

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

A REVIEW OF THE DEAVER–VICK DEBATE

Gary W. Summers

This debate took place October 24-27, 2011 in Indianapolis, IN. For the first two nights the proposition was:

The Scriptures teach that Holy Spirit baptism has ceased and is no longer in the church today.

The proposition for the last two nights was:

The Scriptures teach that when a person becomes a Christian he is baptized in the water and in the Holy Spirit.

It was not too long ago that brethren were debating propositions like these with Pentecostals and charismatics. In fact the first proposition above was used in the Woods-Franklin Debate in 1974. Franklin had been a gospel preacher but had departed from the faith. The fact that someone as sound as Mac Deaver once was would be denying the first proposition above and affirming the latter shows how far some in the Lord's church are willing to digress. Frankly, to show how bad (doctrinally) some things have become, this writer firmly believes that if Mac Deaver stood up next week and said, "I can speak in tongues, work miracles, and have been appointed as a modern apostle," he would not lose but a handful of followers. This is not a prediction that he will do so but rather a statement that highlights the devotion so many have to a mere man instead of to the truth.

TALKING TRASH

Both parties made disparaging remarks about the other. Ben referred to Mac as a "half-baked Pentecostal," questioned whether or not he was a "modernist," and threw in the suggestion that Mac is a Calvinist, which he quickly denied. Despite his well-prepared protest of that allegation, some would say that Mac agrees with Calvinism when he says that a man's nature is changed when he is baptized in

the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, it did not take Mac long to begin his usual smear job on his opponent. Time and again Mac would say things such as, "You can see Ben is struggling," when in fact he was not. He would refer to Ben's having "gotten in trouble" with an argument and comment that Ben was under enormous pressure. He spoke about how he told his wife that he pitied Ben before the debate began and how that he felt sorry for Ben. No Deaver debate would be complete without Mac saying that his opponent's arguments were "pathetic" and "silly"—but such disparagements are all right because Mac said them kindly.

The debate would be better without comments such as these from either side. Ben may well think it is worth lamentation that a gospel preacher would hold Mac's positions (and most of us do), but the purpose of the debate is primarily to show the fallacy of an opponent's views. Mac may well think that Ben's reasoning is pitiful (though he commended him repeatedly for having the courage to face Mac in public debate), but he could spend his time better in presenting his case. When Ben spent a few moments quoting from Mac to show his arrogance (which is apparent to most brethren), Mac spent even more time complaining that Ben had wasted his time in doing so. He was right in that it was irrelevant to the debate.

HUMOR

It is always humorous to watch Mac try to intimidate his opponent by saying how poor a job his opponent is doing in the debate. Perhaps these comments are to convince those who are in Mac's corner, but the rest of us just chuckle and

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
August 3, 1917-October 10, 2001

Editorial...

MAC DEAVER, TODD DEAVER, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Over the years on numerous occasions brother Mac Deaver has steadfastly and feverishly worked to propagate and defend his evolving doctrine on the work of the Holy Spirit with and in the Christian. In his doctrine he alleges that the personal indwelling Spirit provides, when needed, immediate, direct divine strength to, and divine wisdom for, the Christian's inward man (spirit). As the doctrine goes, one's own human resolve, determination, and strength to always do God's will are incapable by themselves, on certain occasions, of providing the help necessary for one to keep from sinning. Mac alleges that on these occasions no matter how much one loves God, no matter how strong one's living active faith in God and His Word is, no matter how determined one is to be "**stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,**" (1 Cor. 15:58), one simply cannot resist sinning. Thus, Mac erroneously teaches that a Christian must have the Holy Spirit's personal direct and immediate divine strength infused into one's inward man in order for one to keep from sinning. To illustrate his view Mac has at times referenced a single man who is being tempted to commit fornication. He says that without the Spirit's direct and immediate infusion of divine strength into the man's inward man (spirit), Satan's appeal to the man to satisfy his sexual appetites by committing fornication would be too great for the man in and of himself to resist. In such cases, according to Mac, only by the Holy Spirit's personal, immediate, and direct infusion of divine strength into the man's spirit would he be able to resist the temptation to commit the sin of fornication. In other words, the gospel according to Mac, affirms there are occasions in a Christian's life that no matter how much he is determined to obey God, he cannot do it without the Holy Spirit's personal presence in him, directly and immediately injecting him with divine wisdom and divine strength, without which he would in Mac's illustration commit sin.

Todd Deaver is Mac's youngest son. In his book on the Holy Spirit, wherein he teaches his spurious doctrine previously noted, as well as his error on Holy Spirit Baptism, Mac points out that Todd's influence had a great part to play in leading him to believe his erroneous concept of Holy Spirit Baptism discussed in Gary Summers' review of the Deaver/Vick debate in this issue of CFTF. However, since the time Todd helped his father come to his present views on Holy Spirit Baptism, Todd has repudiated the New Testament as an infallible pattern or divine blue print. He has also rejected the true hermeneutical principles for understanding any written document—direct statements, examples, and implication. Todd does not believe that any and all music except singing is sinful in the worship of God.

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say, “Well, there he goes again.” It actually harms Mac to provide such assessments when they are not valid; people may dismiss such comments when they are actually true. These things aside, Mac did three things during the debate that he did not intend to be humorous, but they were.

The first was his continual complaining. He said in his first speech that he had been trying to get a debate for years. He apparently has forgotten that he turned down an opportunity for one with Wesley Simons on rather flimsy grounds. Also, he refused to continue negotiations through the proper channels for a debate with Daniel Denham just last year. After several months, he had not taken five minutes to reserve a location for the debate. Apparently, he did not instruct his efficient secretary to place such a call, either. When it was brought to his attention that he had not procured a place and that the only place he had mentioned was not available, he became defensive. Rather than taking five minutes to check on a site at that point, he wrote several e-mails of complaint—even telling the person in charge of negotiations that he wore him out.

So after complaining (erroneously) in his first speech of the first night that no one would debate him, he complained in the second speech about the length of 20-minute presentations. He would have preferred thirty-minute ones because twenty was just not enough time to cover everything. This writer could not help but think that the format was the same as with the Warren-Flew and the Warren-Matson debates (except for the rejoinder at the end). If brother Warren could defeat two prominent atheists with twenty-minute speeches, why could not Mac make his case concerning Holy Spirit baptism in such a format?

Keeping these two complaints in mind, it simply got to be humorous on the second night of the debate when in his first speech Mac complained that Ben was debating the wrong proposition. He then presented what he thought Ben should have been debating, which was: “*The Scriptures teach that a person becomes a Christian by being baptized in water only.*” This does not appear to be identical, but Mac insisted that it was. Well, say, since Mac took the time to rewrite the proposition, why not just tell Ben what he should argue, also, so that Mac could refute it—in thirty-minute speeches? Nothing about the debate seemed to satisfy Mac.

In his last speech on the first night, Mac, as part of his response to Ben’s previous speech, looked incredulous, and said, “He doesn’t believe in the time lapse.” Probably no one reading the Scriptures would have a clue as to what Mac was talking about, which was what made his outburst humorous. Only by knowing Mac’s views, as on Holy Spirit baptism, would anyone understand what he meant by the “time lapse.”

The third incident occurred in Mac’s second affirmative speech on the third night. He had previously introduced a syllogism containing 93 words, not counting 5 numbers. He followed that by a second syllogism in his next speech that

contained 92 words. Now, understand that this “logical” argument is three times the length of *The Pledge of Allegiance* and one-third of the *Gettysburg Address*. After reading the second syllogism, Mac commented on it briefly before saying, “How can it be more simple than that?”

“I’VE GROWN”

Ben began the first evening by playing a recording of Mac saying ten years ago that he took strong exception to anyone saying that he believed in Holy Spirit baptism—that it was unfair to characterize him as holding a view of something he did not espouse. Yet now Mac is defending the position that he adamantly refused to be associated with just ten years ago. Mac did not take issue with the evidence, but rather than saying he had flip-flopped on the issue, he argued that there had been an evolution in his thinking. He had continued to grow and learn. The fact is, however, that every false teacher says one of two things. Either they say they have been misunderstood or that they have “grown,” which is a cause for “groan”ing on our part.

In his second speech of the debate, Mac added that others came to this position first, and he named specifically Glenn Jobe. He claims that he reluctantly came to hold the position. He added that his father Roy, who never espoused such a view in his writings, was coming to a knowledge that all Christians were baptized in the Holy Spirit. He also said that it was an old view—that Lard and Milligan held the same view, but brethren chose McGarvey over Lard. It is doubtful that he is correct about Lard, despite a quotation that he gave later. But suppose that he were correct. Did it ever occur to him that brethren adopted McGarvey’s view because he was correct and the others were wrong?

Is Deaver not aware of the two different views on the Godhead held by Campbell and Stone? Stone looked upon Jesus as a created being (not unlike the Jehovah’s Witnesses would later adopt) while Campbell rightly believed that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all coequal Deity. The reason that Stone’s view fell by the wayside is that it was not the truth, and the same may be said for those who opposed McGarvey. He was a fallible man, of course, like all of us, but he presented a compelling case for his view, and brethren could see that he was right.

Ben did well to introduce quotes and charts by brother Warren and others, who believed in the literal indwelling but debated against the concept of Holy Spirit baptism for today. Mac said that brother Nichols missed it, brother Warren missed it, and his daddy missed it on this subject. He missed it too for many years. Of course, the rest of us all missed it, also, along with the entire brotherhood for the past century. How fortunate that we now have Glenn Jobe and Mac Deaver to lead us out of the darkness on this matter! Perhaps the reader will understand better why Ben took the time to show instances of Deaver’s arrogance. Great minds such as Guy N. Woods, Thomas B. Warren, Gus Nichols,

William Woodson, and others did not fail to research this issue. They did, and they went where the evidence led; they made compelling cases for their conclusions. Mac simply ignored all of that and assumes that his interpretation is correct, though it is severely flawed and contrary to clear-cut facts and principles.

WHY THE DEBATE?

On the very first night of the debate Ben asked certain questions to determine the magnitude of the difference of the two positions from Mac's perspective. Surprisingly, Mac said that you could be saved without knowing or agreeing with his position. He affirmed that he did not know for several years that he had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, but he was nevertheless. He must take this position or else insist that brethren Nichols, Warren, his father, and himself were all lost until he discovered this "truth"—something he was not willing to do. But this position, while pleasing to some people, contains three flaws:

First, one would not know the truth concerning what baptism does—yet receive all the benefits of it. For years, we have told people (with respect to the forgiveness of sins), "You cannot be taught wrong and baptized right." Brethren have definitely taught for decades that people are not baptized in the Holy Spirit when they are baptized in water. We have generally taught people that Holy Spirit baptism was a promise that was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost. We have consistently taught that baptism in water is a command, done in obedience to the Lord. We have, according to Mac, taught people wrongly all these years, but they received Holy Spirit baptism anyway, though taught to the contrary. This fact may not defeat Mac's position, but it certainly makes his view look suspicious.

The *second* problem with Deaver's view (which Ben pointed out) is that, if Holy Spirit baptism occurs whether or not we know it, then why write a book about it, and why debate it? If we are not penalized for our ignorance, then why not let everyone remain ignorant and quit splitting the brotherhood over it? Many people believe that Mac's doctrine leads to Pentecostalism; why needlessly offend all of those brethren if it is unnecessary? Yet Mac has taken it upon himself to "enlighten" his brethren with great fervor.

Third, Mac's own analogy shows his position to be false. He used 1 Corinthians 6:16-17 to support his case: "**Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For 'the two,' He says, 'shall be one flesh.' But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.**"

Following are Mac's immediate comments on this passage.

That's my spirit and the Holy Spirit, by the way. And that's—and that's not participation by long distance. Whatever the connection between a man and a harlot, whatever makes

them one, it's the parallel over here on the spiritual side. If there is direct contact, flesh upon flesh, that makes them one flesh, over here I've got one spirit—that's Spirit upon spirit.

Is being one spirit with the Lord literal or figurative? Notice in the first place it is the Christian being one spirit with the Lord—not the Holy Spirit—even though shortly the body will be said to be the temple of the Holy Spirit (v. 19). But, suppose that Mac were correct about man's spirit being one with the Holy Spirit—and that it was literal instead of figurative. Uh, when a man is one with a harlot, does he not know it? Is it not something that he experiences? How, then, can man's spirit be one with the Holy Spirit, and he not know it? How can he not experience something by which he is certain that his spirit and the Holy Spirit are one? Mac cannot resolve this difficulty with his theology.

Remember that this illustration was one of Mac's own choosing. The difficulty cited above is just one problem that one incurs by trying to make the figurative literal. What are the implications of our Spirit being fused into the Holy Spirit? Would we thereby receive some of the power He possesses? Would we be able to prophesy, understand all mysteries, possess all knowledge, be able to work miracles? If not, why not? Are we only fused into the non-miraculous parts of the Spirit? How does this oneness play out? Furthermore, are we only "one" at various times (as a man is with a harlot) but separated at all other times?

How does God's Spirit upon man's spirit work with respect to sin? Can a person sin while he is one with the Holy Spirit? If the Holy Spirit envelops a person, how can sin get in? Why would Christians not, then, be perfect and free from sin? It seems that one has only two choices by way of reply. The first is to say that being one with the Holy Spirit keeps him from sin, but that would deny 1 John 1:8 and 10. The other is to say that our spirit is one with the Holy Spirit, but we sin anyway—in which case, what is the advantage of the union? Mac explained on the third night of the debate, as he was defining his proposition, what he meant by baptism in the Holy Spirit: "I mean your spirit is submerged; it is enclosed by the person of Holy Spirit." He further argued that we always maintain that contact. So, how is it that we sin?

None of these difficulties exist if we understand that we are figuratively one with God as we obey His teachings, which are inspired of the Holy Spirit. Needless to say, if we entertain sin, we are no longer one with the Spirit of God. We have walked away—perhaps temporarily, perhaps permanently. How does the literal unity work with one who has erred from the truth or gone back into the world? Surely Mac would not argue that a Christian cannot fall from grace, since that doctrine clearly contradicts Galatians 5:1-4. That leaves him the unenviable alternative of saying that we are sinning so as to be lost while still submerged and enclosed by the Holy Spirit. How can Mac extricate himself from such a dilemma? He cannot cite Judas as an example because he

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2012 SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST *CFTF* LECTURESHIP

The New Testament Church and Counterfeit Churches

Wednesday, February 22—Sunday, February 26 • David P. Brown, Lectureship Director

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:00 PM **David P. Brown:** *What is the New Testament Church?*

8:00 PM **John West:** *What is the Independent Christian Church?*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23

9:00 AM **Michael Hatcher:** *What is the Salvation Army?*

10:00 AM **John Rose:** *What is the Lutheran Church?*

11:00 AM **Johnny Oxendine:** *What is the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons)?*

LUNCH BREAK

1:30 PM **John West:** *What are the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches?*

2:30 PM **Daniel Denham:** *What is Dispensationalism?*

3:30 PM *Open Forum*

DINNER BREAK

6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:00 PM **Dub McClish:** *What is the Restoration Principle and is it Scriptural?*

8:00 PM **Bruce Stulting:** *Are Faithful Children of God Found in the Denominations?*

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24

9:00 AM **Danny Douglas:** *What is the Baptist Church?*

10:00 AM **John Rose:** *What is the Unitarian/Universalist Church?*

11:00 AM **Wayne Blake:** *What is the Organization and Work of the New Testament Church?*

LUNCH BREAK

1:30 PM **Gene Hill:** *What is the Methodist Church?*

2:30 PM **Jess Whitlock:** *What Makes JW's, Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Seventh Day Adventists Different from Other Denominations?*

3:30 PM *Open Forum*

DINNER BREAK

6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:00 PM **Roelf Ruffner:** *One Can Know One Is a Member of the Lord's Church? (Identifying Marks of the Church)*

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

9:00 AM **Jess Whitlock:** *What is Christian Science?*

10:00 AM **Johnny Oxendine:** *What is the Worship of the New Testament Church?*

10:00 AM **Sonya West:** *Give Your Daughters To Husbands (Choosing a Husband)—LADIES ONLY*

11:00 AM **Daniel Denham:** *What is the Emerging Church?*

LUNCH BREAK

1:30 PM **Danny Douglas:** *What is the Community Church?*

1:30 PM **Sonya West:** *Thy Desire Shall be to Thy Husband (Having a Successful Marriage)—LADIES ONLY*

2:30 PM **Gene Hill:** *What is the Presbyterian Church?*

3:30 PM **Bruce Stulting:** *Does the New Testament Authorize the Church Revealed on its Pages to Fellowship Denominational Churches?*

4:30 PM **Roelf Ruffner:** *Is the New Testament Church a Denomination?*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

9:30 AM **Terry Hightower:** *The Apostasy of the First Century Church*

10:30 AM **Geoff Litke:** *Are Pious Un-Immersed Persons Christians?*

NOON MEAL PROVIDED BY THE SPRING CONGREGATION

1:30 PM **Terry Hightower:** *The Emergence of Catholicism from the Apostate Church*

2:30 PM **Michael Hatcher:** *What is the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?*

3:30 PM **Dub McClish:** *Has the New Testament Church Been Restored? —LECTURESHIP ENDS*

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betrayed Christ and killed himself before the baptism of the Holy Spirit was given. The position that most brethren take is not fraught with these contradictions, which show that Mac's position is false.

Several articles could be written about this debate, but the approach taken in this one will be to look at the first argument used on both sides, along with pertinent, subsequent comments made. In his third speech on the first night of the debate, brother Vick set forth the following syllogism:

Major Premise: All miracles have ceased (1 Cor. 13:8-10; Eph. 4:11-16).

Minor Premise: The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a miracle (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-47).

Conclusion: The baptism of the Holy Spirit has ceased.

This syllogism is valid in its form. If the major and minor premise are true, the conclusion is true. The only question left to determine is, then: "Are the premises true?"

The major premise is true. Paul taught that the spiritual gifts were coming to an end. He selected three of the nine gifts from 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, and he said that prophecies would fail, tongues would cease, and knowledge would vanish away. These three represent all of them. Many of the gifts (such as knowledge, prophecy, and tongues) involved the Divine revelation of God's Word apart from natural means. God supernaturally imparted spiritual knowledge to those who had these gifts. But when the entire revelation was complete (that which is perfect had come), then the gifts would no longer be needed since all would have access to the completed Revelation. Mac did not deny this major premise.

But he did take issue with the minor premise. He clearly and plainly denied that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a miracle. Some matters in the debate may have been hard to follow, but Mac is clear on this point:

He's wrong in saying that Holy Spirit baptism is a miracle. Why would you say that? There is no proof of that. That's just a wild assertion.... It's not a miracle (1:3-D [first night, Deaver's third speech]).

So, is Holy Spirit baptism a miracle or not? Ben responded (2:1V) by giving the definition of a miracle:

An extraordinary manifestation of Divine power, operating either independently of the laws and forces of nature, as in the original creation, or in opposition to them, as in the separation of the waters of the Red Sea, or in connection or harmony with them as in Noah's flood.

Mac's position is that the manifestations of power, such as inspiration, speaking in tongues, and working miracles are separate from the Holy Spirit baptism itself. "Really?" You might ask—and rightfully so. "Yes," he would respond. He argues that Holy Spirit baptism is not a miracle in itself, and there is not necessarily anything miraculous associated

with it. In fact, he went so far as to say that the 120 were baptized in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost—as well as those who were not even present!

What does Acts 1:8 actually say? According to the Greek Interlinear (Berry), Jesus said to the twelve, "But you will receive power, having come the Holy Spirit upon you, and you shall be to me witnesses both in Jerusalem and all Judea and in Samaria and to [the] uttermost part of the earth." Can the coming of the Holy Spirit be disassociated from the power? The Holy Spirit's coming on them resulted in miraculous things. If the inspired writer wanted us to consider them to be totally separate, why did he have them both occur at the same time? Why not write that the apostles and others received Holy Spirit baptism on one occasion but that they did not receive any miraculous powers until later? Why is it that we need Mac to explain it to us?

The Holy Spirit put the two together because they belong together. We ought to notice that the apostles were all gathered together on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1). Mac is still insisting that it was the 120, but he made no reply to the article this writer previously made against that notion. Few, if any, brethren have ever taken Mac's view on that subject; perhaps that's another point everyone "missed." So, when were the apostles all baptized in the Holy Spirit? Was it when they were all in one accord in one place?

Or was it when there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, filling the whole house where they were sitting (v. 2)? Neither the gathering nor the sound implies they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Would not most of us say that the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit when there appeared divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each one of them (v. 3)? It's at this point that the text says they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (v. 5). The phrase, filled with the Holy Spirit does not always refer to Holy Spirit baptism, but in this case it does. The baptism and the speaking in tongues are simultaneous. They both occur at the same moment or within seconds of each other. There is no delay or "time lapse."

Ben argued that Cornelius and his household were also baptized in the Holy Spirit (some brethren do not hold this view). Once again, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to Peter preach (Acts 10:44), and when He did, they spoke with tongues, which was immediately noticeable to the Jews (v. 45). Once again, there was no time lapse between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the speaking in tongues. Mac denies that this ability to speak in tongues has a close association with Holy Spirit baptism. The power to speak in tongues and Holy Spirit baptism are two separate things, he says, but he does not get this idea from the text; it comes from his theology. Just asserting that the two are different does not disprove Ben's syllogism. Holy Spirit baptism was miraculous. It was something that the Holy Spirit

bestowed directly upon people, causing them to speak in various languages.

THE MENTION OF BAPTISM

In his first speech of the first night (1:1D), Mac referred to a question he had presented to brother Vick, which he had answered:

True – False. In each New Testament account where someone became a Christian, the word “baptism” or one of its forms must be found in the immediate context (cf. Acts 5:14, 9:31).

Ben correctly answered false though the two verses supplied are general statements about the number of believers increasing—not individual accounts of conversion. Mac then drew this inappropriate conclusion: “But if we can know that about baptism in water, why can’t the same be true about baptism in the Spirit?”

The two concepts are not even remotely similar. As members of the church know, baptism is mentioned in cases of conversion—almost without exception. How many accounts of conversion are mentioned? Some are found in Acts 2:41 (the three thousand); 8:9-13 (Simon and the Samaritans); 8:35-39 (the Ethiopian eunuch); 9:18 (Saul); 10:44-48 (Cornelius and his household); 13:12 (Sergius Paulus); 13:48 (some in Antioch in Pisidia); 16:15 (Lydia); 16:31-34 (the Philippian jailer); Acts 17:34 (some from Athens); 18:8 (Crispus and other Corinthians); 19:1-7 (the Ephesians).

Of those twelve instances, only three do not specifically mention baptism (the two in Acts 13 and the Athenians in Acts 17). Three out of four specifically mention baptism as part of the conversion process. Now what is the ratio in instances of Holy Spirit baptism? Acts 11:16 implies two and only two events—one on Pentecost and one with Cornelius. No other events in the entire New Testament mention baptism in the Holy Spirit. But Mac sees it everywhere! If the apostles are laying hands on the Samaritans, why, they were identifying those brethren so the Holy Spirit would know to give them Holy Spirit baptism (really?). In fact, just about any time the Holy Spirit is mentioned or miraculous gifts are mentioned, Mac assumes that Holy Spirit baptism is under consideration. But if we take those same twelve conversions, only two times is baptism in the Holy Spirit implied. Is it that hard to see (when comparing 9 out of 12 to 2 out of 12) the answer to Mac’s question? We can be assured that in the three instances, those who believed were also baptized. But why would anyone conclude, with a sampling of only two instances, that the other 10 were instances of Holy Spirit baptism? Such is folly.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, then, is a miracle; miracles have ceased. Therefore, baptism in the Holy Spirit has ceased and is not in the church today.

THE PURPOSE OF HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Also related to Ben’s syllogism was the chart that Mac put up later. He put up a chart with several parts to it, but following is the gist of it. The purpose of Holy Spirit baptism was not for the production of miracles or for inspiration. Miracles were done in the Old Testament, and men were inspired of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Mac says that one of the purposes of Holy Spirit baptism was to regenerate, to make alive, but the Scriptures he quoted to “prove” that assumption said nothing about Holy Spirit baptism. He also asserted that Holy Spirit baptism was the means of our being placed “in spirit” and that it made the indwelling possible. He alleged that Holy Spirit baptism is the means by which we have access to the Father, but, again, no verse that he cited mentioned Holy Spirit baptism. By now anyone following the debate can see why Mac made the preceding argument. He knows that none of these verses teach his doctrine; so he tries to make every appearance of the Holy Spirit refer to Holy Spirit baptism, which is not the case at all.

Consider, however, this statement: “The purpose of Holy Spirit baptism was never the production of miracles; the purpose of Holy Spirit baptism was always the production of character” (4:2). Really? Okay, is it not fair to use Mac’s own logic on this matter? Are not the two statements below parallel?

1) Holy Spirit baptism can have nothing to do with miracles because miracles were performed in the Old Testament.

2) Holy Spirit baptism can have nothing to do with character because men possessed character in the Old Testament.

Whoops! Brethren have used the following phrase for decades. “What proves too much proves nothing.” Mac proved way too much with his reasoning above. The fact is that there was just as much “character” in the Old Testament as there were miracles. Abraham, for example, is called faithful (Gal. 3:9). Moses was faithful in all his house (Heb. 3:2, 5). He was also more humble than all men who were on the face of the earth (Num. 12:3). How could he be these things without the baptism of the Holy Spirit? How could David be called “a man after God’s own heart” (Acts 13:22)? Job was long suffering, an example of suffering and patience (James 5:11). How could all these men have such marvelous character without the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)?

The fact is that no verse in the New Testament says that character is formed when one is baptized in the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, two texts actually do associate Holy Spirit baptism with a miraculous event, but none associate it with character.

It is true that miracles and inspiration existed before baptism in the Holy Spirit, but that does not preclude it being for that purpose anyway. Say, for example, that a rich man gives his son ten thousand dollars a year from the time he is 12 to the time he is 18. When the lad turns 18, the father

says, “Here is a credit card that you may use any time you want.” Now would anyone seriously argue that empowering him with a credit card meant that he never had any money to spend previously? Yet, in effect, that is what Mac does.

Yes, there were miracles and inspiration in the Old Testament, and usually they were connected for the same purpose they are in the New Testament—to establish the fact that the speaker is God’s spokesman. This was the case with Moses, whose deeds and teachings were accompanied by miracles. It was also true with Elijah and Elisha as well. Jesus and His apostles worked miracles to establish proof for their teachings as well (John 20:30-31; Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:1-4). On the Day of Pentecost, the apostles were given their powers permanently when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. So far as we know, they had these abilities the remainder of their lives. No verse says anything to the contrary. Mac is wrong about the purpose for Holy Spirit baptism.

DID THE DENOMINATIONS GET IT RIGHT?

The first night of the debate Mac shocked many in the audience, and those who have seen or read this clip continue to be amazed. He said (forcefully):

...we’re saved by water, and I thought that was all of it, just as he [Ben Vick] still does. I now know it’s not. Not water only. It’s water, and you see we’ve been right about that all the time. The Baptists and the Methodists and the Presbyterians and others who we debated in days gone by—they couldn’t see that. There’s no water....

We were right about the water. They had a hard time being convinced because they were always stressing the Spirit, and that’s where we were weak. We wouldn’t stress the Spirit; we’d stress the water. They wouldn’t stress the water; they’d stress the Spirit. Neither one of us had it completely right....

What destroyed our influence with them (at least, in large part) was we didn’t stress Spirit....

They wanted to have Spirit baptism without the water; we wanted to have water baptism without the Spirit. Neither one of us was right in that sense.

Wow! Where does one begin to show all of the fallacies? *First* of all, if we were debating the role of water baptism in salvation, why would one introduce baptism of the Holy Spirit? *Second*, brethren did debate baptism of the Holy Spirit with Pentecostals. *Third*, those who actually did debate in favor of Holy Spirit baptism were just as wrong as Mac is, and none of them would accept his non-miraculous Holy Spirit baptism which he tries to disassociate with miracles. *Fourth*, our debating brethren did have it completely right. *Fifth*, our influence was not destroyed with those in denominations. Large numbers, occasionally a denominational preacher, and even an entire congregation were sometimes won over to the truth. *Sixth*, how can Mac say that neither one of us was right (in that sense)? *Seventh*, how long will it be before Mac is participating in unity meetings with the various denominations to make a speech like this—the way

Rubel Shelly did twenty years ago? [This is not a baseless comparison (or name calling). Much of what is said above sounds like Shelly in those days.]

The denominations’ rejection of water baptism had little to do with our rejection of Holy Spirit baptism; it had everything to do with their theology of salvation by faith only. Brethren need to think carefully about this speech of Mac’s. It was his first speech of the debate. One would expect that he planned to make this case. Much of what he said later was in response to brother Vick, but this accusation was prepared in advance. Those listening to the debate or reading these words should consider the dangerous things that are being taught. These things are not a matter of indifference. It is time for brethren to repudiate emphatically these false ideas.

MAC’S FIRST PROPOSITION EXAMINED

We now will give our attention to the examination to Mac’s first proposition, which consists of 93 words (almost twice the length of the Preamble to the Constitution, which is only 52 words). Anyone who does not understand it upon the first reading should count himself normal.

If (1) the apostles had already been baptized in water only prior to Acts 2, and if (2) baptism in water only is baptism into the name of Jesus only, and if (3) baptism into the name of the Father and of the Holy Spirit occurs when one receives the Holy Spirit, and if (4) in order to enter the kingdom one must be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, then the apostles entered the kingdom based on their being baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit (3:1D)

Several observations can be made about this syllogism; the *first* is that, even if it were valid in its structure, it is false in content. *Second*, Mac never proved that (2) and (3) were true. *Third*, Mac mentioned several times that from the time of John to Paul’s preaching to the Ephesians (Acts 19) was a transition period, but then, in this syllogism, he acts as if what occurred here (during the transition) is our pattern for today. For example, the apostles were baptized prior to the establishment of the kingdom. But from the Day of Pentecost onward, the Lord added His disciples to the church at the time of baptism (Acts 2:41, 47). *Fourth*, he makes up out of thin air two kinds of baptisms.

The *first* point in the syllogism is the only part of it that is true: The apostles were baptized in water only prior to Acts 2. The *second* part asserts that baptism in water only is baptism into the name of “Jesus only.” At this point, Mac began to sound like a “oneness” Pentecostal. He invented a dichotomy that is not easy to understand.

Christians know that in the great commission Jesus commanded that His apostles make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into (Greek: *eis*) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mat. 28:19). Mac arbitrarily splits this up into two baptisms—one in name of Jesus

(water only) and one in the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit (Holy Spirit baptism). Is there some compelling Scripture that makes this dichotomy? No. Not one passage in the entire Bible defines Holy Spirit baptism as Mac does (which helps to explain why scholarly brethren have “missed it” all these years). They missed it because it is not there. For Mac’s followers, it is painfully absent. He cannot produce one verse that defines Holy Spirit baptism in that manner. *He arrived at this notion because it fits his theology—not because the Bible teaches it.*

But what about the claim that baptism in water is baptism in the name of Jesus only? Ben called him on his misplacement of the adverb only, and Mac’s response was, “It doesn’t make any difference.” Well, then, consider Acts 8:12-17, which Mac claims establishes his case.

But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, Who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Mac’s first problem is that he must contradict the meaning of the text. He must argue that Philip preached the things concerning the kingdom of God but could not baptize them into it. Sure, the text implies that he preached the kingdom and the name of Jesus, and they were baptized to have forgiveness of sins and to enter into the kingdom, but Mac has to come charging in to declare, “No, wait, you are not in the kingdom yet—not until you receive the Holy Spirit.” Immediately, Mac must make two assumptions: 1) that the Samaritans did not come into the kingdom until a later date (although the text does not so state); and 2) that, when they received the Holy Spirit, they then entered the kingdom (although, again, the text does not so state).

A *third* assumption is that, when Peter and John laid their hands upon the Samaritans, this constituted baptism into the name of the Father and of the Holy Spirit (which is not so stated in the text). A *fourth* assumption is that Luke is describing Holy Spirit baptism (which the text does not so state) rather than the imparting of a spiritual gift, which shall be proved later.

But to return to verse 16, does the text say the Samaritans were baptized in the name of “Jesus only”? No, and the reader can clearly see that is not the intent of the verse. Luke is making a contrast. The Holy Spirit had not fallen on them to this point; they had simply been baptized in the name of Jesus. No one could get baptized with the name of “Jesus

only” out of this verse without doing some wresting. Nothing in this text agrees with anything Mac has claimed for it, but he especially misses and perverts the purpose for Peter and John coming to Samaria.

Mac claims that the apostles went there to identify those whom the Holy Spirit should fall upon—apparently, the Holy Spirit would have had trouble knowing who they were, otherwise. He rejects the idea that Peter and John laid their hands upon the Samaritans so that they might have a spiritual gift. In fact, in his very next speech, Mac once again floored most gospel preachers by calling for one passage “that says that apostles only could lay their hands on someone and impart a miraculous gift” (3:2D). Is there a passage that says only? No, but there is no passage that ever says that someone besides the apostles had that ability.

PAUL’S HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Mac thought he found two instances of someone besides the apostles imparting the Holy Spirit. He is dishonest with one of them and inaccurate with the other. Let us deal with the one that is inaccurate first, then we let the reader judge the issue of dishonesty.

Mac asked the question, “When did he [Saul, GWS] receive the Holy Spirit? He did at the hands of Ananias in the water.” And what is the proof of that claim? Mac cannot be referring to Acts 22, since the Holy Spirit is not mentioned at all in verses 10-16; he must be thinking of Acts 9:17-18, which say the following:

And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared on the road to you as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

One might legitimately assume that Ananias was going to do two things for Saul: 1) restore his sight; 2) impart to him the Holy Spirit. However, Ananias could also have meant that, when Saul’s sight was restored, the latter event would occur subsequently (but not necessarily immediately). A mother might commission her children to go to the store, saying, “This money will allow to you buy groceries and for us to eat dinner.” The two obviously do not occur at the same time; in fact it might be three or four hours later that the family eats the prepared meal. Of course, the two actions in the above passage could occur simultaneously, but such is not necessarily the case. There is no causal connection between the two that would obligate the second occurring immediately after or simultaneously with the first. In fact, the text suggests otherwise.

Saul received his sight at once. In the Acts 22:16 account, Ananias said to Saul: **“Why do you wait? Arise and be baptized, washing away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”** The Acts 9 account omits those words but

does declare that Saul arose and was baptized. Neither account says anything about Saul receiving the Spirit or being baptized in the Spirit. If it had occurred at that time, it certainly would have been worthy of mention—especially if Mac’s position were correct. The text ought to say, “Saul arose and was baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit.” Not only does it not make that claim, it does not say anything about Paul being baptized in the Holy Spirit while he was in the water. Where does Mac come up with these things? One might argue that he received the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid hands on him (which would be an assumption), but nothing indicates that Saul received the Holy Spirit while he was in the water.

In fact, the New Testament never states the precise time when Paul was baptized in the Holy Spirit. Was it shortly after he was baptized in water, or did the Lord make him wait a few days? What occurred on Pentecost was visible to all. Was not Paul’s also? If it was, it is odd that nothing was said about it at this time, such as, “After Saul was baptized he received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues (or prophesied).” This omission is conspicuous by its absence.

TIMOTHY’S GIFT

Mac fails to establish his position that others besides the apostles imparted the Holy Spirit when he alludes to Ananias. He is dishonest, however, in implying that the elders gave Timothy a spiritual gift in 1 Timothy 4:14, where Paul wrote: **“Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”** Did the elders, in fact, impart a spiritual gift to the young evangelist? Mac insists that they did:

Look at 1 Timothy 4:14. Timothy had a gift. According to the second book, Paul had a part in the impartation in some sense. But in 1 Timothy 4:14 there were certain elders who had a part in that. Why don’t we make up a category for those who receive miraculous gifts through laying on of the elders’ hands?

The reason is that there is no such category. This kind of argumentation is inexcusable. Mac allows as Paul may have had “a part” in the impartation? Anyone who heard the debate will recall Mac berating Ben for not knowing that the preposition *eis* was used in Matthew 28:19 and Acts 8:17 (although Ben never said otherwise). It was at this juncture that Mac emphatically announced: “The Holy Spirit wrote the book very precisely” (3:3D). Then how is it that Mac overlooked entirely the prepositions used in connection with Timothy’s gift?

In 2 Timothy, Paul reminded Timothy “to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands” (1:6). The preposition used here is *dia*, which means “by” or “through.” Timothy received a spiritual gift by or through the laying on of Paul’s hands. The preposition in 1 Timothy 4:14 is *meta*, which means “with.” When Paul wrote “through prophecy” in 1 Timothy 4:14, that preposition is also *dia*. In other words, the gift which Timothy possessed

came as a result of prophecy (if not Paul’s, then someone else’s) by the laying on of Paul’s hands with the hands of the presbytery. The elders imparted no gift at all to Timothy but simply accompanied Paul’s hands. How could Mac have missed this precise language with respect to prepositions? It is doubtful that too many men who have been preaching for any length of time do not know these particulars.

“ARE YOU WITH ME?”

Having examined the “support” for Mac’s second point in his syllogism, we next consider what he said about the third point. After reading the point, he turned and said, “Are you with me?” Uh, no. How about some evidence? A proposition is to be supported with proof—not asking if the audience is with him. He did no more than repeat what he had already asserted (but not proved) regarding the Samaritans being baptized in the name of the Father and of the Holy Spirit (which the text never states). Mac’s syllogism is unproved and unprovable. His case fails.

THE PURPOSE FOR THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

Mac keeps insisting that Peter and John went up to Samaria to “identify” the Samaritans so that the Holy Spirit could baptize them. Included in Mac’s version of this event is a denial of the text! In his final speech of the debate, he posted a chart of Simon the Sorcerer’s mistakes. Among other things on this chart are the following words:

10. But since the Holy Spirit himself is the power by which miracles are performed (1 Cor. 12:11), Peter says that Simon, in effect, had attempted to buy “the gift of God,” that is, the Holy Spirit himself....

11. Peter and John had not given the Holy Spirit to anyone (cf. John 5:18); Simon saw that “through the laying on of the apostles’ hands that the Spirit was given because Peter and John were identifying those baptized parties to whom the Spirit was to come.... But Simon was wrong to think that Peter and John had given the Spirit....

Simon’s first mistake was that Peter and John were the actual source of the Spirit’s coming.... his second mistake was to assume that miracles would always accompany the coming of the Spirit....

Anyone who reads Acts 8 will see the fallacies in these statements. No verse says that Peter and John were there to “identify” anyone. The apostles prayed that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit (v. 16): “Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit” (v. 17). All of the talk about Peter and John not being the source of the Holy Spirit is so much misdirection. No one ever said that they were, but they were the means through whom the Holy Spirit was imparted. Unless apostles laid their hands on people, they would not have received any miraculous ability. That does not mean that they were the source of the Holy Spirit, which would be absurd. The fact, however, that they were not the source does not negate their role or the way in which

God chose to do things. Mac tried to force upon brethren a false position: Either the apostles were the source of the Holy Spirit, or they had nothing to do with the Samaritans receiving the Holy Spirit. This is a false dilemma because other options exist.

Furthermore, it is Mac who errs—not Simon. He did not offer money that he might receive the Holy Spirit; he said: **“Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”** Before Peter and John laid their hands on the Samaritans, they did not have the Holy Spirit, but afterward they did. Everyone but Mac

and Glenn (and their followers) understand that. Was Simon mistaken about that? If so, then so was Luke because he recorded that **“Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given...”** (v. 18). Mac should give up this position; he is in direct conflict with the inspired writer. Brethren should realize that false doctrines have led him to his present false beliefs on the Holy Spirit.

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DEVIATIONS FROM THE TRUTH

Roelf L. Ruffner

FREEZING LARRY KING

Yes, Larry, there is something after this life! December 4, 2011 CNN aired a program entitled *Larry King: Dinner With King*. It featured the former CNN talk show host at a gathering of some of his celebrity friends for a meal at King’s home. At the meal King reiterated that when he dies, “I wanna be frozen, on the hope that they’ll find whatever I died of and they’ll bring me back.” King’s guests were a bit shocked by his cryogenic revelation. One guest asked Larry if he was a bit obsessed with his own mortality. King responded that his “biggest fear is death, because I don’t think I’m going anywhere.” What a revealing comment! This 78 year old is an agnostic and seems to believe that this life is all there is. Quite naturally he wants to continue on living. Like any materialist he sees nothing after this material world. What a shock he is in for. **“And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”** (Heb. 9:27—<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/larry-king-seth-macfarlane-conan-obrien-frozen-dead-269705> as of 12/5/2011).

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS—FORMER ATHEIST

December 16, 2011, the well known author and atheist Christopher Hitchens died after a long battle with cancer. Hitchens debated many over the existence of God. Contrary to other atheists Hitchens was not rabid or overly aggressive. For this reason he won the respect and admiration of many in the “Christian” community. Some even wrote commentaries hoping that there was some sort of “death bed conversion” by him. Others, betrayed their Universalist leanings, and surmised that God must have overlooked his atheism since he was such a nice guy.

But, Hitchens died an atheist, an unbeliever. R. Albert Mohler, President of Southern Baptist Theological Semi-

nary hit the nail on the head when he wrote; “The death tonight of Christopher Hitchens is an excruciating reminder of the consequences of unbelief. We can only pray others will believe.” Mohler added, “The point about Christopher Hitchens is not that he died of unbelief, but that his unbelief is all that matters now. Unspeakably sad” (<http://www.bpnews.net/BPFIRSTPERSON.asp?ID=36814> as of 1/13/2012; <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=36810> as of 1/13/2012.)

STEPHEN HAWKING—THE BLIND LEADER

January 8, 2012, a celebrated cosmologist and atheist at Cambridge University, Stephen Hawking, turned 70 years of age. Hawking has been severely disabled with Lou Gehrig’s disease for many years yet continues to function using a motorized wheelchair and an electronic speaking device. At his birthday party Hawkins said,

The fact that we humans who are ourselves mere collections of fundamental particles of nature have been able to come this close to an understanding of the laws governing us and our universe is a great triumph.

This is such a narrow, arrogant, materialistic view of the universe and humanity! God has given this “collection of fundamental particles” 70 years to know Him. Most patients with his condition do NOT live more than 10 years. He is so blinded by his unbelief that he cannot see the Truth (cf. Rom. 1:20-22; Heb. 9:27; <http://www.christianpost.com/news/professor-stephen-hawking-at-70-66692/> as of 1/13/2012).

“OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN”

On December 7, 2011, President Obama signed a memorandum which was described by the White House as “the first-ever U.S. government strategy dedicated to

combating human rights abuses against LGBT persons abroad”. You may not know what “LGBT” stands for. In bureaucratic-hedonistic lingo it stands for Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgendered or homosexuals. Later that day Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton told a meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council about this memorandum and threw down the gauntlet.

Now, raising this issue, I know, is sensitive for many people and that the obstacles standing in the way of protecting the human rights of LGBT people rest on deeply held personal, political, cultural, and religious beliefs.

In other words, “We don’t care about any bodies objections to this policy. We are going to do it!”

This administration continues being an advocate for homosexual special-rights in the United States and in the world. They only bring shame on our nation in the eyes of God (http://www.wayoflife.org/fridaynewsnotes/index_files/archive-dec-2011.html as of 1/16/2012).

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SOCIETY’S RESPECT FOR MARRIAGE SINKS LOWER AND LOWER

Charles Pogue

GOD’S INSTITUTION

Marriage is an institution of God. When our heavenly Father made Eve and brought her to Adam He declared that a man is to cleave to his wife (Gen. 2:24), In Jesus’ response to the Pharisees about divorce, He said, **“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”** (Mat. 19:6). The union between the husband and wife is thus a sacred one. God’s prophet, Malachi, wrote that God hates putting away (Mal. 2:16).

When men lose their respect for their Creator, they also lose respect for what He has said and instituted. It was only in the sixth chapter of Genesis that we read,

And it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were very fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose (Gen. 6:1-2).

Because of the hardness of their hearts, the Israelites of old were suffered to put away their wives with a writing of divorcement, but Jesus said that from the beginning that was not so. It was Herod’s taking of his brother’s wife that caused him to come under the rebuke of John, **“It is not lawful for thee to have her”** (Mat. 14:4).

Unfaithfulness in one’s marriage is a sin which, without repentance and subsequent loyalty to one’s spouse, will prevent one from inheriting the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9). In other words, such individuals will be eternally lost. **“Thou shalt not commit adultery”** was one of the Ten Commandments Ex. 20:14). **“Thou shalt not commit adultery”** is

still the commandment of God (Rom. 13:9). Adultery is one of the works of the flesh listed by Paul in Gal. 5:19. Study of both the Old and New Testaments makes it very plain that men of old often paid little heed to God’s instructions regarding the most sacred relationship of marriage that can exist between a man and a woman. Unfortunately, not much has changed in that regard.

UNHOLY UNIONS AND THE CHURCH

Increasingly, people are ignoring the need for marriage. Instead many select a convenient partner and live together outside of marriage and a commitment honored by God. Men with men and women with women work that which is unseemly, and are obtaining greater public and private support. As far as the commitment to marriage and promise of staying together until death do us part is concerned, it has been discarded by many like so much garbage. Divorce is rampant! One supposes that it began in the denominational bodies, where even religious people decided to ignore the commands of God regarding marriage, and now one may divorce and remarry for any reason, and as many times as they please, and still be regarded as faithful members. Presently, the Lord’s church is no exception to that serious disobedience to the will of God. Couples that have been divorced from their original spouses without scriptural cause, and remarried, some multiple times, are accepted by congregations as faithful Christians. The men in such unholy unions are treated as if they were faithful and used to lead prayers, wait on the Lord’s Table, and as song leaders. What irreverence to God and His commands!

WHORE MONGERS AND ADULTERERS

Yes, man's lack of seriousness and respect for the husband and wife relationship established by God, is very prevalent and growing in today's world. Recently, a website, originally launched in 2001, was featured on the Internet. This site, ashleymadison.com, demonstrates just how low people have sunk in their sin and debauchery when it comes to marriage. Boasting 10, 320,000 members, this is a website for men and women providing them with opportunities to cheat on their spouses. One review of the site reads in part:

www.ashleymadison.com is a married dating site designed specifically for casual encounters, secret romances and adult fantasy. The target audience? Men and women alike who are interested in being a tad naughty and stepping outside their relationships.

A tad naughty indeed! It is not a tad naughty; it is heinously and despicably sinful. It makes a total mockery out of God and His commandments. It shows total disrespect for one's spouse, for himself, and for marriage in general. Furthermore, ashleymadison.com and its subscribers, turn the vow to keep one's self from all others into nothing more than a cheap lie.

In June of 2010, there were an estimated 60.3 million marriages in the U.S., or 120,600,000 married persons. In other words, this offensive site claims that 8.6% of all married individuals in the United States are consumers of its filthy service. Sadly, while the claims may be somewhat exaggerated, they are probably not overstated by much if at all.

One obvious question that is raised by the foregoing is, "Are we surprised?" Shocked, yes, but surprised? Unfortunately, no. We live in a world where even belief in God is on the decline. Among those who believe in God, accepting the Bible as His inspired Word and rule book for man's behavior is also on the decline. People are attempting to do what the prophet Jeremiah wrote they cannot do—direct their own steps (Jer. 10:23). Among other things when people attempt to do that, they end up hurting the individuals who are supposed to be the closest to them on earth, their spouses. **"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge"** (Heb. 13:4).

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FORGIVENESS—WITHOUT REPENTANCE?

Guy N. Woods

Children of God should love all men, even their enemies, and when they repent, forgive them. Occasionally, I am asked if it is our duty to forgive those who sin against us when they neither ask for nor desire forgiveness. It is not only not our duty to do so, were we so disposed, but it is an utter impossibility.

The question recurs because many people persist in disregarding what the Scriptures teach is involved in genuine repentance and by substituting their concept of what they feel forgiveness should include. Those who do this imply, whether they intend to or not, that forgiveness is simply the cancellation of all bitter, revengeful, and uncharitable feelings toward those who sin against us, and the substitution of a disposition of kindness, love, and warm regard for the offending one or ones—a disposition, they urge, which should always be characteristic of faithful Christians.

But many devoted and dedicated disciples of the Lord never experience bitter, revengeful, and uncharitable feelings toward those who sin against them, however cruel and heartless such actions may have been. This attitude of a kind disposition is not forgiveness, anyway. God never entertains "bitter, revengeful, and uncharitable" feelings toward even the most vile of sinners, but He forgives only those who repent.

Our Lord, in the shadows of Gethsemane, prayed for those who hated him so much they sought and obtained His execution, but He did not forgive them until they repented. Amid the agonies of the cross, He said to His Father. **"Forgive them; for they know not what they do"** (Luke 23:34) a petition not unconditional in nature, since by His own words first uttered in the Great Commis-

sion (Mark 16:15-16) and later applied by Peter it was intent that pardon be bestowed only on the basis of repentance and obedience to the commandments He gave (Acts 2:36-38).

The words "remission" and "forgiveness" often translate to the same Greek word *aphesis*, the meaning of which is "release," the "sending of sins away" and the consequent restoration of the peaceful, cordial, and friendly relationship formerly existing. Unless the offender wants this "peaceful, cordial, friendly" relationship, it is impossible for the offended to affect it, however much he may desire and seek it.

It is at this point people often say, "Yes, but we must be ready to forgive always," as indeed we ought, but it should be recognized that such readiness is not forgiveness. Our Lord made crystal clear our obligation in all such cases when He said, **"Take heed to yourselves; If thy brother trespass, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times...turn again to thee saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him"** (Luke 17:3,4). Thus, the divine edict is, if one sins against us, we are to rebuke him; and when he repents, we are to forgive him.

It is the duty of all children of God to love all men, even their enemies, actively to seek their good, and pray for their well-being; and, when they repent, to forgive them. It should ever be borne in mind that reconciliation is an integral and essential element of the relationship resulting from penitence on the part of the offender and forgiveness on the offended, and that is occasioned by an adjustment and settlement of all differences that led to the alienation. We must be sure that no action or attitude of ours deters the proper response of others to us because our fellowship here on Earth and our salvation in Heaven hereafter are matters intimately involved.

—Deceased

(Continued from p. 2)

And, who knows what else that is fundamental to a correct faith in God, Christ, the plan of salvation, the church, etc. he no longer believes.

You may be wondering how Todd's apostasy has to do with Mac's false views on the Holy Spirit as previously set out in this editorial. As does Mac, Todd believes in the personal direct work of the Holy Spirit on the inward man of a Christian. Thus, he also believes that the Spirit supplies direct, divine strength and divine wisdom to the Christian's inward man when one needs it to help in overcoming the temptation to sin. Of course, as pointed out earlier, this divine strength is available when one's human strength and wisdom is insufficient for one to keep from sinning. But Todd has sinned in repudiating the New Testament as a divine pattern. Also, as noted previously, he does not believe it is sin to use other kinds of music other than singing in the worship of God. Question: Where was the Holy Spirit when Todd needed Him in his time of temptation, when his human will and strength was insufficient to keep him from sinning? Mac cannot honestly ignore the contradiction existing between what his spurious doctrine affirms—the personal indwelling Holy Spirit imparting direct, immediate divine strength to the Christian's inward man at the moment one's human strength fails him in his efforts to keep from sinning, and the fact that Todd has sinned. In Todd's departure from the faith where was the Holy Spirit's direct, immediate, divine spiritual strength so much needed Todd when he was being tempted to deny the New Testament is a divine pattern and that singing is not the only music authorized by God whereby He is to be worshipped? Indeed, what was the Holy Spirit doing at the time Todd was forming his views that the Bible does not authorized by direct statements, examples, and implication? On and on we could go.

If it is the case, as Mac alleges, that the Holy Spirit does for and to the Christian's inward man (spirit) what He does and for the reasons He does them, then whose fault is it that Todd sinned—Todd's or the Holy Spirit's fault? Yes, any doctrine that implies a false doctrine is itself false. And, therefore, since it is certainly not the Holy Spirit's fault that Todd or anyone else has sinned, then it must be Todd's fault. But Mac teaches a doctrine that will not allow for the previous conclusion.

I would like to think that when Mac begins to explain how a Christian is enticed to sin, and in actuality commits sin, he will explain it just as faithful gospel preachers have always done it. But, when he does it he will find himself butting heads with his own Holy Spirit doctrine. Remember, Mac alleges that the personal indwelling Spirit provides, when the Christian needs it, immediate, direct divine strength to, and divine wisdom for, the Christian's inward man (spirit). This, the erroneous doctrine teaches the Spirit does so the Christian will possess the necessary spiritual strength needed for him to overcome the temptation to sin. But, as Mac admits, Todd sinned and continues to be in the grip of his sin. Now, in view of Mac and Todd's teaching on this matter, as previously set out, whose fault is it that Todd sinned?

Although I strongly disagree with Mac on this subject and with Todd on more than this, I want to assure the readers that there is no ill will in my heart for the Deavers. I would like to think that they have none for me. I have fond recollections of our past friendship and association in the work of the Lord. I have no desire to misrepresent their views. But, if I have if I have done so on anything they teach on any topic, I will be glad to correct them. I wish for them the very best in all things and pray to that end.

—David P. Brown, Editor

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A perverted gospel cannot save. Jesus declared that it is the knowledge of truth, not the belief of error, that makes men free (John 8:32). Though a perverted gospel may have in it all the elements of the true gospel, its power to save is lost in perversion. Bread is God's power to quell the hunger, but the admixture of a poisonous element—a spoonful of arsenic, for instance, in a loaf of bread—would destroy its power. Water is God's power to quench the thirst, but the

admixture of salt will destroy the quenching power of water.

The gospel is God's power to save the soul, but its admixture with error—the doctrines and commandments of men, when heard and believed—destroys its saving power. Hence, Paul's alarm concerning the perverters at Galatia: **“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ”** (Gal. 1:6-7).

Error preached, error heard, and error believed cannot result in the truth obeyed. No man can accidentally obey God. The truth preached, the truth believed, and the truth obeyed makes a Christian. Nothing else does. How careful then men should be in their handling of it!

—Deceased

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