

Defender

"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

Vol. XLI

2012



January

April

July

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February

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Defender



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Vol. XLI

January 2012

Number 01

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Mac Deaver's Present Day Spirit Baptism Heresy in *Biblical Notes Quarterly* *Daniel Denham*

Yet Another Misrepresentation

Where is the integrity of Mac Deaver? I have detailed the mathematical absurdities involved in Mac's theory that two baptisms (one in water and another in the Spirit) equal the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. I have also documented his many misuses of Biblical texts, glaring self-contradictions, false implications, and logical fallacies relative to Spirit baptism. In his Spring 2011 *BNQ* response to my *Defender* article from February 2010, which was but one installment of an entire series dealing with his errors, he claims to have thoroughly rebutted my charges and exposed the weaknesses of my expose.

Yet, over and over again he makes counter charges that are not only wrong, but are founded on his obvious failure to have even read the materials as carefully as he claims to have read them. He charges that I took him out of context, for example, concerning what he claims is a "spliced quotation" pertaining to his theory that Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 provide exceptions to the time-frame on conversion as taught in John 3:5 (cf. the July to September 2011 issues

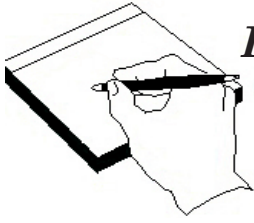
of *Defender* on this theory). There is an obvious intimation by Mac that there was something unscrupulous about the way I handled the statement. I "spliced" it; so, I must have been dishonest in handling it and in my criticism of his position.

However, this so-called "spliced quotation" came from his own **explicit** statements on page 317 of his book. He said concerning "the birth of water and the birth of Spirit" that these "would always occur at approximately the same moment." That statement is in his book; I did not make it up. That he contradicts himself in his handling of Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 is not my fault. I did not write his book. He wrote it, supposedly even being guided by direct Divine wisdom in doing so. Here is the **precise** sentence from the book: "That is, the birth of water and the birth of Spirit would always occur at approximately the same moment." Now compare that to my quotation of it: "He speaks of 'the birth of water and the birth of Spirit,' and says these 'would always occur at approximately the same moment' (317)" (*Defender* 2:2011, 1). The

only difference is my documented insertion, "and says these," which alters the meaning not one whit! The insertion itself is set off by the quote marks used around Mac's own words showing that "and says these" are my words and not his. The entire sentence which he gave is found in the quotation without any alteration of its syntactic or semantic force. His charge is not only bogus, but outright deceitful!

Mac knows he has been caught in yet another glaring self-contradiction, and he has caught the self-evident force of that self-contradiction. So he trumps up a bogus charge to deflect from his blunder. He blundered in a field upon which he prides himself. He knows that it is not rational to contend that (1) these two actions "always" occur at approximately the same time and then argue that (2) in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 they did not occur at the same time. Does he not know the meaning of *always*? Where is the master of *precision* in speech on this? If it **always** is to occur that way, but did not as he claims concerning the

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Notes From The Editor

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Sound Like

I recently read a comment on a messenger list written by brother Donald Fox regarding a comment made to him by a lady. After brother Fox became a Christian and began preaching, he became very close friends with the well-known preacher J. A. Thornton who has since passed away. This lady had been listening to a radio program of which brother Thornton was the speaker. She visited the congregation where brother Fox was preaching. After the services brother Fox greeted her and she told him, "You sound just like brother Thornton." Brother Fox's voice did not sound like brother Thornton; instead it was the message. The message was the same.

As many know, my father was also a Gospel preacher. Some who listened to him preach would, after hearing my preaching, tell me that I sounded like him. They mean that I physically sound like him (my voice), but also some of the expressions that I use come from him.

When we become Christians, we go through a change. We begin developing the nature of God in our lives (2 Pet. 1:3-4). His attitudes are to become our attitudes. We are to develop the mind of Christ (Phi. 2:5). Baptism as directed by the Holy Spirit is the new birth process (John 3:3, 5; 1 Cor. 4:15; Jam. 1:18). The new birth implies a new crea-

ture, and this is what the Scriptures teach. In Christ we become 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). We get into Christ through the new birth process where we become a child of God. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27). We are children of God (a new creature) in Christ, and we get into Christ through baptism (the new birth process). As children take on the characteristics of their parents, so the Christian takes on the characteristics of God.

Since God is love (1 John 4:7), we must learn to love the way that God loves. God's love is not the mushy, sentimentalism of many today. It is a love that sees what man needs and gives to man what is necessary to take care of those needs. For example, God sees that man is separated from Him and needs reconciliation. Thus, He sends His Son to reconcile man to Himself. Jesus states, "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). Paul would add: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19). God's love was a giving love in doing what man needed. We must develop that type of a love for our fellowman that will do what is Scripturally right in teaching them the saving Gospel of Christ. So many Christians no longer sound out a warning to the lost, no longer teach them, or try to

win souls. We have become comfortable and have taken our ease in Zion (Amos 6:1).

Brethren we need to get on fire for the Lord once more and be "zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:14). Jesus "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). Simply read the life of Christ

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

Michael Hatcher, Editor

and you cannot help but be impressed with His good works. Jesus, in giving us a scene of the Judgment, basically taught us that we would be judged by our good works (Mat. 25:31-46).

However, God is a God of hate as well as being a God of love. The Scriptures convey certain things that God hates. “These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among

brethren” (Pro. 6:16-19). Just as we must learn to love as God loves, we must also learn to hate as God hates. He hates sin and wickedness and so must we. There is a great problem when we love and/or practice the things that God hates and dislike the things that God loves.

God cannot associate himself with evil. “*Thou art* of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity” (Hab. 1:13). John writes, “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie,

and do not the truth” (1 John 1:5-6). Why do we think we can fellowship someone who walks in darkness and still be right with God? Those who teach false doctrine and do not abide in Christ’s doctrine do not have God (2 John 9). If we act as if they are in fellowship with God and thus fellowship them, then we forfeit our fellowship with Him (2 John 10-11).

Let us learn to love the things God loves, hate the things God hates, fellowship with those whom God fellowships and be zealous of doing good.

MH

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12 apostles and the 120 in Acts 2, the Samaritans in Acts 8, Cornelius and his household in Acts 10, and 12 more disciples in Acts 19, then who messed up? Those are an awful lot of exceptions for the way it **always** is done. Instead of owning up to his own logical blunder, Mac shifts blame to me for daring to expose his folly.

He made his claim pertaining specifically to John 3:3, 5 which *antedated* the texts in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19. “But as Jesus had plainly affirmed, both elements (water and Spirit) were necessary in order for one to enter the kingdom (John 3:3, 5)” (*The Holy Spirit*, p. 317). Yes, he argues for a transition period between the two, but he has **no** text after Acts 19 that shows that the two are to be simultaneous—he has none. He has to go back to John 3:5 to argue for this supposed simultaneity. If John 3:5 meant that they were **always** to be simultaneous, then it would have had to have meant it when Jesus first said it. Thus, Mac destroys his own transition period quibble. That he

cannot stand having shown! I have noted in my articles and lectures several times how he has argued for exceptions to this format. I have also pointed out the **inconsistency** of these claims with his use of John 3:5. Mac’s doctrine is incoherent; it does not hang together. The problem then is with Mac and his doctrine, and he is the only one who can correct his self-contradiction. He must **either** admit that John 3:5 never taught the two actions were simultaneous, which leaves him with no text describing the process, **or** else reject his doctrine of a transition period in Acts concerning them. He cannot have both as true.

More Imprecise True/False Questions

Also in his Spring 2011 issue of *BNQ*, Mac resorts frequently to imprecise true/false questions to try to do what he has so miserably failed to do through more direct means. Surely, he knows that only a precisely stated proposition is either true or false. Imprecisely stated ones suffer from the fallacy of ambiguity. He

needs to rework his statements very carefully and avoid that and other pitfalls.

It is obvious that Mac cannot set forth a basic 3-point argument from John 3:5 demanding the conclusion he urges. It is true that true/false questions are most helpful in defining the parameters of one’s case and focusing on and exposing the weaknesses in an opponent’s position. This writer has frequently made use of them. I noted earlier a number of them I asked of Mac and his followers in an article in the *Defender* series on his Spirit baptism heresy, which article Mac conveniently and completely ignored. But true/false questions are valuable only **when precisely stated**, because then and only then does the Law of Excluded Middle apply to propositions. Mac knows this as well as anyone. The statements must be **precisely** stated. Most of Mac’s questions are not precisely stated in his article. They often commit fallacies of thought—such as ambiguity, begging the question, and diverting the issue. As such, they

prove nothing other than the fact that Mac is resorting to deception to advance his case in such matters.

He gives the following true/false question (or statement): “T F 1. In order for a person to become a Christian, he must receive water and Spirit (**True:** John 3:5; Acts 5:32; John 7:37-39; Eph. 1:13,14)” (*BNQ* 9). Now, stop and think, folks! Notice that Mac marked this statement as “**True.**” Elsewhere Mac admits that the alien sinner cannot receive the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14:17). Now, he says that he must to become a Christian, i.e., to cease being an alien sinner. The “he” must be an alien sinner: for if he is already a Christian then the statement is absurd. A Christian does not need to become a Christian. He obviously already is one. What Mac means (but does not state) is that the alien sinner must receive Holy Spirit baptism, but according to Mac that entails immersion of the alien sinner’s human spirit into the literal essence of the Holy Spirit. Thus, his doctrine implies that the alien sinner not only can but must receive the Spirit directly and immediately to be saved. It is the alien sinner who needs to become a Christian and thereby cease being an alien sinner, Mac’s ridiculous “non-sinner but not a Christian” theory, as we have previously detailed, notwithstanding.

John 3:5 only shows that water and the Spirit are in some manner involved in the New Birth for one to enter the kingdom. John 3:5 does not teach that one must receive Spirit baptism to enter the kingdom. Mac must read that into the text from somewhere else. The other three passages he cites concern individuals who are already “obedient ones” (Acts 5:32), disciples (John 7:38-39), and members of the Lord’s church

(Eph. 1:3-23). They do not deal with the alien sinner, but rather with those who are already in the kingdom (or the church). Remember that Mac said “true” to the true/false statement here. It will come back to bite him in later statements in his article.

His second true/false question (or statement) here is as follows:

T F 2. In some cases of conversion in the book of Acts, if one receives water, but does not receive the Spirit or if one receives the Spirit but does not receive the water, he is still a Christian (False: However, when applied to the Samaritans (who received water but not Spirit for a while) Denham wants to claim that they were Christians, but with regard to Cornelius who received the Holy Spirit before he received baptism in water, Denham thinks he is not a Christian until he receives the water (*BNQ* 9)!

Again, Mac affirms that the alien sinner (e.g., the Samaritans and Cornelius) had to receive the Spirit to become Christians. Yet elsewhere Mac says that alien sinners cannot receive the Holy Spirit and cites John 14:17 for this conclusion. That Mac cannot see his own self-contradiction is astonishing. But he contradicts himself in his own book. He states expressly: “But I did say that sinners become Christians today by being baptized in both elements” (*The Holy Spirit*, p. 297). What are the elements? Water and the Holy Spirit. So, the sinner must be immersed in the Holy Spirit to become a Christian according to Mac Deaver, but the alien sinner cannot receive the Spirit to do so according to him as well. That leads to yet another quandary for Deaver—the inevitable conclusion that no alien sinner then can ever be saved. He must directly receive the Spirit to be saved, but he cannot do it because he is in the world and not in Christ (John 14:17). Let Mac wrestle with

his own predicament here awhile.

Let us now consider, while Mac contemplates his quandary, the supposed dilemma he posits for “Denham.” If Mac states that Cornelius received the Holy Spirit in the same sense as Acts 2:38, which he claims entails the personal indwelling of the Spirit, then he implies that Cornelius had the personal indwelling before obeying the Gospel. Remember Mac equates the gift in Acts 2:38 in every respect with the gift in Acts 10:44-45. However, Cornelius had not yet been baptized for the remission of sins and so still was in sin at the time. Thus, Mac implies that Cornelius received Spirit baptism to regenerate him while he was still an alien sinner.

Mac contends that Cornelius was a Gentile living under Patriarchy, but that really does not avail his case here, because Cornelius was still in need of salvation which implies that he was a sinner nonetheless. Peter told him “words whereby [he] and all [his] house **shall be saved**” (Acts 11:14). If he needed salvation, what was it from? Obviously, he needed salvation from sin like everyone else (Rom. 3:23). If Cornelius did not need forgiveness of sins, then why was water baptism even needed? Mac has just removed water from the plan of salvation. Baptists and Methodists ought to rejoice over his efforts here!

What Cornelius received was a miraculous demonstration or gift from the Spirit to convince the Jews present that the Gentiles had a right to hear and receive the Gospel as well as they. It no more meant that he was a child of God at that point than Balaam’s ass speaking with a voice of a man proves that he also was a child of God (Num. 22:28).

As concerns the Samaritans, Mac implies that they were not children

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February 22 – 26, 2012

Elders: **Kenneth Cohn, Buddy Roth, and Jack Stephens**

David P. Brown, Director

Wednesday, February 22

6:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 PM	What is the New Testament Church?	David P. Brown
8:00 PM	What is the Independent Christian Church?	John West

Thursday, February 23

9:00 AM	What is the Salvation Army?	Michael Hatcher
10:00 AM	What is the Lutheran Church?	John Rose
11:00 AM	What is the Church of Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons)?	Johnny Oxendine

Lunch Break

1:30 PM	What are the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches?	John West
2:30 PM	What is Dispensationalism	Daniel Denham
3:30 PM	Open Forum	

Dinner Break

6:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 PM	What is the Restoration Principle and is it Scriptural?	Dub McClish
8:00 PM	Are Faithful Children of God Found in the Denominations?	Bruce Stulting

Friday, February 24

9:00 AM	What is the Baptist Church?	Danny Douglas
10:00 AM	What is the Unitarian/Universalist Church?	John Rose
11:00 AM	What is the Organization and Work of the New Testament Church?	Wayne Blake

Lunch Break

1:30 PM	What is the Methodist Church?	Gene Hill
2:30 PM	What Makes JW's, Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Seventh Day Adventists Different from Other Denominations?	Jess Whitlock
3:30 PM	Open Forum	

Dinner Break

6:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 PM	One Can Know One is a Member of the Lord's Church? (Identifying Marks of the Church)	Roelf Ruffner

Saturday, February 25

9:00 AM	What is Christian Science?	Jess Whitlock
10:00 AM	What is the Worship of the New Testament Church?	Johnny Oxendine
10:00 AM	Give Your Daughters to Husbands (Choosing a Husband)—LADIES ONLY	Sonya West
11:00 AM	What is the Emerging Church?	Daniel Denham

Lunch Break

1:30 PM	What is the Community Church?	Danny Douglas
1:30 PM	Thy Desire Shall be to Thy Husband (Having a Successful Marriage)—LADIES ONLY	Sonya West
2:30 PM	What is the Presbyterian Church?	Gene Hill
3:30 PM	Does the New Testament Authorize the Church Revealed on its Pages to Fellowship Denominational Churches?	Bruce Stulting
4:30 PM	Is the New Testament Church a Denomination?	Roelf Ruffner

Sunday, February 26

9:30 AM	The Apostasy of the First Century Church	Terry Hightower
10:30 AM	Are Pious Un-Immersed Persons Christians?	Geoff Litke

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1:30 PM	The Emergence of Catholicism from the Apostate Church	Terry Hightower
2:30 PM	What is the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?	Michael Hatcher
3:30 PM	Has the New Testament Church Been Restored?	Dub McClish

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of God until several days after their baptism in water by Philip. That is brother Mac's problem, not mine. He is the one with the Samaritans being half born again for several days and poor Philip botching their baptism by not baptizing them

"into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Thus, as I noted, the Samaritans were Christians upon their baptism, and Cornelius and his household were not until their baptism (Acts 10:48). What contradiction is there in that statement? Let Mac pick up and deal with what I have said rather than what he wishes I had said.

The Crux of the Matter Relative to Mac's Doctrine

After all the falderal over Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19, Mac finally comes back to the real focus of his error and the assumption essential to his position. In so doing, he makes yet another blunder and totally negates all of his claims concerning the preceding texts. He goes back to John 3:5 to try and establish his doctrine. Hear him:

I claim that to be a Christian one has to be immersed in both elements. And if water is an element (the thing to be baptized in) in John 3:5, there is no hermeneutical basis upon which to conclude that Spirit is not equally an element as is the water (see 1 Cor. 12:13 with John 7:37-39) (BNQ 9).

First, no one has denied that the Spirit is an element in the New Birth. I for one have said so repeatedly and taught so for over 35 years now. For

one to become a Christian one must be born of water and of the Spirit. That is absolutely true. There is no dispute over that. However, the verb *born* does not mean, "be baptized."

While water baptism is certainly part of the New Birth, it is not all

must be the case that whatever they did to do so they had to have experienced the New Birth in doing it.

Peter preached the Word of God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and commanded those who sought a remedy for their sins to repent and

be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Does Mac deny any of this? And Mac himself admits that this baptism was in water. I note that Peter "with many other words, did exhort and testify, saying unto them, Save your-

selves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). Those who *obeyed* his message (the force of the Greek idiom translated in the KJV as "gladly received the word") "were baptized; and there was added unto them about three thousand souls" (2:41). Again, the words that Peter spoke were directly from the Holy Spirit, or will Mac and his followers deny that? There is no mention of them being baptized in the literal element of the Holy Spirit here. There is no mention of Spirit baptism as being involved in their being added by the Lord to the church. There is only a mention of them receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, and Mac cannot prove that such was Spirit baptism. In fact, if he takes that position then he repudiates the text as a promise of the personal indwelling of the Spirit that he differentiates from the baptism of the Spirit. So, let him take his pick

there is to it. There is more to the New Birth than baptism. The verb *born* is modified by both prepositional phrases. These phrases show some relationship of the parent noun of each phrase to the action of the verb. **It does not tell us what that relationship is.** In fact, Mac would not know what water's relationship to the New Birth is **except by virtue of other texts** bearing on the subject (e.g., Eph. 5:26). He cannot **by John 3:5 alone** establish immersion in water as the means by which one is born of water. Neither can he extrapolate from that the specific relationship the Holy Spirit has to the New Birth. Again, that must be determined by other texts bearing on the general subject.

As those who obeyed the Gospel in Acts wound up in the church, which is the kingdom of God (Acts 2:47; Mat. 16:18-19; Col. 1:12-13), it

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which one he will give up here. If he says that the indwelling implies Spirit baptism, then he needs to prove it.

Now, the apostle Paul taught that he had begotten the Corinthians through the preaching of the Gospel (1 Cor. 4:15). If that was true of an apostle through his preaching of the Gospel, then why is not also true concerning the Holy Spirit who inspired him to preach that Gospel? It can be rightly said that those who experience the New Birth are begotten by the Spirit thus through the preaching of the Gospel. It is also not surprising then that the Bible expressly teaches that we are begotten by God through the Word of truth (Jam. 1:18; 1 Peter 1:22-23). This then is the Spirit's role as one of the elements involved in the New Birth. In summary, we see both elements on Pentecost with the 3000. They heard, believed, and obeyed the Word of the Spirit, wherein is life (John 6:63, 68), and in obey-

ing they were immersed in water for the remission of sins and thus had those sins washed away (Acts 22:16). It is that simple. That is the New Birth succinctly demonstrated on the first Pentecost following the Resurrection of the Lord who made it possible through His atoning blood. Now, brethren compare that simple description of things, which brethren have long understood, held, and taught, with Mac's messed up and bollixed version that is so self-contradictory that Mac himself cannot even keep his story straight as to when Spirit baptism is in view and when it is not in view.

By the way, it is in obeying the teachings of the Spirit that one is baptized into the one body as per 1 Corinthians 12:13. Brother Mac needs to address the material we have presented elsewhere in other articles and lectures showing that such is the self-evident force of that text as per Greek syntax. He

needs to examine Paul's use of *en pneumati* in his epistles, especially in 1 Corinthians 12 itself. Paul is not using it here of the **element** into which we are baptized, but of the Spirit as **agent** in the baptism. Mac has a tendency of only noticing those arguments that he believes he can poke a hole into and particularly seems to avoid getting into a discussion of the original text when it clearly does not support his theory.

Relative to John 7:37-39, it deals with one who is a disciple (*pisteuon*, literally, "he who keeps on believing," **present active participle**) and so also does not support Mac's theory of Spirit baptism for the alien sinner to enter the church. Or is Mac ready to admit that the alien sinner prior to complete obedience to the Gospel receives the Spirit and has thus "living waters" flowing out of his belly?

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Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Vol. XLI

February 2012

Number 02

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

Email: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Mac Deaver's Present-Day Spirit Baptism Heresy in *Biblical Notes Quarterly* *Daniel Denham*

More Questions from Mac, But More Woes for His Doctrine

Mac offers a bunch more true/false questions that are assumed by him to establish the truth of his “cleansing first and then regeneration” error, but they really create more problems for him than they are intended to solve.

The second true/false question, for example, actually unstrings his entire case. Mac writes:

T F 2. When a sinner is immersed in water for the remission of sins, following the moment at which he is forgiven of his sins and while he is still under the water, he is regenerated or made spiritually alive again (**True** – Tit. 3:5) (*BNQ* 11).

He cannot prove from Titus 3:5 that regeneration follows cleansing. He will not (and really cannot) deal with the phrase “the washing of regeneration.” He cannot explain how one can receive the remission of sins without being in Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). For one to receive forgiveness he has to be, therefore, in the kingdom (the church). If he is not, he is still an alien sinner. So, Mac's statement is false, not true. That

destroys his line of argument.

Back in 1999, Mac endorsed the teaching of Bob Berard that the Spirit directly **cleanses and imparts spiritual life to** the heart of the sinner. Bob Berard wrote:

Summarizing, one remains spiritually dead until he is baptized even though he has willingly submitted to the Spirit's word and was thereby “indwelt” (as some imply) by the Spirit solely by means of the Spirit's word. The Spirit's word and man's submitted will leave man lost in sin until that man is immersed (Acts 22:16). It is in that immersion that God operates in addition to His word according to Colossians 2:12. At baptism (not before by the word alone) spiritual life is attained and this is simultaneously with the Spirit's personal entrance into the heart (Rom. 8:9; Col. 2:12-13). Since spiritual life is a working of God occurring at baptism (Col. 2:12-13) and since the indwelling Spirit is identified as the Divine Person giving life (John 4:10-14; 7:37-39; Rom. 8; [sic] 11,13). The Holy Spirit is the Person of the Godhead who personally imparts spiritual life in the heart of the person being baptized (*BNQ* 199/16).

Mac felt so compelled right here

to endorse Bob's new doctrine and explain it *more precisely* that as the editor of *BNQ* he added the following notation parenthetically:

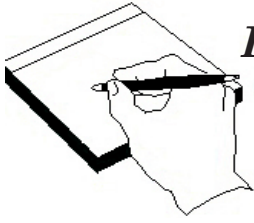
(If the reader would require even more precision, it could be said that the Holy Spirit changes the heart during baptism [Titus 3:5] and then moves into the heart to take up His indwelling after the heart is cleansed [Gal. 4:6], Editor) (16).

Bob then completed the summary by writing:

This is the personal work of the Spirit done in addition to (but in conjunction with) what He does through His word and this is precisely what is meant by the term “direct” as defined in the introduction of this article (16).

Here Bob and Mac equated the cleansing and the giving of spiritual life (or regeneration) and assigned the action to the direct work of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the alien sinner. Mac said the Spirit cleanses the heart and then moves in. Bob says the Spirit directly imparts spiritual life to the heart of the sinner in addition to and in conjunction with the Word of God. That was in 1999.

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Notes From The Editor

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Debating

The very idea of debating is detestable to many *Christians* in our day. Many *Christians* view debates as sinful. They certainly would never engage in such nor would they give their support to one. Debating goes against the idea prevalent in our society today of “friendship evangelism.” However, if one looks back on the history of the church, he will find debates are an important part of it.

Peter instructed us: “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). *Answer* is from the Greek *apologia* and means: “a speech of defense, defense, reply” (BDAG), or “verbal defence, speech in defence” (Thayer). Paul uses this same word when he says of himself: “But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel” (Phi. 1:17). *Defence* is the same Greek word *apologia*. Jude informs us: “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). *Earnestly contend* is from the Greek *epagonizomai* which means: “to exert intense effort on behalf of something, contend” (BDAG) or “to

strive, contend earnestly. To fight for or in reference to something” (Zodhiates).

These passages clearly show we are to be ready to debate our cause: “Debate thy cause with thy neighbour *himself*; and discover not a secret to another” (Pro. 25:9). Yet, many refuse to even entertain the thought of debating. Generally two arguments are made against such. First, is simply the idea that a person does not believe in arguing. Thus, they argue against arguing! Second, it is often said that debates will hurt the church. What evidence do they offer for proof? Their say so!

On occasion someone will bring up the passages where Paul lists debates with other sinful actions. “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers” (Rom. 1:29) and “For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults” (2 Cor. 12:20). *Debate* in these passages come from the Greek *eris* and means, “Engagement in rivalry, especially with reference to positions taken in a matter, strife, discord, contention” (BDAG) or, “contention, strife, wrangling” (Thayer). This deals with an attitude of strife and discord. While a few debates have degenerated into that type of an attitude, it is not a condemnation of debating. When it does degenerate to such, it is not the fault of the debate process, instead it is the fault of the participants. Debate as defined by *New Oxford American Dictionary* is, “a formal discussion on a particular topic in a public meeting or

legislative assembly, in which opposing arguments are put forward. An argument about a particular subject, esp. one in which many people are involved.”

Jesus was a debater. Matthew records Jesus debating first the Herodians, then the Sadducees, and last the Pharisees led by a lawyer (Mat. 22). Each group set forth their argument in the form of a question. Each one was put to shame by Jesus’ perfect response. Jesus had nothing to fear from meeting them or anyone else because He possessed the truth. However, they had everything to fear as is seen when Jesus places them on the spot by His questions. They did not possess the truth, thus “no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*” (22:46).

Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was a debater. Notice what Inspiration says about him: “Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake” (Acts 6:9-10). When he was then brought before the council, he used the truth to show them the error of their way. The council not having the truth could not withstand him so they put him to death. It is interesting to note a couple of

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

things regarding Stephen's account. The antagonists are specifically named. (There goes that not naming names view that so many today are want to say.) Also Stephen, and Jesus, used a logical approach to the subject at hand. Both presented perfectly logical arguments. It was not simply railing against the opponents. They did not make simply emotional appeals to gain adherents to their views.

Other great Bible characters were debaters: Paul, Apollos, Silas, et al. None of these men simply made *ad hominen* attacks against others, or simply spoke evil and tried to ruin other peoples' reputation by evil reports. Faithful men of the past were debaters: Alexander Campbell, Moses Lard, Foy Wallace, Guy N. Woods, Gus Nichols, G. K. Wallace, Thomas Warren, et al. These men were not afraid to unsheathe the

sword of the Spirit and use it effectively in defeating error.

Sadly, men like this are dwindling. No longer are men being taught to defend the Truth and debating the Cause. Today what "men of renown" practice is to backbite and rail against those they oppose. They are challenged to debate, but they will not stand on the polemic platform to logically argue their case. You see it is much easier to get with your friends and simply attack the character of the other person instead of dealing with their arguments. When the problems started as a result of some desiring to fellowship Dave Miller, they were invited to forums to set forth their case. However, instead of standing on the platform and setting forth truth through logical argument, they decided to abstain from such and attack the character of faithful brethren.

When we publish challenges to these men to prove their accusations against us, instead of dealing with the issues they remain quiet and get with their friends and people they can influence and blaspheme us.

There is the old adage: Truth has nothing to fear. The wise man wrote, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Pro. 28:1). These "men of renown" will remain quiet and no longer stand on the frontlines to debate truth because their works are works of darkness. Jesus said, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:20). We pray for their repentance, but they have opened the door to compromise and once that happens, they have no stopping point.

MH

Continued from Page 1
Bob later applied this work to Holy Spirit baptism without any contradiction or opposition from Mac.

It will also be observed that Mac was using both Colossians 2:12 and Titus 3:5 during those years to affirm a direct operation by the Spirit on the alien sinner's heart to cleanse him (or impart spiritual life). I pointed this out in material dealing with Bob's articles. However, now Mac has concocted his absurd doctrine that an accountable person can be a non-sinner without being a Christian to try to extricate himself from the obvious problems confronting his theory on present day Spirit baptism. How many more changes will he make just in responding to these key points?

The text of Colossians 2:13, immediately after verse 12, shows that

the cleansing occurs at the same time as the regeneration. The text reads: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." The verb translated "quickened together" (*sunedzopieesen*) is aorist active indicative and certainly refers to regeneration. It is modified by the participial form "having forgiven," which in Greek is *charisamenos*. It is an aorist middle participle. It is used here as a circumstantial participle. While aorist participles often (though not exclusively) indicate antecedent action relative to their relationship to the action of the principal verb, also called the main or controlling verb, which would be *sunedzopieesen* (quickened together), the general rule does not hold for constructions

where the principal verb is also aorist tense, as is the case here. In such cases where the principal verb is aorist and the modifying circumstantial participle is also aorist the action is commonly **simultaneous** or **contemporary** (i.e., the action of each coincides with the other in time and effect) (cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 624-625). Handley C. G. Moule, in his analysis of the Greek text, even specifically noted that the action of the forgiving here occurs "at the moment, in the act, of the 'quickening'" (*Studies in Colossians and Philemon*, 106).

It is perfectly logical that forgiveness and regeneration (making alive again) should be simultaneous in nature because the reason why one is spiritually dead to begin with is due to the sin he has committed. That is

why the Scriptures speak of the alien sinner as “being dead **in his trespasses and sin**” (Eph. 2:1; cf. Col. 2:13, “dead in your sins”). If one’s sins have been forgiven or cleansed then why is he yet dead? His sins have been pardoned and removed. How can his spirit in any meaningful sense still be “tainted”?

Mac’s third question in the *BNQ* article is also utterly disingenuous and reflects his lack of understanding of redemption itself. He asks:

T F 3. Forgiveness and regeneration are identical concepts (**False**—Look up the words) (*BNQ* 11).

He needs to deal with the phrase “the washing of regeneration” in the original language, as we have pleaded with him to do. Forgiveness and regeneration are differing terms looking at **the same general action** (namely, salvation) from **two perspectives**. The former, like the term justification, looks at salvation from a strictly **judicial** perspective (i.e., the condition of the saved person as one forgiven or pardoned as opposed to still being guilty of sin). The latter looks at it from a **moral** perspective (i.e., the condition of the saved person now made alive as opposed to being dead in sin). To try to separate the two as utterly distinct actions in time is patently absurd. Those who have tried to do so tended to be Arminian in theology (e.g., A. T. Robertson). Forgiveness and regeneration are two descriptive depictions of the same process. Mac needs to define the phrase “identical concepts.” Is he referring to the specific definition of each term? Or does he have reference to the process they implicitly describe? Maybe Mac needs a course in semantics, as well as in grammar and syntax.

How can one who is **not** in Christ have forgiveness in the

Gospel Age when one **must be** in Christ to even have it (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14)? How can one no longer be dead in sin, which is why he needed regeneration in the first place, when he no longer has any sin in which to be dead (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13)? Also, using Mac’s terminology, how can one’s nature remain tainted when that which tainted it has been cleansed?

Some Parallel Texts That Trouble Mac’s Theory

It will be observed that Acts 3:19 parallels Acts 2:38 in structure and promise in its key points. The former reads, “repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” while the latter reads, “repent, and be baptized...for the remission of sins.” Conversion (hence regeneration) is equated with the action of baptism itself, which Mac also admitted concerning Acts 2:38 is water baptism. Thus, conversion (or regeneration) occurs in water baptism at the same time as the remission of sins.

The result of receiving “the gift of the Holy Spirit” or “the times of refreshing” would also be conditioned on the actions of the two verbs in each text by Mac’s own use of Acts 2:38-39. If the baptism in 2:38 is water baptism only, then so is the “be converted” in 3:19 a reference to water baptism only. If there is not involved in the verbs “be baptized” (in 2:38) and “be converted” (in 3:19) any reference then to Spirit baptism, then “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (in 2:38-39) and “the times of refreshing” (in 3:19) are not contingent on one receiving Spirit baptism. Thus, Mac has once more repudiated by implication his own doctrine. It will be recalled that he teaches that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the personal indwelling of the Spirit.

If so, then the only baptism upon which it is contingent, according to Mac’s own use of Acts 2:38-39, is water baptism. Spirit baptism is then precluded.

Mark 16:16 parallels Acts 2:38 as well. This is a fact that brethren have often noted in debate with denominational preachers and in Gospel sermons. To receive the remission of sins is clearly the same thing as to be saved. That implies that when one receives the remission of sins, he must be “in Christ” or in the church, for that is where not only the remission of sins found (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14) but also where those who are saved are (Acts 2:41, 47; Eph. 5:26). Mark 16:16 shows that Mac’s “cleansing first and then regeneration later” doctrine is false.

Mac’s Questions Resumed and Another Dilemma for Mac

Mac, however, is undeterred by the problems of his case. Ignoring them, he goes on to his fourth true/false question in this section of his article by writing:

T F 4. A sinner can be regenerated before he is forgiven (**False**—If he could be he would be both spiritually alive and spiritually dead at the same time. God would be making a guilty sinner spiritually alive while still guilty! Denham’s unfortunate claim that cleansing and regeneration are identical concepts (his words are: “one in the same”) means that he is unintentionally suggesting this impossible situation) (*BNQ* 11).

Again, the question is based on the either/or fallacy that one of the actions must precede the other. That is simply not so. They can be—and indeed are—simultaneous in nature referring to the same ultimate result which is salvation. That is why Paul said that God “saved us...through the washing of regeneration and

renewing by the Holy Spirit” (Tit. 3:5). Note again it is “the washing of regeneration” and not “washing and then regeneration”!

Mac’s question also devastates his distinction though he does not catch it. If the individual, where regeneration would precede cleansing, is both spiritually alive and yet spiritually dead in the scenario he gives, why is that so? Is it not because he would still be in his sins, even as Mac points out? Is that not why he is dead in the first place? Certainly, it is. But, watch it, what if he now has been forgiven and thus has no sins? If he has no sins, then how could he still be spiritually dead? If he is no longer dead in sins, then he must be alive. If not, then why not?

Is it not conceivable that in practical terms **the same act** by which one is forgiven **is the same act that makes him alive**? As there is no longer any sin, then there is obviously no longer any spiritual death. If one is no longer spiritually dead, then, as Mac admits, he must in fact be spiritually alive (he cannot be both at the same time as Mac admits).

Mac’s Muddled Thinking on Forgiveness

Mac’s confusion here arises from his muddled concept of cleansing itself. Again, Mac believes that man’s innate human nature is somehow literally tainted. As man is essentially a moral, spirit being, it would have to be the case that this “taint” literally attaches to either the mind or the spirit of the sinner. What is the nature of this ethereal filth? It would have to be some sort of spiritual substance adhering to the mind or spirit, if it literally exists as Mac claims. This is what, in Bob Berard’s thinking, necessitated the Spirit

directly contacting the human spirit of the sinner to cleanse thus imparting life. In Mac’s present thinking it is what demands the action of Spirit baptism to regenerate by changing this “tainted” nature. The quasi-materialistic impulse of this doctrine, however, is the very essence of its failure. It takes metaphorical language and tries to literalize it.

Where does forgiveness take place on the Divine side to begin with, folks? In the Mind of God, does it not? Is that not **where** also justification (i.e., the **accounting by God** that one is now righteous or in a right relationship with Him and thus now the object of His blessing rather than His wrath) occurs? Again, the answer is: Certainly! Thus, we are talking about essentially **an act of God’s will** that occurs **at the time man completes his compliance to the terms of pardon**. What is Mac missing here? What is so difficult for him to grasp as to the relationships of these terms and concepts to God’s action in salvation? Why does Mac not know these things?

A False Charge from Mac Answered

As concerns my supposedly “unfortunate claim,” I explained exactly what I meant by my terms “one in the same” immediately following the phrase. Notice I also said **in the very same paragraph**: “These terms simply look at the **one action** from two perspectives—cleansing and regeneration” (*Defender* 5). It is in that they refer to the same action that they are one in the same. For all practical reasons they are in this respect. How often, brethren, have we compared Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 and noted that being saved in Mark 16:16 has the same **practical** force as

receiving the remission of sins? Has Mac ever done so? Most certainly he has, if he will be honest about it. Why did not Mac point out my expansion on the meaning of the phrase he uses here rather than try to mislead his readers into drawing a conclusion that I obviously did not intend? Again, is the man becoming incapable of telling the truth concerning certain matters?

I even added in the statement from which he clips the misappropriated phrase: “and are tied to the same event.” For one complaining earlier about spliced quotations, why did he clip this phrase out to use while obviously ignoring not only the explanation given bearing on the expression but even the rest of the specific sentence in which the phrase stands? Perhaps, it would be because his readers might realize the self-evident force of a plural verb (“are tied”)—it indicates that at least two items or things are in view.

Further, they might also from the phrase “to the same event” conclude that this is the sense in which I was saying the cleansing and regeneration were “one in the same.” Again, cannot the man be honest about anything pertaining to the subject and his opponents?

The Remaining Questions In This Section

His fifth and sixth true/false questions are really *non sequitur* to the central issue here, though Mac is going to try to make something from them. It is freely admitted that repentance is required for the validity of one’s baptism and that this entails the cessation of sin, but what does this have to do with his case?

His seventh true/false question is where he tries to twist the doctrine of repentance into meaning the alien

sinner is now no longer an alien sinner. There is an implication from his question (however, I suspect Mac will not accept it) which crushes his attempt. He writes:

T F 7. In the process of a sinner's becoming a saint, at some point while he is under the water, since he is no longer a practicing sinner and since he is no longer guilty of sin, he is no longer a sinner (**True**) (*BNQ* 11).

Now, watch his twisting of his question. He states:

Note: If he is not a sinner by practice and if he is not one by guilt, then how can he possibly be a sinner as distinguished from a saint? In baptism, does God forgive the sinner or does he forgive the saint? He forgives the sinner in order that the sinner may become a saint. By forgiveness, he becomes a non-sinner. By regeneration he becomes a new creature which is a Christian (Rom. 6:3, 4; 2 Cor. 5:17) (*BNQ* 11).

If he is not a sinner, then he is a saint. But if he is a saint, then he is a Christian. Mac seems to miss that point. Mac wants to place the saint between the alien sinner and the Christian. But if he is a saint, then he is already a Christian. It is the church that is said to be sanctified (Eph. 5:26). The church is comprised of Christians. Or is Mac ready to contend that others are sanctified under New Testament law without becoming Christians? Furthermore, one is either in the world or he is in Christ (the church).

The forgiven person in the scenario described by Mac, if he is not a Christian, is then not "in Christ" but is still in the world. The Law of Excluded Middle offers no other option for Mac. Additionally, how can the forgiven person even have forgiveness without having entered into Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14)? Such is self-contradictory.

Certainly, it is the sinner who is being forgiven, but at the point he is forgiven he then becomes a saint and, thus, a Christian. The same washing that cleansed him also sanctified him. Ephesians 5:26 says that we are both **sanctified** and **cleansed** by the washing of water by the word (KJV). Mac admits in his book that this refers to the water baptism part of the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 which he proposes (*The Holy Spirit*, 321). It should be noted that again we have an aorist main verb (*hagiasee*) with an aorist circumstantial participle of simultaneous or contemporary action (*katharisas*) in Ephesians 5:26. If he is a saint, then he is in the church, for it is the church (i.e., its members) that is said to have been sanctified in baptism. If he is in the church, then he is in the kingdom, and thus has experienced the New Birth (John 3:5). If he has received the New Birth, then he has been regenerated, and once more Mac's doctrine is defeated. Also, if he is in the church, he is "in Christ," which is where one must be to be a new creature (2 Cor.

5:17). So, Mac is defeated at every point.

Recall the parallel between Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38. If it is the case that salvation is equal to having the remission of sins, then it must be the case that at the point one receives the remission of sins he is saved. If he is saved, then he is in the church where the saved are (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23). He is therefore in the kingdom (Mat. 16:18-19), and so has received the New Birth (John 3:5). The forgiven person is a Christian. He thus has been regenerated, and once more Mac's doctrine is defeated.

It will be observed that Mac ignores the need in baptism for one to complete the *tupos* (pattern or form) of doctrine delivered by the apostles concerning the death, burial, **and resurrection** of Christ as mirrored by the act of Bible baptism (cf. Rom. 6:17-18). It will be noted by the careful reader of Romans 6:3-4, cited by Mac in his question, that one must be "raised up" like Christ to "walk in newness of life" to actually complete and comply with the *tupos*. In fact, Mac even adds to the text the necessity for one's spirit to **remain** submerged in the literal essence of the Holy Spirit as an essentially continuing process, while the text says nothing of that nature. So, Mac takes away an essential part while adding something else to Romans 6:3-4. Can you believe it?

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Out of the “Dark Ages”

Lynn Parker

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

From this short episode, we can draw several lessons. First, we must be ever vigilant for opportunities to teach the truth. The old fisherman’s question,

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

Second, never roll your eyes at the preaching of truth, and do not mutter: “wish they’d talk about something else”—even though you have heard it before. There are always new generations that need to hear the same great, old Gospel truths. Paul commanded, “And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). Perhaps this young man is the product of a congregation that once told its preachers: “Don’t preach against fellowship with denominations—we don’t have that problem here.” **They do now.** Human memory is fleeting at best, and

even the most fundamental teachings deserve repetition and emphasis on a regular basis (2 Pet. 1:13-15).

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

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

Kingsbury, TX

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Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Vol. XLI

March 2012

Number 03

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

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“Danger Will Robinson!” Thoughts Lost in Space and Brethren

Johnny Oxendine

Many years ago a popular television program (“Lost In Space”) had a robot that uttered those words (in the aforementioned title) when the young Will Robinson was unaware of impending danger. Today it is simply another phrase for warning someone when they are making a misstep or overlooking something important. I thought of this silly phrase when I happened to think of what many in the Bay Area have committed themselves to in the form of speaking engagements that include people from the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver. This is where Neal Pollard preaches for the Bear Valley Church of Christ.

As we mentioned previously, Neal has a connection to the Deaver’s (having preached a meeting at the congregation where Mac had preached—and his son now preaches), which means that there is obviously no objection to the doctrines that all Christians are baptized of the Holy Spirit, the direct operation of the Holy Spirit (in all of its manifestations), and other errors that Mac has pontificated. That some local preachers went to

the Bear Valley lectures last year says enough, but that a whole passel of them are soon heading down to Monterey with a Bear Valley troupe says, “Danger, Will Robinson,” if truth and associations matter.

I spoke to one local preacher who actually had **no idea** of all of these goings-on, but there are others in the area who have made it clear that it really does not matter what association they have with these people as long as no one asks any questions about it. Of course, it does not hurt that Dave Miller, now becoming a local celebrity, actually recommended Mac Deaver for a debate a year or so ago. I can only surmise that Miller has no problem with Deaver’s errors, or is as ignorant of them as he is elder reevaluation/reaffirmation (which he advocated and practiced).

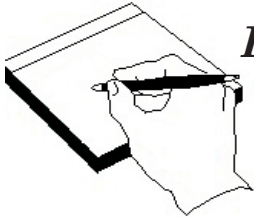
Now maybe the members at Bear Valley do not know what Mac teaches, or that Neal has a link on his blog to Weylan Deaver’s blog, or what that means, but **they should**. Maybe they do not know Neal’s link to Wayne Jones (University Church of Christ, San Marcos) has anything to do with Stan Crowley (infamous

for his marriage/divorce/remarriage errors). Nope, Neal and the rest are just another cog in the big party movement that has engulfed the church in many places, and brethren are no longer concerned about what it portends.

This all started with the idea that Apologetics Press was too big to fail, regardless of the fact that a false teacher was at the helm. The stubborn arrogance of that move led many to circle the wagons (some having to switch directions) into an enlarged fellowship circle (Grider, Young, MSOP, et al.) that would no longer address error lest it condemn itself of hypocrisy.

Years ago we warned, “danger, Will Robinson” to some brethren who were about to embark on a trip that included (totally unbeknownst to them) a false teacher, under the umbrella of a congregation we had intimate knowledge of regarding their fellowship with the Sunset School of Preaching. Oh, they did not think we could have such information, but they at least heeded the warning and avoided such associa-

Continued on Page 6



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

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mhatcher@gmail.com

Elder Authority

Jesus promised to build His church upon the solid rock that He was the Christ the Son of God. “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18). While Jesus was put to death, death could not contain Him; He was raised from the grave and established the church of Christ. God has made Him head over the church. God “raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:20-23; cf. Col. 1:18). He does not share that headship with anyone). Having authority over the church, He has complete “right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience.”

Within a local congregation, God set forth a certain organization. We see that organization mentioned when Paul writes to the Philippians: “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (1:1). Within that congregation of saints,

there are bishops and deacons. The bishops are those who oversee the work of the local congregation. “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). They have the exhortation to “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind” (1 Pet. 5:2).

Those “saints in Christ Jesus” (i.e., Christians) have the obligation to humbly submit to their oversight. “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you” (Heb. 13:7). Paul would write, “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves” (1 The. 5:12-13).

Our society went through a time of rebellion to authority in the 1960s. This rebellious attitude made its way into the Lord’s church. The Crossroads movement and later the Boston Movement (which became the International Church of Christ) by-passed the bishops of the local congregation to establish a high-archal system like the Roman Catholic papacy.

In the late 1970s two brethren attacked the authority of the bishops within the local congregation. Reuel Lemmons, then editor for *Firm Foundation*, wrote an editorial titled, “Who Calls the Shots” (August 2,

1977). Around the same time frame, Waymon D. Miller wrote a book titled, *The Role of Elders in the New Testament Church*.

Both works attacked the authority of the New Testament bishops and taught the only authority elders possessed was through their example. Miller wrote, “It is well to remember that there is not one occasion in the inspired record of a body of elders independently arriving at a decision about **anything**. There is, therefore, **no New Testament authority or precedent for elders serving in the decision-making role for churches**” (47). Sound brethren recognized the danger of attacks against the eldership such as these and properly refused to fellowship those who advocated such false doctrines.

On April 8, 1990, Dave Miller preached a sermon (under the authority of the elders of the Brown Trail congregation in Bedford, Texas, advocating what has come to be known as the reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders. This practice (as was preached by Dave Miller and practiced by the Brown Trail congregation) attacks the authority God placed within the eldership. Many, at that time, separated themselves from Miller and the Brown Trail congregation and would not fellowship them. However, the majority of brethren did not know anything about Miller’s sermon or what had taken place.

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

Bert Thompson hired Dave Miller to work for Apologetics Press. When the sins of Bert Thompson came to light, 60 brethren allowed their names to be placed on a statement of support for Apologetics Press and at the same time Dave Miller was promoted to executive director. Instead of withdrawing their support (as they should have done) it was instead decided that Apologetics Press was too important to fail. Thus, they continued their support of Apologetics Press and by implication, Dave Miller. These same brethren who would not fellowship others who taught doctrines that attacked the authority of the elders, now fellowshiped Dave Miller who taught and participated in a practice that attacked the authority of the elders.

When you accept doctrines that denigrate elder's authority, then other matters naturally arise. There are specific things which one begins to challenge as to whether the elders have a right to make decisions. Some

will argue that elders do not have the right to make a policy regarding the version of the Bible one is to use in the preaching and teaching program of the congregation. They challenge whether or not the elders have a right to have those serving in a public capacity to wear a tie and coat.

We are hearing more and more today contend that elders have no authority over attendance. They contend that God only obligates us to worship on the first day of the week and thus the elders have no right to obligate us to attend at any other time. If the elders have a mid-week Bible study, a person can choose to attend or not attend as it pleases them, or if the elders bring someone in for a Gospel meeting, members do not have to attend because elders do not possess authority in these matters.

The fact is elders do have authority to expedite the commands God has given. Members are to humbly

submit to their oversight. Thus, they do have the right to make a decision regarding what version will be used in the public teaching program (and make sure that perversions of God's Word are not used). They do have the right to make decisions regarding the proper decorum as to those who serve in a public way during the worship services. Elders are given the obligation to feed the flock and to do so they plan a mid-week Bible study or Gospel meeting efforts. To refuse to submit to these areas of the elders' authority is to be rebellious against God's delegated authority. You can see how that worked by reading Numbers 16.

However, when brethren compromised regarding Dave Miller when his sermon and the practice he took part in undermined the authority of the elders, they have opened the floodgates to challenge the authority of elders in any area.

MH

Mac Deaver's Present-Day Holy Spirit Heresy in *Biblical Notes Quarterly* *Daniel Denham*

The Problem of Time and the Text of Titus 3:5

Mac tries to extricate himself from the dilemma that he surely perceives by reducing the time distinction between **the cleansing and the regeneration** so he can slip Spirit baptism upon the human spirit of the candidate just after he is forgiven but just before he becomes a Christian. He posits that the person first becomes a saint and then upon regeneration a Christian. That way, Mac seems to think, he evades the

charge of a direct operation on an alien sinner. However, a saint does not need regenerating. If he is a saint, as noted above, he is a Christian. Thus, Mac will have to opt for a category somewhere between the alien sinner and the non-Christian saint. However, as we have already noted, there is no such category in between the alien sinner and the saint in the process. He has to invent it and ignore many passages to squeeze this nebulous category in between the two. As noted, he floats

this new category on page 14 under the rubric that he could be "a non-sinner who by regeneration is made a saint." However, Titus 3:5 speaks of "the washing of regeneration." Again, this is either the washing which regeneration produces, which would naturally entail simultaneous action, or the washing which is regeneration. *The renewing of the Holy Spirit* simply describes this same action in the form of hendiadys, as I have repeatedly noted. Mac cannot answer this! I am persuaded that

some of his supporters know this to be the case, even if Mac does not do so. We challenge Mac and them to deal with the original construction rather than making unsubstantiated assertions that syntactically are not only incorrect, but obviously absurd. Titus 3:5 does not read “first the washing and then the regeneration” which Mac’s theory must logically call for in the construction. Ignoring the obvious, brethren, is not an answer.

Returning to his material in the Spring of 2011 *BNQ* article, we note the following from Mac:

But now note that while conceptually forgiveness must precede regeneration, and regeneration must precede the indwelling, chronologically while they as events appear in due order, the whole process transpires in the blink of the eye while the person is under the water. Conceptually, we must make certain significant distinctions. But forgiveness, regeneration, and indwelling all transpire in a brief moment when the person’s body is under the water (*BNQ* 11).

The blink of an eye is indeed quick, but that blink can be the difference between life and death in driving an automobile or in facing the muzzle of a gun. Regardless of however fine Mac wants to pare down the time between the two actions, there is nonetheless implied a **difference in time**. He still has the Spirit contacting directly and immediately the naked spirit of one who is not a Christian and not a saint. Such a one is by definition still in his sins, because he is not in Christ where one receives the remission of sins (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). Mac, like Arminian Baptists seeking to avoid their own dilemmas, tries vainly to reduce the time difference between the direct operation he envisions and the act of salvation. Nevertheless

he, like they, still has some minuscule gap of time between them that cannot be bridged. It may as well be a chasm like that between the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19ff.) for all practical purposes. It is still a direct working of the Spirit on the heart of an alien sinner. As such it is the death-knell to his doctrine. Also, the time would have differed in specific cases according to his own teaching on the subject. In the case of the apostles, for example, it would have lasted for 3 ½ years and for the Samaritans in Acts 8 for several days, if Mac’s doctrine were actually true (which it obviously is not).

The Mac-Ian Art of Missing the Obvious

Mac, after having made a bigger mess, bristles in writing:

Now, in all of that description, where did I imply that the Holy Spirit comes on “the naked heart of the sinner” as charged by Denham? Dear reader, can you find the evidence in the foregoing description of the conversion process that I taught some form of Calvinism? Where did Denham or anyone else ever find the evidence to charge Roy and Mac Daever with being Calvinists or as being “neo-Calvinists” as one reckless antagonist falsely claimed? I deny to the death that we have ever explicitly or implicitly taught Calvinism! And I would remind Denham and his friends that it is a serious matter to become a false accuser (cf. Rev. 21:8; cf. Matt. 26:59-66). And all of those who in their uninformed zeal have taught that we are Calvinists need to be reminded that while it is surely wrong for a man to become a *false teacher*, it is also wrong for one to become a *false accuser*! (*BNQ* 11).

First, notice again the false canard about Calvinism! Mac is the one who needs to be reminded about the consequences of the sin of lying

against others here. Let him show where I accused his father of teaching Calvinism. He cannot find it. Let him find where I taught that his daddy taught Calvinism. He definitely did not present the evidence in the quotes he has given so far. I have specifically set forth the case that he is teaching what John Wesley taught on salvation during his earlier years due to his Anglican roots and the Arminian influence among the Anglicans of his period. Such are not false charges. They are based on historical fact. As N.B. Hardeman often said, “If it walks like a duck, looks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, pardon me if I call it a duck!”

Second, what he is doing is falsely equating the charge of a direct operation on the alien sinner with the charge of teaching raw Calvinism. This is diverting the issue yet again. Arminianism and its perfectionistic step-child Wesleyanism both teach a direct operation on alien sinners. **This is not a false doctrine peculiar to Calvinism.** To imply that it is not only false; it is patently dishonest, if the man knows anything of these systems. The brethren at Tennessee Bible College ought to know of these things! Or do they not study Systematic Theology there? What say ye, Malcolm?

Third, Mac pouts over having the unsavory implications of his doctrine tossed at him, but rather than answering them honestly, he smears his opponents with false charges. In his arrogance, the man shows both his abject ignorance and immaturity. One would think that for one claiming to have direct help of the Spirit in organizing his material and making his case that he would avoid such blunders in both logic and manners.

Parrish, FL

What The Bible Says About: 37th Annual Bellview Lectures June 9-13, 2012

Saturday, June 9

7:00 pm Truth David P. Brown
7:45 pm False Teachers John West

Sunday, June 10

9:00 am Morality Gene Hill
10:00 am Worship Ken Chumbley
Lunch Break
2:00 pm Bible Translations John West
3:00 pm The Tongue Dennis "Skip" Francis
Dinner Break
7:00 pm Holy Spirit Charles Pogue
7:45 pm Satan Gary Summers

Monday, June 11

9:00 am Inspiration of the Bible Michael Hatcher
10:00 am Home Tim Cozad
11:00 am Works of the Flesh Roelf Ruffner
Lunch Break
1:30 pm Emotions Charles Pogue
2:30 pm Conflict Gene Hill
3:30 pm Open Forum:
Dinner Break
7:00 pm Christian Growth Wayne Blake
7:45 pm Baptism Dub McClish

Tuesday, June 12

9:00 am Authority Ken Chumbley
10:00 am Divorce and Remarriage Don Tarbet
11:00 am Love David P. Brown
Lunch Break
1:30 pm Christian's Fruit Lynn Parker
2:30 pm Hate Tim Cozad
3:30 pm Open Forum:
Dinner Break
7:00 pm Modesty John Rose
7:45 pm Salvation Dennis "Skip" Francis

Wednesday, June 13

9:00 am The Second Coming Dub McClish
10:00 am God the Father Wayne Blake
11:00 am Drinking Alcohol Don Tarbet
Lunch Break
1:30 pm Covenants John Rose
2:30 pm Christ Roelf Ruffner
3:30 pm Open Forum:
Dinner Break
7:00 pm Hell Gary Summers
7:45 pm Heaven Lynn Parker

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determined yet. The book will contain 29 chapters. This will be a soft-cover book. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

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Continued from Page 1
tions. Today, warnings like that go unheard. Brethren simply disregard the obvious. Yet, let them ask those brethren from Bear Valley if they knew anything about Mac Deaver's

false doctrines relating to the Holy Spirit (baptism of and direct operation of) before Neal Pollard (their preacher) went to speak at the Deaver Den. They will likely brush

off the question and the questioner, hoping it will all be forgotten—and it will be, by both parties because neither of them care enough about the Gospel to contend for the faith.
San Mateo, CA

Does There Come a Point at Which Doctrinal Soundness Becomes a Hindrance to One's Relationship with God?

Charles Pogue

If one had asked brethren forty years ago if doctrine can be so emphasized that it becomes a hindrance to one's relationship with God, he would have been identified as a would-be peddler of denominational nonsense. Now, however, Rob Hatchett must think so, for he wrote it with boldness in his *Think*, article, "Where Are The Future Leaders?" Brad Harrub must think so, because he was willing to be the original publisher of the chockablock of error. Barry Grider must think so, because he was willing to foist the liberal lies upon the Forest Hill congregation. If Grider is to be believed, the Forest Hill membership must think so, too, because according to brother Grider, he received about as many accolades for printing it in the Forest Hill News as Abraham Lincoln did from the slaves for issuing the Emancipation Proclamation!

The foolishness of the above parties is clearly reduced to the scriptural ignorance it purveys by one single verse of Scripture (in fact, many single verses of Scripture will achieve that end), John 14:21 where Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and

he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Is to say that one loves God, and is loved of God, an accurate way to express that one has a very close relationship with Him? Surely none would deny it. That mutual love (relationship), Jesus said, is established by an individual having and keeping His commandments. To have the commandments implies that one must either study to learn them on his own, or be taught them by someone else. For instance, God has chosen "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). That those things are to be brought to our attention with consistency and frequency is clearly understood by Hebrews 2:1: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." Hatchett, Harrub, and Grider would have us to give less heed to the very things upon which Jesus said our relationship with both Him and His Father is established and enjoyed.

Gospel preachers who teach the doctrine of Christ are doing nothing more or less than what Paul

admonished Timothy to do. "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine whereunto thou hast attained" (1 Tim. 4:6). There is an open challenge, not made by man, but by God himself, to prove by a single Scripture reference that it is possible to prevent, diminish, stymie, slow down, or hinder one's relationship with God by focusing too much on doctrine. We hope, brethren, that everyone can recognize the subjective standard the false suggestion implies. If it is possible for too much doctrine to hinder one's relationship with God, how much is too much, and when is the point reached? Would the point not be different for one individual than it is for the next? If a person apostatizes from God, may he be returned to the fold by providing him with a sense of social relevance and entertainment or must it be done by doctrine? To ask is to answer.

If social relevance and entertainment were even necessary (which they are not) to developing a close relationship with God, one might have expected Paul's last words to

the Ephesian elders would have been for them to load the Ephesian brethren into a ship and sail them all (or at least the younger generation) across the Mediterranean Sea to the arena in Rome for some gladiatorial entertainment. That

would have contained an element of social relevance to boot! He did not. Instead, Paul told them, "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 that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). Choose this day who you will believe, whether it be Hatchett, Harrub, or Grider. As for me and my house, we will put our trust in the words of the inspired apostle!

Granby, MO

"Let Me Not Be Ashamed"

Brad Green

Enemies surrounded the psalmist David. He was chased into exile by his father-in-law (King Saul), faced rebellion from his own son (Absalom), and was always harassed by the enemies of God. In many of the psalms, we find David praying for deliverance from his enemies. In one such occurrence, we read:

Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, Let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause (Psa. 25:1-3).

Though David prayed often that his enemies not triumph over him in a physical sense, knowing that such a triumph would bring shame and disgrace to David, it seems that an even sadder principle is here proclaimed. Sorrowfully, in regards to faithfulness to God, those who **should** be ashamed are not, while those who need **not be** ashamed (due to their obedience to God) are. David proclaims his trust in God and prays that no temptation will cause him to be ashamed of his faithful service to God. If an individual becomes ashamed of doing the Will of God, apostasy from the Truth will follow. The enemies of God will stop at nothing to assault the faithful child of God and seek to make him ashamed. Harsh

statements like: "You are unloving, unkind, and without compassion," and "You think you are the only ones going to Heaven" are attempts to make the Christian ashamed. If such an attack is successful, it is indeed a triumph over one's faith.

The Bible teaches that the faithful child of God, one who waits on the Lord (25:3), has nothing of which to be ashamed. The apostle Paul states, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). Jesus proclaimed: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). If we desire to be with Christ in eternity, we cannot allow anything today to make us ashamed of being wholly obedient to His Word.

On the other hand, those who should be ashamed are those who are not obedient to God. The psalmist states that disobedience to God is without cause, because there is no rational cause for transgressing God's Laws. God is good and upright (Psa. 25:8), just (25:9), merciful and forgiving (25:7, 10). Anyone who will not or who has not obeyed

God should be ashamed.

Paul writes, "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, **that he may be ashamed**. Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother" (2 The. 3:14-15). Paul also states by inspiration: "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:10).

Let us remember the words of the inspired psalmist, "O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, Let not mine enemies triumph over me." Let us never be ashamed of the Truth of God's Word, and let us never be made to feel ashamed because we submit to it. Let us trust in the Lord and seek Him often in prayer that we do not succumb to the attacks of those who desire to triumph over our faith. Let us, with patience and love, seek to help those who are lost and those who have erred from the faith to understand that it is not shameful to preach and practice only that which God authorizes. The shame is to have a lifetime of opportunity to be faithful to God, but to choose to reject His loving call to "come unto me" (Mat. 11:28; Rev. 22:17).

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Vol. XLI

April 2012

Number 04

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Are We Drifting?

J. Noel Merideth

J. D. Tant, a famous Texas preacher of times past, would often end his articles by saying “Don’t forget, brethren, we are drifting.” He voiced his alarm as to the drift which he felt was taking place within the brotherhood. This “drift” was during the years in which the fight with the digressives began to subside, and brethren began to try a “new approach” to the denominational world. It was an approach in which debating and discussions would have an ever-decreasing emphasis. There was also the problem that brethren would not invite sound preachers to hold meetings in the summers; they wanted “big preachers” saying that if they could not get a “big preacher,” they would not have any. There are the same problems today and the question might well be asked: Are we drifting?

When one reads bulletins today it is obvious that some are acquiring a vocabulary quite different from the Bible and that of everyday life and contrary to the sound speech which God commands preachers and teachers to use. They forget to preach the Gospel in its simplicity and power, beauty, and glory. They fail, if they do not even refuse, to

follow the example of the learned Paul, that is determine to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

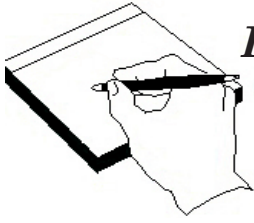
We are now treated to questionable remarks about fellowship. We are told to be tolerant of error. There are those who say we may be wrong on some of the basic matters in Christianity and that there ought never to have been any division over such issues as instrumental music in worship, premillennialism, and marriage and divorce. [We might now add the organization of the church to that list—editor.] We are actually told by some that we may be wrong on these matters. This is evidence that some are drifting in the wrong direction. Paul wrote, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*” (Eph. 5:11). John writes:

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

It is thus clear that God wants us to follow the doctrine of Christ and not fellowship false doctrine not even bid them God-speed. To come along and say we may be wrong on these matters is like showing cowardice in the face of the enemy and betraying the Lord with the kiss of compromise. There is such a thing as truth, it is accessible, it is within our mental reach; we should seek it, find it, believe it, and preach it! We should not be ashamed to preach that instrumental music in worship is sin, premillennialism is false, and the only grounds for scriptural divorce and remarriage is fornication.

We are also told by some that we should get out of the judging business and into the loving business. We as preachers are sometimes lectured that we see too much black and white, right and wrong. Blessings are sometimes sprinkled over the denominational world even the Salvation Army. Now it is true that hypocritical judgment is wrong (Mat. 7:13), but it is also true that there are things we are to judge. The Corinthians were to judge the case of fornication among them and put away the wicked person from

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Notes From The Editor

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Knowing God

God exists. While the Bible does not set out to prove the existence of God, it does give evidence of His existence. The Bible begins with God existing: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). God has also revealed Himself to man. He revealed Himself through nature (Psa. 19:1; Rom. 1:20) so only a fool would say there is no God (Psa. 14:1). However, this knowledge is incomplete. God has also revealed Himself through His Son and our Savior, Jesus the Christ (John 1:18; 14:9), thus Jesus' life exemplified God and His nature (Heb. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:4). Then God has revealed Himself by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:11). He does this by the prophets and apostle who spoke by the inspiration of God (1 Cor. 2:7-13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

It is, thus, man's responsibility to seek after and find God. Paul would tell the Athenians:

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him,

and find him, though he be not far from every one of us (Acts 17:24-27).

We have this need because God created us with a need to worship. We often speak of the need for air, water, and food, God also placed within man that need to worship. We must make sure our worship is directed at the proper object. The Psalmist writes, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (42:1-2). Later we read, "O God, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so *as* I have seen thee in the sanctuary" (63:1-2).

God is a jealous God, so He will not share man's loyalties with anyone or anything else. When He gives the Jews the Mosaic Law, He begins with this idea by saying:

I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments (Exo. 20:2-6).

There are certain blessings that come as a result of knowing God. Peter writes:

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as

his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Pet. 1:2-4).

There are at least five blessings Peter reveals to us that come from knowing God. First is grace. *Grace* is generally defined as unmerited favor or words to that effect. It has an application of God's gift of His Son to die on the cross for sinful mankind. God's grace is extended to all men (Tit. 2:11) in that Christ died for all (Heb. 2:9). However, only those who know God are recipients of God's grace in saving them from their sins.

Second is peace. While said by Eliphaz the Temanite, it is nonetheless true: "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee" (Job 22:21). We can first have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). Having peace with God brings peace with self (John 14:27) and peace with others (Rom. 12:18). Because we have peace with self, we can also have peace with whatever circumstances we might find ourselves in (Phi. 4:11-12).

He then tells us through a knowledge of God we have life. This would certainly include the life we have here on this earth. Jesus states, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I

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

am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly” (John 10:10). God, our Creator, knows what is best for us and has shown us the way in which to live so we would have the best life available in the example of Christ. However, there is much more than simply this world. There is the world to come. In Jesus’ high priestly prayer, He prayed, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (17:3). Peter continues in this letter to state that “an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:11).

The fourth thing Peter mentions that comes from a knowledge of God is godliness. *Godliness* is the translation of the word *eusebeia* and means devotion or piety toward God. Paul tells us, “But godliness with content-

ment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6).

The last thing Peter mentions in this context is that we have exceeding great and precious promises. Paul speaks of this in writing to the Ephesian brethren by saying, “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ” (1:3).

On the other hand, a failure to know God leads to eternal destruction. Paul would write, “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).

Sadly, in our society today most do not have any concept of God. The majority that do, simply do not know God in all that it means. They do not obey the Gospel (which is implicit in knowing God) or follow the teachings given in the Bible. This is why we see the world in the condition it is now in. Evil and wickedness abound. People call evil, good, and they call that which is good, evil (Isa. 5:20-23). The words of God to Israel are apropos for our times: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children” (Hos. 4:6). We, as Christians, need to be teaching people about God and His will for all men today.

MH

Continued from Page 1

among them; they were to judge them that are in the church (1 Cor. 5:1-13). Jesus said, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). The problem today is that people are not making the right kind of judgments. We love the souls of all men and should try to teach them the truth. We even love the souls of men in denominationalism, but we believe they are wrong religiously, even the Salvation Army. Instead of trying to compromise with those in error we should try to convert those who are in error to the way of truth. This takes patience and teaching but this is our job.

Christ came and died to purchase the church with His blood. Surely Christ would not have made such

sacrifice for the church unless it was to have a mission in some measure worthy of its cost. The great mission of the church is to preach the Gospel to the world, to build people up in the faith, and to help the worthy poor. It is not the mission of the church to furnish amusement for the world or its own members. We all know that a certain amount of recreation is necessary to the health and happiness of the individual, but it is not the function of the church to furnish amusement for people. The New Testament teaches that bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and that which is to come (1 Tim. 4:8). To quote an old preacher: “As the church turns its attention to amusement and recreation, it will

be shorn of its power as Samson was when his hair was cut.” A church is drifting in the wrong direction when it turns from its true course and moves to relatively unimportant matters. May we never lose sight of our goal nor drift away from it. Brethren, are we drifting?

Deceased

“*Christian Light*,” Sep-Oct 1981

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Mac Deaver's Present-Day Holy Spirit Heresy in *Biblical Notes Quarterly*

Daniel Denham

Denying Obvious Parallels Does Not Make Them Non-Parallel

Leaving the impression that he is following along with my line of argument to answer my article in order, Mac now says: "Now let us continue with Denham's own words" (*BNQ* 11—all quotes from this page). In actuality he has gone back a page or two to pick up on a point of linguistics and language that he had previously chosen to ignore because it strikes at the fundamental structure of John 3:5, the central text upon which he bases his position, and to have done so at the time in keeping with the flow of my article would have placed his response in the midst of the discussion of his supposed transition period texts in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19. This would, as we shall show, have proven quite enlightening to his readers as to how he really is using John 3:5. He is going back and forth between two completely different approaches to the text—each of which is mutually exclusive to the other. The deception was carried out in his book, but would have been made even more obvious in a shorter space. So, what he has done is separate, as best he could, this material on John 3:5 from the discussion on the transition he sees in Acts, as though they have no relevance to one another. The deception, however, does not help him.

Mac depicts the quote he uses from me as "such confusion," and refers to it as "a mangled mess of ideas!" (*BNQ* 11). So, let us break down the quote sentence by sen-

tence and see if that is so, or if the confusion is really with Mac. Where is the "mangled mess of ideas" really to be found?

(1) Mac quotes the following from me: "Mac's error on John 3:5 implicitly takes the construction as **an order of operation** type of construction." **Order of operation** simply refers to an order of actions that are involved in the syntax **of the sentence or clause** to which the actions belong. What is so difficult or confusing about that?

"Mary went to the store and bought apples" is an example of an order of operation construction. The sentence entails an "order of operation" in that Mary first goes to the store and then (at the store) buys the apples. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). That too is a sentence involving "an order of operation." One must first believe and then be baptized to be saved. Does Mac dispute any of these as entailing an order of operation?

(2) The next sentence in my statement is: "He is reading the text in this fashion, 'One must be baptized into water and into the Holy Spirit to enter into the kingdom of God.'" What is so confusing about that observation which is simply based on how Mac has reasoned from John 3:5? If there is confusion, it has to be in Mac's use of the text to teach both water and Spirit baptism as essential to enter into the kingdom of God.

(3) Then I said: "The problem is this wrongly equates born with

baptized." The sentence simply means that Mac takes *born* to mean "be baptized (in)" when he uses John 3:5. What is confusing about that? Is Mac willing to admit that the verb rendered *born* does not mean, "be baptized"? If so, then we have already made good progress in driving him off his main argument, whether he will acknowledge it or not. While baptism is part of the New Birth, it does not follow that *born* means "be baptized (in)," as Mac's use implies.

(4) He next quotes me as saying: "While baptism is part of the New Birth, baptism **alone** is not the New Birth." The New Birth consists of more than being dipped in water. In fact, even prior to Mac's new doctrine on present-day Spirit baptism, I suspect Mac would not have argued that water baptism alone comprised all that was involved in the New Birth. That is my point. Baptism alone is not all that comprises the New Birth. Again, what is so confusing about that statement? Is faith a part of the New Birth? Is repentance essential to the New Birth? What about confession of Christ?

(5) "The New Birth involves two key elements here—water and the Spirit." That is pretty self-explanatory as well. I do not state here how the two relate to the action of the verb "born." I simply note that there are two elements in the text that do. The genitive forms in which they are couched grammatically modify the action of the verb. That is a simple fact. So, where is the "confusion" or

the “mangled mess” here, Mac?

(6) Let us move to the next sentence which reads: “The form of construction is the same as that given in John 4:24, where worship is said to be ‘in spirit and in truth.’” This is also a simple statement of fact. The constructions are the same in that we have a verb modified by adverbial phrases. The only difference is that John 3:5 employs the preposition *ex* (or *ek*) with the genitive constituting the phrases “of water...of the Spirit,” while John 4:24 uses the preposition *en* with the dative case, “in spirit...in truth.” In the Greek text of each, one preposition actually governs the two nouns conjointly creating the two phrases in our English translations. The effect is ultimately the same in that the action of the main verb is modified by prepositional phrases that are acting **adverbially**. What does Mac not understand about this point? What is so confusing about it to him? Does he need a refresher course on how adverbs and adverbial phrases function in a sentence? Again, was he not listening when his own Daddy, one of the best Greek students in our lifetime, covered such subjects in Greek class? Was Mac not paying attention, or is he suffering from selective amnesia?

I suspect that he really does see the significance of my point and feeling the force of the argument, which he cannot answer. It is much easier to dismiss it *a priori* as confusing, a “mangled mess,” etc., rather than actually dealing with the syntax of the constructions.

(7) I then said regarding John 4:24: “Clearly, that is not an order of operation construction.” Again, where is the confusion here? Let Mac show us and engage us on the syntax of the statements. “Jesus is

not saying that we,” I went on to say, “must worship first in spirit and then in truth.” First, notice that I “spliced” the “quotation,” and yet did not alter its meaning one whit. Second, this statement is another simple statement of fact. Does Mac deny the statement? Does he believe, teach, and practice that John 4:24 involves an order of operation in which one must first worship in spirit and then worship in truth? Yes or No. If no, then he admits what I am pointing out in the statement. Where is the confusion here?

(8) I then draw the appropriate conclusion demanded by the consideration of the John 4:24 construction, by stating: “Neither is He affirming in John 3:5 that we are to be baptized in water and then in the Spirit.” What is confusing about this, folks? It is another simple statement of fact based on the preceding fact.

(9) So, I said: “That does not follow from the construction.” And it does not! That is another simple statement of fact proven by the example of the construction in John 4:24 where a verb is modified by adverbial phrases.

(10) I conclude: “Yet, Mac acts as though it does (289-299).” That is another statement of fact. He does act as though that is its significance and so employs the text of John 3:5 in his discussion of it in the pages cited. If Mac wants to go on record saying that such is not the case, and that he rejects the uses of John 3:5 as an order of operation construction, then let him say so. Here is his chance to be on record on that point! I suspect that he will not touch top, bottom, or sides of the matter, however, because to do so would mean to explicitly repudiate his main argument on John 3:5.

Now watch how Mac tries to twist what is so basically simple. He writes:

Dear reader, just where shall I begin in answering such confusion? What a mangled mess of ideas! First, he attempts to deny that the process of conversion is, in fact, an orderly process. The process, per Denham, is not “an order of operation.”

This statement makes me again wonder if Mac can tell the truth about anything. **Where did Denham say that “the process of conversion” is not an “orderly process”?** What Denham said was that there is **not an order of process taught or demanded by the construction of John 3:5!** And there is not. If Mac believes there is, then John 4:24 would also involve the specific order I set out in my comments above, which surely Mac would not accept. I was dealing with the syntactic and semantic structure of John 3:5. I said the construction of John 3:5 is “not an order of operation type of construction.” It is not. That is a simple fact. An order of operation construction entails the use of conjoined **verbs** or **verb forms** (e.g., infinitives, participles). If Mac really knew anything about syntax (whether Greek or English) he would know that. Why conjoined verbs and verb forms? Because that is where the action is expressed! Let brother Mac be honest about the matter and address it as such.

Mac continues his obfuscation of the matter, by next claiming:

Second, he then affirms that conversion is not merely baptism alone (which I take to mean water baptism alone), but he says that the new birth involves “two” key elements—water and Spirit. Now, dear reader, which comes first today? Water or Spirit?

What did I say about his arguing

that John 3:5 involves an order of operation? Does he so soon forget that Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 come after the Lord's teaching in John 3:5? Whatever Mac claims that John 3:5 teaches today it has to have taught when first spoken, and that brings us right back to the force of the syntax of the exceptive clause which **precludes** all of the exceptions to the order of operation he implies is indicated by John 3:5. Now, let us see him extricate himself from this self-contradiction.

Brethren, this is why he separated this material on the order of operation from the fuller discussion of the exceptions in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19, which he says are not really exceptions. He feels the force of the point and it has hit home despite his attempt to avoid it. Thus he immediately cautions against bringing the case of Cornelius in Acts 10 into the discussion at this point. Why? Because Cornelius received the Spirit

first and then the water according to Mac's own statements which are reversed from what he says John 3:5 binds upon us today. It does not dawn upon him that John 3:5 was spoken **before** Acts 10:44-48, which then violated his pattern as per John 3:5. If it does, he is conveniently ignoring it and being deceitful about its meaning. Let him tell us whether it is incompetence in handling the chronology of the Bible's teaching or duplicity concerning it as to why he is doing this.

Mac writes:

Don't be confused over the case of Cornelius which case cannot now be duplicated. No one in the world today is in the same situation that Cornelius was in (the case of Cornelius is explained in much detail in our book). Today as in all other cases of conversion in the book of Acts, we see that water comes first, followed by the reception of the Holy Spirit. Will Denham deny this order? No, he will not (BNQ 11-12).

Denham does deny that the Spirit is received today as Mac claims as per the 120 in Acts 2, the Samaritans in Acts 8, and the twelve disciples in Acts 19. Denham does deny that Spirit baptism was involved in each of these cases. (By the way, the 120 are not even mentioned in Acts 2. I challenge Mac to show from the original text that **they** received Spirit baptism on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. He cannot do so. The original text refutes this silly notion.) Denham does deny that Spirit baptism occurs when the candidate is submerged in the water of water baptism, which is what Mac claims John 3:5 teaches. Again, if it teaches that today, it taught it when first spoken. None of the examples given here fit that teaching. So, unless "except" really does not mean "except," these cases did not entail Holy Spirit baptism as per his main argument.

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“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Vol. XLI

May 2012

Number 05

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My God—My God—Why?

Wayne Coats

I do not understand how anyone could be more distressed, discomfited, and heartsick than I, as a result of the discord, ill-will, chaos, non-fellowship, and attitudes which border upon hatred between, among, and toward brethren. What kind of mentality would a human have, if one tried to assert that God is the author of such fightings among brethren? The obvious truth is that many brethren apparently do not care one whit what God thinks. Division is sinful and sin is damning.

If we can be honest enough to admit that division exists between congregations, where unity, harmony, goodwill, and peace prevailed a few years ago, then why can we not be honest enough to admit the causal factors that surely make the devil rejoice? There was a time in the not too distant past when brethren would travel across the United States and they felt perfectly at home and had no problem stopping and worshipping wherever they might be on the Lord's Day. That has drastically changed. Who changed and why? It is as dishonest and deceitful as the devil can ever cause one to be, when we refuse to admit the source of our divisions.

Anyone who has an ounce of integrity certainly knows and will admit that a great number of brethren in numerous congregations have not moved one iota of a hairsbreadth from the position and ground which they have occupied for long decades. Who will deny this? The simple worship has remained the same and the sermons that are preached are true to the Book, and sound forth the old Jerusalem Gospel. Is this wrong? Are brethren to be damned, ostracized, ridiculed, rejected, maligned, and avoided who seek to follow the old paths? Yes, that is the purpose and practice of an increasing number of liberal brethren who sneer at, snarl, and look with disdain upon those brethren who refuse to turn aside from the faith.

There is no longer any fellowship between brethren and congregations in a great many areas. Let us use a bit of common sense coupled with Scripture. When you bring into the worship, the playing of mechanical instruments of music, I cannot possibly fellowship you in such actions. We enjoyed fellowship before you brought in the instrument. Who destroyed our fellowship?

We worshipped together and

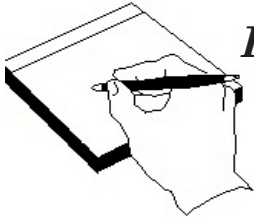
enjoyed wonderful fellowship for years, but you brought in all sorts of special entertaining solos, duets, quartets, and choral groups. I cannot justify such antics in worship to God. We had fellowship with each other before these new fangled practices were introduced. Who introduced them and destroyed our fellowship?

In days gone by, we treasured the fellowship of brethren more than the fellowship of denominational pastors, but that has changed drastically. I cannot with a clear conscience condone the practice of hob-knobbing with false teachers. I will not fellowship such false teachers. When brethren bring in false teachers and I stubbornly and scripturally refuse to fellowship them, please tell me who causes the breach of fellowship?

When preaching brethren become saturated with liberalism, modernism, Pentecostalism, and cultic theology, I cannot fellowship such foolishness. Is this sinful upon my part? Who causes the break in fellowship?

Please get this point well. If liberal compromising brethren desire

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Notes From The Editor

**Michael
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Prayer And Providence

God works in the affairs of man. He always has and He continues to do so. God has worked in two ways: through miracles and through providence. It is important that we understand the terms. A miracle is the setting aside of the natural laws God established. Providence is God's working through (or by means of) the natural laws He established.

God has used both miracles and providence to accomplish His desired will. For example, it was God's desire that Egypt (Pharaoh) allow the children of Israel to leave Egypt, as it was time to bring them into the Land of Promise (and bring justice upon the nations inhabiting the land). Pharaoh refused to allow the Israelites to leave. His refusal brought about ten plagues upon Egypt till he decided to fulfill God's will in allowing the children of Israel to leave Egypt. God's will was accomplished by means of miracles on this occasion.

At a latter time, God used providential means to accomplish the saving of the Israelites. Before Israel even knew they needed help, God was arranging for their deliverance from extinction. While it, no doubt, began long before we are introduced to the scene, God used the refusal of a queen (Vashti) to show herself to some drunken men at the request

of the king (Ahasuerus), God's hand was in her removal as being queen and the rise of Esther to take her place. It involved Mordecai's being in just the right place to hear the plot against the king, and then his learning of the plot by wicked Haman to destroy the Israelites. God also used a sleepless night by the king and the reading of the book of records at the exact location regarding Mordecai's exposing the plot to kill the king. God used all these events and many others to bring about the deliverance of the Jews. Nothing found in all the events surrounding this deliverance involved a miracle, but God was behind all of it using providential means to accomplish His purpose.

God's use of miracles was for a limited time and for a limited purpose. His use of miracles ended with the completed revelation of His Word. The Bible states the end of miraculous activity at this time in 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 and in Ephesians 4:7-16. We also understand the end of miraculous activity would be when the last apostle and the last person the apostles laid their hands on died. The apostles received miraculous power directly from God (along with the house of Cornelius), however others had to have the apostles lay hands on them and impart those powers to them (Acts 8). Additionally, there is no longer any purpose for miracles. The purpose of miracles was for confirmation. They confirmed the messenger and his message as being from God. We no longer need such confirmation as we now have a confirmed Word, and once something is confirmed, it does not need continual confirmation. While miraculous activity has ceased, God's providential care has and does continue.

God has instructed us to pray. Paul's admonition was: "Pray without ceasing" (1 The. 5:17). Again he exhorted: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phi. 4:6). Note that Paul shows to whom we are to pray—God. *God* should be understood as referring to the Divine Three unless the context indicates One as opposed to the others. In this context God has reference to the Father as is evidenced by the contrast in the next verse that the peace of God comes through Christ. This corresponds to what Jesus stated in John 16:23-24. (Those who teach we can pray to Jesus are teaching error and are false teachers.) Paul says we can let our requests be made known. What requests? Any request. Notice what John writes, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22). We are not to request things simple to consume them upon our own pleasures. James points out: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts" (4:3). Thus, we have the right to ask for anything as long as it is according to God's Will and not to consume it upon our own lust (pleasure).

In our prayers, we can go to our heavenly Father and cast our anxiety or worry upon Him. Peter writes,

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

What The Bible Says About:

37th Annual Bellview Lectures

June 9-13, 2012

Saturday, June 9			7:45 pm	Baptism	Dub McClish
7:00 pm	Truth	David P. Brown	Tuesday, June 12		
7:45 pm	False Teachers	John West	9:00 am	Authority	Ken Chumbley
Sunday, June 10			10:00 am	Divorce and Remarriage	Don Tarbet
9:00 am	Morality	Gene Hill	11:00 am	Love	David P. Brown
10:00 am	Worship	Ken Chumbley	<i>Lunch Break</i>		
<i>Lunch Break</i>			1:30 pm	The Christian's Fruit	Lynn Parker
2:00 pm	Bible Translations	John West	2:30 pm	Hate	Tim Cozad
3:00 pm	The Tongue	Dennis "Skip" Francis	3:30 pm	Open Forum:	
<i>Dinner Break</i>			<i>Dinner Break</i>		
7:00 pm	The Holy Spirit	Charles Pogue	7:00 pm	Modesty	John Rose
7:45 pm	Satan	Gary Summers	7:45 pm	Salvation	Dennis "Skip" Francis
Monday, June 11			Wednesday, June 13		
9:00 am	The Inspiration of the Bible		9:00 am	The Second Coming	Dub McClish
		Michael Hatcher	10:00 am	God the Father	Wayne Blake
10:00 am	The Home	Tim Cozad	11:00 am	Drinking Alcohol	Don Tarbet
11:00 am	The Works of the Flesh	Roelf Ruffner	<i>Lunch Break</i>		
<i>Lunch Break</i>			1:30 pm	Covenants	John Rose
1:30 pm	Emotions	Charles Pogue	2:30 pm	Christ	Roelf Ruffner
2:30 pm	Conflict	Gene Hill	3:30 pm	Open Forum:	
3:30 pm	Open Forum:		<i>Dinner Break</i>		
<i>Dinner Break</i>			7:00 pm	Hell	Gary Summers
7:00 pm	Christian Growth	Wayne Blake	7:45 pm	Heaven	Lynn Parker

Bellview Lectures Information

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The Red Roof Inn (2591 Wilde Lake Blvd; Pensacola, FL 32526) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$59.99—single bed and \$69.99—double beds. Their phone number is 850.941-0908. **Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations.** If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

Meals

The women of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch Monday – Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration tables.

Books

The lectureship book, *What The Bible Says About:* will be available for purchase. The price of the book is \$11 plus \$3 shipping charges per book. For those attending the lectures

the price will be \$10. The book will contain 29 chapters. This will be a soft-cover book. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2012) will be available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of the CD is \$36.75 (includes postage). The CD also includes the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2011), *Beacon* (1972, 1974-2011), and other material. If you have a previous CD contact the office for an update price.

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“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7). These cares might come in various ways: family, business, personal, friends, and even cares about the church. As a Father, God will do those things that are good for us. Jesus said, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Mat. 7:11).

In all these things, God knows what is best for us. Thus, sometimes, even if we are asking according to God’s Will and casting our cares upon Him, God will not grant the request. Paul prayed three times that his “thorn in the flesh” would be removed (2 Cor. 12:7-8). God’s answer was that His “grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (12:9). God knows what is best for us even if we do not. Thus, we might pray for something (as Paul did), yet that something (Paul’s “thorn in the flesh”) is not what is best, thus God overrides our request.

One important question, however, is: How does God accomplish working these things out for our good? He accomplishes His will today through providential means. We have the right to pray for the sick (Jam. 5). When we pray for the sick, do we not expect God to heal them? Certainly we do. How is God going to accomplish that healing? During New Testament times healings were often accomplished by miraculous activity. However, that type of activity has ceased. Does that mean God cannot heal someone today? Certainly not. God can heal the sick today by means of providence. An example of this is when Hezekiah was informed by God that he would die and not live (2 Kin. 20:1). Hezekiah prayed to God upon which God informed him that fifteen years would be added to his life (20:2-6). They then took “a lump of figs. And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered” (20:7). God used the lump of figs (a common remedy for boils in the East) to bring about the healing of Heekiah based upon his

prayer; however, God used natural means to accomplish the healing, not a miracle.

We, as we have seen previously, have the privilege to take our troubles to God in prayer. God, in answer to our concerns, can work things out for our good. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose” (Rom. 8:28). How does God do this, the same way He worked out the problem of the Israelites in saving them from wicked Haman. God, who declares the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10), can work on the solution to the problems we come across even before we know they are problems. Then when we pray, God has through providential means, worked out the solution to the problem that we face.

Our admonition then is that we “ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). We can rest assured that God, through providential means, will work things out for our good.

MH

Continued from Page 1
to bring false teachers into a city or county and prefer their fellowship in preference to the goodwill and fellowship of numerous brethren in congregations within the area, so be it. Such brethren have serious problems too horrible to take to the judgment. This is the same sort of low, sleazy attitude that will bring in the mechanical instruments—even though good brethren protest strongly.

Does congregation A absolutely have to have preacher X to come into the area, when it is established, documented, and proven beyond

question that preacher X is a false teacher? Of course not! Why persist in that which raises barriers, destroys fellowship and brings about division—over a matter that could be left alone?

But one answers that brethren in other congregations have no right to tell elders in another congregation what to do. Amen! In matters of human opinion such is the case—when human opinion does violate divine principles—such ceases to be human opinion. Try that argument between individuals within the same congregation. When does one man’s opinion become the concern of other

brethren? A Solomon is not needed to answer this.

To assume that my influence, efforts, teachings, oppositions, helps, hindrance, speech, and writing must be limited, restricted, confined, and kept to myself, within my home congregation and never to be directed towards, or deal with the problems within a brotherhood, or sister congregation is to take a position which **would set aside** the very books of much of the New Testament. No, we are not inspired writers, but we do have the inspired Book.

Tis a strange quirk in the thinking of brethren when they prefer the

fellowship of a heretic rather than that of fellow-saints who are sound in the faith! Moreover, liberal elders in a congregation will absolutely refuse to invite a sound, conservative Gospel preacher to come in and preach the Word. They bar the door against such men, yet they whine and moan when they are exposed and opposed. Brethren need to be united in the faith, like the Bible teaches. Brethren are divided, disjointed, dissected, split asunder, snarling, backbiting, fighting, and going to hell, and no one is willing to admit being guilty, at least I am not. You probably will not either, so the church of Christ will continue to present to a hell-bound world the sad spectacle of a divided church, a weakened church, a worldly church, and a disgraceful church.

What is the solution? Knowing the mentality, stubbornness, arrogance, hard-headedness, and self-centered attitude of my brethren, I do not believe the problem will be resolved this side of judgment. To

some, even the preceding sentence presents a problem. According to the Bible, evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse whereas the faithful will continue to comprise a very small minority.

Heretics, false brethren, and the compromisers will flourish and as usual the weak and sickly will succumb to the ways of the carnal church.

To think that there will be a solution to resolve the problem is to be naïve indeed. Such would mean that the devil will go away. This will not happen. The battle will never cease for faithful saints until the crown is finally won.

What can and must we do? The answer is clear.

Mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them (Rom. 16:17).

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them (Eph. 5:11).

For what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols?... Wherefore Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing; And I will receive you (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

It is sheer folly to think that the liberal, soft, mushy, all positive, compromising brethren will lift even a little finger to support, encourage, assist, or help brethren who sound forth the clarion call to stay with the Book. There is no fellowship existent, so why not go ahead and announce it and explain why? Tell who the culprits are and expose them. What have you to lose? You cannot lose that which you do not have. Sure, the liberals will laugh at you, but consider the source and go ahead. Who wants the devil on his side when a battle is to be fought?

Mt. Juliet, TN

The Crisis in Religious Authority

Dub McClish

The challenges of recent years to authority in home, school, marketplace, and military were bound to have their parallels in religion. The very foundations of pontifical authority in Roman Catholicism have been jarred in recent years with unprecedented open debate between priests and pope over such matters as contraception and a celibate priesthood. A few years ago Italian legislators ignored the pope's objections to a national divorce law and passed such a law. Among other results, many sources indicate that previously unheard of numbers of priests

and nuns are deserting their orders. Some predict that within twenty years or less Catholicism will not be distinguishable from Protestantism. All of this is happening because, one by one, the legs are being knocked from under the pontifical chair, the seat of authority.

Protestantism has felt the effects of this challenge, too. Until two or three decades ago most Protestant churches claimed to believe in the Bible and its authority, but in the intervening years the seminaries have all but destroyed that faith by producing a constant stream

of unbelieving pulpiteers. Many Protestants have quit in disgust, but many others have gladly embraced the non-authoritative approach. (The age-old Protestant slogans claiming that "one church is as good as another" and that "it makes no difference what you believe as long as you're sincere" did a good job of preparing the soil for this liberalism.) Many Protestants seem to be bewilderedly hanging on to the only vestige of religion they know, sickened at what they see and hear on Sunday, but knowing of nothing better.

The crumbling and discarding of their traditional authorities has gone on long enough to produce an offsetting reaction among both segments of Christendom. Especially can this be seen in Protestantism. While the *anything-goes* liberals have occupied the headlines with their attempts at out blaspheming each other, there has been a quiet, but steady interest generated in conservative, Biblical study and teaching. This is visible in both pulpit and pew. Unfortunately, “fundamentalist” independent and holiness groups have profited most from this fallout. Widespread religious liberalism has served to accent the folly of a non-authoritative approach to religion! (This phenomenon is well documented in Dean M. Kelly’s book, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*.)

In the church of the Lord, the source of religious authority has never been in question on any large scale; it has been the Bible, particularly the New Testament. There have been some in every age since Pentecost who would not endure the sound doctrine and have turned away from the truth (2 Tim. 4:3-4), but upon exposure they have either been restored or have left the church entirely. In recent years the anti-authority approach has seriously invaded the Lord’s church. It now appears that the question of religious authority is an open issue, perhaps even a divisive issue, among us. Such statements as: “Not one of us can give chapter and verse for everything we do in our worship, nor do we need to,” and “The right spirit is more important than the right practice,” and “There is no one right way” are frightful indications. The attack that has been mounted against the authority of elders in the

local church is also symptomatic. It is a sad fact that some brethren have decided they have outgrown the need for biblical authority. What a tragic irony that at the very time when many sincere religious people are taking a turn toward conservatism, many influential brethren have moved toward liberalism.

A Christian is distinguished from all other religionists and is constituted a Christian by virtue of his submission to the authority of Christ through the Scriptures. There is no such thing as a Christian without the Scriptures. Since a church is simply a body of Christians, it is evident that the church, by scriptural definition, cannot exist in the absence of scriptural authority. The seed of the kingdom is still the Word of God (Luke 8:11).

In the face of this incontrovertible principle, it becomes even more lamentable that there are those in the church (including teachers, preachers, and elders) who have lost their respect for the authority of God’s Word. Sadder yet is the fact that they feel comfortable, are tolerated, and repeatedly given a platform in many quarters. Some have fallen into the old error of conceiving of the church as merely a denomination. Some no longer have a conscience about instrumental music in worship or the observance of the Lord’s Supper every Lord’s day and only on the Lord’s day. This same loose attitude toward Scripture has set some up for embracing, or at least being tolerant toward, neo-Pentecostalism. An increasing number of our pulpits no longer ring with a distinctive, Scripture-filled, authoritative message. Some have a difficult time deciding what to tell people to do who want to become Christians. Many are moving the

church into the entertainment field. More and more the local church is being pressured to assume the responsibilities of parents and home. Probably none of these people would openly attack the Scriptures, but the result of their efforts is the same. The disguised wolf is always more dangerous than the unmasked one (Mat. 7:15).

The church has weathered many stormy issues through the centuries. Some of the great issues of the first century involved Judaism (Acts 15), the coming of the Lord (2 Pet. 3) and incipient Gnosticism (1 Tim. 6:20-21; 1 John). These were all met with an appeal to authoritative preaching by inspired men. When their voices ceased to be heard, apostasy resulted and the church of Christ disappeared from history books for several centuries. In the last century and this one, all issues from the missionary society and the instrument to communion cups and orphan homes have been faced with an open Bible. Its authority has been appealed to in countless sermons, debates, articles, and books. Most brethren on both sides of these issues agreed on one point: the only court of appeal was the Word of God. Because of this appeal to God’s authority, the truth on these matters has shone forth to the majority of God’s people and one by one these issues have been decided and left behind.

The issue before us now is not so simple or singular as those before. It revolves around a certain type of “worldly wisdom.” It thrives upon what it considers to be intellectualism. Its proponents are loud on *spirituality*, as they define it, and are correspondingly soft on strict adherence to God’s Word, as though these were incompatible!

All saints should weep that the time has come in the kingdom when there are those who almost boastfully disregard the finality of Scriptural authority. It is now being preached that one cannot take a definite stand on any Scripture truth because what we “think” is truth may only be our “subjective interpretation.” If that be true, then that which by scriptural definition has been termed *error* may only be mere “subjective interpretation” and may in reality be truth! (Are those who are preaching this **absolutely sure** that their view is not merely **their own** “subjective interpretation?”) If this line be followed, there is no way to discern truth from error. Therefore, doctrine becomes altogether inconsequential. In such case, lines of fellowship cannot be drawn over whether one is Scripturally baptized, whether one is dedicated to the Lord’s teaching on

worship or the divine pattern for the church, or any number of other issues. To these *free* brethren (as they picture themselves) such matters are “legalistic” and “traditional.” To contend for such things makes one “judgmental,” “intolerant,” and “Pharisaical.” To stand firmly upon God’s definition of a Christian and upon the terms by which the Lord adds one to His church is to “play God” or to be derisively called a “five-stepper” by those loose-thinkers.

If contending earnestly for “the faith once for all delivered” makes me a legalist, that is what the Lord wants me to be, for He gave that directive (Jude 3). If insisting that only those immersed for remission of sins following faith, repentance, and confession are in the Lord’s church means that one is an intolerant judge, then one is such with Heaven’s approval. Standing for

the terms of spiritual fellowship demanded by the Scriptures is not *playing* God, it is **obeying** God (1 John 1:7). Like Paul in Ephesus (Acts 20:31), those who love the truth and the church it produces dare not “cease to admonish” or “warn” (KJV). The time seems to be fast approaching when those who desire their children to be a part of the simple church of Christ that they have known are going to have to by-pass brethren who are steadily working against this purpose. If the cancer of liberalism will not respond to the treatment of scriptural admonition, radical surgery is the only recourse. Otherwise, the cancer will devour the whole body. The issue we are fighting now embraces all other issues. Simply put, it is this: is the Bible our religious authority or can we teach and practice what we please?

Denton, TX

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