

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

A BROTHERLY APPEAL FOR A PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON A CRUCIAL MATTER

Curtis A. Cates

This appeal is being made with Christian love, in utmost sincerity, and with a fervent desire for what is best for the church of our Lord. The time has come [and it is beyond time] when for the truth's sake a series of public discussions is needed with prominent members of the church whose efforts are resulting in the Lord's church drifting into apostasy.

A few years ago when, by and large, brethren were still willing to contend earnestly for the faith in public discussions, there seldom arose a serious problem either within or without the church that was not partially solved through public discussion. Numerous of our most faithful and capable preachers successfully met and exposed the "Goliaths" of denominationalism. Faithful brethren publicly exposed (through debate) digressive, premillennial, and anti errors, which arose within the church. [Be it said to the credit of many of the false teachers of the past, they had the courage of their convictions (though they were wrong) to the point of publicly defending their views. Has this generation produced a group of antagonists to the old Jerusalem gospel who do not have such courage?] It is our sincere conviction that the errors some brethren presently teach among us, if unchecked, may send the church into apostasy for a number of generations.

MATTHEW 18:15-17 DOES NOT FORBID THE EXPOSURE OF A FALSE TEACHER

Many false teachers seek to remain in fellowship with the church by demanding that they not only be permitted to teach their heresy but also be granted immunity from exposure. They "wrest" (2 Pet. 3:16) the passage in Matthew 18:15-17, which actually teaches that personal matters should be settled in private, if possible. Thus "by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent" (Rom. 16:18).

Such brethren teach their error publicly, and when a faithful

brother answers their false doctrine publicly, they often cry, "He did not come to me personally before he publicly spoke or wrote on the subject." *Question:* Did the false teacher come to us and announce what he planned to do before he publicly taught his error? Of course he did not do this! And, the Bible does not demand that he do it. Then, on what ground does he insist that he can teach his error publicly, but that we can reply only in private? Paul knew what Matthew 18:15-17 taught and yet, he wrote, "**Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear**" (1 Tim. 5:20). He made public for all time the sins of Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20) and also of Demas (2 Tim. 4:10). He even publicly exposed Peter's error at Antioch (Gal. 2:11). Brethren, let us ever "**Preach the word**" (2 Tim. 4:2) and be "**set for the defense of the gospel**" (Phil. 1:16). Let us publicly expose false doctrine (Acts 18:28).

A CHALLENGE FOR A PUBLIC DEBATE

Brother Rubel Shelly has now, for many years, publicly taught much error. Many readers of *Yokefellow* have read his articles, heard him speak in person, or heard his lectures on cassette tapes. He speaks in many places across the nation. For example, he has recently spoken at the following places: Missouri Street Church of Christ, West Memphis, Arkansas; Pepperdine University, Malibu, California; Richland Hills Church of Christ, Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, area; and White Station Church of Christ, Memphis, Tennessee. All of his numerous lectures which I have examined in one way or another are basically the same.

The elders of the Knight Arnold Church of Christ are deeply concerned about the error which is being taught in general in the Lord's church today, and in particular by Woodmont Hills Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, through their regular preacher,

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

Editorial...

HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN

Though the articles in this issue of *CFTF* from Memphis School of Preaching's *Yokefellow*, Volume 18, No. 4, April 15, 1991, are over 16 years old, they are as timely, needed and right on target today as when originally published. We thought and continue to think that MSOP set a good example for the church in challenging Rubel Shelly, et al., to defend their false position. In challenging Shelly MSOP was following in the steps of all Godly men in a true demonstration of love for and faith in God, Christ, the Bible, the Gospel, Jude 3 and all things righteous. They were proving that they hated EVERY false way—not just some false ways. Further, with like-minded brethren MSOP correctly opposed the error taught in the Herald of Truth program and the 1973 Memphis meeting concerning the same; the late James D. Bales' error on MDR; the "AD 70" or Realized Eschatology heresy; Hugo McCord's error on "faith" and "knowledge;" the various errors coming from ACU, David Lipscomb U., etc.; the false teaching of Max Lucado and friends; Buster Dobb's error pertaining to "All of Life is Worship" and Mac Deaver's error on the direct work of the Holy Spirit.

However, we sadly remember that certain brethren thought MSOP and those who stood with them against any and all heresies were "so narrow that they could see through a key hole with both eyes at the same time." Thus, by some MSOP was labeled with such names as vile, unkind, hateful, mean, toxic, unloving, contentious church splitters, etc. But, those things did not matter to us, for we were not ashamed to defend them and like-minded brethren against such false charges. **But that was another time, another place, a different false doctrine and a different false teacher.**

Then came Dave Miller, Stan Crowley et al. We publicly proved them to be false teachers and opposed their error. We also pointed out the Bible's teaching regarding fellowshiping false teachers and those who bid them God's speed (2 John 8-11). But rather than join with us to oppose such men and their errors, MSOP and friends chose to deal with us as Shelly, Woodmont Hills, et al., dealt with them. Read and think about the *Yokefellow* articles printed in this issue of *CFTF* and be amazed at the radical change in MSOP and friends from 1991 till today. The change in them is comparable to the difference in Shelly's 1969 *G. A.* article and his 1990 Woodmont Hills bulletin article.

The late Guy N. Woods pointed out that *the first step away from truth is the most serious and significant step, because on it all the other steps are dependent.* That being the case, *who has moved—MSOP, T“N”GJ, AP, SWSBS, GBN, et al., OR CFTF* and like-minded brethren? Also, what is the logical end to the road they are presently traveling? If MSOP and company do not know the answer to the previous question, Rubel Shelly and friends can tell them. How does one walk 500 miles? **ONE STEP AT A TIME.**

—David P. Brown, Editor

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Paul Vaughn John West				

Prepared by education and experience as faithful teachers of the Word of God, our faculty members lean neither to the right nor left of Bible authority in general and New Testament authority in particular (Colossians 3:17). To the contrary, they seek to remain on the "mountain top of Truth." The faculty is determined to avoid all things not authorized by God's Word, as well as what the Bible condemns. Being faithful Christians, our teachers are duty bound to expose all error and uphold all truth regarding moral and spiritual values as they teach the text of the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:2; 5:32; 12:32; Galatians 1:8-9). *Liberalism* (loosing what God in His Word has bound upon us) and *anti-ism* (binding on man certain rules where God has loosed us from them) are earnestly opposed (Proverbs 17:15; Jude 3). In TBI God is exalted, Christ magnified and the Word that has been revealed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit is diligently studied.

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Rubel Shelly. [Unfortunately, there are many purveyors of the “new hermeneutic” in the brotherhood today.] The Knight Arnold elders are convinced that the time has arrived for Woodmont Hills and Rubel Shelly to allow their teaching to be publicly tested. Therefore, the Knight Arnold elders requested brother Garland Elkins, one of the instructors in the Memphis School of Preaching, to offer to debate brother Shelly. Brother Elkins readily agreed to their request and sent signed propositions to brother Shelly when the elders of Knight Arnold wrote to the Woodmont Hills elders about these matters.

You will see in this issue of *Yokefellow* the correspondence between the elders of Knight Arnold and of Woodmont Hills regarding the proposed debate. The Knight Arnold elders first wrote the Woodmont Hills elders on February 3, 1991. The Woodmont Hills elders replied February 12, 1991. The Knight Arnold elders pursued the correspondence further on February 25, 1991. At this writing (March 29, 1991), there has been no reply from the Woodmont Hills elders. As one will observe, more than a month has elapsed since the Knight Arnold elders mailed their last letter to the Woodmont Hills elders.

The following was stated in the first letter from the Knight Arnold elders to the Woodmont Hills elders. “Since brother Shelly has taught his views publicly, and from coast to coast, we are sure that you will have no hesitancy in endorsing him to debate. And, since his views have been widely circulated, we feel sure that you have no objections whatever to our publicizing this communication.” In order that all may know the details of these matters, they are made public in this issue of *Yokefellow*.

With all of our hearts, and with deep concern and generous Christian love, we urge our brethren in Nashville (the elders at Woodmont Hills and their regular preacher, Rubel Shelly) that they join us in a study of this enormously important subject (Salvation by Grace). [*YOKEFELLOW*, Vol. 18, NO. 4, April 15, 1991, p. 1: A Publication of the Memphis School of Preaching, Curtis A. Cates and Garland Elkins Co-Editors]

—3950 Forrest Hill—Irene Rd.
Memphis, TN 38125

CO-EDITOR’S COLUMN

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED

Curtis A. Cates

INTRODUCTION

When Jude wrote his beloved brethren **“to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints”** (Jude 3), error among them had been allowed to make rapid strides; it was past time for decisive, urgent, even apostolic action. They had not been combating false doctrine, heresy as they had been commanded; thus, their own safety and the future of God’s people were at stake.

OUR SOLE PROTECTION IS “THE FAITH”

“The faith” is the system of faith, the truth of the gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation, the scheme of human redemption (Rom. 1:16; John 8:32; 17:17), the **“one faith”** (Eph. 4:5,13). It is that which comes from, is based upon the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). It is the Word of God which purifies (I Pet. 1:22-25), which blesses (Jas. 1:25), which brings life and godliness (II Pet. 1:3,4), which saves our souls (Jas. 1:21, 22), which perfects baptized penitent believers into one (John 17:17-24), and which makes the man of God **“perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work”** (II Tim. 3:16,17), through God’s grace (Tit. 1:1-4; 2:11-15). God’s covenant is *all* and *alone* sufficient!

“THE FAITH” MUST BE PREACHED

“Preach the word” (II Tim. 4:2). **“But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine”** (Tit. 2:1), Paul commanded. Peter wrote, **“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God”** (I Pet. 4:11). The seed of the kingdom is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). Let those who add to, take from, or substitute for the pure gospel beware (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:5,6; Rev. 22:18,19)! Those departing from the truth are accursed (Gal. 1:6-9; II John 9-11).

THOSE NOT CONTENDING FOR “THE FAITH” ARE NOT PROTECTED

God condemns one who refuses to contend for the faith; neutrality is not an option for the Christian in the **“good fight of faith”** (I Tim. 6:17). The fence straddler, who “puts his head into the sand” and is indifferent toward false teachers and false teaching, is against the Lord (Matt. 12:30). Preachers, as the apostle Paul, must be **“set for the defense of the gospel”** (Phil. 1:16); elders are likewise commanded to stop the mouths of false witnesses (Titus 1:11). Christians are to examine the things they are taught (Acts 17:11) and to try the preachers (I John 4:1); and the church is to mark and avoid false teachers (Rom. 16:17,18; II John 9-11). Heretics are to be isolated; the flock is to be protected from wolves in sheep’s clothing (II Cor. 11:3,4,13-15). Making the sheepfold a haven for wolves, or making the sheep a ready, unsuspecting audience for wolves, or sending the innocent lambs to a “wolf” workshop/seminar/scholarly conference is hardly Christian stewardship and proper shepherding!

CONCLUSION

The brotherhood is being widely, severely troubled by digression. Who will come to the defense of the “old Jerusalem gospel”? Who will insist upon a “thus saith the Lord,” a “what saith the Scriptures,” “book, chapter, and verse” preaching? Is it not still the Word which will judge us in the last day (John 12:48; Rev. 20:12)? Does anyone really feel that error will go away if we simply let it alone; will it refute and destroy itself? How do you consider a physician who leaves cancer untreated? Contend, dear soldier of Christ! (*YOKEFELLOW*, Vol. 18, NO. 4, April 15, 1991, p. 2).

KNIGHT ARNOLD

CHURCH OF CHRIST

4400 KNIGHT ARNOLD ROAD, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38118
901-363-3330

February 3, 1991

Elders
Woodmont Hills Church
2206 21st Avenue,
South Nashville, TN 37212

Dear brethren:

As fellow-elders in one of the congregations of the Lord we are writing to you about a most serious matter, one that affects both our and your eternal welfare. However, we want first to assure you of our Christian love and concern for you and the work of the Lord everywhere. We are very eager to follow what the apostle Peter wrote in I Peter 3:8, "Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded." We are also aware that we have the responsibility to "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3). The point that we desire to make is, that it is our purpose to practice the golden rule (Matt. 7:12), while contending for the truth and opposing error (Jude 3).

Brethren, we assume that you believe and endorse what your preacher, brother Rubel Shelly, is teaching. We are convinced that he has publicly, and in many parts of the nation, taught serious error, and we are unalterably opposed to the error that he teaches. We hasten to assure you that we have nothing of a personal nature against brother Shelly. In fact, many of us have known him for a number of years. In the past he has done much good. However, it is our considered judgment that in recent years he has, and is, teaching the error referred to above. Therefore, as elders of the Knight Arnold Church of Christ, we have requested brother Garland Elkins, one of the instructors in the Memphis School of Preaching, to represent the Knight Arnold Church of Christ and the Memphis School of Preaching in a public debate with brother Shelly, and brother Elkins has agreed to do so, provided propositions are mutually agreed upon by him and brother Shelly. Brother Elkins has been, and is still, a friend of brother Shelly, and has been for many years. He has nothing but good will toward him, and we assure that brother Elkins will conduct himself throughout the debate as a Christian gentleman. We have also requested that brother Curtis A. Cates, Director of the Memphis School of Preaching, sign this letter, and he readily agreed to do so.

As elders of the Knight Arnold Church of Christ we proposed that the following propositions be debated:

PROPOSITIONS FOR DEBATE

I.

The Bible teaches that salvation from sin results from the grace of God alone, totally and completely apart from any human activity.

Affirm: _____
Rubel Shelly

Deny: /s/ Garland Elkins

II.

The Bible teaches that salvation depends upon both (1) the grace of God and (2) the faithful, loving obedience of the individual human being.

Affirm: /s/ Garland Elkins

Deny: _____
Rubel Shelly

We offer the following formats and would be happy with any of the three:

1. The debate will be comprised of two nights of discussion in Nashville and two nights of discussion in Memphis.
2. Or, the debate will be comprised of four nights of discussion in Nashville.
3. Or, the debate will be comprised of four nights of discussion in Memphis.

Since brother Shelly has taught his views publicly, and from coast to coast, we are sure that you will have no hesitancy in endorsing him to debate. And, since his views have been widely circulated, we feel sure that you have no objections whatever to our publicizing this communication.

Further, in order to accomplish the maximum good for the greatest number, we suggest that a book be printed from the speeches of the debate, and that it be widely distributed. We will be happy to work out the details with you as per the publishing of the book. We also strongly recommend that audio and video tapes of the debate be made available at minimal cost, all of this to be done for the good of the Cause. We will also be happy to work with you regarding the times and places. Finally, we emphasize again that each of us should realize the need to have a proper attitude, avoiding all arrogance, humbly keeping in mind the welfare of the church and concern for lost souls. And brethren, may we urge you to recognize that in all the arrangements, agreements, and the actual debate itself, we will be motivated by nothing but the love of God and love for the souls of men.

We all should strive to conduct ourselves in the manner that Paul described when he wrote, "**and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you**" (Eph. 4:32). And, we hereby commit ourselves to do this.

Brethren, if you think us to be wrong you will recognize the responsibility to correct us. Likewise it follows that since we believe that brother Shelly teaches error, we have the Christian responsibility lovingly, with Christian kindness, to oppose the error which is being taught. This is especially appropriate since the influence of brother Shelly and of his teaching has been spread among brethren across the United States and around the world.

Brethren, we look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. Please find the propositions on a separate sheet, which we request that brother Shelly sign and return.

In Christian love,

/s/ James A. Bobbitt, Elder

/s/ Bert Embry, Elder

/s/ Floyd M. Hayes, Elder

/s/ D. H. Kirby, Elder

/s/ Harold Mangrum, Elder /s/ Curtis A. Cates, Director
Memphis School of Preaching

Cc: Rubel Shelly

Family of God
at WOODMONT HILLS

February 12, 1991

The Elders Church of Christ
4400 Knight Arnold Road
Memphis, TN 38118

Dear Brothers:

We have received your letter of February 3.

Our views, and those of all the people on our ministry staff, are best stated in the following words: 'For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do' (Ephesians 2:8-10). We hope this clarifies the matter in your minds.

Yours truly,
[Signed]
Roy Newsom
Chairman of the Elders

WOODMONT HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST
2206 21ST AVENUE SOUTH
NASHVILLE, TN 37212
297-8551

KNIGHT ARNOLD
CHURCH OF CHRIST
4400 KNIGHT ARNOLD ROAD, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38118
901-363-3330

February 25, 1991

Elders
Woodmont Hills Church of Christ
2206 21st Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37212

Dear Brethren:

We have received your letter of February 12, 1991.

As in our last letter to you, we emphasize again that we write in Christian love for you, and for the cause of Christ around the world.

We regret that you did not address the issue about which we are currently corresponding. *You* stated, "Our views, and those of all the people on our ministry staff, are best stated in the following words: '**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from your selves, it is the gift of God—not by works,**

so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do' (Ephesians 2:8-10)." All people who believe the Bible will affirm that they believe Ephesians 2:8-10. We most certainly do believe Ephesians 2:8-10, but what brother Shelly has taught in your church bulletin October 31, 1990 does not teach what Paul taught in Ephesians 2:8-10. Among other things brother Shelly wrote, "It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity." Webster defines lie as follows: "to utter falsehood with an intention to deceive." He defines scandalous as "causing scandal; offensive and shocking to the moral feelings of the community; of such a nature as to outrage a sense of decency; shameful." Webster defines the word outrageous as follows: "having the nature of, involving, or doing great injury or wrong." Please note what brother Shelly and Sam Morris, a Baptist preacher, have taught regarding salvation. Sam Morris: "All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger." Rubel Shelly: "It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation." Both Sam Morris, a Baptist preacher, and brother Rubel Shelly teach error in their above quoted statements. If brother Shelly believes what he has taught, let him affirm the proposition "The Bible teaches that salvation from sin results from the grace of God alone, totally and completely apart from any human activity." Brother Garland Elkins has already signed his name to deny that proposition. If brother Shelly prefers to use his own words then let him affirm what he averred when he wrote, "It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity." If he will sign to affirm that proposition in public debate, then brother Garland Elkins will sign to deny publicly that proposition. Brother Elkins has already signed to affirm the following proposition for debate: "The Bible teaches that salvation depends upon both (1) the grace of God and (2) the faithful, loving obedience of the individual human being."

For your and brother Shelly's convenience you will find the enclosed signed propositions. We sincerely want to know whether you agree with what brother Shelly taught in your own church bulletin.

We believe Ephesians 2:8-10, but that is not what brother Shelly taught. We trust that brother Shelly will sign the enclosed propositions and will thus allow the doctrine which he taught in your bulletin to be tested in honorable public debate. We assure you that brother Garland Elkins will conduct his part of the debate in a calm, courteous, loving, and dignified Christian manner.

We again commit ourselves to doing everything we do in connection with the proposed debate in sincere Christian love.

We await your reply.

Brotherly yours in Christ,

/s/James A. Bobbitt, Elder

/s/ Bert Embry, Elder

/s/ Floyd M. Hayes, Elder

/s/ D. H. Kirby, Elder

/s/ Harold Mangrum, Elder

/s/ Curtis A. Cates, Director
Memphis School of Preaching

Cc: Rubel Shelly

A LATE RESPONSE After this *Yokefellow* had gone to press, brother Roy Newsom, representing the Woodmont Hills elders wrote the Knight Arnold elders as follows.

Dear brothers:

It is our judgment that there will be no advancement to the Lord's Kingdom by our participating in the debate you propose.

In Him, /s/
Roy Newsom

It is very significant that they did not say whether the propositions which were sent them as representative of the two views under consideration are either true or false. Since each one of these propositions is precisely stated, it follows that each one of them is either true or false.

Contrary to their averment, we humbly and lovingly suggest that such a debate **would be** advantageous to the truth which we are willing to affirm.

On the other hand, we have strong conviction that such a debate would **not be** advantageous to the exponents of the doctrine which was taught by brother Shelly in his article, "Arbeit Macht Frei!" which appeared in the Woodmont Hills bulletin, **and** which evidently indicates the position of the Woodmont Hills church. If they disagree with it, they should let us know.

— **Note Unsigned**, Editor, *CFTF*

(*YOKEFELLOW*, Letters, Vol. 18, NO. 4, April 15, 1991, pp. 3, 4, 5)



HERE IS AN ARTICLE WHICH *DENIES* PLAIN BIBLE TEACHING.

So many still believe the monstrous lie that ...

ARBEIT MACHT FREI!

Rubel Shelly

It was two years ago now that my son and I walked through the gate of Auschwitz. Somewhere over 4,000,000 people were Adolf Hitler's "guests" there between 1940 and 1945.

Over your head as you pass through that gate are the words *Arbeit macht frei!* In English, they mean "work liberates" or "work sets you free." It was a grotesque lie, Auschwitz was an end-of-the-line death camp where 2,000,000 Jews and 2,000,000 "undesirable" Europeans died in a gas chamber, on the gallows, or in medical experiments.

There was no mercy in the death camp. There was only work without reward. Empty labor leading to earlier death. False hope of freedom for those who believed a lie.

Yet how many people do I know who live by the same lie in their spiritual lives! They have put their hope in obeying enough of the "essential" commandments, attending enough of the "required" assemblies, and developing enough of the "necessary" Christian virtues to go to heaven.

Such people feel no security in salvation—and are absolutely mystified by those who do. "Duty" is the key noun in their theological vocabulary; "obey" is the operative verb. Yet they are never quite sure they have done their duty or obeyed enough of the right commands.

It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit

to our salvation. *Arbeit macht frei!* is the falsehood against which both Romans and Galatians protest. Then there is his theological thunderbolt against it in Ephesians:

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (2:8-9).

Because God's standard can be nothing less than perfection, no amount of our correct theology, good deeds, charity, and piety can equal that requirement. Therefore anyone who is saved must renounce everything but the cross as his or her hope for eternal life.

Abundant good works are the fruit of salvation, but the finished work of Christ at Calvary is the only act of merit in human redemption. Until we renounce everything but Christ, we are prisoners in a death camp. Embracing a lie. Forfeiting life.

— Rubel Shelly

Love Lines, Woodmont Hills, Church of Christ bulletin, Oct. 31, 1990

INCREDIBLE CHARGE; GLARING INCONSISTENCY

Please notice carefully in the above article that brother Rubel Shelly charges brethren with teaching "*a scandalous and outrageous lie*" when we teach that it is necessary to obey the gospel in order to be saved by the grace of God. Notice, further, also, that brother Shelly showed inconsistency in writing such averments. It is a matter of record that he implicitly teaches

that those who oppose his public teaching must come to him in private before they are at liberty to oppose him in public fashion. The question is this: to whom did brother Shelly go before he wrote the above charges? Of a certainty, he did not come to the elders of the Knight Arnold Church of Christ or to anyone in the Knight Arnold congregation, who (along with all faithful congregations and each faithful Christian) believe and teach what the Bible teaches, namely, that to be saved by the grace of God

it is necessary to obey the gospel. He *did*, however, implicitly charge all faithful brethren with believing egregious error! He has implicitly taught that absolutely no human activity is involved in the gospel plan of salvation.

—Comments unsigned, **Editor, CFTF**

(*YOKEFELLOW*, Vol. 18, NO. 4, April 15, 1991, pp. 3, 4)

SALVATION IS BY GRACE BUT NOT BY GRACE ONLY

Thomas B. Warren

There is an enormous difference between affirming (1) that salvation is by grace and (2) that salvation is by grace *only*. The difference is of great importance. However, during my college, seminary and university years, I spent quite a bit of time studying under denominational professors and in associating with fellow-students who were members of various denominations. In listening to lectures, I often heard the accusation leveled against members of the Lord's church that they believed in salvation by *works* and *not* in salvation by grace. This accusation was usually accompanied by the affirmation that members of the church (the church of Christ) believed that they *earned* salvation by the *works* they did, especially by baptism. Also, this sort of discussion (on the part of both faculty and students) usually involved the further accusation that members of the church believed in "*water salvation*" rather than in salvation by the *blood* of Christ!

I just want to say that never at any time did I hesitate in such situations to make clear that God's people were being misrepresented by such accusations. Also, I want to make clear that I do not presently hesitate to make such clear wherever the situation may call for me to do so.

Now I am hearing that same accusation—that we reject salvation by grace and affirm that salvation is by meritorious works—being leveled against those who stand for the truth by those among us who have espoused the basic "liberal" stance. But this accusation is just as false when it comes from our own brethren as it is when it comes from denominationalists.

I have been listening to gospel preachers preach the gospel all of my life, and in all of those years, I have *never* heard even on gospel teacher contend that any one is saved by meritorious works! The truth of this matter is that grace, faith, love and acts of obedience *all* have crucial roles in God's plan of salvation.

If men are saved, they are saved by the grace of God (Tit. 2:11; Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 15:11; et al.). No one is—or can be—saved by *meritorious* works (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 11:6; et al.). But this truth does *not* mean that men are saved *only* by grace (on the part of God) without *any* works at all (on the part of men). If grace were the *only* consideration, then *all* men would be saved (Tit. 2:11). Yet, Jesus made clear that "few" would be saved, in contrast to the "many" who would be lost (Matt. 7: 13, 14).

Recently, I saw an article¹, written by a brother in Christ,

which alleges that it "is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation." [It is quite serious to charge brethren with lying.]

These statements remind me of the booklet² (written by a Baptist preacher) which affirms that all of the deeds which one may do in obedience to the Gospel of Christ "*will not make his soul one whit safer.*" In so saying, he taught that loving obedience to Jesus Christ has nothing whatever to do with his becoming a Christian or, finally with his going to Heaven when Jesus comes again to judge the world.

In regard to the sins which one may commit, the same booklet teaches that "all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger. The justification of the human soul is through the atonement of Christ and not through the efforts of man. *The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul*" (emphasis mine, TBW).

Let us compare these two statements.

The Baptist said: "*The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul.*"

Our brother said, "*We do not contribute one whit to our salvation*" and that it is an "*outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity.*"

How do the statements compare? Is there a significant difference between them? I aver that there is not.

They both teach salvation by grace *only*.

Our brother taught that it is **an outrageous lie** to teach that salvation "*arises from human activity.*"

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The Baptist also taught that the way a man lives (this would include all of his thoughts and deeds) has nothing whatever to do with his salvation. So, this is a clear affirmation that after the moment when one believes in Christ, there is nothing he can do which would result in his eternal damnation. (I even heard one Baptist preacher say, “*Since I trusted Jesus as my personal Savior, I could not go to Hell even if I wanted to!*” Also, during debates, I have heard Baptist preachers argue that John 6:28-29 teaches, not that *man* must do the believing, but that *God* does the believing for him.

Our *brother* eliminates *all* human activity from salvation. If he were right, then *every* human being will be saved, because God’s grace is offered to ALL men (Tit. 2:11)! So, if this false doctrine really were true, then there would be no need for the preaching of the Gospel (all men would be saved without it, without ever *hearing* it, without ever *believing* it, without ever *obeying* it—either to *become* a Christian or in the *living* of the Christian life). May it be remembered, that the brother whom we are reviewing also taught that “*good works are the fruit of salvation.*” Given this doctrine, the things we do in *becoming* a Christian are *not* “good works.” This he teaches in spite of such passages as James 2:24-26.

In contradiction to our brother’s positions, the New Testament conditions both *becoming* a Christian and *living* a life which will result in eternal salvation on certain specified things. The Holy Spirit, in inspiring the writing of the New Testament, put the little word “*if*” before quite a number of conditions. Following are just a few of such passages: (1) Gal. 6:7-9: “**... in due season we shall reap *IF* we faint *not*”**; (2) Heb. 10:26: “***For IF we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins.***” [*emphases mine in the two preceding points*]; (3) Gal. 1:6-9 clearly teaches that if anyone preaches a gospel which is different from that of Christ, he will be under the curse of God.

There are many other passages which use “*if*” in this fashion. May all people be warned that there are works (acts of obedience which are required by Christ in the Gospel) which one must do in order to become a Christian. Also, there are works which one must do in order to go to Heaven when this life is over.

I want lovingly to affirm without reservation that no one can be saved without the grace of God—no one can *earn* his salvation. Every person who is saved is saved by *grace!* But—note this please—no one is saved by *grace only!* People are saved by the grace of God *when* by faith they obey the relevant instructions of Christ, who taught that only those who do the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21). Our brother contradicts Jesus, His Apostles, and His prophets. It should be clear that while the works of man cannot *earn* the forgiving of even one sin, it is nevertheless the case that salvation by the GRACE OF GOD is CONTINGENT on man’s *faith in* and *obedience to* the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 5:8-9).

James 2:24-26 and Revelation 2:10 among many other passages, ought to settle it for all of us: (1) those who live and die in faithfulness to the Gospel of Christ will be *saved* eternally, and (2) those who live and die in unfaithfulness to the Gospel of Christ will be *lost* eternally (cf. James 2:24-26; Matt. 25:46).

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One is saved by grace, but faith also has a part (Eph. 2:8-9). But Christ says, through His word, that men are saved by works and *not* by faith *only* (James 2:24-26).

The seed of God (His word) must be both believed and obeyed (Lk. 8:4-15). Each person is free either to stay in the “mudhole” of sin or, by faith and obedience, to get out of the “mudhole” of sin (II Pet. 2:20-22).

Again, I kindly suggest, that ought to settle the *matter for all of us*.

END NOTES

1 Rubel Shelly, “Love Lines,” October 31, 1990; Woodmont Hills Bulletin, Nashville, p. 3.

2 Sam Morris, Do A Christian’s Sins Damn His Soul? (No publisher or date indicated), pp. 1-2.

(*YOKEFELLOW*, Vol. 18, NO. 4, April 15, 1991, pp. 4, 6, 5—pages out of order—**Editor, CFTF**)

THIS IS AN ARTICLE FROM RUBEL SHELLY
WHEN HE TAUGHT THE TRUTH (ROM. 2:21)

OH, FOR AN HONEST FALSE TEACHER

Rubel Shelly

Of certain false teachers, John wrote: “**They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us**” (1 John 2:19).

The false teachers under consideration in this text had not arisen from the heathen world to challenge Christianity. They had arisen from within the church itself! They had become apostates from the truth. They were no longer “of us,” i.e., they did not possess the spirit of obedience which was characteristic of faithful disciples, for if they had possessed such a spirit they “**would have continued with us.**” In refusing to be obedient to the gospel and in teaching another gospel, these individuals had revealed themselves and severed their ties with faithful churches.

Can anything good be said about such apostates as these? Yes! They were honest! When these former members of the Lord’s church came to repudiate the basic tenets of the faith, they were honest enough to indicate as much and make a clean break with the church. So, before you conclude that there is nothing good to be said for any false teacher, consider the matter of honesty. Surely we can have more respect for a man who is honest and open about his convictions (or lack of them) than for a man who no longer believes the basic doctrines of the gospel but seeks to stay within the body of believers as a subversive. Such a person is not only a heretic Christian, he is a dishonest man!

Oh, for an honest false teacher! Now there are false teachers in our brotherhood today. For example, one preacher recently told me that he no longer believes it necessary to contend for the historicity of the virgin birth. Another recently denied the inerrancy of the Word of God in a speech which I heard. Yet these men—knowing full well that their views are contrary to the convictions which have characterized our brotherhood from Pentecost to the present day—have made known their intentions to “stay within the fellowship” of the churches of Christ. I suppose they intend to enlighten the backward brotherhood of which they have been a part!

But such men as those mentioned above (and I fear they are not the only preachers and teachers who feel this way) have developed a special conscience which excuses their

deceitfulness and treachery. They are quick to point out that they have reached these unorthodox opinions in all sincerity and with no evil intent—often in the name of “scholarship.” *While I do not question the sincerity with which they came to their present views, I do question their honesty in remaining within our brotherhood after they have come to hold such!*

College professors, preachers, Sunday School teachers or “just plain members” who have come to question or disagree with the Bible had best stop and weigh their position carefully. If, upon such thorough investigation, they decide that they are no longer “**of us,**” let them be honest enough to break with us openly and quit their unmanly treason!

—*Gospel Advocate*,
May 6, 1971

***WILL BROTHER SHELLY EVER COME
BACK TO THE TRUTH WHICH HE ONCE SO
FAITHFULLY TAUGHT?***

(*YOKEFELLOW*, Vol. 18, NO. 4, April 15, 1991, p. 8)

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AN “OPEN LETTER” TO THE “NEW” GOSPEL JOURNAL BOARD

Jess Whitlock

Queries from concerned members of the Lord’s church in Wyoming caused me to re-read an issue of *The Defender* (Vol. 26, # 11, Nov. 1997) (Also in *CFTF*, Vol. 28, # 12, Dec. 1997, p. 11—**Editor**) T.J. Hicks had rightfully addressed an “Open Letter” to “Cline (Paden) & other Sunset Elders.” In the second paragraph Tom Hicks made this very timely and scriptural request of the Sunset elders:

Because my previous and latest correspondence (to Cline Paden, a man for whom I once had the highest respect) goes unanswered, I feel that I have no choice but to begin communicating by means of “OPEN LETTERS” (open for “all brethren” to read), but addressed to Sunset (her elders, various ministers, and faculty members in the School). I feel that these matters should be conducted “in writing” because

“oral” discussions can be forgotten, denied, and/or otherwise flawed. Furthermore, if it is in print, one cannot deny that he said something that he did say, or say that he said something he did not say. Truth, integrity, and moral conviction have nothing to fear when exposed to the light. The same cannot be said for false doctrines, unethical dealings, and immoral behavior. Rather than to retreat into darkness, Sunset needs to “shed some light” in answer to questions that fall into all three of these categories.”

Did I hear someone say, “Amen”? When I read that entire correspondence in 1997 I said an audible “amen” in my office. I cannot think of any faithful brother in Christ who would not say that such was fair and needed. It is now 10 years later. Let us try this today.

TO THE “NEW” GOSPEL JOURNAL BOARD AND THE CURRENT CO-EDITORS

Because previous attempts to set up meetings and discussions (relating to matters such as: reaffirmation of elders, Miller’s false doctrine of “intent” to marry, et al, and extending fellowship to false teachers and false doctrines) remain unanswered and unmet, we have no choice but to open up communications by means of “OPEN LETTERS” (open so that all brethren can weigh truth against error). However, these letters should be directed to the current board members and editorial staff of *The “New” Gospel Journal*. The direction of this NEW monthly is not what it was under the capable editorship of brother Dub McClish. I was thrilled to receive my first copy of *The “Original” Gospel Journal* in January of 2000. I looked forward to every edition through July of 2005. Then a sad set of circumstances forced me to send in our cancellation. I had marveled at the 9 editorial aims of *The “Original,”* especially editorial aim # 5; **“Oppose and expose both doctrinal and practical error from all quarters.”** (Cf. Matt. 7:15; Eph. 4:14; 5:6; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 6:20-21; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 John 7-11. But, as John Moore (co-editor of *T“N”GJ*) stated at the 2005 Schertz Lectures, “We are going to do the very best that we can to bring to you issues that are encouraging, that edify, that instruct, that build up people, that are good for the church, every member of the church.” Notice, not one word about exposing error!

Some brethren have said that such things as the false practice of the so-called elder reaffirmation, the false doctrine of the “intent” to marry farce, and the fellowship of false doctrine/teachers, etc. are about “matters that don’t matter” or as one eldership said, “an unnecessary issue over marriage and divorce.” But, brethren, GOD INSPIRED SCRIPTURE DOES MATTER! I am reminded of the words of my Lord in Matthew 23:23, **“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier MATTERS of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”** Is it possible that we are encouraging, edifying, and building up people, all of which are good and noble, and have

omitted the weightier matters of “opposing and exposing both doctrinal and practical error”? These matters should be addressed “in writing” and/or in “oral” form that is recorded and preserved by tape, CD, DVD, etc. so they cannot be flawed. If it is recorded in print (or preserved by tape, CD, DVD), one cannot deny that he said something that he did say, or say that he said something he did not say. Barry Grider (co-editor of *T“N”GJ*) said at the 2005 Schertz Lectures, “doing our best to provide for our brotherhood a paper that is Biblically sound, one that is well-balanced. Once more, no mention is made of exposing error or speaking of New Testament authority for what we practice, i.e., reaffirmation of elders...”

Truth, integrity, and moral conviction have nothing to fear when exposed to the light of God’s Word: 2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 17:7-8; Rom. 3:2; Psa. 119:105, 140; Pro. 30:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 4:12-13; Matt. 24:35; 28:18; Col. 3:17; Jude 3. The same cannot be said for false doctrines, unethical dealings, and immoral behavior. We shall see what we shall see when *T“N”GJ* Board of Directors and the co-editors are asked whether they will stand on the side of truth, integrity, and moral conviction; OR shall they side with false doctrines (teachers), unethical dealings, and immoral behavior? Rather than to retreat into the darkness, *THE “NEW” GOSPEL JOURNAL* needs to “shed some light” in answer to questions that fall into all three of these categories (but which 3 shall it be)?

“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so: AND WHAT WILL YE DO IN THE END THEREOF?” (Jer. 5: 31).

Awaiting your reply,

A concerned brotherhood

—P.O. Box 26
Cheyenne, OK 73628
Jesswhitlock@dobsontelecd.com

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

B. C. Goodpasture, Deceased

Everything which God has made in creation and redemption has a mission. Nothing walks with aimless feet in the economy of God. The church is a divine institution—it is of divine origin. It, therefore, has a mission.

The building of the church was an expensive undertaking. The Lord could create the heavens and the earth without the shedding of a single drop of blood, but without shedding of His own blood He could not establish the church. **“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it”** (Eph. 5:25). He purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Even before His death, Jesus sacrificed for the church. **“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich”** (2 Cor. 8:9). He was rich in terms of heavenly and eternal values, yet He became poor, **“emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross”** (Phi. 2:7-8). Surely Christ would not have made such sacrifices for the church unless it was to have a mission in some measure worthy of its cost. What, then, is the mission of the church?

The question can be answered both negatively and positively. It is not the mission of the church to furnish *amusement* for the world or even for its own members. Innocent amusement in proper proportion has its place in the life of all normal persons, but it is not the business of the church to furnish it. The church would come off a poor second if it undertook to compete with institutions established for the express purpose of entertaining people. It would make itself ridiculous if it entered into such competition. Again, it is not the responsibility of the church as such to furnish *recreation* for its members.

A certain amount of recreation is necessary to the health and happiness of the individual. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, it is said, and rightly said; but it is not the function of the church to furnish the play. The church was not established to feature **athletics**. Rather, it emphasizes the principle that **“bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come”** (1 Tim. 4:8). Sometimes one would conclude, from the emphasis given to recreation, that godliness is profitable for a little, and that bodily exercise is profitable for all things.

For the church to turn aside from its divine work to furnish amusement and recreation is to pervert its mission. It is to degrade its mission. Amusement and recreation should stem from the home rather than the church. The church, like Nehemiah, has a great work to do; and it should not come down on the plains of Ono to amuse and entertain. 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. Only as the church becomes worldly, as it pillows its head on the lap of Delilah, will it want to turn from its wonted course to relatively unimportant matters. Imagine Paul selecting

and training a group of brethren to compete in the Isthmian games! Of his work at Corinth, he said: **“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”** (1 Cor. 2:2). What then, is the work of the church?

On the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the church, we find it *preaching the Gospel*. It is reasonable to expect the church, under the leadership of the apostles, to be engaged in its divinely assigned work. Christ, before His ascension, had laid upon His disciples—and His church, the grave and momentous responsibility of preaching the Gospel to every creature in every age of the world (Mark 16:15-16). During the lifetime of the apostles the church was busily engaged in preaching the Gospel to the remote ends of the earth. In his first epistle to Timothy, Paul said, **“These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth”** (1 Tim. 3:14-15). The church is the **“pillar and ground of the truth”**—not truth in general, but rather Truth in particular. The church must support and preach the Gospel always as a part of its divine mission.

Further, the church in Jerusalem **“continued stedfastly in the apostles’ teaching”** (Acts 2:42—Editor) In addition to preaching the Gospel to alien sinners, the church *taught and built up its own members* that they might **“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”** (2 Pet. 3:18). The Lord has made ample provisions for the edification of His people, the church.

“And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error” (Eph. 4:11-14).

It is, therefore, the work of the church to *promote the growth and development of its members*.

Finally, the church in Jerusalem *ministered to the material needs of its worthy poor* (Acts 4:32-37; 6:1-6). The Gentile churches sent help to the brethren in Judea (Acts 11:29-30; Rom. 15:25-26). Paul said that he was always ready to help those in need (Gal. 2:10). It is a part of the work of the church to help those who are in need, but the church is under no obligation to help those who will not help themselves. **“If any will not work,”** said Paul, **“neither let him eat”** (2 The. 3:10).

If the church will discharge its duty in preaching the Gospel, in edifying its members, and in helping the worthy poor, it will not have desire or time merely to amuse and entertain.

—*Gospel Advocate*, May 20, 1948

SOME OF THE THINGS WE HAVE BEEN SAYING ARE PROVING TO BE TRUE, ELSEWHERE...

JOHNNY OXENDINE

We recently received a bulletin from a congregation on the East coast with some tidbits from their missionary in Thailand. He said in August 2007, over 110 church leaders in that country attended a seminar discussing the Richland Hills group (can we still say church of Christ?), and the damage they are doing in the brotherhood. (This is how far the influence of false doctrine can reach, and if we don't expose it.)

In April 2006 a missionary team from Abilene Christian University (remember when all of the brethren were adamantly defending them?) had a joint worship with the Christian Church in the Chiangmai province of Thailand. The team said they saw nothing wrong with using instruments in the worship (Biblical authority matters little at Abilene these days), and that they sought to have more of these encounters with the Christian Church in the future. (Of course, not ALL of the ACU professors will say that they condone instrumental music in worship — but so what? If they continue to teach there, they do condone it! If they are against it, what hinders them from finding another job?) What concerned the Thai missionary

was the fact that several Thai brethren had worshipped [sic] at Richland Hills and came back to Thailand also advocating instrumental music in worship. Richland Hills (Fort Worth, Texas), for those who might not know, was one of the first congregations to engage in the unscriptural practice of elder re-evaluation/reaffirmation back in 1987. We have seen how insidious that doctrine, and those who support/condone it (or support those who do), has brutalized the brotherhood over the last two years to the extent that once conservative brethren have overtly sided with liberal doctrinal issues.

The problem that the Thai brethren are facing is not unusual nor the first time that we have seen large organizations moving their doctrinal errors overseas. Where once we had the problem of dealing with denominational falsity in foreign countries, we now are in the midst of a liberal tidal wave at a time when the church is most vulnerable. How will this affect the missionaries elsewhere?

Some years ago we had been supporters of the deaf work in Ethiopia until it became glaringly apparent that they were

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about to hand the work off to the Sunset School of Preaching (and Truman Scott). It was tragic that all of the work that had been done to get that project off the ground was now to be supplanted by those with larger purses than the brethren who laid the foundation. Sometimes we do not take the time, or care enough, to find out the details as we should and do not want anyone to give us information that might change our minds about a work. The Thai missionary held the seminar to inform brethren both in Thailand and abroad (the U.S.)

about the dangers resulting from Richland Hills (and Abilene). He also sent that information identifying the culprits. Now we know that there are many brethren that do not want any news like this to be broadcast (it is a negative assessment of Richland Hills and Abilene), but that is another story.

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THE BOSWELL- HARDEMAN DEBATE

Paul Vaughn

The subject of adding mechanical instruments of music to the worship of God has been around for many years. The recent events in some congregations of adding mechanical instruments of music show that this battle is not over, nor can this issue be swept away as dust on the floor. In 1923 N. B. Hardeman debated Ira M. Boswell on this issue. The debate was held at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee from May 31 to June 5, 1923.

In the discussion, N. B. Hardeman said, "Let me suggest to you that these are matters that pertain to our eternal destiny, for which we have to answer after the things of time shall have passed."¹ Brother Hardeman was speaking of debating itself. It was his fear that the wrong attitude in public discussions would prohibit debates in the future. He went on to say, "I do not want that criticism to be justly made that this discussion has drifted into a lighter vein, lest there be prejudice engendered against religious discussions that would some time prevent their recurrence."² There is a need for public debates today, as it was needed in past history. Debates enable all

issues to be discussed and error to be exposed. Yet, debating in our postmodern society is frowned upon as non-Christian. Satan has won a victory when Christians are deceived and blinded from defending the faith. It is written, "**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).

The Boswell-Hardeman discussion on mechanical instrumental music in worship is of vast importance to all Christians. It should be read and discussed today. It will help Christians prepare for battle. Paul said, "**Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil**" (Ephesians 6:11). The armor has been prepared by God and every Christian should be dressed for warfare.

BACKGROUND OF THE DEBATE

O. E. Payne of the Christian Church wrote a very liberal book on the music question in the church. This book was

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mailed throughout the Nashville area by "The Commission on Unity." This Commission was made up of members of the Vine Street Christian Church with their preacher, **Carey E. Morgan**, heading the list.

F. B. Srygley took this Commission to task in the *Gospel Advocate* on May 18, 1922. He suggested that a copy of **M. C. Kurfees'** book, *Instrumental Music in Worship*, be mailed along with Payne's book. Kurfees' book is a masterful study on the Greek verb "PSALLO." It completely defeats the arguments in Payne's book. M.C. Kurfees quotes John W. McGarvey in his study. The quote came from an article that he wrote in the *Apostolic Times*. McGarvey said, "It is manifest that we cannot adopt the practice without abandoning the obvious and only ground on which a restoration of Primitive Christianity can be accomplished, or on which the plea for it can be maintained."³ He goes on to say, "I hold that the use of the instrument is sinful, and I must not be requested to keep my mouth shut in the presence of sin, whether committed by a church or an individual."⁴ Tempers on both sides of the discussion began to flare and the foundation was laid for the Boswell-Hardeman debate.

THE DEBATE

The proposition was "Instrumental music in church worship is Scriptural." It was affirmed by Dr. Ira M. Boswell and denied by N. B. Hardeman. Each night of the debate was divided into two-hour sessions with each speaker having two thirty-minute speeches.

There is not enough space in this short article to examine fully every speech of Boswell and Hardeman. Those are easily found in the book. Brother Hardeman answered every argument that Boswell put forth in the discussion. This debate needs to be read and studied today. In the Christian Church there are always those seeking unity. But, their idea of unity is nothing more than compromising the Scriptures for the teachings and whims of men.

The Boswell-Hardeman discussion will help every Christian see the fallacy, error, and misconception of using mechanical instruments in the worship. This battle has been raging for years and it will not go away as long as there are those who seek to please themselves and not please God. There is a question that must be asked, "Does the church of

Christ have the resolution and the love for the restoration of primitive Christianity, enough to abandon all the innovations of men?" There are many congregations who are losing the will to fight the good fight of faith and stand only on God's word.

The debates of sound brethren in our past will enable all to defeat the error that can so easily lead one astray. Have you read the *Boswell-Hardemen Discussion*? If not get a copy and study it. Brother Hardemen has been dead for many years, yet he is still fighting against error in this magnificent debate.

—1415 Lincoln Road
Lewisport, KY
42351

ENDNOTES

1. Ira Boswell and N. B. Hardeman: *Boswell-Hardeman Discussion On Instrumental Music*, Guardian of Truth, Fairmount, 1981, p. 117.
2. Ibid.
3. M. C. Kurfees, *Instrumental Music in Worship*, *Gospel Advocate*, Nashville, TN, 1975, p. 235.
4. Ibid.

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-North Carolina-

Rocky Mount—Scheffield Drive Church of Christ, 3309 Scheffield Dr., Rocky Mount, NC 27802 (252) 937-7997.

-Oklahoma-

Porum—Church of Christ, 8 miles South of I-40 at Hwy 2, Warner exit. Sun. 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. Allen Lawson, evangelist, email: lawson@starnetok.net.

- Tennessee-

Murfreesboro—Church of Christ, 837 Esther Lane, Murfreesboro, TN, Sun. Bible class 9:00 a.m., Worship 10:00 a.m., Fellowship meal 11:00 a.m., Devotional 12:00 p.m.; Wed. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. For directions and other information please visit our website at www.murfreesborochurchofchrist.org. evangelist, Steve Yeatts.

-Texas-

Denton area—Northpoint Church of Christ, 5101 E. University Dr. (Greenbelt Business Park). Mailing address: Northpoint Church of Christ, Greenbelt Business Park, 5101 E. University Dr., Box 12, Denton, TX 76208. E-mail: northpointcoc@hotmail.com. Sunday: 9:30, 10:30, 6:00; Wednesday 7:00. Contact: Dub McClish: 940.323.9797; tgjoriginal@verizon.net.

Houston area—Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, (281) 353-2707. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, evangelist. Home of the Spring Contending for the Faith Lectures beginning the last Sunday in February. www.churchesofchrist.com.

Hubbard—105 NE 6th St., Hubbard, TX 76648, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. Delbert J. Goines; DJGoines@Valornet.com.

Huntsville—1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. Huntsville, TX 77320. Sun. 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (936) 438-8202.

Hurst (Fort Worth area)—Northeast Church of Christ, 1313 Karla Dr., P.O. Box 85, Hurst, TX 76053. Sun. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. (817) 282-3239.

New Braunfels—225 Saenger Halle Rd. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7:30 p.m. Lynn Parker, evangelist. (830) 625-9367. www.nbchurchofchrist.com.

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