# BLINDED BY DARKNESS

*Timothy L. Dooley*

I remember as a young boy, my parents taking our family to the Mammoth Caves in Kentucky. I can recall much of the walk we took deep into the earth, yet my most vivid memory was when we had journeyed into one of the deepest parts of the cave we were told to hold our hands in front of our faces. A moment later the lights were turned out and even after a sufficient period of time to allow our sight to adjust, we still could not see a thing—even our hands so close to our faces. I will never forget how it felt to be in such outer darkness.

I have read that there are fish in the waters of such caves that, though they have eyes, they are completely blind. Because of the darkness of their world there is no need for vision. They have literally been blinded by the darkness of their environment.

The Word of God has much to say regarding both light and darkness. The world and sin are referred to as darkness, as are those who walk not according to the law Christ has delivered. Christ and righteousness are referred to as light. Second Corinthians 6:14 says, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

A person whose thoughts and intents are evil is said to be full of darkness. Matthew 6:23 says, “But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!” This darkness is just as that at the bottom of the cavern of which I spoke in the beginning of this article. But nothing like the darkness that awaits those who are evil and disobedient when the day of judgement comes. “Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Mat. 22:13; cf., Mat. 25:30; 2 Pet.

2:4, 17; Jude 13).

In Luke 1:79 it is said of Christ that He came “to give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” Acts 26:23 says, “That Christ should suffer, and *that* he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.”

The darkness of sin in this world will blind many souls to the truth. They will be lost and in danger of eternal damnation. Yet the light that is able to save the lost has been delivered unto us by Christ. It is our responsibility, by His Word, to send that light to the whole world.

Paul, while rehearsing his encounter with the Lord to King Agrippa, declares in Acts 26:18 that he was sent by Christ “to open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” He expressed this same commitment in Romans 1:14, “I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.”

Likewise, we hold that same light, that same responsibility today. And we must shine that light with the same fortitude of Paul and the other apostles. Christ commands it! Read Matthew 5:15, “Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.”

Let us evangelize and lead those who are in darkness before they are blinded by it. Let us use God’s Word to shine light into the darkness of this world before these souls are in such outer darkness that they are lost for eternity.

*2243 Iroquois Street; Springfield, OH 45506*

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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

# Defender



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

*Volume XXVIII*

*March 1999*

*Number 3*

Web Site: <http://members.tripod.com/bellviewcoc>

## YOU CAN'T COUNT ON ANYTHING ANYMORE

*Al Brown*

There was a time—it seems so very, very long ago now—when things seemed so much more stable than they do now. You could count on some things from one day to the next, and they would still be there the next morning. Life moved at a more leisurely pace. There seemed to be time for the family—back in those days when there was a family in more than just name.

Oh, there was evil in the world. There always has been. Men found it easy to sin, and there were plenty of temptations to lure them. Still, most seemed to have had a deeply-instilled awareness of what was morally right and wrong. Open, blatant sin was not tolerated as it is today. Sexual immorality brought a sense of shame, not only to the perpetrators, but to their families and others. There were some things which were disgraceful, and to discuss them in public, or even among the family was shameful.

Today, after fifty years of “coming of age” under the influence of situation ethics and humanism, vast numbers of people no longer know what is right and wrong. They do not even know that a definitive moral standard exists. No subject is too shameful or sleazy to discuss, not only within the family circle, but on network television. The most filthy, degenerate people TV talk-show hosts can dredge up from the slime-pits of depravity daily contaminate our homes with the vilest filth and call it entertainment.

Our nation—indeed, the world is rapidly changing, and much of the change has not been beneficial to man. So many of his once-great cities are crumbling in decay. Crime rages out of control, and he has no idea what to do about it. He has lived for fifty years under the threat

of nuclear annihilation. Pollution chokes his rivers, the air he breathes, and the food he eats.

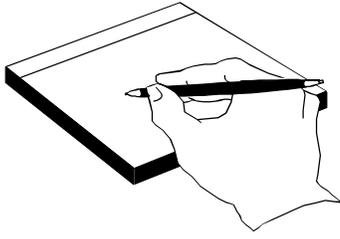
His religious institutions, once so vital and reassuring to him, lie bankrupt of meaningful faith or soul-satisfying endeavors, and he has blindly followed the defection of his spiritually-blind religious leaders down the path of skepticism, agnosticism, and outright atheism, disguised under the beguiling names of humanism and existentialism. In all this chaotic change, and in his disillusionment and frustration, he cries out in desperation: “Is there nothing to which I can cling that is firm and steady?”

Again, he hears a host of answers, but most of them woefully fail in the fiery trials through which man must go. There is but one voice that can really give him the peace with God and man, and the tranquility of soul he craves. Even then, he must be prepared to seek it in the one place it can be found and be willing to conform to the demands it places on him.

The answer is Jesus Christ and the religion He reveals in the New Testament. This does not mean he can follow some theologian or the teaching of one of the various religious groups. Their sectarian, humanly-devised creeds, confessions of faith, manuals, and disciplines are a far cry from the truth taught by Jesus Christ. These soul-saving words can be found only in the Bible. Indeed, Christ condemned those who replaced the Word of God with “the precepts of men” and said every plant which His Father did not plant would be rooted up (Mat. 15:6-9, 13). In other words, every humanly devised religion would be destroyed.

*(Continued on Page 4)*

# Notes From The Editor



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## Eli

In many ways Eli was a great man. He was a judge in Israel for forty years; during which time he was God's spokesman to Israel. We do not see any outward evil and sin within his life. We can observe that he was a generous man for toward the end of life, he sees himself being set aside for the younger Samuel. Even though Samuel will take his place, Eli does not rebel, grow bitter, give way to envy, or say hard and hateful things about his successor. Instead he patiently teaches the youthful Samuel. Yet, notice the message God gives to Eli through the youthful Samuel. "And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all *things* which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever" (1 Sam. 3:11-14).

In spite of all the good points of Eli, God pronounces a grievous judgment against both Eli's house and against Eli himself. The reason given is because of what Eli failed to do. Eli was not guilty of any great evil, but his sons were. The evil doings of his sons (Hophni and Phinehas) were not hidden from his eyes; he had complete knowledge of their wickedness. He was well aware that they were bringing shame upon themselves and upon the high priestly office to which they were called. "And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress" (1 Sam.

2:23-24). Eli's sin was simply that he failed to restrain his sons; therefore, Eli shared in their guilt and doom. The Lord told Eli: "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my* habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?" (1 Sam. 2:29).

Why did not Eli restrain them? While some have thought that he was simply too busy, this could not be the case because he did give them a mile rebuke. "Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them" (1 Sam. 2:22-25). However, this was way too mild to deal with such a scandalous sin. They should have been immediately take out of the priesthood and they should have been stoned for being sons of Belial (Deu. 17:3-5). The Law of Moses also provided for the stoning of rebellious children such as Hophni and Phinehas (Deu. 21:18-21). However, Eli was simply too soft, too easy toward his children. He was too good-natured and weak toward them. No doubt, Eli loved his sons, but he did not love them enough to restrain them. Thus, the Lord punished not only the children, but Eli also.

This background should show us the failure of pious softness. When one considers the way of the Lord, pious softness was not His way. When He saw the moneychangers in the temple, He drove them out (Mat. 21; John 2). In the strongest language possible, Jesus denounced and rebuked those in sin (Mat. 15, 23). Pious softness is always the way of failure. Consider some examples.

This approach has failed within the home. Parents are to train their children. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). This bringing up includes the proper instruction (Deu. 6:7; 32:46), but it also includes a restraining of the children. "For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth....He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him be-

times....The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to *himself* bringeth his mother to shame....Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul” (Pro. 3:12; 13:24; 29:15, 17). Far too many children today grow up without seeing any boundary lines for their actions. Parents do not say “No!” to their children. Then there are many parents who will tell their child no, but never follow through with any punishment if the child violates what the parent said. To a great extent this pious softness is destroying our nation.

We also can observe the failure of pious softness in our society. Crime is one of the great problems of our nation. But the liberals of our society have convinced many to be soft on crime. The government has the responsibility of keeping an orderly society. In keeping order, government is to punish evildoers (1 Pet. 2:14) even to the putting them to death (Gen. 9:4; Rom. 13:3-4). But the liberals have taught that capital punishment is “cruel and unusual punishment.” Therefore, capital punishment was abandoned for many years. Today, even though it is carried out, it is years before the sentence is executed. “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Ecc. 8:11). Crime runs rampant in our society because of the pious softness of many—and it is a complete failure.

We are also seeing a failure of this type of attitude in the church. Many Christians today object to the God ordained practice of withdrawing of fellowship. When a child of God refuses to live according to His laws and refuses to repent of his sin, the Scriptures command us to withdraw fellowship from him (1 Cor. 5; Eph. 5:11; 2 The. 3:6, 14). However, many objected to this practice and weak elders stopped obeying God concerning it. Sin is now winked at in many congregations and every member knows they can live in sin and nothing will be done about it. Sin will be tolerated by the elders and members. There is no demand within those congregations of Christians living as to be shining lights in a world of darkness. This has become a great problem within the church. It becomes difficult to convert the world when we are living like the world.

Another area is the toleration of false teachers. The Bible is clear concerning our actions regarding those who would alter God’s holy Word. “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17). “If any man teach

otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;...from such withdraw thyself” (1 Tim. 6:3, 5). “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself” (Tit. 3:10-11). Elders certainly are to take the lead in this action. “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). “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). Yet, many elders would not know a false teacher if they came with a sign on their shirts informing everyone. Even then many elderships would not do anything about the false teacher. Many would invite him into the pulpit while some of those would state that he is not going to speak on that subject here. They refuse to do what God said to do and are not worthy of that honorable work.

Preachers should also be taking a lead in marking and withdrawing from false teachers. Yet, many preachers will continue to support false teachers and their events. They will use their bulletins to advertise their happenings, they will attend, lead prayers, etc., all under the guise of loving our brethren and the desire to be kind and gentle. Those who take a stand and obey God’s directives are ridiculed as being too harsh and unloving. Often these preachers would never teach false doctrine themselves, but they simply are too piously soft to take a stand against the error of today. Sometimes one wakes up and wonders what has been happening among us. They are now shocked at some of the practices found within the church. One of the answers as to what has been happening is that he has not done what the Lord commands and because of his pious softness and failure to mark and withdraw, they have allowed sin

and error to invade the precious bride of Christ. If they had done what the Lord commanded all along, the church would not be in the shape it is in today.

This is not an allowance to be unkind or unloving in any way. However, it is our obligation to take a stand. Pious softness will not work in the home, the world, or in the church. Let us learn from the mistake of Eli. MH

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

Denominational doctrine has always twisted, ignored, denied, and replaced the directions Christ gave for reconciling man back to God and for obtaining a truly abundant, happy life. The many varieties of religious leaders and theologians compete for our allegiance, but all of them offer nothing more than the opinions of mere men. If they teach less than what is contained in Scripture, it is not enough. If they add anything to what man must believe and do, it is too much. If what they teach were identical to the New Testament, it would be just another copy of God's Word. In any case, what they teach is human opinion and therefore condemned by God.

No matter how much our environment may change, there is one thing of which we can be sure: Christ and His Word and His promises will not change. The apostle Paul wrote, "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and to-day, *yea* and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). This speaks of the eternal sameness of Jesus Christ. It is something on which we can count. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and may have *it* abundantly" (John 10:10), but the only way it can be a reality is to live by what Christ

and His apostles taught. The Lord said, concerning His Word, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Mat. 24:85), and this great, eternal verity can furnish stability, strength, and encouragement such as nothing else can.

Christ offers man 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 fearful" (John 14:27). Paul wrote, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Phi. 4:6-7).

Paul tells us how to be content: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phi. 4:11-13).

These are the things for which man searches his entire life. He will spend all that he has to acquire them, but happiness always seems to elude him. There is a better way—a way of stability, love, and faith—a way of peace and contentment. But, it is only in Christ, and most refuse to believe it. Jesus described them: "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life" (John 5:89-40).

*Deceased*

## IS ABORTION MURDER?

*Travis L. Quertermous*

On Thursday, October 30, 1997, the Florida State Supreme Court handed down a landmark decision in the abortion controversy. The case concerned a young woman who was six months pregnant and wanted an abortion. However, she could not afford one, so she shot herself in the abdomen with a handgun, killing the fetus within her. The state of Florida put her on trial for the murder of the unborn child. The Florida Supreme Court ruled that she was not guilty of homicide. The court further decided that had a third party pulled the trigger, that person could be found guilty of murder. It would be difficult to imagine a more irrational decision

than this one. A six-month old fetus is very capable of surviving outside the womb. Had this Florida woman walked into any hospital nursery in the Sunshine State and killed any other baby therein, even a premature one, she would have surely been convicted of murder. The only difference between her baby and these is that hers was still in the womb! Such illustrates the absurdity of abortion laws in our country. Nonetheless, this ruling should have a far-reaching impact on the abortion controversy because of the implications of the court's decision. Let us reflect on them.

First, as irrational as it was, the decision of the

Florida High Court is in perfect harmony with the “rationale” used by the U.S. Supreme Court to make abortion-on-demand the law of the land in its infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision handed down on January 22, 1973. Such, of course, only shows how ridiculous the latter decision itself was. The U.S. Supreme Court said that since the humanity of the fetus could not be determined, abortion was not murder. It furthermore decided that a woman had complete control over her body under the so-called privacy protections provided under the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution. Finally, since the Constitution defined an American citizen as one born or naturalized in the United States, our nation’s Highest Court denied the rights and protections of American citizenship to the unborn (since they had not yet been born). There were no Scripture or science and less sense to any of those rulings, but they became the law. Yet, with that kind of precedent, how could the Florida Supreme Court make any other ruling than it made, despite the obvious flaws in the reasoning? In the eyes of the law, she simply performed an abortion on herself! Nonetheless, the implications of their decision undermines the validity of *Roe v. Wade*.

Second, to further demonstrate the absurdity of the Florida ruling, since when does it take a third party to commit murder? And what would this third party do to the woman’s unborn baby that the woman herself did not do? Suppose someone had walked up to her and shot her, killing the unborn baby in her womb. According to the Florida Supreme Court, that person would be guilty of murdering the fetus. Yet, the woman did the same thing to herself with the same result, namely, a dead baby. But, with a wave of a legal magic wand and some judicial hocus-pocus, the Florida justices arbitrarily declared her not to be a murderess. That makes no sense whatsoever.

Third, are doctors that henceforth perform abortions in Florida now murderers? According to the Florida Supreme Court they are, because they are a third party to the killing of a fetus. With this we agree, but we doubt that the abortionists will accept this logical conclusion of this ruling. But, if the abortion doctor is not guilty of murder, why would anyone else be guilty of homicide for killing the fetus instead of the mother? What would they do to the unborn child that the abortion doctor does not do? Incidentally, God has said that even those who unintentionally kill an unborn child are murderers (Exo. 21:22-25).

Either that unborn baby has been murdered or it has

not been murdered and it matters not who pulled the trigger or performed the abortion. If the fetus is not a person, it would not matter who killed it, they could not be guilty of murder for that crime can only be committed against a human being. But, according to the Florida Supreme Court, it is possible to murder an unborn baby. It therefore irresistibly follows that at some point the fetus is a person, per the Florida High Court’s ruling. If this decision is correct, and the fetus can be murdered, hence is a person, then *Roe v. Wade* is wrong! But, if the Florida Court was wrong, then the woman was guilty of murdering her fetus and its humanity is still proven. The abortionists may take either horn of that dilemma they wish! Either way, abortion is proven to be murder.

But, to establish conclusively that the Florida woman should have been convicted of homicide, we need only show that the unborn child is human from the moment of conception. Scientifically and scripturally speaking, the only thing that two human beings can reproduce is another human being (Gen. 1:11-12, 20-22, 28; 4:1-2). Whatever is produced as a result of human reproduction is always and only a human person. Therefore, to abort that child is to be guilty of murder. What is murder? It is the intentional killing of another human being without sufficient justification or due process of law. Thus, therapeutic abortions (those done to save the life of the mother), capital punishment, and self-defense would not be murder. The Bible makes no distinction between a baby born inside the womb or outside of it. The Greek word for “baby” (*brephos*) is applied to them both (Luke 1:41; 1 Pet. 2:2). In Luke 1:41 Elizabeth was six months pregnant with John the Baptist; exactly the same age as the fetus shot and killed by its mother in Florida. That proves that in the eyes of God she was guilty of murdering her baby, no matter what the court may say.

The only possible conclusion rational people could reach was the poor baby was murdered in its mother’s womb by the very woman carrying him. Sadly, the Florida judges did not have the courage or the wisdom to challenge *Roe v. Wade*. Abortion (excepting therapeutic ones) is murder. This sad case vividly illustrates the tragedy and absurdity that is the abortion law in our nation. One of the seven things God hates is “hands that shed innocent blood” (Pro. 6:17). Let us pray and work toward a swift end to this American Holocaust.

*112 North Payne Street; Pacific, MO 63069*

# THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL LECTURESHIP MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

3950 Forest Hill Irene Road; Memphis, TN 38125

MARCH 28 - APRIL 1, 1999

## “GOD HATH SPOKEN, AFFIRMING TRUTH AND REPROVING ERROR”

| Sunday, March 28                            |  |                  | Wednesday, March 31   |   |                  |
|---|--|------------------|---|---|------------------|
| 9:30-10:20 AM                               | The Existence Of God   | James Rogers     | 9:00- 9:50 AM   | Sincere, Knowledgeable, Devout Christians                               |                  |
| 10:30-11:30 AM                              | Creation, Not Evolution                                      | Steve Ellis      |   | In Denominations Error  | Garland Elkins   |
| 6:00- 7:00 PM                               | Verbal, Plenary, Inerrant Inspiration Of The Bible           | Jackie Stearsman | 10:00-10:50 AM  | Wearing Man-made Designations Error                                     | Bobby Liddell    |
| Monday, March 29                            |  |                  | 10:00-10:50 AM  | The Christian Woman's Responsibility To The Home (Women's Class)        | Irene Taylor     |
| 9:00- 9:50 AM                               | Bible Only Making Christians Only, The Only Christians       | Roy J. Hearn     | 11:00-11:50 AM  | Impossibility Of apostasy Error   | Randy Mabe       |
| 10:00-10:50 AM                              | Church/Kingdom Established On Pentecost, Christ Reigning     | Billy Bland      | 11:00-11:50 AM  | Class 1: Contributing From Treasury To Homes For Needy                  | David Morton     |
| 10:00-10:50 AM                              | The Christian Woman's Responsibility To God (Women's Class)  | Corinne Elkins   | Class 2: Roman Catholic Church The Original Apostolic Church Error  |   | Jerry Jones      |
| 11:00-11:50 AM                              | Hereditary Total Depravity Error                             | Mark Lindley     | Class 3: Witnessing, Testifying Today Error   |   | Danny Box        |
| 11:00-11:50 AM                              | Class 1: Helping Non-Saints From Treasury Error              | Paul Sain        | Class 4: Deferred Giving And Estate Planning Seminar  |   | Bob Swayne       |
|   | Class 2: Book Of Mormon Revelation From God Error            | Lance Foster     | LUNCH   |   |                  |
|   | Class 3: Mechanical Instrumental Music In Worship Error      | Kent Bailey      | 1:10- 2:00 PM   | Grace Only, Faith Only Error  | Cliff Newell     |
|   | Class 4: Deferred Giving And Estate Planning Seminar         | Bob Swayne       | 1:10- 2:00 PM   | Class 1: Clapping, Shouting, Dancing, Lifting Up Hands In Worship Error | Glenn Colley     |
| 11:50- 1:10 PM                              | LUNCH  |                  | Class 2: Maintaining Purity, Withdrawal of Fellowship   |   | Neil Myers       |
| 1:10- 2:00 PM                               | Immersion In Water The Only Christian Baptism                | Jerry Martin     | Class 3: Troubled Friendships Today (Women's Class)   |   | Jane McWhorter   |
| 1:10- 2:00 PM                               | Class 1: Women Preaching Leadership Roles Error              | David Brown      | 2:10- 3:00 PM   | Miraculous Divine Healing Today Error                                   | Michael Hatcher  |
|   | Class 2: Soul Sleeping/Materialism Error                     | T. J. Clarke     | 3:10- 4:00 PM   | Open Forum  | Garland Elkins   |
|   | Class 3: Seeds Of Friendship (Women's Class)                 | Jane McWhorter   | 4:00- 7:00 PM   | INTERMISSION  |                  |
| 2:10- 3:00 PM                               | New Hermeneutic Error  | David Brown      | 7:00- 7:30 PM   | CONGREGATIONAL SINGING  |                  |
| 3:10- 4:00 PM                               | Open Forum   | Garland Elkins   | 7:30- 8:30 PM   | The Church Of Christ Restored   | Don McWhorter    |
| 4:00- 7:00 PM                               | INTERMISSION   |                  | Thursday, April 1   |   |                  |
| 7:00- 7:30 PM                               | CONGREGATIONAL SINGING                                       |                  | 9:00- 9:50 AM   | Unity In Diversity Error  | Ivie Powell      |
| 7:30- 8:30 PM                               | Truth Absolute, Knowable, Do-able                            | Kenneth Gossett  | 10:00-10:50 AM  | Holy Spirit Operates On Alien Only Through Word                         | Dewey Medlin     |
| Tuesday, March 30                           |  |                  | 10:00-10:50 AM  | The Christian Woman's Responsibility To The Community (Women's Class)   | Annette Cates    |
| 9:00- 9:50 AM                               | Human Creeds Heretical And Schismatical                      | Gary Colley      | 11:00-11:50 AM  | But One Scriptural Reason For Divorce And Remarriage                    | Royce Williamson |
| 10:00-10:00 AM                              | Earthly Headquarters And Hierarchy Error                     | Harrell Davidson | 11:00-11:50 AM  | Class 1: Not Eating In Meeting House Error                              | Johnie Scaggs    |
| 10:00-10:50 AM                              | The Christian Woman's Responsibility To Self (Women's Class) | Carol Mangrum    | Class 2: Catholic Tradition And Pope The Authority Error  |   | Ken Willis       |
| 11:00-11:50 AM                              | Community Church Pattern, Doctrine Error                     | Gary McDade      | Class 3: Feet Washing In Worship Error  |   | Ray Penna        |
| 11:00-11:50 AM                              | Class 1: Churches Cooperating In Preaching                   | Steve Housley    | Class 4: Deferred Giving And Estate Planning Seminar  |   | Bob Swayne       |
|   | Class 2: All Persons Having Opportunity To Be Saved          | Randall Medlin   | 11:50- 1:10 PM  | LUNCH   |                  |
|   | Class 3: Everything One Does Is Worship Error                | Larry Powers     | 1:10- 2:00 PM   | Gospel VS Doctrine, Core/Bull's Eye Error                               | Ira Rice         |
|   | Class 4: Deferred Giving And Estate Planning Seminar         | Bob Swayne       | 1:10- 2:00 PM   | Class 1: Jesus Only Error   | Robert Williams  |
| 11:50- 1:10 PM                              | LUNCH  |                  | Class 2: Man-made Missions Of Church Error  |   | Gary Shaver      |
| 1:00- 2:00 PM                               | Baptism To Be In Order To Remission Of Sins                  | Frank Chesser    | Class 3: Dealing With Criticism (Women's Class)   |   | Jane McWhorter   |
| 1:10- 2:00 PM                               | Class 1: Transubstantiation, Other Lord's Supper Error       | Jim Gillaspie    | 2:10- 3:00 PM   | Holy Spirit Operates On Heart Of Christian Only Through Word            | Keith Mosher     |
|   | Class 2: New "Bibles" Error                                  | James Boyd       | 3:10- 4:00 PM   | Open Forum  | Garland Elkins   |
|   | Class 3: Troubled Bible Teachings (Women's Class)            | Jane McWhorter   | 4:00- 7:00 PM   | INTERMISSION  |                  |
| 2:10- 3:00 PM                               | One Congregation Can Withdraw From Another Congregation      | Dub Mcclish      | 7:00- 7:30 PM   | CONGREGATIONAL SINGING  |                  |
| PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND SUPPORTERS SEMINAR |  |                  | 7:30- 8:30 PM   | The Church Of Christ Resurrected, Rewarded                              | Robert Taylor    |
| 3:10- 4:00 PM                               | Open Forum   | Garland Elkins   | NOTE: There will be classes and activities for pre-school children daily, and also for the evening classes. |   |                  |
| 4:00- 7:00 PM                               | INTERMISSION   |                  | WATER/ELECTRICAL HOOKUPS PROVIDED   |   |                  |
| 7:00- 7:30 PM                               | CONGREGATIONAL SINGING                                       |                  |   |   |                  |
| 7:30- 8:30 PM                               | New Testament The Pattern                                    | Jerry Moffit     |   |   |                  |

# LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY SUMMER SERIES FEATURES FALSE TEACHER

*Toney L. Smith*

I received a brochure advertising the 1998 David Lipscomb University Summer Series and I could not help but be disheartened when I saw the names of some of their speakers. For example, one was Joe Beam about whom much has been written concerning his apostasy. Generally these articles state that Beam is teaching false doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit's work in today's world. Also, I have recently listened to a series of lessons presented by Beam at the 1996 Nashville Jubilee. He clearly is one of the "change agents" who is seeking to move the church of Christ away from its firm foundation. He strongly denies that he is Pentecostal, but his position clearly overrides his denial.

Notice some of his positions concerning the Holy Spirit. He said, "Some people will never be free of sinful addictions in their lives without God's **intervention**." Beam stated that the Holy Spirit works in three avenues: through the Word, through spiritual wisdom, and in what he called wakening or prompting. It is in this latter category his Pentecostalism is exposed. Notice these examples that were given:

- ◆ In counseling a young couple, Beam stated he asked God to let him know when either lied. After some time in the counseling session, he stopped the young man and told him that God had just told him that he had lied!
- ◆ On another occasion, he claimed he was led by the Spirit to a home where he surmised that the man was having an affair, without any evidence to sustain the allegation.
- ◆ He said a prisoner's soul was saved because

God led him to a trash can where someone had discarded some Bible material.

- ◆ He alleged a Texas preacher was able to keep a man from committing murder because God sent him to stop the would-be killer.
- ◆ Once he asked God to speak to him. He turned on the radio and pushed buttons until a woman came on singing a song that related directly to him.
- ◆ He also stated that sometimes he listens to his speeches and hears himself saying things that he never knew before.
- ◆ He saw a denominational program on television concerning a man who had not been able to speak above a whisper for 10 years and God miraculously restored his voice. He then affirmed that God cannot be put in a box and that His fellowship extends beyond the church of Christ.

It is difficult to comprehend how a "Christian University" could promote and endorse such. It is clear that the administrators of this school no longer desire to make any real distinction between truth and error. We are to "mark and avoid" false teachers and those who promote such (Rom. 16:17). Jim Waldron wrote: What good does it do for the president to preach the truth on baptism for remission of sins, then turn around and have Joe Beam's pentecostalism "featured in daily classes" in the Summer Lectures?

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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

# Defender



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

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## FOLLOWING CHRIST TO GLORY

*Shan Jackson*

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 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. 16:24-26).

If we are talking about personal wealth, How much is a lot? Donald Trump has an estimated 500 million dollars in cash and assets. Is that a lot? Ross Perot has an estimated 1 billion dollars. Bill Gates has an estimated 5 billion. I have about \$37. Is that a lot? Well, compared to Donald Trump that is not a lot, but compared to a homeless person I suppose it is.

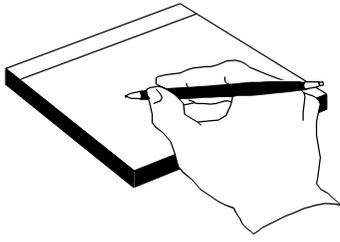
In this passage Jesus is talking about wealth. But instead of teaching about physical wealth He uses physical wealth to illustrate the essentiality of spiritual wealth. He is drawing a parallel between physical wealth and spiritual wealth. Now, physical wealth is determined differently than spiritual wealth. Physical wealth is determined by treasure laid up on earth, whereas spiritual wealth is determined by treasure laid up in heaven. Deuteronomy 28:12 refers to earthly treasure: “The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand.” But in Matthew 13:44 Jesus is talking about spiritual treasure when He says, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field.” Later in that chapter He says, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old” (Mat. 13:51). When He was talking to the Rich

Young Ruler He said, “Sell all that thou hast [physical treasure], and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven” (Luke 18:22). Jesus’ emphasis is that physical treasure cannot begin to compare with spiritual treasure. He says that even if a man had all the treasure this earth had to offer it should be seen as worthless compared to spiritual treasure. You could add all Donald Trump’s treasure, Ross Perot’s treasure, and Bill Gates’ treasure all together and it is not worth as much as the blessings Christians receive by worshipping God together. Jesus says, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mat. 6:21).

Now, if the truth is found in God (John 17:17), and God’s truth is the gospel (Rom. 1:16), then what makes the gospel so attractive? Is it the beauty of the language or is it the beauty of the message? We know it is the beauty of the message. And the beauty of the message can be summed up in one word—sacrifice. Jesus said, “If I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me” (John 12:32). Jesus also said, “For God so loved the world, that he gave [sacrificed] his only begotten Son” (John 3:16). Sacrifice—and sacrifice is exactly what Jesus did for man upon the cross. That is what He did, and what He does. Paul would later confess: “The Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). In Romans 5 he mentions that fact that we were helpless, and that at that time Jesus died for us. He says that God proved His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). He says

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## God

Jesus, in His high priestly prayer, stated: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). Thus, we immediately realize the importance of a knowledge of God. Yet, there are many things about God which we never will be able to comprehend. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33). Yet, God, in His infinite mercy, has revealed certain things about Himself. I was recently asked a question concerning God and His nature (specifically dealing with the Trinity) which I wish to examine here.

Moses revealed that God (Jehovah) is one. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD” (Deu. 6:4). The Hebrew word translated *one* refers to a unified one. It is the same word used of the husband and wife relationship. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). We also see this used with a multiplicity of individuals: “And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do” (Gen. 11:6; see also Gen. 41:1, 5, 25; Acts 4:32; 1 Cor. 3:8). Therefore, we can know that even though God is one, there might be more than one person who makes up the Godhead. We observe this to be the case from the first chapter of the Bible. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). “God” is the translation of the Hebrew *elohim* which is a plural noun (the singular is *eloah*). The subject of the sentence is “created” from the Hebrew *bara* which is singular. Instead of translating it “Gods created” the translators correctly understood that there is more than one entity who

makes up the Godhead but though a plurality of persons, yet they are one. We see this in the English when God says, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Gen. 1:26). We have the plural pronouns *us* and *our*. Therefore, who is God, or who makes up the Godhead?

Within the Godhead, there is God the Father. Let me simply list several passages which mention the Father as God. “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed” (John 6:27). “That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 15:6). “But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him” (1 Cor. 8:6). “One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:6). These passages, along with others, show that the Father is God.

Within the Godhead, there is God the Logos who becomes the Son. Again there are several passages which mention that Jesus is God. “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Mat. 1:23). “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). “And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Phi. 2:6). *Form* is from a Greek word dealing with the intrinsic nature of something. Here, Jesus having the nature of God. “But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom” (Heb. 1:8). Again, these passages, along with others, show that Jesus is God.

Within the Godhead, there is God the Holy Spirit. Allow me to again simply list a few verses: which should be sufficient for those who respect God’s Word. “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God” (Acts 5:3-4). “But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his

Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:10-11). “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17). “In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).

All the characteristics, attributes, titles, and prerogatives of God (Deity) are ascribed to each one of these three (the Father, the Son, the Spirit). We are not affirming that there are three Gods, but one God. While there is one God, there are three persons each possessing the nature of God. This is why the Scriptures speak of the Godhead (Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9). The three are one in purpose, nature, and essence.

When we read of God (or Jehovah) in the Scriptures we need to think of all three members of the Godhead, unless the context shows that one member is specifically being discussed. For example, when Jesus prayed to God, or says “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” the context demands that Jesus is speaking to the Father. That does not exclude Jesus or the Holy Spirit from being God. Consider an illustration. My grandfather’s name was William Hardy Hatcher, my father’s name was William Cain Hatcher, my name is William Michael Hatcher, my oldest son’s name is William Andrew Hatcher. Each one of us is William Hatcher. Someone could address one while not speaking about the others. My son William Hatcher could be addressing me as William Hatcher; however that would not mean that he is any less William Hatcher than I am. We are both William Hatcher. Thus, Jesus could address the Father as God and be (remain) God Himself. *MH*

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(Continued from Page 1)

we were reconciled with God through the death of His Son, and having been reconciled we shall be saved from wrath through Him. Peter joins in by saying that Christ bore our sins in His own body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24), and that by His wounds we were healed. Jesus asked, “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8:37). Before we answer casually we need to realize what He gave for us.

Matthew 16:21 says, “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.” We know the old saying that even

the greatest journey begins with one step, I suppose we could say that this was Jesus’ first step toward the cross. His time of teaching was almost over. His time of healing the sick and raising the dead was almost gone. Now, it was time to face the cross. But, it was also time for His disciples to make a commitment to Him. You see, commitment is the thrust of His question. It was time for His disciples to decide. Jesus is asking them to decide to voluntarily take up their crosses and follow Him.

You know, sometimes we think that these crosses the disciples were asked to bear were persecution, trials, etc., but Jesus is actually calling on them to be ready to die for Him. He was saying that if they wanted to follow Him they needed to be ready to make the ultimate sacrifice. And brethren, the cross He was asking them to bear is the cross every Christian of every age is also asked to bear. He had already said in chapter 10: “He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me” (v. 38). In other words, he that is unwilling to make the ultimate sacrifice, he that is unwilling to give up anything and everything that stands in the way, is not worthy to wear His name. So this was nothing new to them, and this should not be new news to us either. Do we not know that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? Do we not know that we were bought with a price? Therefore, as Paul says, “glorify God in your body, and in your spirit” (1 Cor. 6:20). Brethren, what are we profited if we gain the whole world and lose our soul? And we are going to lose our soul if we do not deny self, take up our cross, and follow Him.

From here on out we will try to determine what Jesus actually meant in His question. Jesus was specifically teaching the twelve, however, there is also specific instruction for us. Our question is not, what did this mean to them; our question is what does this passage mean to us? Does it mean we must die in order to be a Christian? Does it mean we have to actually pursue our own demise? Should you and I actively seek martyrdom? Well, if we believe the Bible then the answer is “no.” Now, remember Jesus’ question, What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Well, what did the early church give? They gave their lives—not in death, but in life. In order to follow Jesus, God’s will must be the determining factor in our lives. Romans 12:1-2, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.” Brethren, Christians must live like Jesus, and if necessary we must die like Jesus as well. We must not be

willing to exchange anything for our soul.

Brethren, may we with unbridled zeal determine to dedicate our lives to His service. May we with one voice determine to keep the church pure for His sake.

Let us determine to take up our cross and follow Him. To follow Him in life, death, and then to glory.

*P.O. Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465*

## On The Question: Is All of Life, Except For Sin, Worship?

### *Quotations from Buster Dobbs*

#### The Old Buster Dobbs—NO!

1988

“My prayer is that we will quit this carnival atmosphere, and get back to the deep sincerity of true devotion, with the emphasis where it belongs. We must teach our young about the greatness of God, and the strength of self-sacrificing service.

The flimsy and foolish notion that everything we do is worship is so obviously wrong it should not be hard to refute. A simply rebuke out to be enough! When we keep in mind what worship is, we will have no trouble understanding that many things we do cannot possibly be worship. If we make low and mundane things equal to worship, we degrade worship.

I do not wish to be crude, or rude, but, if everything we do is worship, then picking your nose is worship! We do a lot of things in private that are not worship. Think for a moment of the details of your intimate life, and ask yourself if it is worship. You know it is not! Only those who have an inadequate idea of worship would make such a claim.

We must do everything we do with a reference to God. ‘And whatever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus’ (Col. 3:17). To do a thing in the name of the Lord is to do that thing by his authority, and with his approval. Everything we do is to be in keeping with the instructions of God’s Word.”

“Fall On Your Face,” *Firm Foundation*, June 1988, p. 7.

1997

“Worship must be only that which is due to a sovereign God. It must edify the worshiper. It must consist only of that which is clearly taught in the New Testament.

The holy kiss is not worship. It is a greeting. Paul says so. It edifies no one. It is not something due a reigning God. It is not clearly taught in the New Testament as worship. It is all right for saints to greet one another with a holy kiss if they desire to do so, but it is

not an item of worship. To say at the close of a letter, ‘Salute (Greet) one another with a holy kiss’ is a request and not a command. It is like saying, ‘Give my regards to your family.’ The five times the holy kiss is mentioned in the New Testament it occurs at the close of an epistle. It is a salutation—a polite expression of greeting or goodwill. It is optional. It is not a command. To attempt to promote this gesture to a law and an item of worship is sophomoric.

Foot washing is in order when it helps and benefits our fellow creature but is not worship because, like the holy kiss, it is directed to humans and not deity.”

“O Worship The King,” *Firm Foundation*, May 1997, p. 4.

#### The New Buster Dobbs—YES!

1998

“On still another but equal level, there is also the worship of a committed life. ‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service’ (Rom. 12:1).

1. All sacrifice offered to God is worship.
2. Christians are to continually offer their bodies as a sacrifice to God.
3. Therefore there is a sense in which worship is continual.....

Such devoted service to God is clearly worship. It involves *all* that we do. Whether we are earning a living for our family, or seeking lawful entertainment and recreation, it is to be done in the name of the Lord. As holy, royal priests we make an offering to the father through the son in everything we do.....

It does not follow that sacrifice was not worship simply because it is mentioned in conjunction with the word worship.....

When the Bible speaks of worship and service, it does not follow that the service cannot be worship just because it is mentioned in the same breath with the word worship.

Besides, if we take the view that ‘worship and serve’ must mean that the service is not worship, we deny the scripture that tells us to ‘offer our bodies a living sacrifice,’ which is the service of continuing worship.”

“Is All Of Life Worship,” *Contending For The Faith*, December 1998, p. 6-7.

1999

“The Holy Spirit, through the pen of Paul, defines spiritual service. In view of the mercies of God (John 3:16), he tells us to offer our bodies a living sacrifice, which is (now, he is about to tell us what the living sacrifice is...of what it consists... of its nature) which is spiritual service. The living sacrifice is service. Sacrifice connotes worship. The presenting our very souls to God as a sacrifice of worship. That is what it is! Paul said so.”

“Holy and Unholy,” *Firm Foundation*, February 1999, p. 4.

Important New Tract:

## If All The Christian Life Is Worship: What Then?

Gary L. Grizzell

This new tract is one that is greatly needed at the present time. Buster Dobbs began advocating the false doctrine that except for sin all of a Christian’s life is worship. He presented this doctrine under the idea that there are different levels of worship (sounds a lot like levels of fellowship, or Big F and little f fellowship). This tract answers the questions brother Dobbs has presented and sufficiently answers the question as to the all of life is worship heresy. I encourage all to get and read it. You may order from the author at: 2128 Crystal Ct., Cookeville, TN 38501, or phone: 931-432-6984.

1 + 1 = 2

*Steve Gunter*

The hostile forces of modernism which seek the total destruction of faith in God throughout the earth, His creation, often chastise and charge the church with intellectual inferiority. Science, they say, in contrast provides precise “operational definitions” which, indeed, give the **illusion** of infallibility to the naive and unlearned. Scripture, however, rightly foresaw this and warns every Christian to watch out for the “oppositions of science falsely so called” (1 Tim. 6:20).

After all, the Word of God contains truly infallible “operational definitions,” for example, “God is love” (1 John 4:16). Atheists claim “literary” definitions are open to “multiple meanings” and hence unreliable. The apostle Peter said along that line: “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).

Paul wrote in thanks to the Thessalonians “because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually

worketh also in you that believe” (1 The. 2:13). Likewise he said to the Corinthian Christians: “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor. 2:13).

Human knowledge rarely holds up over the passing years of time. New encyclopedias, new textbooks, and such like appear without fail. The scientific humanists of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century dreamed of a human book having within it all the truth. Diderot, their leader, called it *The Encyclopedia* (encyclo=all, paedia=knowledge or learning). The humanist effort utterly failed.

Compare that experience to the history of revelation. The Bible remains right in its biographical, geographical, historical, and its scientific statements. Open the New Testament and obey the operational definitions of God that bring forth a soul redeemed from sin by the blood of the Lamb for sinners slain.

1 and 1 **is** 2. “He that believeth **and is** baptized **shall be** saved” (Mark 16:16).

1202 Royal Drive; Bentonville, AR 72712

# “Worldliness”

June 12 - 16, 1999

## Saturday, June 12

7:00 PM Denying Ungodliness And Worldly Lusts  
Noah Hackworth

8:00 PM Living Soberly, Righteously, And Godly John Moore

## Sunday, June 13

9:00 AM Causes Of Worldliness Clifford Newell

10:00 AM Examining One's Life Tommy Hicks

11:00 AM *Lunch Break*

2:00 PM Materialism Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

3:00 PM Wastefulness Eddie Whitten

4:00 PM Humanism Daniel Denham

5:00 PM *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM Immodest Apparel David Baker

8:00 PM Alcohol, Tobacco, And Drug Use Danny Box

## Monday, June 14

9:00 AM Homosexuality Kent Bailey

10:00 AM Purity Of Mind, Life, Speech David Brown

11:00 AM Pride Joel Wheeler

12:00 PM *Lunch Break*

1:30 PM Covetousness Wesley Simons

2:30 PM Envy Flavil Nichols

3:15 PM Open Forum Garland Elkins

4:00 PM *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM Gambling Garland Elkins

8:00 PM Lying And Corrupt Communication Bobby Liddell

## Tuesday, June 15

9:00 AM Dancing Roger Jackson

10:00 AM Purity Of Mind, Life, Speech David Brown

11:00 AM Backbiters And Gossips David Hester

12:00 PM *Lunch Break*

1:30 PM Pornography Gene Burgett

2:30 PM Hedonism B. J. Clarke

3:15 PM Open Forum Dub McClish

4:00 PM *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM Denominationalism Dub McClish

8:00 PM The Media Jerry Murrell

## Wednesday, June 16

9:00 AM Abortion And Euthanasia Tim Smith

10:00 AM Purity Of Mind, Life, Speech David Brown

11:00 AM Anger, Hatred, And Malice Marvin Weir

12:00 PM *Lunch Break*

1:30 PM Stealing Guss Eoff

2:30 PM Fornication And Adultery Curtis Cates

3:15 PM Open Forum Curtis Cates

4:00 PM *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM Disobedience To Parents Jesse Whitlock

8:00 PM Consequences Of Worldliness Ronnie Hayes

## Bellview Lectures Information

### HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a “first come, first served” basis (call our office at: 850/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Sauffley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following motel is available nearby and is providing a *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway) offers the following price (tax not included) \$45—1 to 4 people per room; a restaurant is located in the motel. Their phone number is 850/453-3333. When checking into the above motel, show them this brochure announcing this special rate, or when calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are attending the *Bellview Lectures*.

### MEALS

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

### EXHIBITS

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

### AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

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

### BOOKS

The lectureship book, *Worldiness* will be available to those attending the *Bellview Lectures* at a reduced rate. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price prior to June 30, 1999, or afterwards at the regular price. It will contain thirty chapters and approximately 450 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

### TRANSPORTATION

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

# THE DESTRUCTIVE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

*William M. Hurley*

In our society today the roll of religion has been drastically changed. Too often in assemblies across our land we are offered a watered down facsimile of what the Bible actually teaches. Many preachers have fallen victim to the thought that Sunday sermons should always encourage and soothe the conscience of the audience. Never saying anything from the pulpit that would offend or startle anyone who is comfortable in the ways of the world. Above all, many preachers would insist, that a large crowd of worshippers must signify success. This type of thinking is even true among some churches of Christ. But many of the teachings of the Bible are destructive in nature! Let us notice some things the Bible can destroy.

**The Bible Destroys Unhappy Homes.** The only way to loosen Satan's grip on many homes today is to be reminded what the Bible tells us concerning the home. First, let us all take note that God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16). If more marriages were founded upon the foundation that divorce is not an option, think how many homes could have been saved from the divorce court. Second, the husband must be the head of the house (Eph. 5:23), taking responsibility to lead and enforce God's will for his household. The children of our society also need to be taught the value of honoring mother and father and obeying their parents (Eph. 6:4). I know these are Bible teachings that are unpopular and unfashionable in many circles but a Bible preacher will still preach on such things.

**The Bible Destroys False Doctrine.** Satan's greatest tool is found in the religious divisions among those who wish to follow Christ. But a Bible preacher will still preach the value of leaving the religious traditions of man (Mat. 15:9) and going back to the Bible for all we say and do. Let us return to the church we find in

the Bible when followers of Jesus were known only as "Christians" (Acts 11:26). Let us worship as Scripture gives us authority by taking the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7), singing (Eph. 5:19), giving financially (1 Cor. 16:1-2), praying (Jam. 5:16), and having Bible preaching (2 Tim. 4:2). Let the church be organized as God would have it (1 Tim. 3:1-13) with bishops, deacons, and saints (Phi. 1:1). Let the church wear the name the Bible gives for it (Rom. 16:16). Again, unpopular teachings but much needed in a world of religious division.

**The Bible Destroys Sin.** I ask you honestly how long has it been since you have heard a sermon on the subject of sin? Too many preachers today are afraid to speak out about such things as they might have to move or take a cut in salary. But a Bible preacher knows that sin is dangerous and deadly. All have sinned (Rom. 3:23), and sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2). Only by the sacrifice of Christ and our obedience to His gospel can we break the shackles of sin and spiritual death and be made free (John 8:31-32). We obey the gospel by belief in Jesus as the Christ (John 8:24), repenting of our sins (Acts 17:30), confessing Him with our lips (Rom. 10:9-10), being baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38), and living a faithful life until death (Rev. 2:10). Think about it.

*1401 Eden Drive; Longview, TX 75605*

New Book:

***Return To The Old Paths***

V. Glenn McCoy

It is a "reader friendly" history of the restoration movement written by a conservative. It is a hardback book of 359 pages. Cost is \$7.00 plus postage and handling. It can be ordered from the author at: 22470 Mission Hills Lane, Yorba Linda, CA 92887.

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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

# Defender



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

Volume XXVIII

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Web Site: <http://members.tripod.com/bellviewcoc>

## THE VOICE OF ASSURANCE

*Gary W. Summers*

When little Billy was just a boy, he occasionally got in trouble, as little boys often do. But his mother always managed to find a way to keep him from being punished. “Don’t worry, Billy. I know it wasn’t your fault. You didn’t know what you were doing. I’m sure there is a way out of this situation. Just trust me.” His playmates were kept in after school at times because of their misdeeds, but somehow Billy’s mother was able to keep his father or school officials or anyone else from disciplining little Billy.

When Bill was a teenager, he fathered a child, but in those days no one had heard of DNA tests; so he refused to take responsibility for his lasciviousness. He regretted that a baby had resulted from his uncontrolled passions, but that was not his problem, he reasoned. He asked his friends to spread the rumor that his former girlfriend had been promiscuous and that the child could have been anybody’s. They assured him that they would help him out of this jam, which they proceeded to do. The charge was not true, of course, but he discovered that lying was helpful at times.

When Bill tried gambling, he found quickly that it was not one of his strengths. He owed \$1,000 and had no one he could ask to borrow such a sum. He and a co-employee hatched a plan to say they were robbed of their evening receipts at their place of employment. They were very clever about it, too. Most of their answers about the phantom robbers matched, but some questions one answered while the other did not know, and vice versa. No one caught on; Bill paid his gambling debts and left that form of *entertainment* for good.

Bill got married, but it did not last. In two years

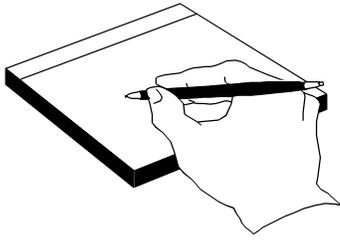
they both decided it had been a mistake, although both were in their mid-twenties at the time of marriage. They parted as friends (for the most part) and assured one another that it was the best thing to do under the circumstances. Three years later Bill married again. He never mentioned his former marriage and insinuated he had always been single.

When his new *wife* insisted that they begin worshipping somewhere, they selected a church of Christ that met near where they lived. In time they were visited and studied with. She was ready to obey the gospel; Bill was baptized, but only for appearance’s sake. He had lied about so much in his young life that one more deception seemed harmless to him. They had been asked if this was their first marriage, and Bill’s innocent wife assured them it was. Bill remained silent.

After 15 years and three children, someone from his past came to visit the family and asked about Bill’s first wife. Bill answered that his first wife had been unfaithful to him and hurriedly changed the subject. (Of course it was a lie, but by now he knew what the Bible taught, although he did not necessarily believe it. He also knew that according to its teachings, he was not entitled to be married, and he was not about to give up his wife and family just because of some technicality.) The wife was distraught about being deceived and talked to the preacher and his wife. They agreed with her that it was disappointing and painful for her to have been deceived, but as long as he had been free to marry, everything was all right, biblically speaking (Mat. 19:3-9).

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## “Be Not Deceived”

We find the above phrase five times in the King James Version of the Bible. While these five occurrences are in different locations, there is a common theme running through them. Let us consider these five occurrences.

Moses writes, “Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them” (Deu. 11:16). Throughout this chapter Moses is encouraging the Israelites to keep God’s commands. As they keep those commands they will receive the blessings of God. However, Moses gives them a warning if they turn from God’s commands to worship and serve (notice both are used showing there is a difference in worship and service) idols, then they will receive God’s wrath. “And *then* the LORD’S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and *lest* ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you” (Deu. 11:17). While stated specifically for the Israelites and relating to their possession of Canaan, the principles are valid even today. As we worship and serve Jehovah, He will bless us; if we turn from Him, we no longer will receive those blessings of God.

The next occurrence is a statement of warning given by Jesus to His apostles. “And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them” (Luke 21:8). They had been discussing the temple in Jerusalem and Jesus informed them that “*As for* these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Luke 21:6). They naturally ask Jesus when these things would come to pass. Jesus proceeds to give

them the signs which would precede His coming to destroy Jerusalem. He tells them that there would be individuals claiming to be Christ. He warns them not to go after these false Christs for if they do they will likewise perish. We have many false teachers today (even infiltrating the Lord’s church) who deceive many. If we follow after these teachers of error, then we will be destroyed in the last day by the Judge of all the earth.

After warning Christians not to go to law against other Christians, Paul makes a general statement concerning those who will not enter into life eternal. Those who live unrighteous lives will not go to heaven but will be lost. He then deals with specific actions and again states that those who do such things will not inherit heaven’s home. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-10). We should never deceive ourselves into thinking that we can do sinful acts and receive a home with God in heaven.

Later in this same book Paul establishes the bodily resurrection. There were some in Corinth who were denying that there would be a resurrection of the body. Paul appeals to the gospel (the death, burial, and resurrection) of Christ as proof that we will be raised. He also shows the consequences of the doctrine of no bodily resurrection from the dead. In the midst of this chapter he states, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33). The ASV translates it this way: “Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals.” Paul knew the importance of withdrawing oneself from false teachers because their influence will corrupt us. If the Corinthians continued with (continued in fellowship) those who were teaching there is no bodily resurrection, then the Corinthians would soon end up in that false doctrinal position. The false teachers companionship would end up corrupting the good lifestyle and doctrine of the Corinthians.

The last time we find this phrase is in Paul’s letter to the Galatians. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). Paul gives us the general principle of sowing and reaping. However a person lives his life, that is what he will receive. He elaborates by stating: “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life

everlasting” (Gal. 6:8). This is the culmination of our study: if a person hearkens to false teachers and teaching and lives according to error within his life, or if a person lives an immoral life, then he will reap everlasting destruction. This is a great warning to us to be careful of the doctrine we hear and accept. “And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given” (Mark 4:24). Then we must be careful how we live. Error, false doctrine, and immoral living will have its effect upon us. *MH*

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(Continued from Page 1)

But she was unwilling to let the matter lie. He had deceived her once; had he deceived her twice? She pressed him for details and eventually located Bill’s first wife. She made no assumptions but casually asked why they had divorced. “Well, we were young when we married, didn’t really know one another very well, and just decided that it wouldn’t work out.” “Uh,” Bill’s wife paused, “I don’t know exactly how to ask this without sounding nosy or insensitive, but were either of you involved in an extramarital affair before the divorce?” Her heart sank when the reply came, “Oh, no. It was nothing like that. We were involved before we got married, but while married, there was no outside hanky-panky going on. In fact, that was the best thing about our marriage. No, we separated because we were incompatible in just about every other way.”

When Bill’s wife confronted him with these facts, he admitted the truth. She cried for several days because of his betrayal, because of their current situation, because the lack of a solution, and because of their innocent children. Their youngest was ten; would he understand the situation? She insisted they talk to the preacher and the elders of the congregation they attended, and all of them confirmed her fears—that she and Bill did not have a right to be married. Bill did not care what they thought, but she was torn between the Truth and her family situation.

Meanwhile, Bill had been doing some checking around and had discovered that there was another “church of Christ” nearby that had made the public statement: “We will accept anyone as members—regardless of their past marital history.” What a perfect solution! When he shared this news with his wife, he could not understand her lack of enthusiasm. “Their policy doesn’t change the Scriptures,” she said. “Let’s just talk with them,” he prodded. “What can it hurt to get a second opinion? If there’s any way to keep our

family together, don’t we owe it to ourselves just to listen?”

Bill’s wife knew that what she was hearing at that meeting was baloney, but desperate people can sometimes be persuaded against their wills. She relented, and they moved their membership to this new “church.” After all, the elders and the preacher had assured them that their marriage was valid since they were not Christians at the time of their “marriage.” In every other respect they were a conservative congregation.

Over the next ten years, however, various other doctrines were introduced. Grace and love were greatly emphasized while sin was scarcely ever mentioned. Obedience to God was equated with legalism, and no one’s self-esteem was bruised, let alone damaged. The worship began to change with quartets leading the singing; hand clapping became popular, and instruments of music were being used in meetings outside the assembly. Women were made deaconesses.

Theistic evolution was taught, and hell was never mentioned (if, in fact, anyone still believed in it). The group began to fellowship denominations, and baptism for the remission of sins was rarely mentioned (and not really regarded as essential any longer). Bill’s wife knew all these things were wrong, but she could not speak out because of her own unlawful marriage. She had made excuses to friends, even sometimes parroting the drivel she usually heard about not *judging* others.

Finally, she could stand it no longer. She protested to Bill, but he just told her that hundreds of people could not be wrong and that that small group they once attended was just a bunch of unloving exclusivists. She could tolerate the situation no longer. Her children had all left home; she did, too. She realized she had deceived herself for the sake of the family; she hoped she had not ruined her influence. She returned to the little congregation and repented sincerely for her unscriptural marriage and fellowshiping with an unscriptural church.

Bill was assured by the liberal congregation that he could divorce his wife of 25 years (since she had deserted him) and remarry, which he promptly did. He remained in full fellowship and continued to meet with that group until his death.

On the day of judgment there was no one to reassure Bill that everything would be all right. His mother, who had always fixed things for him, was herself lost; she could not help him now. His friends who rescued him from his responsibilities earlier in life could not get him out of this jam; they too stood condemned.

The shepherds of the large congregation were not there to comfort him; they were charged with dereliction of duty, not feeding the flock good food, and allowing wolves to destroy people's souls. They could not offer their reassurances to Bill now. The preacher had been condemned by Jesus as a false teacher and was consigned to one of the hotter regions of hell for his purposefully leading people astray and taking Satan's part.

Bill saw his *wife* of 25 years and the elders who had spoken the truth to him. They were being rewarded with crowns of life. But they could not help Bill now. For

once, he had to live with his decisions (or perhaps we should say **die** with them).

Amidst the fire Bill saw his mother and said, "Look what your love has wrought." "Be quiet, you ungrateful child," she screamed in her misery. He saw one of the elders in torment, and said, "Where are your assurances now?" "Go away," he moaned. "We told you what you wanted to hear. You got what you wanted on earth. Now reap the reward you deserve." Bill was finally held responsible for his actions with one eternal thought: "Having my own way was not worth it!"

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## APRIL FOOL!!!

*Jess Whitlock*

I watched a TV documentary this past Tuesday evening (April 1st) called, *Mysteries of the Man in the Shroud* (i.e., the shroud of Turin). The documentary was certainly slanted to indicate belief that the "man" of the shroud was Christ and that this was the burial cloth. I cannot help but wonder if it was just coincidence that this "special" aired on April Fool's day?

Dr. Walter C. McCrone of Chicago, a microscopist with a worldwide reputation, has already declared the shroud of Turin to be a hoax! Dr. McCrone was a member of the Shroud of Turin Research Project. He is quoted as saying, "They actually gave me the samples [from the shroud—JLW] that I was looking at. But then I started getting results that they didn't like and from that point on, our paths started to separate." His careful examination revealed no blood! It did reveal a "great deal of red iron earth and vermilion paint pigment," so with over 50 years experience he concluded that the image was "painted by an artist."

Oxford University did radiocarbon dating tests on samples from the shroud. I know that such dating is not conclusive in all areas, but the tests done in the 1980s gave an approximate date of A.D. 1350. It is highly unlikely that such tests were 1300 years off target!

When the television documentary was about over the narrator stated: "Science will not settle the mystery of the man of the shroud..." That's right—but the Bible will.

Without the scientists, microscopists, lab technicians, etc., we can easily see whether or not the shroud of Turin was the actual burial cloth for Christ our Lord. Christ Himself stated in John 5:39, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they

are they which testify of me." The Scriptures remain as the final authority—therefore, what saith the Scriptures?

Bear in mind that the shroud of Turin is one piece of linen cloth measuring 14.25 feet long and 3.58 feet wide. At an undetermined date a matching strip of linen 3.5 inches wide was attached alone one of the long sides of the cloth. (Information available in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1984 beginning on p. 30.)

Let your fingers do the walkin' and let the Bible do the talkin.' In Matthew 27:59, "And when Joseph had taken the body, he **wrapped** it in a clean linen **cloth**." In Mark's accounts 15:46, "and **wrapped** him in the linen." Luke 23:53 reads, "and **wrapped** it [the body of Christ—JLW] in linen." And, John's record, 19:40, "Then took they [Joseph and Nicodemus—JLW] the body of Jesus, and **wound** it in linen **clothes** with the spices." Now, did they **wrap**, **wind**, or **bind** the body of Christ? The answer is they did it all "as the manner of the Jews is to bury" (John 19:40). To deny this is to deny the Word of God in the matter. John's account mentioned the plural "clothes" or "cloths" in the ASV of 1901. Obviously the work was not done in one piece of cloth, such as the shroud of Turin is! It all boils down to whether we believe God or the words of men who have made hoaxes their livelihood for multiplied centuries!

In his book, *A History of Christianity*, Mr. Paul Johnson tells of same claims made through the centuries that purport to be authentic, showing how gullible some people can be. We will just have room for a small sample:

Gregory IX, who became Pope in 1227, produced the relics of the guardians of the papal city: the heads of

the apostles Peter and Paul, which were carried in solemn procession through Rome...Although Peter was supposed to be buried beneath the high altar of St. Peter...his head, together with saint Paul's, encased in magnificent reliquaries, were kept...along with the Ark of the Covenant, the Tablets of Moses, the Rod of Aaron, an urn of manna, the Virgin's tunic, John the Baptist's hair shirt, the five loaves and two fishes from the feeding of the 5,000 and the dining table used at the Last Supper.

The shroud of Turin seems to pale into insignificance in comparison to some "discoveries" through the centuries. The late brother J. T. Marlin, who made as many trips to the Bible lands as any man I know, once

told me that he figured if you could gather up all the chips and pieces of wood that were said to have come from the cross that bore the body of Christ you would probably have enough wood to build an ark but he chuckled, none of it would be gopher wood! We have read of claims to have the shoes of Christ, His swaddling clothes, the blood and water that came from His side, etc. But, Barnum and Bailey told us there was one born every minute! To those caught up in the documentary of the man in the shroud of Turin, let me say, April Fool!

*809 East Pershing Drive; Ardmore, OK 73401*

## THE GOD THAT MADE THE WORLD

*Noah A. Hackworth*

In Acts 17:24-26, a brilliant address is made in Athens, Greece, to the Athenian philosophers. "Into the university city of the world sometime in August, A.D. 51, there came a man walking on foot, about fifty years of age, a Jew, who had probably never been heard of in this center of intellectual preeminence, by the name of Paul." (Wilbur Smith, *Therefore Stand* {Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1945}, p. 246.) To the idolaters of ancient Athens, he declared, "and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26). This passage powerfully affirms: (1) God is the Creator of all men, and (2) all men have descended from the same ancestor. Since God is the Creator of us all (Red, Yellow, Black, and White), we all ought to stop insisting on our private piece of America. After all, the human race has more in common than it thinks. Albert Barnes remarked:

All the families of men are descended from one origin or stock. However different their complexion, features, or language, yet they are derived from a common stock. The word blood is often used to denote race, stock, kindred. This passage affirms that all the human family are descended from the same ancestor; and that, consequently, all the variety of complexion, &c., is to be traced to some other cause than that they were originally different races created. See Gen. i.; comp. Mal. 2:10. The design of the apostle in this affirmation was, probably, to convince the Greeks that he regarded them all as brethren; and that, although he was a Jew, yet he was not enslaved to any narrow notions or prejudices in reference to other men, It follows also from this, that no one nation, and no individual, can claim any pre-eminence over others in virtue of birth

or blood. All are in this respect equal; and the whole human family, however they may differ in complexion, customs, and laws, are to be regarded as brethren. It follows, also, that no one part of the race has a right to enslave or oppress any other part, on account of difference of complexion. (Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes on the New Testament* {Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1962}, p. 485.)

According to The Public Broadcasting Service, discoveries of linguists in Russia and America have shown that all languages could have come from a single, ancient source, just as the Bible says it did (*US News and World Report*, November 5, 1990). Stanford geneticist Luigi Cavalli-Sforza supports the "likelihood that all languages were originally unified." At any rate, in the Athenian address, Paul makes the following points with reference to God. (1) He made the world and all things therein. (2) He is Lord of heaven and earth. (3) He dwelleth not in temples made with hands. (4) He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. (5) He made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation. (6) He should be sought after, felt after, and found. (7) He is not far from each one of us. (8) He is the One in Whom we live, and move, and have our being. (9) He is our Father and we are His offspring. (10) He once overlooked ignorance. (11) He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent. (12) He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man Whom He hath ordained. (13) He has given assurance whereof He has raised Him from the dead.

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# “Worldliness”

June 12 - 16, 1999

## Saturday, June 12

7:00 PM Denying Ungodliness And Worldly Lust  
Noah Hackworth

8:00 PM Living Soberly, Righteously, And Godly John Moore

## Sunday, June 13

9:00 AM Causes Of Worldliness Clifford Newell

10:00 AM Examining One's Life Tommy Hicks

11:00 AM *Lunch Break*

2:00 PM Materialism Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

3:00 PM Wastefulness Eddie Whitten

4:00 PM Humanism Daniel Denham

5:00 PM *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM Immodest Apparel David Baker

8:00 PM Alcoholism, Smoking, And Drug Use Danny Box

## Monday, June 14

9:00 AM Homosexuality Kent Bailey

10:00 AM Purity Of Mind, Life, Speech David Brown

11:00 AM Pride Joel Wheeler

12:00 PM *Lunch Break*

1:30 PM Covetousness Wesley Simons

2:30 PM Envy Flavil Nichols

3:15 PM Open Forum Garland Elkins

4:00 PM *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM Gambling Garland Elkins

8:00 PM Lying And Corrupt Communication Bobby Liddell

## Tuesday, June 15

9:00 AM Dancing Roger Jackson

10:00 AM Purity Of Mind, Life, Speech David Brown

11:00 AM Backbiters And Gossips David Hester

12:00 PM *Lunch Break*

1:30 PM Pornography Stanley Ryan

2:30 PM Hedonism B. J. Clarke

3:15 PM Open Forum Dub McClish

4:00 PM *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM Denominationalism Dub McClish

8:00 PM The Media Jerry Murrell

## Wednesday, June 16

9:00 AM Abortion And Euthanasia Tim Smith

10:00 AM Purity Of Mind, Life, Speech David Brown

11:00 AM Anger, Hatred, And Malice Marvin Weir

12:00 PM *Lunch Break*

1:30 PM Stealing Guss Eoff

2:30 PM Fornication And Adultery Curtis Cates

3:15 PM Open Forum Curtis Cates

4:00 PM *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM Disobedience To Parents Jesse Whitlock

8:00 PM Consequences Of Worldliness Ronnie Hayes

## Bellview Lectures Information

### HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a “first come, first served” basis (call our office at: 850/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following motel is available nearby and is providing a *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway) offers the following price (tax not included) \$45—1 to 4 people per room; a restaurant is located in the motel. Their phone number is 850/453-3333. When checking into the above motel, show them this brochure announcing this special rate, or when calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are attending the *Bellview Lectures*.

### MEALS

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

### EXHIBITS

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

### AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

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

### BOOKS

The lectureship book, *Worldliness* will be available to those attending the *Bellview Lectures* at a reduced rate. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price prior to June 30, 1999, or afterwards at the regular price. It will contain thirty chapters and approximately 450 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

### TRANSPORTATION

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

# “I WANT TO SEE GOD”

*Tracy Dugger*

Realizing that God is the only true and living God and that He is the Almighty Creator of this vast universe, and yet not so removed from *us* who are of one of many billions of His creatures, it would only be natural to want to *see* Him! Moses revealed this desire when he humbly requested of God, “And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory” (Exo. 33:18). This is not permitted as Jesus Himself made known, “And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape” (John 5:37). Even Moses quickly learned of the impossibility of that request. God stated to him, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, **Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live**” (Exo. 33:19-20).

Mortal men cannot see God and live! However, the faithful servant Moses, was permitted a glimpse of God’s backside (the fullness of meaning in which I am unable to understand). It would seem Moses was allowed a fuller view of God than any other man; with the exception of One who was no ordinary man.

To find oneself in the presence of God would truly be a humbling and overwhelming experience to say the least. The Bible gives us a glimpse of what that experience would be like:

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of

him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged (Isa. 6:1-7).

Although such would be an awesome and fearful event there still remains in us a natural desire to see God. This desire surely arises from our curiosity as well as from our God-seeking side (Acts 17:26-28). Again, we are not now permitted to see God. However, the Bible’s picture of heaven allows us a **glimpse**—a partial portraiture (Rev. 7; 14; 21; 22). Nevertheless, what are we to do until then? Look at Jesus Christ! We are able to see God by looking at Him. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*” (John 1:18). “Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father” (John 6:48). “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?” (John 14:9). The only way to see Jesus is through New Testament eyes: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full” (1 John 1:3-4).

Yes, I want to see God. In a real sense, to see Jesus is to see the Father. But, even in a fuller sense (the fullest), to be with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit and thus to see God we must first see Them through the eyes of Jesus in the New Testament!

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

**Write For Your  
Free Bible Correspondence  
Course  
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# Defender



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

Volume XXVIII

June 1999

Number 6

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## THE GOSPEL, THE SPIRIT'S SWORD

*Curtis A. Cates*

**Man must not allow himself to depreciate the power of God's Word or limit God's power.** Some err in this very way by taking the position that God's Word cannot save, cannot strengthen, cannot adequately lead man. They believe that he must receive a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, whether speaking directly to the person, or converting him miraculously through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or comforting and sealing the individual in a direct way in his heart. Such denigrates the Word of God. The Word of God has such power that it framed the universe (Heb. 11:3), making everything which has not/cannot create a single thing (John 1:1-3). God's Word also raised Christ from the dead (Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:15). So likewise shall He raise us up through His Word (John 5:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:50-57; 1 The. 4:16). The Word is the instrument used by the Holy Spirit, His sword (Eph. 6:17).

### **Notice the Power of God's Written Word**

First, **the Word has the power to produce faith.** “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). One cannot call upon the Lord (in obedience) and be saved without first possessing faith (Rom. 10:14; Heb. 11:6). Faith is not a leap in the dark; it is founded upon the inspired testimony of the inspired Book (2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 17:20-22).

Second, **the Word has the power to turn men to the truth, to change lives.** Paul was sent to the Gentiles preaching the doctrine of Christ to: “open their eyes [spiritual eyes], and to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts

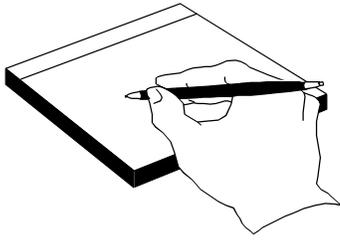
26:17-18). The love and mercy of God decreed that man should not have to grope in darkness. He provided a way of escape, into the marvelous light of the kingdom. The Word declares how one can enter into spiritual light (“God is light”) and have fellowship with other Christians and with God (1 John 1:1-7). What gives this light? “Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Psa. 119:130).

Third, **the Word has the power to convert the soul.** “The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple” (Psa. 19:7). The doctrines of men have the power to convert no one. Peter charged those in the temple: “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” (Acts 3:19). What marvelous power the Word has upon the minds of humble persons, who are “poor in spirit” (Mat. 5:3); “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” How marvelous is the chain reaction (additional conversions) which often takes place when one responds to the loving invitation of the Saviour (Mat. 11:28-30)!

Four, **the Word has the power to save lost souls.** Though men have invented many terrifying, awesome weapons of war, all of them set off at one time could not save a single soul. The total wisdom of this world compacted together, the *learning* of all the modern *theologians*, cannot meet the spiritual needs of one sinner. The gospel is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16;

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



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Hatcher**

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## God Is Not Mocked

Paul uses a well known and recognized principle of sowing and reaping regarding our lives when he writes, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal. 6:7-8). *Mock* means “to turn up the nose at, sneer at” and thus, “to deride or treat with contempt.” We are able to mock man and what man says; Paul says informs us that we should not try to deceive ourselves into thinking that we can mock God and His Word. Let us consider some ways in which God is not mocked.

### SALVATION

God is not mocked regarding our salvation. The denominational world has for years taught differing doctrines of man’s salvation from sin. Some teach the doctrine of salvation by grace alone. There are no verses in the Bible which teach salvation by grace only or alone. This doctrine comes from the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination and the total depravity of man. They teach that God predetermined to save certain people before the creation and to damn all others. Man is totally evil and sinful with absolutely no ability to do anything pleasing to God. Since man can do nothing, God must in some way overwhelm man which is God’s saving grace. They will appeal to Paul’s statement to the Ephesians: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). Paul informed Titus: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Tit. 2:11). Since God’s saving grace has appeared to **all men** and if man is saved by grace alone, then the inescapable conclusion is that all men will be saved. Yet, Jesus taught that most men will be lost (Mat. 7:13-14).

Therefore, we all know that we are not saved by grace alone. Man must obey the gospel to be saved by the grace of God. We are called into Christ’s grace. Paul wrote, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel” (Gal. 1:6). We are called by the gospel: “Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 The. 2:14). We must obey a form of the gospel to be freed from our sins: “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17-18). God will not be mocked by those who teach that we will be saved by grace alone. Sadly, some of our liberal brethren are also trying to mock God with such teaching.

Some teach that man will be saved by faith alone or only. They will appeal to the multitude of Scriptures which teach that we are saved by faith. For example: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43). “And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:30-31). However, as noted previously, obedience is also necessary (Rom. 6:17-18). “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). The Scriptures show that faith is not obedience when Jesus spoke of individuals who believed in Him as Lord but they did not obey. “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. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Mat. 7:21-23). Therefore we know that man is not saved by faith only and that obedience to the gospel is also necessary. Those who teach the doctrine of salvation by faith only are trying to mock God, but “be not deceived; God is not mocked.”

## ACTIONS

This is obviously the context of the statement by Paul in Galatians. He emphasizes that we will reap according to what we sow. He then encourages us to continue doing good. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:9-10). All men will be judged by the works they do in this life. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). "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). "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" (Rev. 20:12). Paul tells the Galatians that if they wish to inherit eternal life they must sow to the Spirit. They are to add the fruit of the Spirit to their lives. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22-25). It also demands that we not sow to the flesh. Paul tells us: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

While man can sneer at other men, mocking them; God will not be mocked. Those who teach and believe false doctrines will meet God in judgment and they will receive the eternal reward of their teaching—eternal damnation. If we live contrary to God's revealed way, we will appear before God's judgment seat and reap the harvest of our lives—eternal damnation. Make sure that you sow to the Spirit and not to the flesh because God will not be mocked. MH

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(Continued from Page 1)

Heb. 4:12; John 8:32; 1 Cor. 1:21; John 15:2; Jam.

1:21; John 17:17; Acts 11:13-14). Through obedience to the truth, one's sins are remitted, that is, counted as though they had never been (Acts 2:38).

Five, **the Word has the power to make a person a new creature.** "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). He is then a child of God (Gal. 3:26-29), an heir of the promise of Abraham. He is a spiritual Jew, a part of the Israel of God (Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 6:16). Having died to the love and practice of sin, he is a servant of Christ (Rom. 6:1-4, 13, 16). He is no longer "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance" (Eph. 4:18), but now has "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

Six, **the Word has the power to beget and produce spiritual birth into the spiritual kingdom, the church.** The Holy Spirit does not directly beget a person but works only through the Word. "For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:22-23). This, if acted upon scripturally, produces the new birth, born of water (baptism) and the Spirit (being led by the Word) into the kingdom (John 3:3, 5). Becoming a Christian is a spiritual *birth*, not a *joining* of some man-made church. The Holy Spirit never acts directly upon the heart of man in conviction, conversion, sanctification, or edification. He works only through the Word (Luke 8:11; Eph. 6:17).

Seven, **the Word of God has the power to bring blessed assurance of salvation.** When the Ethiopian nobleman was immersed for remission of sins, born again, he "went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39). The knowledge of the Word is that "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:3-4). The Word causes the heart to rejoice (Psa. 19:8) and enables us to be "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:1-2, 37). With what "things that *pertain* unto life and godliness" has the knowledge of the Word not supplied us (2 Pet. 1:3)? What things does the Word lack in order to make "the man of God...perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17)? And, the Lord is with us (Mat. 28:20).

Eight, **the Word of God has the power to strengthen the Christian.** What need do we have for some direct operation of the Spirit, some direct leading, some direct illumination when the Word is fully adequate? To the elders at Ephesus Paul gave assurance, “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). Through the Word, we are able to triumph (2 Cor. 2:14); we are strengthened (Phi. 4:13); we are able to distinguish between truth and error (Phi. 1:7-11); we are able to pull down Satan’s strongholds (2 Cor. 10:4); we are able to try the spirits (teachers) (1 John 4:1); we are able to discern whether what is taught is the truth (Acts 17:11); we are able to grow spiritually (1 Pet. 2:2); we are able to overcome sin (Psa. 119:104).

Nine, **the Word of God has the power to judge us in the last day.** The Lord stated, “the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48; 2 The. 1:6-9; Rev. 20:12; Rom. 2:16). What response, in view of the fact that “all these things shall be dissolved,” must I have toward the powerful Word of God (2 Pet. 3:11-18)?

#### **How Must We Respond to the Gospel?**

The gospel has as its purpose the **salvation of the lost.** The fact that it is so powerful points out that man’s greatest need is the salvation of his immortal soul (Mat. 16:24-26; Isa. 59:1-2). All accountable human beings have sinned (Rom. 3:23) and shall be lost, if they persist in sin (Rom. 6:23).

**The gospel is complete,** because it is God’s power “unto salvation.” Nothing more is needed, nothing else is authorized, and nothing less is acceptable (Gal. 1:6-9; Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19; 1 Pet. 4:11). How can one justify believing and obeying another doctrine if another doctrine cannot be preached?

Since everyone is lost, the **gospel is for all** (Heb. 2:9; John 3:16; Mat. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:17). Does this not also underscore the urgency of carrying the whole message to the whole world (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16)? Indeed, the gospel meets the needs of every person, in every generation, in every place—**amazing indeed!**

Since the gospel has universal application, the **requirements to become a Christian are universal.** God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35). Dear reader, what you are required to do, every other sinner is required to do. Why then do various churches require a diversity of steps of obedience, or even no obedience at all? The Lord’s church is not a denomination, nor could it be. Since the Word is the seed of the kingdom and since seed always produces after its kind, the product is **always** the same nature as the seed. When we respect and learn that there is **only one gospel,** we will learn there is **but one church** produced by that one seed. The sectarian and denominational groups are not the one church; they were produced by doctrines of men and will be uprooted by God come judgment day (Mat. 15:13).

#### **What Must Be My Attitude Toward the Gospel?**

I must not be ashamed of it nor of the church which it produces. Since it is the only power adapted to the salvation of souls, I must believe and obey the gospel. I cannot save myself! If I harden my heart against it, I will be damned (Mark 16:15-16; 2 The. 2:10-12). I must maintain faithfulness to the truth unto death (Rev. 2:10), living a life of faith (Rom. 1:17). I must not be ungrateful for, and unresponsive to, the **great powerful** provisions which God made for **my** salvation. The power of God will enable me to receive an “abundant entrance” into heaven, if I have been faithful when I shall have “gone the last mile of the way” (2 Pet. 1:11).

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## THE MAN OF SORROWS

*Graham Cain*

The profound 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah is a bitter-sweet revelation foretelling our Savior’s sorrowful suffering as He was “delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23), to a vicarious death. It was not, in any way, an ordinary death. It was a progressive series of shameful events at the hands of willfully ignorant men who were also haughty, ungrateful, unmerciful, and sinfully wicked.

It is stated in verse 4 that He was a man of sorrows. The prophet goes on to add that He was “acquainted with grief,” that “He was despised,” that “he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,” that “he was wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities,” and that “the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:3-6). Even though “he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin” (Isa. 53:9-10). The glorious grace and mercy of Divine Love is climaxed in these wonderful words: “he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isa. 53:12).

Truly, He was a man of sorrows. This was seen throughout His life among men: “He sighed deeply in his spirit” (Mark 8:12), “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it” (Luke 19:41). “He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled” (John 11:33). In John 12:27 these sad words: “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.”

The tender, discerning, innate humanity of Jesus is outstandingly clear all through His earthly life, yet intensifies and climaxes during the final few hours in the garden and on the cross.

I have tried to capture this with its personal significance for each one of us in the following:

### **The Man of Sorrows**

The man of sorrows clothed in anguish prays in a garden all alone

His hour is soon to be upon Him for human sin He must atone

No friend was there to help or comfort as He cried “Not my will but thine”

The pain and sorrow He wore was for the sins that He bore

Oh, they were your sins—and yes, they were mine.

Then Judas came to play the traitor as with a kiss he betrayed a friend

They put Him through a trial of hatred He stood alone—none would defend

His friends forsook Him in a body not one would

stay to share this time  
The pain and sorrow He wore was for the sins that He bore

Oh, they were your sins—and yes, they were mine.

The angry mob cried “crucify him” as Pilate tried to reach their shame

“Do with him as you will” he answered “I wash my hands of any blame”

So as they placed His cross upon Him up Calvary’s hill they made Him climb

The pain and sorrow He wore was for the sins that He bore

Oh, they were your sins—and yes, they were mine.

Between two thieves they crucified Him on that sad morning long ago

And then they taunted Him and mocked Him as there He suffered long and slow

Then as He died the earth did tremble and darkness veiled this scene of crime

The pain and sorrow He wore was for the sins that He bore

Oh, they were your sins—and yes, they were mine.

Now I’m so glad I’ve learned to trust Him and to make His will mine each day

I claim Him as my Lord and Master, He gave His life my debt to pay

I want to tell the good news to others how He died to save all mankind

The pain and sorrow He wore was for the sins that He bore

Oh, they were your sins—and yes, they were mine.

“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).

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## **DARING TO DANCE WITH WOLVES**

A Review of the book *Daring to Dance with God* authored by Jeff Walling

*Barry Gilreath*

Jesus warned, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mat. 7:15). Paul reaffirmed the Lord’s prediction when he said, “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” (Acts 20:29-30). There has been no scarcity of individuals eager

to fulfill these prophetic utterances. Regardless of the time under consideration, false teachers have always abounded. This is one compelling reason why elders, preachers, and other concerned Christians must be informed regarding specific individuals and doctrines that are infiltrating the church abroad. To ignore the facts or express apathy toward individuals and erroneous doctrines that have divided brethren and caused countless thousands to fall

from God's grace is irresponsible and contrary to the Christ we claim to follow.

Jeff Walling is one such man who has proven himself to be a false teacher in our generation. This was once again made known in his most recent book entitled, *Daring to Dance with God*. The very title itself is one intended to shock and provoke interest. I recently read his book in conjunction with a class I was teaching and was frustrated, shocked, concerned, and disappointed to say the least.

In chapter one Walling sets the stage for the theme of the book where he discusses a situation that he was confronted with years earlier as a third-grade student. In a particular class he was studying folk music and learned that students would soon be square dancing as a part of the curriculum. After going home excited and telling his mother of the new experience he would get to engage in, he learned that dancing was not an acceptable activity in his household. Although he credits his parents for being great parents and teaching him of Jesus, he affirms that "there were a few areas in which their **opinions** [emphasis mine, JBG] were fixed. Dancing was one of them."

This event in Walling's early life seems to provide a basis upon which the rest of the book centers upon. He makes an exhaustive attempt to play on *dance* by associating it with the Christian walk of life. Every chapter uses dancing terminology or illusions to make points regarding a relationship with God. Chapter titles include: "Dancing on Thin Air," "Doing the Sinners Tango," "Dancing in the Dark," and "Save the Last Dance for Me," just to name a few.

One of the first Scripture references he uses is Luke 15. Jesus tells the story of the prodigal son and reveals a gracious father. Walling refers to Luke 15:25 where the older son heard music and dancing in his father's house, and then he asserts the following: "God is inviting us to come and dance with him! Now there's a partner to line up for....Just imagine! God invites us into intimacy with himself; he calls us into celebration of all that's good and glorious. And he asks not that we stay at arm's length; rather he pulls us in tight, taking us for the dance of a lifetime....Dancing with God is allowing him to take our breath away as he whirls us through the dark and light places that life leads us....But above all dancing with God is learning to let go" (pp. 11-43).

"*Learning to let go*" is a key thought in Walling's book and is the underlying agenda that he is attempting to push. Especially is this demonstrated in chapters eight and ten. These two chapters seem to be most revealing about Walling's intentions and his desire for changing the church. This review will primarily deal with these two chapters.

In chapter eight Walling deals with Christians whose "dancing shoes are too tight." In other words, they need to learn to let go and loosen up a little. He rightly condemns worshipping God in mere ritualistic exercises, but then lays the groundwork for one to jump to the other extreme. There is no balanced presentation of his topic. What he accuses some of doing in one extreme, his illustrations, points, and Scripture twisting would justify in the other direction. There was no emphasis on the importance of worshipping according to the pattern as set forth in Scripture. He calls upon the reader to "praise him with abandon" (p. 117). One cannot help but wonder what or who Walling wants the reader to abandon in praise.

Walling referred to some Christians as the "Gospel Gestapos, ever on patrol lest someone do or say something that's not exactly as they think it should be." He went on to write: "Driven by a fear of anything that's new and a reverence for everything that's middle-of-the-road, people with this mind-set can't be comfortable turning loose of their inhibitions and singing at the top of their lungs or raising their hands in spontaneous praise." His bizarre assertions appear to be an attempt to gain sympathy for the agenda that he and some other brethren are promoting. Personally, I have never met a single Christian who believed that it was wrong to sing out loudly in worship. But by associating singing loudly with the practice of hand raising, he seeks to cause the readers to have an unfavorable opinion of those who oppose spontaneous hand raising in worship. After all these are the same people who oppose singing out. How absurd! He concludes the chapter by continuing his theme of letting go. He lists several ways in which one might let go and then boldly writes: "Whatever form of expression you choose will probably be uncomfortable at first, but go ahead and be extravagant, outlandish, and demonstrative. Pour put perfume. If it comes from a heart filled with gratitude, the smell of your sacrifice will motivate and inspire others to let their praises ring out as well."

Chapter ten dealt with a sin that Walling referred to as "Michalepsy." Again, there is a play on words used. He began the chapter by telling of a woman who was extremely angry at her husband for something he had done. We soon learn that the woman Walling is describing was Michal, the wife of King David, and that the context of his study centered around the time when the ark had been returned to Jerusalem after being gone for some time. Walling took extreme liberty with the text in several sections in this chapter to make the story very dramatic. In doing so, this author believes he drew false conclusions that the inspired writer never intended to be drawn. The Bible records that David removed his clothing and danced

before the Lord. Michal was angry because her husband had disrobed himself in the sight of the slave girls in such a *vulgar* manner (2 Sam. 6:20). Nowhere do we find even a hint that God was pleased with David's dance. I am therefore bewildered at the interpretation and application that Walling attempts to make. In all respects his position is one of the most absurd hermeneutical conclusions that I have read in some time. According to Walling, Michal was the one in the wrong for despising her husband's vulgar public dancing. She was not focusing on what was really important—the ark being back in Jerusalem. David's angry reply, that he was dancing before the Lord and that he would become even more undignified, was according to Walling a seemingly "long overdue rebuke." He then went on to describe Michal as the first in a long line of "church police" who see it as their mission in life to insure that praising, if done at all, is done with refinement and propriety. "What Michal needed was a review of a basic principle of good dancing...her desire to regulate her husband's behavior could have been curbed if she had followed two simple rules." Those rules recommended by Walling were that she needed to keep her eyes on her own dance partner (in other words, mind her own business), and keep her eyes off others' dance with God (the dance of praise David was doing in the name of God).

Walling's twisting of the Scripture is intended to justify his conclusions regarding our own response toward other's expressions of love. In his words: "Spiritual freedom is a two-edged sword. It allows me to express my love for God in any form I choose, but it also allows others to express their love in ways I may not care for!" He concludes the chapter by affirming: "Michal's end should convince us that criticizing the praise of others is not a dance that God will join us in. The end he refers to is the fact that she did not have any more children with David. He assumes that David or God was punishing her for her protest of his 'dirty dancing.'"

After reading this chapter and reflecting upon his misinterpretation of the Scripture, I cannot help but wonder

what brother Walling would do next Sunday, if while preaching, an elder jumped up, stripped off his clothes as David and began to prance across the stage while raising his hands and singing loudly before the Lord. Based upon the justification for the assertions made throughout the whole chapter, he would be obliged to keep his eye on his own "dance partner" and keep right on preaching. To do otherwise would cause him to commit the sin of "Michalepsy."

Although Walling makes some valid points at times, I cannot recommend his book as one which will promote spiritual growth. His offensive play on words by associating the holy with the profane with allusions to God as a "dance partner," twisting of certain Scriptures, and lack of reverence for truth, proves once again that he truly is a wolf in sheep's clothing. It is also revealing to see who Walling chose to write the foreword to his book—Max Lucado who has publicly taught that one becomes a child of God by saying a simple prayer, and that one is baptized not in order to be saved, but because one is already saved. Walling in return acknowledges Lucado for his inspiration, encouragement, and letting him call him friend (p. xiii). Can you imagine the apostle Paul or any other first century writer using a false teacher to promote a gospel message and then thank him for his inspiration, encouragement, and friendship? Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). James wrote, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God" (Jam. 4:4). It is inconsistent for some to stand in opposition to Lucado and his erroneous doctrinal stances and then turn around and support and defend men like Jeff Walling who have embraced him. To do so is to truly engage in a dance. Not with God, but with wolves. *Daring to Dance with Wolves* is truly a dangerous dance of death.

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# Defender



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

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## A TIMELY LECTURESHIP—WORLDLINESS

*Joe E. Galloway*

Although His disciples must live **in** this world, Jesus made it clear that they are not to be **of** the world (John 17:14-16). Surely we need not utilize much space to prove that this world is full of problems—and problems that seem to grow worse year-after-year. Too often the world’s attitudes become the attitudes of members of the Lord’s church. So, the sins characteristic of this world become the sins of those who ought to be transformed from it, rather than being conformed to it (Rom. 12:2). Although we are not to love this world (1 John 2:15-17), worldliness is a real problem and threat to all who would please God.

Pensacola (and Florida) is looked upon by many as a place of many forms of worldliness, and certainly a place for beach activities. Yet, my wife, Barbara, and I have been going there for part of a week in June for a number of years and have not even seen the beach! Instead, we enjoy the much greater pleasure of being in the company of many of the world’s finest Christians as we enjoy one of the best Bible lectureships available anywhere!

During the week of June 12-16, we were privileged to attend the Twenty-fourth Annual Bellview Lectures. We heard all thirty lectures delivered on *Worldliness*, and also listened with interest to the three Open Forum discussions. Excellent lessons were presented on many of the specific sins we often term worldliness: gambling, dancing, pornography, immodest dress, corrupt speech, and the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Equally needed lectures were given on many of the philosophies behind these sins, such as: materialism, humanism, and hedonism. Wastefulness,

covetousness, envy, pride, hatred, and gossip were the themes of lessons right along with lessons on the sins of abortion, homosexuality, and fornication. Positive lessons such as the need for purity of mind, life, and speech were also given.

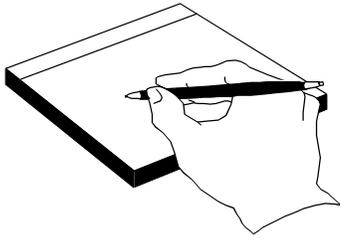
We concur with the sentiments expressed by several: that if these lessons could be taught in every congregation in the brotherhood, such would greatly help in turning many back toward God and His Word. Sadly, we also must agree with statements made by others—that many congregations would not permit such topics to be taught!

Although it is hardly possible to have this identical lectureship presented at the congregation of which you are a member, we suggest two things that can help teach these needed topics where you worship: (1) The lectures can be made available to many others through the 436-page book, through both audio and video tapes of all sessions, and through the book now also being available on computer disk. All of these are high quality productions and are available at a very reasonable cost. (2) Preachers can, themselves, preach many of these lessons at their local congregations. Elders can encourage their preachers to speak on these topics, and let the congregation know that they stand firmly behind them in this needed teaching!

Appreciation needs to be expressed to the fine Bellview church for this lectureship each year! Few of us realize both the cost and the work behind such an endeavor. So many in that congregation spend many hours to make it the success that it is each year. The

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



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## “Keep All The Commandments”

Moses encourages the children of Israel to keep all of God’s commands by saying, “Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it; And that ye may prolong *your* days in the land, which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey” (Deu. 11:8-9). After encouraging them to keep God’s commands, he gives them three reasons for keeping the commands. Before considering the three reasons Moses gives for keeping God’s commands, let us notice one thing about Moses’ exhortation.

To receive the blessings of God we must keep the commands. God has always dealt with man according to his obedience or failure to obey His commands. God gave Adam and Eve commands at the beginning of time. They were to keep and dress the garden and they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As long as they obeyed His commands they received God’s blessings, but when they violated God’s command not to eat of the tree in the midst of the garden they were punished.

As is set forth by Moses in the preceding verses the children of Israel were encouraged to keep the commands of God as proclaimed by Moses. As long as Israel remained faithful to the commands, God blessed them. For example, when God told Israel that He had given them Jericho, He gave them instructions to be able to take the city. They were to march around the city once a day for six days and the seventh day march around it seven times, blow the trumpets, make a long blast with the ram’s horn, shout a great shout, and the walls of Jericho would fall down flat. Israel obeyed these instructions and God gave them the city and they

went in and possessed Jericho.

Later in the history of Israel, during the days of the kings of the divided kingdom, Israel no longer remained faithful to God. Thus, God brought upon the Israelites a nation to punish them. The Northern Kingdom of Israel first went astray and God brought the Assyrians to take them into captivity in 722 B.C. Later the Southern Kingdom of Judah followed after her wayward sister and God brought the Babylonians in 586 B.C. to punish them.

The same principle is observed in New Testament times. Jesus promised to give those Christians in Smyrna a crown of life if they remained faithful to Him. “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). Yet, when Ananias and his wife Sapphira conspired together to lie to the Holy Spirit, “to keep back *part* of the price of the land” (Acts 5:3), they died before the Lord (Acts 5:1-11). Thus, the principle God has always worked with man is that when man obeys His commands, man will be blessed. However, when man fails to obey, man will be punished. “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Heb. 10:36).

God stated through Moses that we must keep **all** the commands not just some. Many in the world today have a cafeteria type of religion. When we go to a cafeteria we have the right to chose what we will eat and refuse to take those foods which we do not like. I might take the liver and onions but leave the green beans, while another person might not want the liver and onions but they will take the green beans. It is a situation where you can have it your way. Many have tried to transfer this approach to religion and the Bible. “I will take belief but no thank you for baptism.” This is what the denominational world has done for years. We have no right to take one command and exclude another command of God. Generally we have seen this very clearly when it comes to the plan of salvation, and some other areas of study. However, have we not done the same thing in other areas?

When someone personally sins against you, Jesus taught that you are to go to that one and tell him his sin trying to get him to repent (Mat. 18:15-20). While this passage has been misused by many it often has been ignored by everyone else. This is someone we feel uncomfortable with thus we choose not to obey God’s command concerning our responsibility.

We take the command to be baptized for the remission of our sins very seriously (and we should). However, part of the great commission is the responsibility to go and preach the gospel to every creature. While the command was originally given to the apostles, it is likewise applicable to us because Jesus told them to teach all disciples to do all that He had commanded them. That makes the command equally applicable to us. Yet, most Christians do not like trying to teach others, therefore we make excuses for our failure to obey. We know that someone who fails to obey the command to be baptized for his salvation will not be saved. How can we expect to be saved when we fail to obey Christ's command to preach the gospel to every creature?

We cannot pick and choose what commands we will obey and what commands we will neglect. If we want to receive the blessings of God, we must obey **all** of God's commands without omitting any. *MH*

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

elders: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, and Fred Stancliff not only are behind the planning of this, but are present

at the lectureship and actively assisting in many ways. Michael Hatcher, as director of the lectureship and editor of the book, spends countless hours in assuring that the materials printed are accurate, scriptural, and in an understandable form. As emcee for each session, he helps keep the lectureship going in an orderly fashion as well as making all feel welcome. The deacons function well in many capacities, including their superb work in the sound room. Many of the ladies assist in various ways such as registration and food preparation.

Lord willing, we look forward to the year 2000 lectureship! You would do well to plan to attend, too! It will most certainly be well prepared, and many topics important to our continued Christian life, hope, and responsibilities will be presented. Attendance at most sessions this year was even higher than last year's. Several came this year for their first time; many returned from last year. Why not begin, now, to make plans to be present in June 2000?

*218 Pinecrest Drive Greeneville. TN 37743*

*Editor's Note: Next years lectureship will be on the theme "Sad Statements In The Bible." We would love to have you come and be a part of this exciting lecture-series. The date will be June 10-14, 2000.*

## OUR TRIP TO THE BELLVIEW LECTURES

*Tim Smith*

Our trip to the **Bellview Lectures** was a very enjoyable experience, a time of refreshment and rest. We were able to see old friends and meet new ones, and all in a godly atmosphere. We arrived in Pensacola a little before lunch (June 14), but there were so many people in the motel that our room was not ready until after lunch, so we were unable to attend the lectures until our room was ready and we were able to dress and prepare. We missed many good sessions over the weekend, with brethren such as Noah Hackworth, John Moore, Clifford Newell, Tommy Hicks, Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Eddie Whitten, Daniel Denham, David Baker, and Danny Box preaching. We also missed the first lectures delivered on Monday, including Kent Bailey (Homosexuality), David Brown (the first installment in his series on Purity of Mind, Life, Speech), Joel Wheeler (Pride), and Wesley Simons (Covetousness). We arrived for the 2:30 P.M. lecture on Monday, and the announced speaker, Flavil Nichols, was unable to attend due to a death in the family, but Eddie Whitten filled in for him and delivered a lecture entitled "Envy." At 3:15 P.M.

Garland Elkins presided over the Open Forum, wherein questions were asked concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. The session was orderly, and though there was some disagreement between the various questioners, the attitude was godly and the demeanor was respectful. We observed the scheduled supper break at 4:00 P.M. The lectures resumed at 7:00 P.M. with brother Elkins delivering a lecture on the subject of "Gambling." He discussed the dangers and even criminal activities connected with gambling. At 8:00 P.M. Bobby Liddell addressed the subject of "Lying and Corrupt Communication" (he was against both of them!). The day was refreshing and encouraging. We were dismissed at about 9:00 P.M. and retired for the evening.

The lectures resumed at 9:00 A.M. Tuesday morning with brother Roger Jackson speaking on "Dancing." Being an adult, I suppose I would be disposed to agree with his thoughts anyway, but when both of my daughters were impressed with his presentation and the truthfulness of his arguments I knew that his approach was most effective. At 10:00 A.M. David

Brown resumed his series on "Purity of Mind, Life, Speech." At 11:00 A.M. brother David Hester addressed the subject of "Backbiters and Gossips." At 12:00 noon the lectures were dismissed for the midday meal. We gathered again at 1:30 P.M. for the afternoon session, but the schedule was amended due to an illness in the family of brother Marvin Weir. Gene Burgett was originally scheduled to address the subject of "Pornography" at this hour, but due to a conflict in his schedule Stanley Ryan was slated to fill in for him. However, Marvin Weir's father-in-law fell ill and had to have emergency surgery in Texas, thus necessitating his early departure. Stanley Ryan agreed to put his lecture off until the next day and brother Weir addressed the subject of "Anger, Hatred, and Malice." At 2:30 P.M. B. J. Clarke addressed the matter of "Hedonism," ("the principle that happiness [defined in terms of pleasure] is the sole and proper aim of human action"). Brother Dub McClish fielded questions in the Open Forum at 3:15 P.M. dealing with the proper application of Matthew 24 and Acts 2 wherein Peter quoted from Joel 2, and various issues concerning music in and out of the worship services. The lectures were then dismissed for supper (4:15 P.M.). My family and I ate supper with Stanley Ryan and his wife, taking occasion to catch up on old times and visit. We re-gathered at 7:00 P.M. for the evening session, wherein Dub McClish addressed the sin of "Denominationalism." In his usual able fashion, he clearly and methodically set forth the case for truth and against error. He was followed by Jerry Murrell, preacher for the Needmore Church of Christ in Indian Mound, Tennessee. This was the first time I had occasion to meet him, and I found him to be most friendly and he did a tremendous job dealing with the immorality and ungodliness which visits our homes daily through the television. After this lesson the session was dismissed for the evening (9:00 P.M.).

The lectures began again at 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday with my lecture on "Abortion and Euthanasia" (though I repeatedly suggested to brother Hatcher {the director of the Lectures} and others that perhaps we should call it off because of the rain—albeit to no avail). At 10:00 A.M. David Brown concluded his series on "Purity of Mind, Life, Speech." At 11:00 A.M. Stanley Ryan, filling in for Gene Burgett, delivered his lecture on "Pornography." The session was then dismissed for lunch, and my family and I had to leave to be here (at Enon) for the Wednesday Evening Bible Class. We missed the final lectures, presented by Guss Eoff, Curtis Cates, Jesse Whitlock, and Ronnie Hayes.

We were kindly received and warmly treated by brother Hatcher, as usual, and I commend him for the difficult and tiring job of arranging and presiding as master of ceremonies for each of the speeches. He was able to find something kind to say about each speech and speaker, and his efforts greatly enhanced the experience. It was good to see brother Paul Brantley, brother Bill Gallaher, and brother Fred Stancliff, the elders of the Bellview congregation, quoting from the lectureship book: "Without these men this lectureship would not exist. These men have the foresight needed as overseers of the Bellview congregation and are sound in the faith." As I noted in my speech, I was educated at the Bellview Preacher Training School which was under their oversight, and I am always happy to associate with them (the congregation and the elders) and to enjoy their company. We were able to see many old friends, some from the Liberty Church of Christ (DeFuniak Springs, Florida) and other congregations in that area; some from Jay, Florida; and other places also. There were two graduates of the Bellview Preacher Training School on the program this year, Daniel Denham and myself. I look forward to seeing brother Denham during the lectures, and I have long admired him for his knowledge and ability. I was unable to be present for his speech, but I have read his material in the book and have ordered the video of his lesson (and others). We were able to see Harold Bigham, also a graduate of the school at Bellview and preacher for the aforementioned Liberty Church of Christ, and as we are good friends, I enjoyed that very much. Brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr., was present for the majority of the Lectures, and at age 82 he does not seem to have slowed down even a little. Though I missed his lecture, I have read his material in the book and have ordered the video; I was able to be there for his song leading (before one of the lessons), and as usual, it was most enjoyable. It is always good for me to be able to see Elward and Dot Brantley, as she was the secretary at the Preacher Training School when I was a student there and as such she was an integral part of the student's life. She, too, seemed to be doing well and it was most enjoyable to visit with her at each session. I commend to you the book of the lectures. I would also suggest ordering the audio or video tapes of the program (on each audio there are two lessons at \$1.00 per tape, there are 17 audio tapes; there are six videos for \$6.00 per tape). Thanks to the brethren there for the great week!

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# HERESY TO THE MAX

*Tyler Young*

We have heard the joke before. A guy is getting a tour of heaven and is walked by rooms of folk from all different denominations. As he passes by one last room, he is told to be very quiet. “Why?” he asks. The guide whispers to him: “Those are the people from the church of Christ they think they’re the only ones here.”

Such ridicule of Christ’s church is common. But it is disturbing when one of the most influential preachers in the brotherhood finds it amusing.

“The Grip of Grace Lucado puts new face on Churches of Christ” is an article by Paul R. Buckley about Max Lucado which appeared recently in the *Dallas Morning News*. Buckley began the piece with the joke above, adding: “It’s an old one, but Max Lucado still laughs because he knows as well as anyone the Church of Christ’s no-one’s-saved-but-us reputation. He’s a Church of Christ minister, after all, as well as the hottest Christian writer around. And he believes that there really are Baptists, Methodists, and Catholics in those other rooms.”

Indeed he does. “Brother” Lucado makes no secret of his blatant disregard for biblical truth. There is but one church and one faith (Eph. 4:4-6), and denominationalism is sinful (1 Cor. 11:10). Little details like that are not a problem for Max; he has spoken for Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Catholic Churches. As a keynote speaker at a Promise Keepers rally he declared denominationalists of every stripe to be brothers in Christ. In discussing plans to swap his Oak Hills Church of Christ (San Antonio) pulpit for a day with the *Reverend* Buckner Fanning of Trinity Baptist Church, Lucado shamelessly declared: “Whenever I see a man call God ‘Father,’ I see a brother.”

Who cares what you believe or practice? Not Max. Worship Mary. Follow the Pope. Sprinkle babies. Have a clergy. Let women preach. Take the Lord’s supper once a year or on Tuesday. Do not bother with elders. Preach the rapture. Speak in tongues. Play the banjo, beat the drum, blow the horn in worship. Bring in the clowns. Forget obedience. Forget doctrine. Forget truth. Believe what you want, teach what you want, do what you want—just be sure to call God your father and you are a-okay with Max.

That ought to concern us because when Lucado talks, people listen. What he writes, people read. His undeniable talent has made him one of the most recog-

nized *Christian* writers of our time. Our denominational friends rave about his best selling devotional books prominently displayed in *Christian* bookstores and catalogues. Written in conversational style, Lucado’s works are sprinkled here and there with heresy. They are generally long on inspirational story telling but short on substance, which is a big part of what makes them popular.

But his popularity outside of the church is not what concerns us as much as what he symbolizes within the brotherhood. As the article observes, Max’s ecumenism is representative of an alarming trend in the Lord’s church. After noting Max’s acceptance of denominationalists, Buckley remarked: “more and more Church of Christ members are thinking what he’s thinking.” He is right. It is ironic that a staff writer for the *Dallas Morning News* is apparently more aware of conditions in the church today than many of our own brethren are. Perhaps those who have dismissed the warnings of faithful preachers about the extent of the departure from truth in the church will take note that even outsiders can see where we are heading.

The article explains why Lucado does not advocate what he calls “the more strict” teachings of the churches of Christ. For example, to justify his rejection of the biblical truth that baptism is necessary “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), Max says, “We’re saved by grace. Baptism is a response to God’s gift, not a way to earn God’s gift.” Faithful brethren have never claimed that baptism earns salvation. But Jesus made it essential to receive salvation by the grace of God (Mark 16:16). Lucado’s book, *In The Grip of Grace*, may rank 10<sup>th</sup> on the bestseller list, but his view that grace means obedience is not essential to salvation shows he is in the grip of Satan.

The article also brings to light the fact that some brethren lack the spiritual spine to obey the scriptural injunction to mark and turn away from Max as a false teacher (Rom. 16:17). For example, Buckley observes that some in the church number Max among those who do not love the truth, but notes that “Robert Oglesby (Waterview Church of Christ, Richardson, Texas) won’t go that far.” He is not alone. Many like Oglesby refuse to go as far as the Bible requires in this regard. They stock the local church library with Max’s books. They speak of his tremendous talent. And though they may

not jump on the denominational bandwagon with him, they remain silent about his error and allow his influence to continue unchecked.

According to the article, Lucado is pleased that the church is changing and “senses an exciting revival” underway among us. The changes underway in the church are only exciting if you enjoy witnessing widespread departure from the divine pattern (and people on a one way ticket to hell—Editor). That is what is happening, and no one represents that desertion of truth better than brother Lucado.

No doubt Max is a kind and likable man. Surely we can appreciate his ability and recognize his sincerity. We ought to love him and pray for his soul. But the fact is he is now a high profile disgrace to the body of Christ. If the continuing apostasy from the truth in the church today had a face, it would probably be Max Lucado’s. And it is past time for brethren to take note of that and cut off all fellowship with him: “For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 11).

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## GOD’S PLUMBLINE

*Danny L. Box*

“Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall *made* by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more” (Amos 7:7-8).

Webster’s dictionary defines the plumbline as: “A lead weight hung at the end of a line to determine whether a wall is vertical or straight; instrument used to test if something is vertical or straight; instrument used to determine if lines are true.”

In his commentary, Adam Clarke has this to say about the plumbline seen by Amos: “This appears to be an emblem of strict justice and indicates God is going to now visit them according to their iniquities.”

God goes on to tell Amos that Israel is about to be destroyed because they did not adhere to the standard He had set. On another occasion, God again informs Israel: “Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet” (Isa. 28:17).

Jeremiah knew that God had set a standard or “plumbed the line” before the people, and that is why his concern is so clear as he penned the following words: “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer. 6:16). But what was the response of the people: “We will not walk *therein*.”

Even our Lord knew that man would not walk by the “plumbed” way. He told us that there were two ways. One wide and broad that led to destruction, the other strait and narrow that led to life eternal. Many would go in by one way but only a few would enter that strait and narrow way (Mat. 7:13-14).

In everything we do we must look for God’s “plumbline,” because it is by this measurement or standard that we will be judged. Let’s look now at what God has put His “plumbline” against to set the standard for us.

**God has set His “plumbline” against our salvation.** God and Christ want all men to be saved, they are not willing that any should perish. For this reason, God has given us a standard which we must follow if we expect to be saved. (1) We must hear the true Word of God, because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). (2) We must believe the Word, because it is impossible to please God without belief (Heb. 11:6). (3) We must repent of our sins, because without repentance there can be no forgiveness (Luke 13:3). (4) We must confess Christ, because if we confess Him before men, He will confess us before the Father (Mat. 10:32). (5) And we must be baptized for the remission of our sins, because it is in baptism that we contact the cleansing blood of Christ (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16). This is God’s standard for obedience to the gospel. Anything else, taught by anyone else, anywhere else, at any other time is not true if it does not “plumb” according to God’s Word. We must be sure that what we do for salvation must not deviate from God’s straight line or else we will be lost.

**God has placed His “plumbline” against our life.** Once we have obeyed the gospel, and become one of His children, God expects us to walk by His rule or standard. He does not leave His rules to guess, but has laid them out for us in a straightforward way. (1) We are to deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and live soberly, righteously and godly (Tit. 2:12). (2) We are to abstain from every form of evil (1 The. 5:22). (3) We are to be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in

the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). (4) We are to avoid the works of the flesh, and seek the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:19-23). (5) We are to study to show ourselves approved of God, that we might grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:2). (6) We are to add to our life the Christian graces (2 Pet. 1:5-10). (7) We are to be an example to those around us (1 Tim. 4:12-16). If we live by these and the other rules and standards found in God's Word, then we can look for Him to say on that day of judgment: "Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Mat. 25:21-23).

**God has placed His "plumbline" against our worship.** God expects us as His people to worship Him "in spirit and in truth." That worship must be done decently and in the order that God dictates, and it must be for His glory. God's standard for our worship includes the following: (1) Preaching and teaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified (Acts 20:7). (2) Congregational singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). (3) Publicly offering up prayers (Acts 2:42). (4) Remembering the Lord's death by the partaking on each First Day of the Week of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-29; 16:1). (5) Giving of our means as we have purposed in our hearts and with the right attitude (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7). This is God's prescribed way to worship, and He holds His "plumbline" against what we do and call worship. Anything left out is not pleasing to Him, and anything added is not pleasing to Him.

**God has placed His "plumbline" against false teachers.** God wants the gospel preached to the whole world. It is this gospel that is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe (Rom. 1:16). Those who do not follow the standard in their preaching and teaching will have to face the wrath of God. Galatians 1:6-9 lets us know that if we preach any other gospel than that which was once and for all delivered by the Lord, we will be accursed. Second John 9-11 informs us as a people that if anyone preaches or teaches anything other

than what was delivered by Christ we are to reject them. Then 2 Peter 2:1 lets us know that false teachers that bring in their "damnable heresies" shall be destroyed.

God and Christ knew that men would depart from sound doctrine, and would gather to themselves men that would preach to please the ear, and for that reason the "plumbline" was set against what must be preached, and we cannot deviate from it. God's Word is complete, it is perfect, it is simple, and it is universal in that applies to all men.

**God has placed His "plumbline" against our works.** Matthew 5:16 goes like this: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." From this verse and many others we see that a Christian must be an active working servant in the Lord's kingdom. Just as the physical body has many working parts, so does the spiritual body, and for the body of our Lord to be in "good health" each member must be a working part.

When God puts His "plumbline" against our works, He looks to see if we have taken every opportunity to do good (Gal. 6:10); He looks to see if we are doing those works for His glory, or are we doing them to be praised of men (Mat. 5:16). He looks to see if we are following "that which is good" to all men (1 The. 5:15). We must remember that on the day of Judgment we will give an account of all that we have done on this earth whether it be good or evil, and God's standard is for us to do good to all.

In conclusion, God told Amos: "I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people," and brethren we must believe that He has. Everything we do must be in accordance with God's standard or else it is sin.

Now let me ask you, if God was to hold His "plumbline" up beside you right now, as a congregation, or as an individual, would you then be straight and true, or would you be "off plumb"?

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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Free Bible Correspondence  
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# Defender



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

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## RECOMMENDED READING: *WORLDLINESS*

*Gary W. Summers*

Every day someone makes the decision to become a Christian. Departing from sin and its influence is both a difficult decision and a challenging process. If Satan tried to tempt Jesus with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, he will do no less toward us, His humble (and weaker) followers. Trying to live a holy life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation is a constant struggle. This latest lectureship book of the Bellview Church of Christ in Pensacola, Florida, published in June of this year, titled *Worldliness*, will be of great help to Christians striving diligently to serve a holy God.

Worldliness comes packaged in various forms, and this book performs an excellent service in defining these areas of temptation, which we all need to be able to identify and overcome. The first chapter serves as a general introduction: “Living Soberly, Righteously, and Godly.” Not only are all three words carefully defined, but an interesting discussion of three elements of righteousness is included. The second chapter, “Denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts,” is also of a general nature, with a special emphasis on the way in which fleshly lusts “war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11).

The next chapter is also foundational; it deals with “Causes of Worldliness” and is followed by a look at the philosophy of “Hedonism,” which is thoroughly defined, with a special focus on Epicurus. There follow 14 examples of hedonism, most of which are located in the Scriptures, but a few modern-day instances are also listed. This section closes with suggestions for overcoming the hedonistic philosophy.

Another well-documented chapter (65 endnotes)

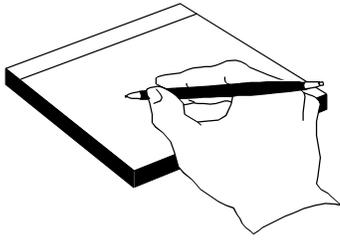
deals with the philosophy of “Humanism,” which Christians really need to comprehend if they want to understand much of what is happening in society and in the nation’s schools. Basically, Humanism is atheistic and deifies Man (p. 69). Brother Daniel Denham mentions such humanistic luminaries as Corliss Lamont, August Comte, John Dewey, Julian Huxley, Carl Sagan, George Gaylord Simpson, Paul Kurtz, and others; he lets them and their works speak for themselves so that it is clear that they are not being misrepresented.

It is important to understand what role the “Educational System” and “The Media” play in influencing our society towards humanistic thought and behavior. These two chapters have a combined total of 49 endnotes, thus continuing the high standard of research already evidenced in the book and making it excellent resource material. There is a page of facts about Disney, which includes information such as their signing an occultic rock band, whose music is “laced with Satanic themes” (p. 100); they also have a four-year contract with Martin Scorsese (director of the blasphemous *The Last Temptation of Christ*).

Following a look at “Occultism” are three chapters of a more general nature: “Examining One’s Life,” “Purity of Mind, Life, and Speech,” and “Disobedience to Parents.” The first of these chapters contains a fascinating poem titled “The Church Walking With the World” (pp. 129-31). The second contains a list of character traits that Christ exhibited during His earthly ministry (p. 142), an analysis of Philippians 4:8 and

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



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## Gideon

I am certain that all of us know the account of Gideon which we find in Judges 6. The first verse lays the foundation for the events surrounding Gideon. “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.” After serving the Midianites, God delivers Israel by the hand of Gideon. There are some great principles we find in the record of these events.

We find that God is the only source of relief. “And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD” (Jud. 6:6). The Israelites were hurting. They were subservient to the Midianites who took all their goods. There was no place for them to turn. They, finally realizing their sad plight, turn to the only source of help available. There are a great many who are hurting today. Some try to find relief from their trials and tribulations in a bottle, or in drugs, or some other source. However, they never find true relief there. There is the universal problem of sin. Sin brings bondage and guilt. People have always sought for relief from their guilt and the powerless feeling that sin brings. The **only** source of relief is found in God. We, as Christians, need to be reaching out to individuals who are in sin and inform them where they can find relief from their pain.

Next, we find that God reached out to the children of Israel. “That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage” (Jud. 6:8). God sent them a prophet (a spokesman for God). He begins calling upon them to repent, telling them why they are in the distress they are under: “Ye have not obeyed my voice” (Jud. 6:10). If they had obeyed the

voice of Jehovah, they would not have been oppressed. However, God is the One who made the move to bring them back to Him. God has made the first move to alleviate the sin of man. He did not send a prophet, but His only begotten Son. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). We were yet sinners when God made the move to save us. In that state of sin, Paul declares that we were enemies of God. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom. 5:10). Because of the love which God demonstrated to man, it causes man to reciprocate by loving God. “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

Next, we observe man’s response—man must humble himself. We see this in the attitude of Gideon. “And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family *is* poor in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father’s house” (Jud. 6:15). Gideon recognized that his nature, as he put it that he was not a great person. He was poor and even in his father’s house he was the least. He did not have an elevated view of himself or his own greatness. For God to help man, man must humble himself under God. “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jam. 4:6-7) “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Pet. 4:6). This might be the hardest thing for man to do. It makes him realize that he is not the measure of all things and needs the help of someone else—God. Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes with this needed principle. “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 5:3). Regarding man’s sins: it means that man (recognizing his need for God and believing in the Christ as our Savior) will repent of his sins, make a confession of his faith, and be immersed in water for the forgiveness of his sins. Upon that God will cleanse him of his sins. He will be free from the guilt, power, and eternal consequences of sin. However, he must continue to humble himself under God’s hand in obedience to Him for eternal salvation.

God then gives man a great promise—I will be with you. “And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with

thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man” (Jud. 6:16). What a reassuring promise God gave to Gideon. You will overcome the oppressors (the enemy, the Midianites) because I will be with you. When God is for us who can overcome us? “What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Rom. 8:31-37). Whatever might come, God will be with those who humble themselves under Him. “*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*” (Heb. 13:5-6).

After God reached out to the Israelites, Gideon humbled himself under God and God brought about a great deliverance by the hand of Gideon. God has reached out to all men in giving His Son to die for our sins. If we will humble ourselves under God’s mighty hand, He will bring about a great deliverance for us. As we continue in faithfulness to Him, He will be with us so we will be able to overcome all adversaries and be given an eternal home with God in heaven. MH

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(Continued from Page 1)

1 Corinthians 13, and a sample chart from “Screen It,” which is a handy tool to use to find out what forms of worldliness will be found in movies that are currently playing (p. 163). David Brown also takes a brief look at a variety of subjects, most of which have their own chapters elsewhere in the book.

“Pride” and “Envy” are subjects infrequently discussed, and we need to be reminded of their dangers. A more common topic is “Immodesty.” Although it would be a relief to need never prepare, present, or listen to another lesson on this topic, it remains needful. The definitions set forth are appropriate, and the pur-

pose for immodest dress is clearly established, including the famous quotation from Mary Quant, the “mother” of the miniskirt (p. 222).

Young people still need information about “Dancing.” The author examines eight defenses that are offered in favor of dancing and five reasons why Christians should avoid the practice. Another perennial problem is “Pornography.” The author lists the amount of money spent annually by Americans each year for hard-core pornography (p. 242), the number of phone sex calls made every day, 70% of which are made by minors (p. 243), and an indication of the extent of the problem created by the Internet (pp. 243-44).

“Fornication and Adultery” may seem like sins that are pretty easily recognized as being of the world, but each year some Christians allow themselves to be overcome by this problem. The topics of “Abortion and Euthanasia” occasion no little amount of controversy whenever they are introduced. One might affirm that these practices are simply Humanism applied.

No current book on worldliness could fail to include a chapter on the most-promoted sin in America, “Homosexuality.” The writer presents the basic argument against homosexuality and lists Bible passages that are pertinent to the topic. A brief look is given at various defenses made on behalf of the sin, but they are generally specious and contrived (the Bible being so clear with respect to this perverted practice). Evidence is presented to show that homosexuals can *change* (pp. 283-84). Everyone should be aware of the homosexual agenda (pp. 284-85).

“Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use” have not ceased to be an allurements for some. The effects of these are highlighted, as well they should be. It is far easier to prevent these habits from forming than it is to find ways to quit them in order to save one’s life.

“Covetousness,” “Materialism,” and “Stealing” cannot be assumed to be sins of the past. We often assume that spiritually-minded people will not be bothered by sins like these, but the Scriptures emphasize this temptation—for a reason!

Some of the material in the chapter on “Gambling” is taken from the outstanding tract by Garland Elkins and Robert R. Taylor, Jr.: *Gambling: National Pastime to Prosperity or Sure Bet to Poverty?* This 27-page chapter contains several definitions and persuasive information. Some may take issue with such statements as “gambling is robbery by consent” or a gambler “gives **no fair** exchange of goods or services in return” (p.

332); an intelligent refutation would be interesting. Information is provided concerning the ways gambling has “benefitted” Las Vegas (pp. 339-40) and Atlantic City (pp. 340-42). After analyzing the “state lottery,” brother Elkins cites from the tract 20 reasons why gambling is biblically wrong (pp. 349-52).

“Anger, Hatred, and Malice” are among the old clothes that Christians must shed. These are defined and explained, as well as what constitutes appropriate anger. “Backbiters and Gossips” receive much deserved attention, also. Not only is it difficult to avoid repeating “gossip,” it is even harder to avoid hearing. The writer offers a different perspective on the subject by calling attention to the fact that some, who are guilty of actual wrongdoing (and refuse to acknowledge or repent of it), are pointing fingers at those who are sound in the faith and referring to them as “gossips” because their own sins have been exposed (p. 374)!

Closely associated with the preceding topic is “Lying and Corrupt Communication”; we are bombarded with them daily. According to the book, *The Day America Told the Truth*, 91% of the population tells lies on a regular basis (p. 382)—that is, if those surveyed told the truth. (Perhaps that is the reason so few people care that the holder of the highest elected

office in this nation lies to us on a regular basis.) The importance of truth is emphasized appropriately in this chapter.

It may not seem like it at first, but there is a connection between worldliness and “Denominationalism.” Brother McClish focuses on some of the contradictions of denominationalism, its consequences, and cures for it. “Wastefulness” would probably not come to mind for most people as an example of worldliness, but it is important to recognize that the waste of one’s time, talent, and resources is of the world and repudiated by Christ. The Bible teaches that we must look for and take advantage of our opportunities. The book concludes with “Consequences of Worldliness.”

This book’s 436 pages should be studied by all members of the church because of its valuable treatment of subjects relevant to us. As Jesus pointed out, we are **in** the world, but we are not to be **of** the world. Such a task is not easy; this book will help us clarify our thinking with its appeal to and reliance upon the Scriptures on these matters. The price of \$12.00 (plus \$2.10 shipping and handling) is a bargain. It may be ordered from the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526.

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## JUBILEE '99

### It’s That Time of Year Again!

*Barry Gilreath*

**Jubilee '99 will be kicked off by a man who is not even a member of the church of Christ and non-Christian singers are being promoted as “Christian musicians.” Read the following and you will see that Jubilee is up to the same old thing—promoting error and division!**

A few weeks ago I was browsing through *Christian Chronicle* and I came across a full-page advertisement promoting the 1999 JUBILEE to begin in late June. In keeping with past years, the Nashville based event will again promote controversy and division among members of the Lord’s church. As we expected, the regular “who’s who” among agents of change in the church will be participating during the 1999 gathering. Lynn Anderson, Mike Cope, Jeff Walling, Rubel Shelly, Joe Beam and a host of other known false teachers will be speak-

ing with perhaps a few new faces as well. (*Editor’s note: Buddy Bell the former preacher for the Gateway Church Of Christ in Pensacola, FL, (see the February 1999 “Defender”) and their present preacher Chris Seidman were also speakers for the Nashville Jubilee.*)

The lineup of speakers is hardly surprising. What is astonishing this year is the inclusion of several denominational *superstars* into the week’s festivities. I guess we all knew that it would only be a matter of time before such would occur. It is truly amazing to see some of our brethren getting farther and farther from Scripture as each year passes. It is disheartening to watch brothers and sisters in Christ abandon the only basis for which Christian unity can ever be obtained and maintained—the Bible. For example, the Woodmont Hills congregation, where Rubel Shelly preaches, in conjunction with the beginning on Jubilee '99, is having **George Barna** to come and hold a one day seminar on church

growth. As noted in the advertisement of *Christian Chronicle*, it will be “an important event...of interest to Jubilee visitors.” What is strange about a seminar on church growth you ask? The answer is, the speaker and the subject. Mr. Barna is recognized throughout the religious world as an “expert” on church ministry. Barna Research has spent the last two years studying people’s attitudes, experiences, and expectations as well as the current and new ministry practices of churches throughout the religious world. However, the irony of this church growth seminar is that members of the Lord’s church are being encouraged to kick off Jubilee ’99 by coming and learning how to grow Christ’s church from a man who is not even a member of Christ’s church. I do not take the position that we cannot learn anything from non-members. Yet, what justification can there possibly be in encouraging an assembly of God’s people where those who are not in fellowship with God are presented as *experts* on bringing people into God’s fellowship?

In addition to the seminar by Mr. Barna, Jubilee attendees will be given the *opportunity* to attend a Thursday night concert by **Wes King** and **Michael Card**. These two men are popular musicians/performers from the denominational world whom Jubilee supporters are promoting as “Christian Musicians.” In the advertisement for Jubilee the two performers are seen posing for a picture. One of them posed for the picture with his instrument of choice—the guitar.

The theme for Jubilee ’99 is “Lord, I Lift Your Name On High.” As I read the title of the subject matter from the advertisement, I could not help but think how ironic this too was when considering all that surrounds the Jubilee every year, with this year being no exception.

How often people want to claim to honor the Lord with their lips, but yet dishonor Him with their actions (Mat. 15:8-9). Exaltation of the name of Christ can only be accomplished through our obedience to our Lord’s will (1 Sam. 15:22). It is not achieved by promoting false teachers who have gone out from among us (Eph. 5:11; 2 The. 3:6; 2 Pet. 2:1-2), and have done damage to the distinctiveness of the Lord’s church. We do not lift up the name of the Lord when we promote church growth seminars with speakers who are not even members of the church. Nor can we lift up the name of the Lord when we refer to non-members as “Christian musicians,” or seek to find edification in listening to non-Christians offer vain praise that is presented in ways that are not consistent with New Testament teaching (Col. 3:17). So much of what people consider lifting up is in reality tearing down. And, rather than lifting up the name of Christ as is claimed, we find the names of frail men lifted up and the authority of Christ not taken seriously (1 Cor. 4:6).

I will not be attending Jubilee ’99 as I expect most people from our area will not. Someone says, “Why then even address a subject that is not relative to the local work of the church?” Because the subject is related to the local work of the church. The erroneous convictions that are expressed each year through the activities and speakers at Jubilee are very likely held by some members of the church wherever one may live. Though the Nashville Jubilee is only a few hours away by distance, it is probably not so far away by measure of the hearts of some brethren who are closer to home.

901 Chester Street; Dalton, GA 30721

## “BEHOLD THE FIG TREE”

*Tim Smith*

“And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away” (Luke 21:29:33).

The Lord of life often used signs to point to key events in the development of the apostles’ faith, and

concerning the coming kingdom and the promised destruction of Jerusalem. He would, as He did in the words of our text, point to an event (the destruction of Jerusalem in this case), set forth some signs, and indicate that the coming of the signs meant the coming of the event. The fig tree beginning to *shoot forth* indicated that the seasons were changing, in this case, from spring to summer. It is said that the first figs ripen in late May or early June (Vines, p. 424). Jesus indicated that when the fig trees began to sprout, the apostles would know the predicted event was near.

We do not have the miraculous gift of prophecy in our day, as it (and all other miracles) were taken away with the advent of the complete truth (1 Cor. 13:8-10; Eph. 4), but we still are able to determine that some things are coming by observing certain conditions around us. We know that the seasons change by looking at the calendar, but we could just as easily look at the plant and animal life about us and determine the same thing. When we look at the horizon and notice that the clouds are beginning to lighten, we understand that day is near. When we look to the sky and notice the “setting of the sun,” we know that night is near. So it is in other areas as well, we look to the wrinkling of the skin and the graying of the hair and know that old age is approaching, we feel the weakening of the body and believe that death is approaching. I would like for us to **behold the fig tree** concerning some very important matters in the course of our study at this time. We are not using these verses to make a point concerning their original context, and in no wise are we trying to predict anything based on the prediction of Jesus; but, we are merely pointing out that some things we have seen in the past certainly and sadly lead to other things, almost without exception.

**Behold the advent of modern versions into the pulpit**, for when you see these things coming, know that apostasy cannot be far off. There is much evidence available (and readily, I might add) concerning the dangers of the NIV and other modern perversions, but because many in the sectarian world find them attractive, many of *our* preachers think they have to use them. Have you ever stopped to consider why the sectarian preachers and members like them? The popularity of the NIV among the ranks of sectarians is due to the intentional mistakes contained within it. It has been twisted and turned to accommodate the doctrines of Calvin and others. Why would a man who loves the truth, and takes seriously the command to “**preach the word**” stoop to using such an obvious tool of the devil?

**Behold the alteration of the worship service.** For years (almost 2,000, to be clearer) the body of Christ has understood that acceptable worship consists of preaching (Acts 20:7), praying (Acts 2:42), partaking of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11), giving of our means (2 Cor. 9:6-7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2), and congregational singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Men led the prayers (1 Tim. 2:8), the Lord’s Supper consisted of fruit of the vine and unleavened bread (not Dr. Pepper and Ritz Crackers) men did the preaching (1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim.

2:11-15), and each member sang along with each other member (they did not sing before the others, they did not sing and play an instrument, and etc.). What, in the Bible, has changed in the last 2,000 years? Is there some sort of *new revelation* which has come to those who would change things? When the church came together in the first century they did just that, they came together. There was not a separate assembly for the old folks, and one for the young married couples, and one for the singles, and one for the single-again crowd, and etc. The pattern calls for everyone to come into one assembly and partake of the Lord’s Supper, give as prospered, sing as a group, pray together while led by a man, and hear a man preach the gospel. What has changed?

**Behold the absence of book, chapter, and verse preaching.** When your preacher cannot find it within himself to refer to the Bible on a regular basis, you had better watch out! Why is it that so many wish to preach any and every thing but the Bible? Do they know more about religion than God? Have they forgotten that the Bible is inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16)? Have they forgotten that the Bible is able to give us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3)? Do they really love and care for their audience? Then let them preach the Bible to them.

**Behold the elevation of the physical over the spiritual.** When the church presumes to put itself into the entertainment business, leaving the three authorized areas of operation as set forth in the Bible (preaching to the lost—Mat. 28:19; edifying the saved—Acts 20:32; and benevolence—Jam. 1:27), the church leaves the Lord. Where is there even one ounce of authority in all of the New Testament for the body of Christ to participate in a “denominational sports league”? Is there even one remote reference to it? Did the Lord’s apostles participate in one? Was Paul the first baseman? Or, maybe it was Peter, as he preached the first sermon in the name of the risen Lord? Where is the authority? We know that we are to come out from among them and be separate (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1), for that we have authority; but where is the authority for the other? It is not there. Faithful Christians do not need the *added allure* of recreation or entertainment to keep them dedicated to the Lord; they merely need the Old Rugged Cross and all that it represents.

**Behold the breaking down of the walls (put in place by the Lord) of fellowship.** When the church opens its fellowship to those who are not Christians: the church sins (1 Cor. 5:13—herein Paul says that God has

determined in advance that non-Christians have no part with the faithful). When the church extends fellowship to false teachers: the church sins (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 John 9-11). When the church extends fellowship to anyone excluded from the fellowship by the New Testament: the church sins, and stands in need of repentance.

Behold, are we heading in the right direction? Not if we are leaving the Bible. Let us go back to the Bible, speaking where the Bible speaks, remaining silent where

it is silent; calling Bible things by Bible names; in matters of faith, let us have unity; in matters of opinion, let us have liberty; and in all matters, may charity characterize us. I love the Lord, and I love His church; and it is just that, **His** church. I love it enough to sound forth a call for all among the membership of the church, whether here in our nation or abroad, to "Preach the word."

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## DO WE KNOW OR ARE WE JUST UNCARING?

*Lynn Blair*

It is scary what some people do not know about the Bible. Even more scary is what some that profess to be members of the Lord's church do not know about the Bible.

For instance, I fear many times that I am using the same Scriptures so often that everybody will grow weary of them. Not that they are not still powerful and needed, but that everybody will know those same Scriptures already. Ah, but then I am asked a question by somebody that hears that teaching every week. Didn't I cover that in last week's lesson? Have you not been listening? I do not ask these questions out loud, but sometimes I wonder. The truth is that our people do not always catch everything that is said. We (you **and** me) need repetition. The apostle Peter wished to stir up the brethren's pure mind by way of **remembrance** (2 Pet. 3:1). We should strive to do the same. We can not be ready to give an answer (1 Pet. 3:15) if we do not remember.

If we expect to remember something, we need to become more familiar with it. It is that way with hobbies, jobs, etc. It is certainly that way with a knowledge of the Scriptures. The person that does not study at home will not have a good working knowledge of the

Scriptures. The person who does not study at home will also not be pleasing to God (Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15). No matter how good, interesting, and full of Scripture the sermon may be, it is still the duty of the listener to check and see if those things are so (Acts 17:11).

Why are we not converting more? Could it be because we are not studying the Scriptures ourselves and therefore not teaching anyone else? Could it be that we are not living an example in which we would be comfortable trying to talk to someone about their soul? **If** we know the truth and live it in our everyday lives, then why are we not teaching more??? Good question!

*1314 Millington; Winfield, KS 67156*

### Attention:

The 1999 Bellview Lectures have hit the Internet. You can see the actual sermons being preached. If you have internet access, we urge you to go to this web site: 208.199.33.67. Then click on the Sermons link, scroll down to the Bellview Lectures section and click on the particular lesson you would like to hear. We appreciate Rick Page for his work in getting our lectureship on the Internet.

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# Defender



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

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## A SURE PATH TO OBLIVION

*Gary W. Summers*

Because we are in the midst of a full-blown apostasy, reason would dictate that we all encourage one another to stand for the truth (John 17:17). We especially need to promote an understanding of the way God authorizes so we may be correct in doctrine and pleasing to Him in worship (Col. 3:17). Unfortunately, the post-modern position of many brethren echoes Pilate's skeptical remark: "What is truth?" (John 18:38). Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the current attitude amounts to: "Who cares what is truth?"

Since congregations are teetering daily on the brink of the hill overlooking liberalism, it is indeed unfortunate that some have taken it upon themselves to criticize brethren who have heeded the biblical admonition to mark those who "cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine" which the New Testament teaches (Rom. 16:17). The faithful who remain cannot afford sniping at one another; this is the time to support one another. It was therefore disillusioning to hear a prominent brother say these words a few months ago.

There are some preachers who think that they have been appointed of God to try to be pope over the church. And they find out everything they can about what's wrong in other places, and they're writing about it. Elders, know what your preachers are writing. And if they're tearing down the church of our Lord, and they're writing about things they shouldn't be writing, then correct them on it. Don't let them demote fellowship. But make them promote it in the brotherhood. And then all of us have an obligation to do that—and to love the entire church. We sometimes treat other congregations like they're denominations.

Although we do not deny that someone somewhere might want to be the pope over the church, we have

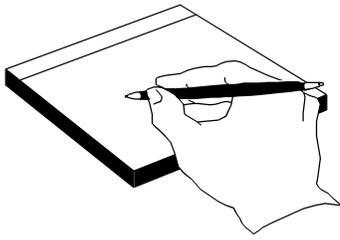
never met this fellow. This charge seems to be a bit on the trite side. If someone has some **evidence** to substantiate the charge, let him present it; otherwise, this hackneyed expression is worthy of a quick burial.

Likewise, who is the fellow spying on other congregations? Most of us hear more than we care to about other churches in the area, but who is the man running around collecting data? Because our society is highly mobile, we occasionally get visits from dissatisfied members of other congregations. Some leave an apostate church and of their own free will communicate the various problems that led to their decision. If the concerns they express are legitimate, then one congregation may decide not to fellowship another one until the matter can be resolved. Churches departing from God's Word, however, do not generally want to discuss such matters with those standing firm.

We receive many bulletins, and occasionally someone does write an article exposing a false teacher or apostate congregation. In the articles we have seen, evidence is offered to establish the case. Usually, the very words of the preacher or congregation in question are cited. We are grateful for the information because brethren are always asking about sound congregations they can safely worship with when they travel. Many people ask ahead of time because of bad previous experiences. There is an international publication that devotes itself to this topic, and it serves a useful purpose. Faithful brethren do not generally protest it.

Those who expose error are not guilty of tearing down the church. People such as Rubel Shelly and Max  
*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## Speedily

The wise man, and wiser still because he was writing by inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16) wrote: “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Ecc. 8:11). In this statement, Solomon gives us a general principle that is seen in several aspects of life. We will consider three areas where this applies.

The first of the divine institutions in time is the home (realizing the church was in the eternal purpose of God). No doubt all have observed this principle in many homes. A child is raised without any punishment and they become a terror to the parents and everyone else as well. The parents finally realize that they need to take matters in hand and apply the board of education at the seat of learning. Yet, the child has been given his own way for such a long period of time that once the parents try to reign him in, it is almost impossible. It simply causes resentment and the desired results fail. We all know that if those same parents had taken the proper course of action years earlier, the results might have been drastically different.

In point of time the government was the second of the three divine institutions. One of the purposes of the government is to keep law and order. Peter wrote, “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well” (1 Pet. 2:13-14). The government is to praise its citizens that do well, and it has the obligation of punishing those who do evil. Lately, our government has done a very poor job of this, especially considering the evil-doing of our President which went unpunished. However, it is evident that many criminals go unpun-

ished in our judicial system. Sometimes they will commit crimes and never be caught; others will be plea bargained down without any jail time, some will get off on technicalities, etc. In spite of all this, some (in reality very few) will be tried and receive the death penalty. God gives the government the responsibility to put evil-doers to death. “For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Rom. 13:4). Many now debate whether or not the capital punishment is of any value—is it any deterrent to crime. I might have to agree that the way in which it is practiced in our nation it might not be a preventive nature. Even in murder cases, the evil-doer more than likely will not receive the death penalty. Even if he does he will remain on death row for more than a decade. Sentence is any but executed speedily, therefore it does not work to deter crime: “The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

The eternal purpose of God is seen in the church of our Lord (Eph. 3:10-11). The church is to be pure and clean. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:...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” (Eph. 1:4; 5:26-27). Yet, we are warned that there will be evildoers who will come into the Lord’s church and what she should do about them. We can classify these evildoers under the immoral, the divisive, and false teachers.

In 1 Corinthians 5, the church had an immoral man among them. Paul clearly taught that the immoral was to be delivered unto Satan, purged out, taken away from among them, put away; so they would not company with him, even to the point of not eating with him. However the church at Corinth was “puffed up” (meaning they were unconcerned and indifferent) and had not rather mourned. They were to withdraw their fellowship from this immoral man. However, the entire passage shows an urgency that should be involved in this action. The soul of the immoral man was involved, he was lost and needed to repent to have salvation. The souls of other members in the congregation were involved, his immoral example might influence them to sin. The souls of those in the world were involved, they might think it all right to sin. They were to execute sentence speedily

so his (and others) heart would not be set on doing evil.

We are taught the same principle above in relation to those who are divisive. “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 6:17-18). While the urgency is not mentioned here, the Spirit shows us the urgency by mentioning the souls involved (the divisive’s soul and the souls of simple or innocent—ASV). However, Paul instructs Titus that we are to admonish a divisive man twice and if he does not repent, then he is to be rejected. “A man that is an heretick [factious man, ASV; divisive man, NKJV] after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself” (Tit. 3:10-11). This does show some urgency involved, and that sentence should be executed speedily.

Surely, the same principle is involved with false teachers as is observed with these others. We are warned that false teachers would come and our need to try or prove the spirits whether they were from God. As promised false teachers did come. Paul continually faced Judaizing teachers. However, notice what he said concerning them to the Galatian brethren. “To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Gal. 2:5). Paul would not put up with their false doctrine for even an hour. He realized the principle above that sentence must be executed speedily or else the hearts of men would be set on doing evil.

It is absolutely no secret that the church has been infiltrated with false teachers over the past few decades. At first there were only small things. Some started giving warnings and exposing the false doctrines and those who taught them. Many within the brotherhood proclaimed that those giving the warnings were simply radicals and extremists. They separated themselves (while not openly withdrawing fellowship) from them. Things continued and those advocating error continued on and have since gotten more blatant in their error. It finally has gotten to the point that the error is so bad, that others are openly exposing them. We are very thankful that these have seen the false doctrine and are now exposing and rebuking the practitioners of such. However, they have let these purveyors of damnation alone for such a long period that their hearts are set on evil. They have waited such a long time that their

warnings will have no effect upon either the false teachers or the ones they have influenced for so long. If they had taken a strong stand decades ago (instead of insulting and ridiculing those who did) there is no telling who and how many might have been saved. We are very thankful that they are now taking a stand and prayerfully others will be prevented from apostatizing because of their work. We urge all brethren to take a strong stand. If you have in the past, continue in this good work. If you have not done so in the past, begin now. Realize the truthfulness of what Solomon, by inspiration, wrote and start executing sentence against evildoers speedily.

MH

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(Continued from Page 1)

Lucado (and those who bask in their shadows) are the ones causing the problems and tearing down the Lord’s church. Those who expose their false, soul-damning doctrine are not the source of conflict any more than Elijah was the troubler of Israel. The guilt lies with the false teachers and those who are allowing them to corrupt God’s people.

If someone is spreading slander and gossip, that is wrong, and it ought to be stopped. If there are those who are just looking for something or someone to write up, they have the wrong motive and should be counseled to understand that brethren need to build up one another. Certainly, elders should know what their preachers are writing, but the idea should be applied to liberal preachers, also. (Why have elders with liberal preachers failed to rebuke their false doctrine?)

To the charge that we sometimes treat other congregations as if they are denominations, we plead guilty. When *brethren* cease to teach baptism for the remission of sins, begin appointing women to leadership positions, introduce denominational concepts into worship, and fellowship denominations, exactly how are we supposed to treat them? There are many congregations that still refer to themselves as a “church of Christ” who ceased being such long ago. There may be a few brethren somewhere who insist on conformity with every optional matter before they will extend fellowship, but most brethren give as much slack as they can to avoid the charge of being opinionated.

To be fair, the brother who made these remarks also encouraged everyone to stand for the truth; perhaps he did not mean these things the way they came across. The elders and preacher of the host congregation made a response similar to this one in their church bulletin.

tin—and rightly so. We have no animosity toward this brother, but disagreement with his ideas is in order. To ignore or minimize a sister congregation's errors is a sure path to oblivion for the Lord's church.

### **“On Watchdogs and Whistle Blowers”**

The above-titled article appeared in the July *Gospel Advocate*, and it merits similar criticism. The author, “a recently retired professor of ministries at Abilene Christian University,” offers several kind remarks about watchdogs before he points out that some of them contract rabies. He does make an attempt to be fair in presenting the strengths and possible weaknesses of *whistle blowers*. And in a time of relative peace among brethren the article might, with a few changes, serve a useful purpose. But again, the brotherhood would better be served with exhortations to remain steadfast. Despite his efforts at objectivity, there are a few points that need to be made.

First, in the middle of page 17 in large bold letters is this statement: “Various self-appointed watchdogs have uselessly irritated faithful people and even bitten others whom they have had no right to bite.” The author is absolutely correct in this statement; everyone probably knows of a good brother who has been ill-treated at the hands of a jealous, spiritual pygmy. But one wonders two things: “Are all watchdogs self-appointed?” and “Exactly how is the author going to apply this prominently-displayed principle?”

Perhaps the answer to the first question is that the self-appointed watchdogs are the ones that create the most problems. But most literal watchdogs are bought or trained for that purpose by a master. Our master told us all to beware of false prophets (Mat. 7:15) and false doctrine (Mat. 16:12). Furthermore, He denounced the Pharisees and the scribes (Mat. 23). Paul cautioned all brethren to “beware of dogs” (Phi. 3:2), and Jude cautioned all brethren “to contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3). Do we not **all** have a responsibility to be a watchdog? And were we not appointed by our Master to fulfill that function?

To answer the question regarding the way this author applies the principles stated in the article, he applauds the work of F. LaGard Smith in his book, *Who Is My Brother?* Although he does not specifically state the reason for praising Smith, presumably he thinks Smith's exegetical work qualifies him to openly rebuke Max Lucado and surreptitiously take issue with Mike Cope, which Smith does in the book.

The problem is that Smith is inconsistent on the issue of fellowship; he contradicts himself often, which Daniel Denham pointed out in his 90-page scholarly

review of *Who Is My Brother?* in Bellview's 1998 lectureship book, *Fellowship* (you may order the book from us for \$12.00 plus postage). Wayne Jackson, a brother never known for shoddy work, also exposed the weaknesses of Smith's work. Smith leaves the door open for fellowshiping those in denominations, and by his own admission he does so himself during the months he spends in England each year.

In an e-mail from Keith Sisman to Dub McClish, dated June 15, 1999, brother Sisman writes concerning the Ashton-Under-Hill-Free-Church:

I have visited this church with other sound brethren. They are Calvinistic (predestination and direct action of the HS in conversion). They teach that baptism does NOT save. Women lead in prayer and give testimony. The instrument is used in worship, “But not when LaGard attends.”

They consider Smith a member! Smith I understand has also given financially to the work there.

Smith has criticised Lucado on his stance of failing to preach baptism, yet Smith openly worships in England with people who teach much the same thing as Lucado, plus Calvinism.

The warnings against self-appointed watchdogs begin to ring a little hollow when we see who and what the author of this article is willing to fellowship. Since he is recently retired from ACU, we might ask: “Did he not consider fellow faculty member Andre Resner's blasphemous article, ‘Christmas At Matthew's House,’ a barrier to fellowship?” Or was Resner a qualified scholar? And what did he think of Abilene's distinguished Carmichael Professor Carroll Osburn's book, *The Peaceable Kingdom?* That was the occasion of Osburn's saying that church organization, premillennialism, instrumental music, and baptism **for or because of** the remission of sins should not be matters of fellowship (in which case, what would be?). Does he agree with Osburn, is it a matter of fellowship, and is it wrong to “write him up”?

### **“Guilt By Association”**

Another article in the same issue of the *Gospel Advocate* laments that a “congregation or university is called liberal because it has used speakers who have spoken where other speakers deemed to be liberal have spoken.” Wait a minute! Why dally in obscurities such as “deemed to be liberal”? Who are we talking about? If the men in question are Rubel Shelly, Jeff Walling, and others of their ilk, they **are** liberal—not just **thought** to be so.

Now granted that some, in their zeal for truth, may have gone too far and drawn lines of fellowship too quickly. We should avoid such hasty actions until

enough time is given to talk calmly through the situation. Again, we live in perilous times, in which many congregations and colleges have invited someone because he was popular—never mind the fact that he has associated with those who have departed from the Word of God. If elders had been more observant regarding those whom some of these speakers fellowshiped, perhaps they could have avoided division. If anything, the brotherhood needs to scrutinize preachers **more** closely, not **less**.

The writer seeks to justify his thesis that “guilt by association” is wrong by appealing to the fact that Jesus was a friend to tax collectors and sinners. The two situations are not parallel; Jesus did not endorse their immorality and fellowship their sins. The speakers in question, however, do not disagree with the liberals on the programs in which they appear. They fellowship the other men and endorse one another’s teaching; otherwise, they would not be invited!

“Guilt by association” is a biblical principle. Jehu the prophet asked King Jehoshaphat: “Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore *is* wrath upon thee” (2 Chr. 19:2). Although this occurred in the Old Testament, there is no reason that the same question should not be asked in this era. (*Editor’s note: Also see Lester Kamp’s excellent treatment of this subject “Guilt by Association” in our 1998 Lectureship book on Christian Fellowship and Bob Berard’s manuscript on “Fellowship and Preachers” in the same book. These were also reproduced in Defender. Berard’s “Fellowship and Preachers in August 1998; Kamp’s “Guilt by Association in October 1998 issues.)*

### “Today’s Pharisees”

A third article in July’s *Gospel Advocate* continues this theme. It is, perhaps, the most vicious of them all.

Our modern-day Pharisees are the same. All they want to know is where you go and who you know. If you do not associate with people they deem faithful, you must be unfaithful. They think that they can dictate with whom you should or should not fellowship. They have their lists and measure you by their lists instead of the Bible (15).

Really? Has the author seen these lists? Is it possible to get a copy? He sounds like an annual attendee of the Tulsa Soul-Winning Workshop or the Nashville Jubilee. The only criterion most of us use to determine fellowship is: “Does this person or group teach what the Bible teaches?” If not, we usually try to discern if the person is a babe in Christ and untaught—or if he knows what those men stand for and agrees with them. Toward the former we exercise patience and tolerance, but we must withhold fellowship from the latter. By the way, is

it Pharisaical to point a finger at those who disagree with you and call them a Pharisee?

Just look at the modern Pharisees. Their empty church buildings, lack of action, and constant whining about how difficult life is are testimonies to their lack of love for the lost.

Oh! So, a facility empty of people is a mark of Phariseeism. Pity the poor animals on the ark and all the time they had to spend with Noah and his Pharisaical family! Most congregations still standing for the truth show signs of meaningful activity and are engaged in evangelistic activities. These generalizations are unwarranted and unprovable.

The motto of today’s Pharisee might be, “The sins in others I can see! But praise the Lord there is none in me!”

Whew! One wonders how the writer knows the Pharisees so well. If he is acting as a watchdog, where is the scholarship that qualifies him to make these charges (as the brother who wrote the “watchdog” article insisted was necessary)? Those of us who have not met these modern-day Pharisees should rejoice immediately.

Today’s Pharisees know what the Bible teaches about marriage and remarriage, baptism for the remission of sins, instrumental music in the church, fellowshiping the denominations, and paying tithes, but they do not know love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22-23).

How, O how, does this man know these folks so well that he can even describe their personal, private walk with God? Although the phrase is overworked today, this accusation really does amount to judgmentalism.

### Conclusion

It is sad to see articles of this stripe in a magazine once (but no longer) known as the “Old Reliable.” The *Gospel Advocate* still contains a number of articles by sound brethren; some of the information published is helpful, but it is not the same publication it once was.

This article was not intended to be an advertisement for the forthcoming *The Gospel Journal*, but it certainly calls attention to the fact that the brotherhood needs a publication to take the place of some older papers that once were held in high esteem.

The purpose of this article was to protest and lament those who are calling for broader fellowship and more tolerance at the very time we need to be most alert. To complain about a few brethren who *may* have been overly vigilant when wolves are stealing sheep by the dozen makes as much sense as replacing light bulbs in the chandelier of the *Titanic* while it is sinking.

312 Pearl Street; Denton, TX 76201

# Second Annual Lubbock Lectureship

## LOOKING UNTO JESUS

### The Author and Finisher of Our Faith

*Tommy J. Hicks, Director*

October 10-14, 1999

#### Sunday, October 10

|          |  |                 |
|----------|--|-----------------|
| 9:00 AM  | Bible Translations and Versions                              | Michael Hatcher |
| 10:00 AM | Looking Unto Jesus   | Gordon Brewer   |
| 11:00 AM | <i>Lunch Break</i>   |                 |
| 2:00 PM  | Is Christ's Church Ecumenical?                               | Lynn Parker     |
| 3:00 PM  | The Bible's Word, "Redemption"                               | Terry Hightower |
| 4:00 PM  | The New Name   | Lester Kamp     |
| 5:00 PM  | <i>Dinner Break</i>  |                 |
| 6:30 PM  | Congregational Singing                                       | Dale Stone      |
| 7:00 PM  | Jesus Christ, the Sone of God                                | Curtis Cates    |
| 8:00 PM  | Controversy: The "Lumenberg Letter" and the Pious Unimmersed | Mark Lewis      |

#### Monday, October 11

|          |   |                 |
|----------|---|-----------------|
| 9:00 AM  | Figures of Speech Used in the Bible                               | Noah Hackworth  |
| 10:00 AM | The Good Confession   | David Watson    |
| 11:00 AM | Did Jesus Really Live on Earth?                                   | Dan Flournoy    |
| 12:00 PM | <i>Lunch Break</i>  |                 |
| 2:00 PM  | The Bible's Word, "Justification"                                 | Eddie Whitten   |
| 3:00 PM  | The New Commandment   | Michael Wyatt   |
| 4:00 PM  | The Apostles of Jesus Christ                                      | Tyrone DuBose   |
| 5:00 PM  | <i>Dinner Break</i>   |                 |
| 6:30 PM  | Congregational Singing  | Dale Stone      |
| 7:00 PM  | Jesus Christ, The King of Kings                                   | Stephen Wiggins |
| 8:00 PM  | Controversy: "Play on Miss Bertha" Introduction of the Instrument | Tom Wacaster    |

#### Tuesday, October 12

|          |   |                  |
|----------|---|------------------|
| 9:00 AM  | N. T. Applications of O. T. Principles                        | David Brown      |
| 10:00 AM | Preaching Jesus and Him Crucified                             | Kenneth Free     |
| 11:00 AM | Why Does Evil Exist?  | Gary Summers     |
| 12:00 PM | <i>Lunch Break</i>  |                  |
| 2:00 PM  | The Bible's Word, "Sanctification"                            | Royce Williamson |
| 3:00 PM  | New Heaven and New Earth                                      | Barry Grider     |
| 4:00 PM  | OPEN FORUM  | Dub McClish      |
| 5:00 PM  | <i>Dinner Break</i>   |                  |
| 6:30 PM  | Congregational Singing  | Dale Stone       |
| 7:00 PM  | Jesus Christ, Savior of the World                             | Ira Y. Rice, Jr. |
| 8:00 PM  | Controversy: Digression and the "Missionary Society" Division | Marvin Weir      |

#### Wednesday, October 13

|          |   |               |
|----------|---|---------------|
| 9:00 AM  | Jesus' Use of Hebrew Idioms                                     | Joseph Meador |
| 10:00 AM | Jesus Loves Me  | Neal Abbott   |
| 12:00 PM | <i>Lunch Break</i>  |               |
| 2:00 PM  | Is Everything in Life Worship?                                  | Don Tarbet    |
| 3:00 PM  | The Bible's Word, "Righteousness"                               | Kevin Rhodes  |
| 4:00 PM  | OPEN FORUM  | Dub McClish   |
| 5:00 PM  | <i>Dinner Break</i>   |               |
| 6:30 PM  | Congregational Singing  | Dale Stone    |
| 7:00 PM  | Jesus Christ, Our High Priest                                   | Monte Evans   |
| 8:00 PM  | Controversy: The McGary/Lipscomb "What is Valid Baptism?" Issue | Don Walker    |

#### Thursday, October 14

|          |  |                |
|----------|--|----------------|
| 9:00 PM  | Bible Types and Antitypes                            | Tommy J. Hicks |
| 10:00 PM | Jesus Provides the Answer                            | David Harendt  |
| 11:00 PM | Miracles, Signs, and Wonders                         | Jesse Whitlock |
| 12:00 PM | <i>Lunch Break</i>                                   |                |
| 2:00 PM  | The Bible's Word, "Reconciliation"                   | Kent Graham    |
| 3:00 PM  | The New Covenant/Testament                           | Ken Ratcliff   |
| 4:00 PM  | OPEN FORUM   | Dub McClish    |
| 5:00 PM  | <i>Dinner Break</i>                                  |                |
| 6:30 PM  | Congregational Singing                               | Dale Stone     |
| 7:00 PM  | Jesus Christ, the Prophet of God                     | Johnie Scaggs  |
| 8:00 PM  | Controversy: Changing Times and "The Woman Question" | Robert Dodson  |

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# DO YOU NEED SOMETHING?

*Shan Jackson*

Do you need something? Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Mat. 7:7). Are you looking for something? Jesus said, "Seek, and ye shall find" (Mat. 7:7). Do you want opportunities? Jesus said, "knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke 11:9-10). Then, for illustrative purpose he asks, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Mat. 7:11-12).

Brethren, of all the people in the world Christians have the most going for them. Our Father created everything that there is. As the Psalmist says, He owns "the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Psa. 50:10). Our brother prayed, "Thy kingdom come" and it came. And with that kingdom came the precious plan that will save our souls from the devil's hell.

He supplied us with His Word. He gave us His truth. As Peter says, He gave us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). And, as Peter continues: "Whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in that world by lust. Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in *your* knowledge self-control; and in *your* self-control patience; and in *your* patience godliness; and in *your* godliness brotherly kindness; and in *your* brotherly kindness love. For if these things [Christian virtues] are yours and abound, they make you

to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:3-8).

*P.O. Box 904; Palacios TX 77465*

## YOUR HELP IS NEEDED FOR THE N. B. HARDEMAN LIBRARY AT MSOP

Brother N. B. Hardeman's granddaughter and her family have proposed construction of a ten thousand square foot, two story building on the Memphis School of Preaching campus to be named in honor of N. B. Hardeman. They have very generously offered to contribute and raise \$400,000 of the \$800,000 needed. We are seeking to raise the rest, and have \$240,000 already in hand. We truly believe brother Hardeman to be worthy of this honor since none has influenced our work more than he has (Rom. 13:7).

With the addition of several preachers' libraries and other donations, the present library facilities are filled to overflowing. The new building will accommodate our present holdings, make room for additional donations already promised, and provide space for desperately needed study areas. In addition, the library will house a display of memorabilia of brother Hardeman, including debate notes and other writings.

We are thankful MSOP has been chosen as the location of this library with all it will mean to our work, and to the brotherhood. We are confident God will bless us with the needed funds, and that brethren will see the need and the opportunity to join with us in this effort by sending a contribution to Forest Hill Church of Christ; 3950 Forest Hill Irene Road; Memphis, TN 38125; marked "For MSOP Library Fund."

*Editor's note: Schools need a good library and a good place to study. In preparing to be a preacher and in our preaching, books (a library) are a must. We remain fresh and stir up our minds by books. This is a wonderful opportunity for MSOP. They are in great need of a new building for their library. We encourage your aid and support in this effort.*

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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

Volume XXVIII

October 1999

Number 10

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## THE POWER OF REMEMBRANCE

*Graham Cain*

The faculty of memory is a capacity for being acted upon. It is the mental capacity of storing knowledge, experience, or information which can be brought to mind again at will. God infused this amazing power into the human being. Certain animals have high instinct capabilities and can be trained by humans to do many things; but only man, made in God's own image, has the ability to bring to mind intricate circumstances or occurrences of the past. This power of remembrance is able to influence or motivate us in many ways. Let us consider some of the strong examples of such in the New Testament.

### REMEMBERING TO DO GOOD

In Acts 20:35 we find Paul bringing to a close his discussion with the Ephesian elders with these impressive words: “I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” We have no record of these words of Jesus but they are beautiful words of truth.

In Paul's epistle to the Galatians he recounted some of the events of his recent discussions with the “apostles and elders” in Jerusalem (Acts 15:2-29). The result of this meeting was that Paul and Barnabas were extended “the right hands of fellowship” to go and preach to the heathen (Gal. 2:9) and in verse ten Paul adds, “Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.”

There is much instruction in the New Testament relative to doing good to others (Gal. 6:10) but these two examples show the likelihood of forgetting such by

the exhortation that we “remember” so to do.

### THE DANGER OF FORGETTING

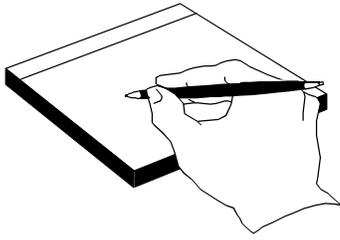
In Peter's second epistle he listed some spiritual advancements that must be added to the faith of the sincere Christian in chapter 1, verses 5-8. These qualities are enumerated as virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Warning is given that anyone who could not see the need for these is “blind” and has “forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” (v. 9). The apostle also stated that to heed and add these things to one's Christian faith gives assurance that “ye shall never fall.”

Starting then with verse 12, the inspired writer sets forth the absolute necessity for “remembrance” with these words: “Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting *you* in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance” (2 Pet. 1:12-15).

The danger of forgetting is emphasized when Peter repeats this again in the first two verses of chapter three: “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.”

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Notes From The Editor



**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## Association

God, through Moses, makes an interesting statement to the Israelites: “And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people” (Lev. 20:6). God was very plain as to what was to happen to those who had familiar spirits and wizards. Listen to Him, “A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood *shall be* upon them” (Lev. 20:27). This should be an immediate warning to those who practice different forms of witchcraft and astrology. It also shows us the propriety of using capital punishment. However, there is another important principle we find in this verse.

Leviticus 20:6 is not dealing with the familiar spirits and wizards, instead, it is dealing with those who would use their services. While the people were to put wizards and familiar spirits to death, God would set His face against those who use them. God had said much the same earlier: “Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God” (Lev. 19:31). God condemns the association with the wizards and familiar spirits as much as He does the actual practice.

God still has the same attitude as He demonstrated in these verses. God will not accept His people fellowshiping evil. The wizards and familiar spirits were the unfruitful works of darkness and God said not to fellowship them. He tells us: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*” (Eph. 5:11). We are instructed the same way when regarding moral issues. Paul lists several aspects of immorality (“ungodliness and unrighteousness”) of which the Gentiles had been (and still were) involved

(Rom. 1:18-31). God, through Paul, then places the worthiness of the government executing capital punishment upon those who act in such manner. “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death” (Rom. 1:32a). Paul then states that those who consent to or approve those doing such deserve the same fate as those who actually do the deeds: “Not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Rom. 1:32b).

The reason God feels this way is expressed by the apostle John. “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). If we have a person who is not content to remain with the parameters of God’s Word, God will have no affiliation with him; he is cut off from God. This would be like the person who was a familiar spirit or wizard of Leviticus. The Spirit instructs us not to receive that person into our house nor bid him God speed. God speed is translated from a word with means (and translated elsewhere) the giving of a greeting. We cannot do anything which might show our approval or support of the person who refuses to remain within the doctrine of Christ. (The doctrine of Christ is the doctrine which Christ is the author, not just the doctrine about Christ’s deity.) If we do anything which indicates our support for this person, then God says we are a partaker (Greek *koinoneo* which means fellowship) of his evil. If we support the false teacher or immoral person in any way, then we are as guilty as that person.

It appears to me that we have a great deal of difficulty with this within the Lord’s church today. There are a great many who would never preach any false doctrine and congregations would not allow it to be preached. However, these same individuals will not take a strong stand against the liberalism of our day. They will advertise the meetings and activities of those who are false teachers, attend their functions, etc. Are they false teachers themselves—No. Do they stand condemned by God—Yes. Just like above, the familiar spirits and wizards were to be put to death, and God set His face against those who turned after them (supported them). The immoral of Romans 1 were to be put to death, but so were those who had pleasure in their sins. We will not practice the sins, but we continue to work and fellowship those who do. This one sin has caused a

great deal of difficulty within the Lord's church. Those who are faithful will not fellowship (support in any way) those who are immoral or false teachers. If they do (whether it be eldership, preachers, or congregations) then they are not faithful themselves but are under the condemnation of God. Then those who are faithful cannot fellowship them (even though they might teach the truth in every other area). Why is it that the faithful cannot fellowship them? Because God has set His face against them for their improper fellowship. We call upon all to take the stand which God expects; having **no** fellowship with any of the unfruitful works of darkness.

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(Continued from Page 1)

### **FEARFUL REMINDERS**

In Luke 17:22-37 Jesus told of the retribution that was to be visited upon the Jews resulting in the destruction of Jerusalem. In His grave warning to those trying to escape, Jesus cautioned that they should not even pause to try to save personal belongings. His awesome warning consisted of only three words. He simply said, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32).

In the sixteenth chapter of Luke our Lord told of an occurrence relating to the death of two men. One was righteous; one was wicked. At death, both were immediately in either a state of rest and comfort or a condition of suffering beyond total description. As the rich man suffered such torment that he cried out in anguish for just a tiny touch of water to cool his tongue, the dreadful words of answer were: "Son, remember" (v. 25).

This answer indicates that in the case of those who are lost, they are to retain their ability to "remember" things of the past. The misery of remembering all the opportunities shunned; all the evil things done; the realization of how things could have been as compared to the way they are—all this remembering is a torture of magnitude within itself. To add this to the vivid descriptions of the eternal sufferings of hell given in the Bible, transcends all human comprehension.

### **TO BE PUT IN REMEMBRANCE**

Jude said in his epistle, "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not" (Jude 5). The writer continues in verse 6 to set forth "the angels" and their destiny and, in verse 7 "the cities," including Sodom and Gomorrah. These vivid examples of "the

people," "the angels," and "the cities" are set forth to show how God destroys the unbelievers, reserves in everlasting chains of darkness the rebellious, and will see that all fornicators along with all who are guilty of vile sexual desecrations suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.

All of these sinful events of history, plus others in this short letter of Jude were expressly recorded to "put you in remembrance."

### **THE GREATEST REMEMBRANCE**

The most important event in the annals of time is the death of God's only begotten Son, followed by His burial and resurrection. On the eventful night before He was put to death, He inaugurated a lasting memorial to His own death. It was to become effective after His kingdom (church, Mat. 16:18-19) had come into existence, at which time Jesus said He would participate with His disciples in eating again, what came to be known as "the Lord's supper" (1 Cor. 11:20). In the account given by the inspired writer Luke, we find this great memorial being instituted by the Lord Himself. "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:19-20).

The "Saviour of the world" (John 4:42), since the beginning of the church has had faithful followers who assemble to eat the Lord's supper in loving remembrance of their precious Saviour. This joyful (though sad) remembrance is always on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), the day upon which Christ, in triumph over death, arose from the grave. Many, many memorials of great events in the history of mankind have been set up to commemorate various things of importance. When compared, however, to the eating of the unleavened bread and drinking the pure juice of the grape in remembrance of His body and His blood—all memorials instituted by man literally fade into total insignificance! And this greatest of all human remembrance is reserved for the ones who love and serve the Savior—while awaiting the great day when He will come again (1 Cor. 11:26)!

### **CONCLUSION**

As we remember—and as we work and wait, may our sacred desire be as expressed by the apostle John in bringing the Divine Revelation to a close: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

2244 Mountain View Drive; Hurst, TX 76054

# EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES

NOVEMBER 14 - 18, 1999

## “STUDIES IN JOHN”

### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14

|          |                 |   |
|----------|-----------------|---|
| 9:00 AM  | Michael Hatcher | The Gospel Account of John—An Introduction  |
| 10:00 AM | Dub McClish     | The “I Am” Statements of the Christ in John   |
| 12:00 PM | LUNCH BREAK     |   |
| 2:00 PM  | David Watson    | Difficult Passages: Does eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ refer to the Lord’s supper (6:53-58)? If Jesus knew that Judas was a “devil” from the beginning, why did He choose him (6:64-70)? Explain Jesus’ comments about “the rivers of living water” in relation to the Holy Spirit (7:38-39). Should John 7:53-8:11 actually be in the text?  |
| 3:00 PM  | Goebel Music    | The Last Supper—Jesus Comforts the Apostles (13:1-14:31)  |
| 4:00 PM  | Bob Sweeten     | Answering False Doctrines: Is knowledge attained through the five senses more certain than faith based upon sufficient evidence (4:39-42)? Are sinners individually predestined to God to come to Christ, and are they drawn to Him by God’s irresistible grace (6:37, 39, 44, 65; et al.)? Is it impossible for one who comes to Christ to be “cast out” (lost) (6:37, 39; 10:27-29)? Will those who never hear the Gospel (ignorant, heathen) not be held accountable to it (9:41; 15:22-24)? |
| 5:00 PM  | DINNER BREAK    |   |
| 7:00 PM  | Gary W. Summers | The Manifold Testimonies to Jesus’ Deity in John  |
| 8:00 PM  | Tim Nichols     | The Cana Miracle and A Visit from Nicodemus (2:1-3:36)  |

### MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15

|          |                  |  |
|----------|------------------|--|
| 9:00 AM  | James Meadows    | Jesus’ Resurrection and Early Appearances (20:1-31)  |
| 10:00 AM | Raymond Hagood   | Difficult Passages: How is it that John could do no miracle, yet be full of the Holy Spirit from the womb (10:41; cf., Luke 1:15)? Do John 11:2 and 12:1-3 describe the same anointing as the one in other Gospel accounts (Mat. 26; Mark 14; Luke 7)? How is the apparent discrepancy between 12:14-15 and Zechariah 9:9 explained? What did Jesus give, and what did the apostles receive (20:22-23), and how does this relate to what the apostles received on Pentecost? |
| 11:00 AM | Steven Lloyd     | Jesus’ Triumphal Entry and Last Public Sermon (12:1-50)  |
| 12:00 PM | LUNCH BREAK      |  |
| 2:00 PM  | Tyler Young      | Jesus Feeds Five Thousand, Walks on the Sea, Preaches (6:1-71)   |
| 3:00 PM  | DISCUSSION FORUM |  |
|          | B. J. Clarke     | The Nature of the Unity for Which Christ Prayed (17:20-21)   |
| 3:45 PM  | B. J. Clarke     | Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic   |
| 5:00 PM  | DINNER BREAK     |  |
| 7:00 PM  | Curtis A. Cates  | The Word Who Became Flesh (1:1-51)   |
| 8:00 PM  | Lester Kamp      | Jesus Raises Lazarus, and the Jews Plot Jesus’ Death (11:1-57)   |

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16

|          |                |   |
|----------|----------------|---|
| 9:00 AM  | Tim Ayers      | Jesus Visits Jerusalem and Confutes His Enemies (7:1-53)  |
| 10:00 AM | David P. Brown | Answering False Doctrines: Was the wine Jesus made in His first sign an intoxicating beverage (2:1-11)? Does selling religious books on church property constitute that for which Jesus drove out the money-changers from the temple (2:13-17)? Is “born of...the Spirit” a reference to baptism in the Holy Spirit (as Pentecostals insist), since “born of water” refers to baptism in water (John 3:5)? Is believing on the Christ the only condition imposed on man for eternal life, as “faith only” advocates teach (3:16, 36; 6:47; et al.)? |
| 11:00 AM | Robert Dodson  | Jesus Heals a Man on the Sabbath and Defends It (5:1-47)  |
| 12:00 PM | LUNCH BREAK    |   |

|         |                    |  |
|---------|--------------------|--|
| 2:00 PM | Barry Grider       | Jesus Heals a Blind Man and the Pharisees React (9:1-41)         |
| 3:00 PM | DISCUSSION FORUM   |  |
|         | Robert Taylor, Jr. | Is “Only Begotten Son” the Correct Translation in John 3:16?     |
| 3:45 PM | Robert Taylor, Jr. | Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic               |
| 5:00 PM | DINNER BREAK       |  |
| 7:00 PM | Garland Elkins     | The Vine and Branches and Final Words to the Eleven (15:1-15:33) |
| 8:00 PM | Marvin Weir        | The Lord’s Prayer (17:1-26)                                      |

### WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17

|          |                  |  |
|----------|------------------|--|
| 9:00 AM  | Ted J. Clarke    | Answering False Doctrines: Was Jesus merely “a god,” a created being, as “Jehovah’s Witnesses” allege (1:1; cf., 14:28)? Is Jesus the only person in the Godhead, as “oneness” Pentecostals insist (1:1; 10:30; 14:9)? Does a sinner “receive Christ,” that is, is he saved, merely by praying for forgiveness (1:12)? Was no grace and truth from God available to men before Christ came, as some aver (1:17)? |
|          |                  | Jesus, the Light for a World of Darkness   |
| 10:00 AM | Darrell Beard    | Difficult Passages: Was no grace and truth revealed through Moses or others before Christ came (1:17)? Why did Jesus say none have seen God, while Moses and others did see God (1:18; 6:46)? Was the wine Jesus instantly made from water intoxicating (2:1-10)? What does it mean to be “born anew” and “born of water and the Spirit” (3:3, 5)?   |
| 11:00 AM | Jesse Whitlock   |  |
| 12:00 PM | LUNCH BREAK      |  |
| 2:00 PM  | Rick Brumback    | The Good Shepherd Discourse and Reaction To It (10:1-42)   |
| 3:00 PM  | DISCUSSION FORUM |  |
|          | Daniel Denham    | Is All of Life Worship (4:23-24)?  |
| 3:45 PM  | Daniel Denham    | Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic   |
| 5:00 PM  | DINNER BREAK     |  |
| 7:00 PM  | James Rogers     | Pilate Gives Jesus to the Jews, and He Is Crucified (19:1-42)  |
| 8:00 PM  | Joseph Meador    | The Dialogue at Jacob’s Well and a Second Sign (4:1-54)  |

### THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18

|          |                  |   |
|----------|------------------|---|
| 9:00 AM  | Gary Grizzell    | The Adulterous Woman and Strong Words for the Jews (8:1-59)   |
| 10:00 AM | Tom Wacaster     | Answering False Doctrines: Are the “other sheep” and the “branches” references to denominational churches (10:16; 15:5)? Were the Jews predestined to reject Christ (12:37-40)? Should we practice footwashing as an act of worship in the church (13:4-15)? Do Jesus’ promises to send the Holy Spirit apply to all believers, including us today, as taught by Pentecostals (14:16-18, 23, 26; 15:26-27; 16:7, 13-14)?      |
|          |                  | The Betrayal, Arrest, and Trials of Jesus (18:1-40)   |
| 11:00 AM | Don Walker       |   |
| 12:00 PM | LUNCH BREAK      |   |
| 2:00 PM  | Bobby Liddell    | Difficult Passages: What is the meaning of the comparison between the wind and the Holy Spirit (3:8)? What is the meaning of “his witness hath set his seal to this” and “God hath sealed” (3:33; 6:27)? What is the meaning of “giveth not the Spirit by measure,” and how does this relate to Christ and to us (3:34)? Should John 5:4 actually be in the text, and was there really healing power in the pool of Bethesda? |
| 3:00 PM  | DISCUSSION FORUM |   |
|          | Jerry Moffitt    | Did Jesus Allow/Encourage Social Drinking of Intoxicants (2:1-10)?  |
| 3:45 PM  | Jerry Moffitt    | Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic  |
| 5:00 PM  | DINNER BREAK     |   |
| 7:00 PM  | Gene Burgett     | Jesus’ Rendezvous with the Apostles in Galilee (21:1-25)  |
| 8:00 PM  | Darrell Conley   | The Gospel Account of John—A Summary  |

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# I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

*Shan Jackson*

Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, "the Son of the living God," shows that the disciples were beginning to understand exactly who Jesus was, and His mission on the earth (Mat. 16:16). They still had a long way to go in their understanding, but they were starting to get the true picture of Jesus as God's "only begotten Son" (John 3:16). But the time of Jesus' personalized teaching of the disciples was almost over. From this time, the Bible says, "he [Jesus] stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). However, Jesus in this text also makes one of the most precious and lasting promises He ever uttered. He said, "I will build my church" (Mat. 16:18).

You know, in times past, Christians have made somewhat of an issue of the way we, or other people, address the church. We try to avoid saying *my church* or *our church* because the church does not belong to us; it belongs to Christ. So we do not say *my* or *our* church because we do not want to cloud that great fact. But Jesus did not just say, "I will build my church" to teach us correct terminology. He said "I will build my church" to teach us spiritual reality. You see, we can refer to the church correctly, and still miss His teaching. Therefore, this writing is going to deal with why Jesus said, "I will build my church."

1. Jesus said "I will build my church" because the church is based on the identity of Christ. His promise to build His church was based on a God-inspired, human response. Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mat. 16:16). Jesus responded, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 16:17), and it is upon Peter's confession that Jesus promised to build His church. The church was not built on a pebble like Peter, but upon the bedrock of His confession. In fact, this confession of faith that Peter made is the same confession of faith every Christian makes unto salvation. It is the same confession that the Ethiopian made in Acts 8. It is the same confession Paul made and that he would later write about in Romans 10:10, "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The confession Peter made in Matthew 16 is the same confession every Christian made in the book of Acts and beyond.

Brethren, Jesus is the foundation of the church (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:4-8). The church is

what it is because Jesus is who He is. If Jesus is not the Son of God then the church is the biggest hoax in history, and we are the biggest fools. But, Jesus is the Son of God. On the day of Pentecost He was identified as "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Jesus said "I will build my church" because the church is based on His identity.

2. Jesus said, "I will build my church" because the church exists to do His will. Brethren, Christ did not build His church so the church can do what it wants to do; rather, He built His church to carry out His will (John 4:34). That is the function of the church. Everything that is done by members of the church are to be done with Jesus' authority. Therefore, as Paul says in Ephesians 5:17, we must understand "what the will of the Lord *is*." Peter says we no longer live according to the lust of the flesh, rather by the will of the Father (1 Pet. 4:2). In other words, our teaching is His teaching, our business is His business, our mission is His mission. It is simply not our choice to change the church to suit ourselves. People have taken innumerable liberties with the will of Christ and someday they will face His wrath.

First, Jesus said, "I will build my church" because the church is based on His identity. Second, Jesus said, "I will build my church" because the church exists to do His will. Third, Jesus said, "I will build my church" because the church was brought into being by His power and sacrifice. "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Brethren, as long as the church holds fast to our profession we are invincible. If death could not stop Jesus from establishing the church, then death also cannot destroy the church He established. If death could not keep Jesus from finishing His mission, then death is not going to keep us from finishing our mission (Luke 19:10). The same power that raised Jesus from the dead also accomplishes His work in us and through us.

It is always God that causes the church to grow. We can plant; we can water; "but [it is] God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:7). The church does not live and grow by man's formulas, it lives and grows by God's direction. And His direction is given in His book. Oh, we might grow something without following God's direction, but it will not be the church unless we are. You know, cancer cells grow a lot faster than healthy

cells. Weeds grow a lot faster than grass. Concerning the church—it is either God’s way of growth, or it is wrong. In fact, concerning life it is either God’s way or it is wrong. Brethren, we do not make growth happen. Only Christ and His Word makes growth happen. The Bible says we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, Jesus Christ. It is Christ’s church, it lives, works, and grows by His power.

Jesus said, “I will build my church.” He said that because the church is based on His identity. He said that

because we exist to do His will. He said that because we were brought into being by His power and His sacrifice. This is what Jesus meant when He called it His.

And now we must ask: To what extent is the church today His church? Are we based on the identity of Christ? Do we exist to do His will? Were we brought into being by His power and His sacrifice? Does correct terminology describe spiritual reality? Is our food to do the will of the Father?

*P.O. Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465*

Mark your calendars!!!

Make plans to attend!!!

# 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Bellview Lectures

Date:

June 10-14, 2000

Theme:

*Sad Statements of the Bible*

## ISRAEL ON TRIAL

*Guss Eoff*

Micah, God’s prophet, tells of the famous controversy between Jehovah and the children of Israel. What a picture! The whole nation is charged to give heed to God’s challenge. “Hear ye now what Jehovah saith: Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice” (Mic. 6:1). Jehovah demands that Israel be called to account, He has a dispute with His own people. God requires that Israel debate with Him, that she bring charges against Him. Israel must be careful of her charges, she better be advertent of her accusations, because God has His witnesses present to

testify against her.

God calls upon His witnesses to testify against His own people. Jehovah calls insensate nature as His witnesses. “Hear, O ye mountains, Jehovah’s controversy, and ye enduring foundations of the earth; for Jehovah hath a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel” (Mic. 6:2). This is not the first time that Jehovah has used such witnesses against Israel. “I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over the Jordan to possess it; ye shall

not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed” (Deu. 4:26). Notice again: “Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth” (Deu. 32:1).

In Micah 6:3 we read God’s question: “O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.” These words show the pleading of a loving God. Even though Israel had forsaken Jehovah, He still loves her. We read these words of solemn earnestness, a cry of sorrow. These words contain an appeal of love, Divine love that longs for the reconciliation of rebels. This language is one of desire: “what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me” (Mic. 6:3). These words point out the painful fact that God’s own people had grown tired of Him.

Before Jehovah passes sentence He permits Himself to be regarded as the defendant. He allows His people to bring charges against Him. Bring what accusations Israel may, she better be careful, because God had His witnesses. Jehovah knew that He had never treated His people unrighteously. “Thus saith Jehovah, What unrighteousness have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?” (Jer. 2:5).

Had God been too severe on His people? The Psalmist knew that this was not the case. “He hath not dealt with us after our sins, Nor rewarded us after our iniquities” (Psa. 103:10). Why then had God’s own people grown tired of Him?

Was Jehovah too quick to become angry with Israel? Certainly not! Notice what the Psalmist said in Psalm 145:8-9. “Jehovah is gracious, and merciful; Slow to anger, and of great lovingkindness. Jehovah is good to all; And his tender mercies are over all his works.”

As we look at this challenge of Jehovah: “testify against me,” can we conclude that God is justified in His

judging? We can be sure He was! King David knew that His heavenly Father was justified. “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, And done that which is evil in thy sight; That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, And be clear when thou judges” (Psa. 51:4).

Before Israel brings charges against her God, He reminds her of all that He has done. “For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him; *remember* from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteous acts of Jehovah” (Mic. 6:4-5).

Israel no doubt would remember all that God had done for her. He gave her freedom from the slavery of Egypt, the great leadership of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. “Thou leddest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron” (Psa. 77:20). Surely God’s people would remember how King Balak wanted Balaam to curse Israel so he could defeat her. They would remember how God delivered them across the Jordan and fought their battles. What more could God have done for Israel? Still, she had grown tired of Him. Why?

It may be easy for us to look upon Israel with disgust and say shame on you! But what about the church today? Maybe Israel was not so bad after all. Many have grown tired of God’s worship as given in the New Testament. As a result they are wanting to change the worship by adding to what God has instructed. Many are wanting to mimic the denominations around us. Many have grown tired of serving God and just quit and gone back into the world. Why? Be careful of the charges we make against God! He has His witnesses to testify against us. Remember, the mountains, the hills, and the enduring foundations are still present.

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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

*Volume XXVIII*

*November 1999*

*Number 11*

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## THE APPLAUSE OF MEN

*Gary W. Summers*

A lady wrote to “Dear Abby” expressing dissatisfaction with the popular practice of applauding during worship. We were amazed that anyone would write such a letter in this age of “Don’t-be-judgmental-and-have-religion-your-own-way.” We were not amazed, however, at the protest that appeared in February 7th’s column. Below is Nancy Whitford’s (from Champaign, Illinois) response.

Regarding the woman who complained about clapping in church: She should relax and enjoy. Worship doesn’t have to be a somber and expressionless experience. The Psalmist tells us, “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.”

How can people relax and enjoy what they do not consider to be spiritual or scriptural? (Come to think of it, was not this Bobby Knight’s advice to women being raped?) The fallacy of this argument is that if several people enjoy it, this woman should also. In other words, if the majority thinks a golden calf would be fun to worship, everyone should enjoy the revelry. The problem is that Nancy does not question whether the practice is right or wrong, which is the appropriate question to ask. Her comment here basically amounts to: “If it feels good, do it.”

The second fallacy in this paragraph is the false dilemma posed: either worship is an expressionless experience or we must clap our hands. How ridiculous! When Moses was in the presence of the burning bush, did he applaud God? When Peter, James, and John were on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus, did they applaud His bright appearance?

This comment assumes that the minds and hearts of people are not nearly so important in worshiping God as

their hands are. How preposterous to think that we can only be involved in worship if our hands can smack each other with precision. Fervency in worship is provided from within, not by some artificial, external stimulus.

The third fallacy is the appeal to the Old Testament for our standard of worship. We are under a new and better covenant now (Heb. 8:6-7). The law of Moses has been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). To go back to the Old Testament as authority for anything in worship or practice carries with it two dangers.

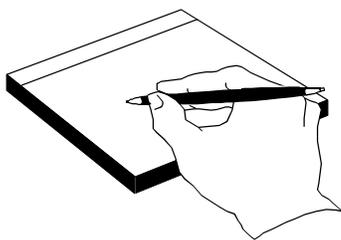
First, to appeal to the Old Testament as authority for even one practice obligates one to obey the whole law (Gal. 5:3). Some Jewish converts in the first century church wanted to bind circumcision on Gentiles. Paul told them they could not just take that one item; they would be required to keep the entire law. Are there any who really want to be bound by the law? Do they want to offer the blood sacrifices required in Leviticus? Do they want to abstain from all work on the Sabbath day? Will they remove pork from their diets? The law requires all of these things—and more.

Second, anyone attempting to be justified by the law has fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4). Now these are very strict statements, but Paul is trying to make the point very clear: We are not under the Old Testament, and we cannot appeal to the Old Testament for New Testament doctrine, worship, or practice.

“What’s wrong with church members expressing their enjoyment of worship? Amen and hallelujah!” Nancy writes (on page 9A of *The Denton Record-Chronicle*).

*(Continued on Page 4)*

# Notes From The Editor



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Hatcher**

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## Sin's Awfulness

Sin has been classified in various ways. There are sins of omission and sins of commission. Sins of omission being injunctions God has commanded us to do which we have failed to do. The Lord's physical brother, James, states this for us: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin" (Jam. 4:17). Sins of commission is when we violate a command God has given. Another way sins have been classified is inward sins and outward sins. Inward sins would be sins of hate, lusts, covetousness, etc. Outward sins would be sins of murder, fornication, stealing, etc. However we might classify sin, it is always awful.

It seems that we have lost the sense of how offensive, repugnant, and evil sin really is. We are so surrounded by sin, and it has become so commonplace in our society, that we no longer realize just how bad sin is. Another reason is that we have falsely classified sins into those sins which are really bad and those that are not so bad. While we have great repulsion of sins such as murder or adultery; for some reason we do not see the evil of "little white lies," materialism, missing services on a Sunday or Wednesday night, or a host of other *little* sins. However, sin is sin.

### Sin Separates

Sin is awful because it separates man from God. We should always keep in mind God's nature. Our God is a holy God. That aspect of His nature is repeatedly stressed in the Scriptures. "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend *is* his name" (Psa 111:9). "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3). "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God

Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. 4:8). The basic idea of holy is set apart.

God being a holy God, cannot have any sin in Him. He is completely set apart from sin. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jam. 1:17). "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" (1 John 1:5).

Being holy, set apart from sin, He cannot associate with sin. "For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee" (Psa. 5:4). "*Thou art* of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, *and* holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth *the man that is* more righteous than he?" (Hab. 1:13). The result that when man commits sin (any sin) it separates him from God. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa 59:2). "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil" (1 Pet. 3:12).

When separated from God, man is God's enemy. "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man" (Psa. 5:5-6). "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). Thus, sin is awful because of what it does to man's relationship to God.

### Sin Has Consequences

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8). There will be consequences both in this life and the life hereafter. Throughout God's Word we observe that sin often brings the consequence of physical death. Because of sin in the world, God destroyed the world by a flood (Gen. 6-8). Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain were destroyed by God with fire because of the sin of homosexuality (Gen. 18-19). Nadab and Abihu were put to death by God because of the sin of using strange (unauthorized) fire in sacrificing to Him (Lev. 10). We observe that often sin, while not bringing physical death, brings sicknesses,

heartaches, and diseases.

While the physical punishment of sin is certainly bad, the eternal punishment of sin in hell is far worse than any physical punishment that might be seen. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9:17). Hell is a punishment. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Mat. 25:46). Those in hell will be in torment. "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (Luke 16:23-24). It is a place where God is taking vengeance and there will be tribulation, fire, punishment, and a separation from God. "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). Sin is awful when seen by the consequences it brings.

### **Sin Caused the Crucifixion**

It is clear that all men have sinned. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal. 3:22). Having sinned, man deserved death. "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). The only way man could be saved from that death which he deserves is by the death of a sinless sacrifice taking the place of sinful man. That sinless sacrifice was Jesus death on the cross. "For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19). "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pet. 3:18). "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of

many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

Read Isaiah's beautiful description of this:

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Isa. 53).

If it was not for sin, Christ would not have had to die. We certainly see the awfulness of sin when we consider that it caused the sinless Son of God to die. Let us never take sin lightly. All sin is reprehensible. Let us always consecrate ourselves to the dedication to God and stay away from sin.

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## **Notes**

While at the Annual Lubbock Lectures, Cline Paden came and heard me speak. I appreciated his coming in view of our past relations. After the lecture, I had the opportunity to talk a few minutes with him. During that conversation two important points came out. He

tactically admitted to me that the false doctrine that the guilty party can remarry had been taught at Sunset School Of Preaching (now known as Sunset International Bible Institute) by informing me of the first person who he heard teach the doctrine. Second, I took the opportunity to discuss the possibility of our sitting down and discussing these matters. I mentioned the possibility of meeting with just him or preferably with the eldership at Sunset. Tommy Hicks (who wrote the articles appearing in *Defender* exposing Sunset) also took the opportunity to mention the possibility of meeting with the elders at Sunset (he has been accused of refusing to meet with them). Cline told both of us (separately and together) that there would be no interest in a meeting on their part. The eldership at Sunset had **no interest** in meeting with either or both of us. While it saddened me that they had no interest in studying and discussing these matters, it was not a great surprise to me.

On another matter which we have dealt with on the pages of *Defender* is the heretical doctrine of all of life is worship except for sin. Yesterday, as I write this, I received a booklet entitled *Worship A Living Sacrifice* written by Jess Hall, Jr. This booklet of 98 pages affirms the truthfulness of this damnable error. The first sentence of the booklet states, “The collection of material in this book demonstrates overwhelmingly that the Bible teaches the child of God is to present his body a living sacrifice, which is spiritual (reasonable) service (worship).” This is the same one whom Buster Dobbs came to a defense of when this doctrine was first introduced. Brother Dobbs clearly agreed with this damnable doctrine (as we showed in the April 1999 issue of *Defender*). However, an unsigned, undated letter comes from Orion Press (of Livingston, TX, and Lindell Mitchell puts his work out under this Writing—Publishing company) stating, “Dobbs and Mitchell emphatically say, ‘The Bible Does **not** teach all of life is worship, except for sin’” (Emphasis in the original). However the author of the statement must think that everyone is stupid. The majority of the statement argues for the very doctrine they claim not to teach. Notice other statements in this unsigned undated statement. “The Holy Spirit, through the pen of Paul, says the entire life of the child of God is to be a holy, living sacrifice of spiritual service....Still, Paul did insist that every Christian’s whole life be offered up to God as a holy living sacrifice, which is spiritual service....The discussion should center on the words: (1) present, (2) sacrifice, (3) holy, and (4) spiritual service. The scholarship of the world

testifies that these words refer to worship.” Dobbs use to teach the truth concerning this doctrine, now he teaches error claiming he is not teaching what he is teaching. “A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways” (Jam. 1:8). Why not just **repent** and come back to the truth? “Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Pro. 16:18). *MH*

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(Continued from Page 1)

Excuse me, but for whom is the worship designed: God or us? Are we gathered together to please ourselves? The philosophy of the *me* generation has finally been applied to worship. People have whined: “I didn’t get anything out of the worship”; so religion (in general) has responded by saying, “What would you like to have?” If you want 15-minute sermonettes, you have got them. If you want dramas, we are with you. Do you want games? Bingo! Do you like bowling? We are right up your alley. Do you want choirs with a modern sound and a rock beat? We can handle that. Why doesn’t somebody just revive the Ed Sullivan Show? It was entertaining without being overly religious.

“Oh, but all of this is for God.” Sure it is—just as the animals that Saul was to kill (but instead brought back alive from the Amalekites) were for sacrifices to Jehovah (1 Sam. 15). Modern churches have adopted the Roy Orbison approach to worship: “Anything you want, you got it.”

Of course worship should be joyous. What we offer to God should come from a heart that is overflowing with praise and gratitude, but it should be directed to Him, not ourselves. The problem with much of today’s *worship* is that it is directed first at the *audience* and only secondarily (if at all) to God, the reason being that worship has become entertainment.

When the choir or soloists use their God-given talents in a worship service, worshipers should be free to express their appreciation. We clap at the church I attend. Yes, there are a few silent types who seem shocked at the vocal majority, but most of us believe there’s nothing wrong with showing our appreciation to those who use their God-given musical talents for the rest of us to enjoy (9A).

The last sentence reaffirms that worship is designed for the enjoyment of those present rather than God. But consider also the idea of clapping for the *performers*. Does that include the one presenting the message? As Dave Miller said, perhaps all of the elders should line up to give him “high fives” after he has presented the message. Neither Moses, the prophets, the apostles, nor

Jesus our Lord ever spoke to receive the praise of men. In fact, those who do are called earticklers (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Those who allow their pulpits to be prostituted for the sake of pleasing the multitude are worthy only of contempt. The applause they hear is the only reward they will receive (Mat. 6:1-2).

These men bear no resemblance to those who preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), to those who preach the truth in and out of season (2 Tim. 4:1-2), or to those who risked death for the Word of God.

Of course, the musical talents to which the writer refers are probably the ability to play musical instruments, a practice not authorized in the New Testament. And neither are choirs or soloists, which are also designed to please the ears of men rather than the mind of God.

It is amazing how simply following the New Testament would resolve the perceived problem of non-participation. All Christians are exhorted to sing. We are to speak, teach, and admonish one another while singing praises to God (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). If all were singing as they should, then all worshipers would be expressing themselves to God (and would not have to rely on someone else to do it for them).

Only one man can speak or pray at one time, but all can sing together, give together, and observe the Lord's Supper together. Even if one man is leading the prayer, we are still all praying, listening to his words in order to say "Amen" at the conclusion of the giving of thanks (1 Cor. 14:16). Only one man may be preaching, but all are attentive, as the Bereans were, to see whether the things that were said are so (Acts 17:11).

God never designed worship as a spectator sport or as entertainment for the masses. It was designed as a way to praise God and edify one another by the enthusiastic participation of all.

Hand clapping in worship (during announcements or at baptisms) is nothing more than another carnal influence of the world upon the church; it cheapens worship and accents worshipping "in spirit" to the exclusion of worshipping "in truth" (John 4:23-24).

The following paragraph well sums up the current practice of so many. It is from Dave Miller's book, *Piloting the Strait*.

Current culture has groomed and conditioned us to be entertained. Television and the cinema have so developed in their sophistication that they are able to stimulate us and hold our attention with little or not effort on our part. As Neil Postman describes in his bestseller **Amusing Ourselves to Death**, we have allowed ourselves to shift away from rational assessment of truth in exchange for substanceless emotional stimulation. So in religious practice, worshippers appear driven by that which is "better felt than told" (232-33).

Although some may think that hand clapping is a minor issue of no importance, it should be remembered that this action itself is not so much the focus of attention as are the attitude and philosophy it represents. The absence of applause does not make worship less spiritual; its inclusion does not add anything spiritual. Applause is not praise for God; it is praise for mankind—for our *performance*. Would it not be better to honor Him with the fruit of our lips (Heb. 13:15)?

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Make plans to attend!!!

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Theme:

*Sad Statements Of The Bible*

# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ASTROLOGY?

*Donny Weimar*

Late night and mid-day television offers a smorgasbord of psychics who claim to know your future. Of course they place a disclaimer at the bottom of the screen: "For Entertainment Purposes Only." Daily periodicals carry horoscopes predicting the emotional successes or failures of the day. Oriental restaurants offer Zodiac table mats and *fortune* cookies in the same tray as the dinner bill. All of it can be conveniently wrapped into a package called Mysticism. This is an old religion that moderns have named the "New Age" movement.

We say that it is old because the tenets of its beliefs can be seen as far back in biblical history as the fifteenth century B.C., in the court of Pharaoh (Exo. 7:11-12). Moses cautioned the Hebrews before they entered Canaan not to associate with individuals: "that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer" (Deu. 18:10-11). There is nothing new about the so-called New Agers. The pseudo religion of the psychics has always been and ever shall be nothing but mumbo-jumbo superstition.

Astrology, according to Larry Fluitt: "The word itself relates to the stars or heavenly bodies. The word 'astrologer,' found in Isaiah 47:12-13, is translated from a Hebrew word that means 'viewer of the heavens.' Astrology, which is both pseudo-science and religious superstition, holds that the position of the sun, moon and planets at the time of one's birth influences personality, and that by projecting the movements of these

celestial bodies, future events can be known. Astrologers, therefore, claim to have access to hidden knowledge." (Fort Worth Lectures, 1998)

The Old Testament clearly declares God's condemnation of Mysticism. Read Deuteronomy 18:9-12; Isaiah 47:9-13; Leviticus 19:26. "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exo. 22:18). Such blasphemes provoke Jehovah to anger (2 Kin. 17:17; 21:6). Astrology is a form of idolatry in that it makes the sun, moon, stars, and planets out to be gods. Idolatry had horrendous consequences for the Jew (Eze. 23:49).

The New Testament denounces Astrology and its friends too. As was just stated afore, astrology turns God's creation into gods, idols of worship. Those who exchange God's truth for a lie and worship the creation instead of the Creator will not to be excused (Rom. 1:25ff). In Acts we read the historical account about the apostles taking the gospel to the Gentiles in Ephesus. "And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver" (Acts 19:18-19). Genuine conversion to Christ demands that one renounce *magical* religious beliefs. (Some would shutter at such a book burning today.) Stargazing, astrology, is a hoax which rational Christians want no part of. It is a pseudo-religion of the father of superstitious lies, the Devil.

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## MARK 16:15-16

*Owen D. Olbricht*

In spite of attacks by some on Mark 16:8-20, the passage continues to appear in all major Bible translations. This is true because evidence is abundant in early Christian literature that the early church was familiar with this passage and accepted it as authentic by quoting from it, using it when translating into other languages, and by including it in most ancient manuscripts.

All that is contained in the passage is also taught in other passages in the New Testament so proof that it is not authentic, if such could ever be presented, would not alter any Christian teaching; however, proof that it is authentic adds weight to the truths taught in the passage.

### SETTING

Mark 16:8-20 augments Jesus' commission to the apostles to go preach the gospel to the world by corresponding with Matthew 28:18-20. The material preceding this in the gospel accounts present the works and teaching of Jesus and is given for our instruction and in order to prove He is the Christ so we will believe in Him as the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:30-31).

Leading people to faith in Jesus was not for the purpose of faith alone, but was rather for the purpose of bringing people to hear Jesus (Mat. 17:5; Acts 3:22-23) so they would obey Him (Mat. 7:23-27; 28:20; John 3:36; see RSV, NAS). After Jesus had completed His

earthly mission with adequate evidence that He is the Christ, the Son of God, who had come to save mankind, He sent His disciples into all the world to seek to bring the world to believe in Him and respond to His will. He stated that repentance and remission of sins would first be taught in His name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). This beginning is recorded in Acts 2:38 and is in compliance with Jesus' instruction as found in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16.

In such a setting the instruction in Mark becomes very important because now for the first time the gospel will be preached in the name of Jesus. For the first time what is required of man to be saved according to the terms of the New Testament will be preached, for the New Testament has been dedicated and made effective by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 9:17-20). For this reason, Mark 16:15-16 is important because it presents the basis of salvation made possible by the death of Jesus, which is obtained through believing the gospel and being baptized.

#### **MEANING OF MARK 16:15-16**

Some object to an interpretation of Mark 16:16 that would include baptism as being necessary for salvation. They do not consider such an interpretation consistent with the rest of the teaching of the New Testament which they believe presents salvation as being by faith only and, therefore, excludes baptism as a requirement for salvation. For this reason they interpret Mark 16:16 as saying that belief only is necessary for salvation. Faith in Jesus does not exclude the necessity to obey Jesus in order to be saved. "He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9). Since Mark 16:16 is the teaching of Jesus, then to be saved one must believe the gospel and be baptized. Other passages might indicate that more might be required, but less could not be required.

Some would object to the necessity of baptism because Jesus did not say, "He that is not baptized shall be damned." Such an argument may seem to have some

validity in an English sentence but has no validity at all because of the construction of the Greek sentence.

D. Edmond Hiebert in his excellent commentary, *Mark, A Portrait of the Servant*, wrote, "The aorist participles, he who believed and was baptized, point to action viewed as past in relation to the time of the verb shall be saved" (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974, p. 418). Both "believe" and "baptized" are aorist participles in the Greek sentence and the main verb is "shall be saved." The general rule in the Greek (adhered to in the interpretation above) which applies in this case is as follows: "The aorist participle denotes action prior to the action denoted by the leading verb, whether the action denoted by the leading verb is past, present or future" (Machen, *NT Greek for Beginners*, p. 117). This means that one must complete his belief of the gospel as well as his baptism before the action of the main verb will take place, i.e., before one will be saved. The argument that Jesus did not say he that is not baptized shall be damned has no validity in this case.

In an effort to bring out the meaning of the aorist participles in Mark 16:16, the New American Standard Version translates the verse, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has not believed shall be condemned." This translation correctly places both believe the gospel and be baptized before shall be saved, as also does the Greek sentence.

#### **SUMMARY**

Mark 16:15-16 is in agreement with other New Testament passages (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). This passage contains Jesus' final instruction to the disciples concerning taking the gospel into all the world, giving them instruction as to what they are to preach and who will be saved.

Whatever at that time He taught them is essential for salvation is required of the whole world. Jesus placed believe and be baptized together before shall be saved. What God, therefore, has joined together, let not man put asunder.

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