

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

THE NEED FOR A STRONG ELDERSHIP

David B. Jones

The history of God's people reveals that the Lord God of heaven has always sought strong leadership for his people.

We recall that the children of Israel were visited by Jehovah and were led out of Egypt by a strong and courageous leader. Moses was commissioned from the burning bush to go and lead God's people out of captivity. Exodus 4:12 reads, "**Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.**" The Lord promised to be with Moses, but also expected Moses to be strong and brave in leading the people.

On one occasion, several men, led by Korah, tried to overthrow the authority of Moses. We read in Numbers 16 that these men claimed Moses took on too much authority. The Bible says that the earth opened up and swallowed those who rebelled against Moses (Numbers 16:31-33). In reality, these men had rebelled against God since Moses was God's leader of the people.

Shortly before his death, Moses commissioned the new leader Joshua, to be strong and of a good courage (Deuteronomy 3 1:6). The Lord knew his people would rise up against the leaders, but he expected the leaders to be strong even in the face of rebellion.

God expected the prophets to be men of courage as they spoke to the people. The Lord told Ezekiel that the house of Israel would not listen to him (Ezekiel 3:7). We read in 3:8-9:

Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead:

fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

Thus Ezekiel could **not** quit when the going became tough.

TODAY

God expects his leaders (elders) to be just as strong and just as courageous. God is still with us today and will still fight our battles for us, if WE will not forsake him. The Bible lists the qualifications for men who would be elders in the Lord's church today (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). In addition, the Bible teaches what elders are to do. A closer look at some of these duties would be profitable for us.

GOD EXPECTS THE ELDERS TO FEED THE CHURCH

The apostle Paul wrote:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

Just as a shepherd would feed his sheep, what they needed to mature, so elders are to feed the people what they need to mature as Christians. Of course, this feeding is the feeding of the pure and simple word of God. We are to desire it so we can grow. "**As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:**" (I Peter 2:2). Since elders have the obligation to feed, it follows logically that a place and time for feeding would be necessary. This would be the assemblies of the saints and each saint

(Continued on Page 6)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

David P. Brown, Editor and Publisher
jbrow@charter.net

Michael Light, Assistant Editor
mclight@bwoodtx.com

COMMUNICATIONS received by Contending for the Faith and/or its Editors are viewed as intended FOR PUBLICATION unless otherwise stated. Whereas we respect confidential information, so described, everything else sent to us we feel free to publish without further permission being necessary. Anything sent to us NOT for publication, please indicate this clearly when you write. Please address such letters directly to the Editor-in-Chief David P. Brown, P.O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383. Telephone: (281) 350-5516.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RATES

Single Subscriptions: One Year, \$14.00; Two Years, \$24.00. Club Rate: Three One-Year Subscriptions, \$36; Five One-Year Subscriptions, \$58.00. Whole Congregation Rate: Any congregation entering each family of its entire membership with single copies being mailed directly to each home receives a \$3.00 discount off the Single Subscription Rate, i.e., such whole congregation subscriptions are payable in advance at the rate of \$11.00 per year per family address. Foreign Rate: One Year, \$30.

ADVERTISING POLICY & RATES

Contending for the Faith was begun and continues to exist to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:7,17) and refute error (Jude 3). Therefore, we are interested in advertising only those things that are in harmony with what the Bible authorizes (Colossians 3:17). We will not knowingly advertise anything to the contrary. Hence, we reserve the right to refuse any offer to advertise in this paper.

All setups and layouts of advertisements will be done by Contending for the Faith. A one-time setup and layout fee for each advertisement will be charged if such setup or layout is needful. Setup and layout fees are in addition to the cost of the space purchased for advertisement. No major changes will be made without customer approval.

All advertisements must be in our hands no later than two (2) months preceding the publishing of the issue of the journal in which you desire your advertisement to appear. To avoid being charged for the following month, ads must be canceled by the first of the month. We appreciate your understanding of and cooperation with our advertising policy.

MAIL ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADVERTISEMENTS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357. COST OF SPACE FOR ADS: Back page, \$300.00; full page, \$300.00; half page, \$175.00; quarter page, \$90.00; less than quarter page, \$18.00 per column-inch. CLASSIFIED ADS: \$2.00 per line per month. CHURCH DIRECTORY ADS: \$30.00 per line per year. SETUP AND LAYOUT FEES: Full page, \$50.00; half page, \$35.00; anything under a half page, \$20.00.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH is published monthly. P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357 Telephone: (281) 350-5516.

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

Editorial...

A Little Leaven is All the Devil Needs

Some people have no problem with how many times the following doctrine is taught or how many people believe that “man’s will can alter God’s will”. Furthermore, whether it is applied to marriage, divorce and remarriage, so-called homosexual marriages, abortions and/or courts ruling that it is legal to starve certain people to death, their fundamental premise remains the same—MAN’S WILL CAN ALTER GOD’S WILL. This false doctrine is what certain brethren have been and are affirming. Over the last several years they have not been quiet about it. Except for some articles of a general nature in *CFTF* we have said little. We chose to wait and watch.

The false doctrine that man’s will can alter God’s will is a right flexible doctrine indeed. We know that to be the case with certain ones who believe this false doctrine because they apply it when it has to do with a human court’s decision to dissolve a Matthew 19:6 “God joined” marriage contrary to Matthew 19:9. But, they will not abide by the same principle and reasoning when the courts’ rule in favor of or a legislature enacts laws legalizing “same sex marriages”, abortion and starving a person to death. Besides being inconsistent in their application of their man-made doctrine, **THEY EVIDENTLY HAVE FORGOTTEN, NEVER KNEW OR HAVE COMPLETELY IGNORED THE PRINCIPLE THAT WHATEVER IMPLIES A FALSE DOCTRINE IS ITS SELF FALSE. TRUTH ONLY IMPLIES TRUTH.**

We know certain brethren had and have no problem with this false idea being taught. We know this because not many months ago it was taught in three Texas lectureships. Each one of these lectureships took place about three months apart. Earlier than these lectureships this same basic false doctrine was taught in certain articles and letters that were circulated through various kinds of media in the brotherhood. Indeed, it was over ten years ago that we first heard of the doctrine and we did not hesitate to deal with the matter then when certain brethren made it clear that they intended to push their view in the churches. To show their attitude, when some who espoused the false doctrine in those days said that our

position was new, it was pointed out to them that brother **Guy N. Woods** (brother Woods was alive in those days) had taught it in his 1976 Question and Answer book. The reply to that point from them was that brother Woods would be disfellowshipped along with the rest who held the view that God’s laws cannot be dissolved by man’s laws. But, the matter seemed to subside. Evidently, though, it had only gone underground.

Much earlier than the lectureships previously noted, a church in central Texas was greatly disturbed by this same doctrine. It was advocated and pushed by one who was then a preacher student (He also is one of the preachers who taught his brand of this false doctrine in one of the preceding lectureships). At the time of the disturbance in the church where he attended he said that his doctrine was worth dividing the church over. He also made it clear to the preacher of that central Texas church that he (the preacher) should be marked as a false teacher because he believed contrary to and opposed the doctrine that man’s will alters God’s will—along with the other points that are just as false and are peculiar to his doctrine (Lynn Parker deals with the other points in his **2005 CFTF Spring Lecture**). The last two sentences are (1) true or (2) the person got his facts mixed up, or (3) the person reporting them is a blatant liar. It would be interesting to see anyone attempt to prove that the person who reported these matters has his facts mixed up or is a liar (I Thessalonians 5:21). This same man was adamant in these matters until he was told that if he continued to push this doctrine he would not be graduated. With that warning, that which he originally considered to be a very obligatory matter (worth dividing the church over) was dropped by him. But he has never repented of the evil done in that church and to that particular preaching brother. Does it take a Solomon to question such an attitude or mind set—a disposition of heart that would allow one to raise such a stink over a doctrine, but grow immediately silent as an oyster when threatened with dire consequences. Mind you, the school did not censure the student because he was teaching false doctrine. Could it be that they just did not desire him to teach it and possibly bring them into the fray? Of course, if it is true that man’s will can alter God’s will, it is an obligatory matter and no one can go to heaven without teaching and practicing it. Again, at the time this was happening we said little, but we waited and watched to see if certain elders or others would

In This Issue...

THE NEED FOR A STRONG ELDERSHIP David B. Jones	1
Editorial... A LITTLE LEAVEN IS ALL THE DEVIL NEEDS	2
WHERE WE STAND David P. Brown	5
IS INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP OPINION? Gary Summers	7
THE SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE Victor M. Eskew	10
CARTOON Steve Cline	13
KEYNOTES OF SCRIPTURE AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST Robert R. Taylor, Jr.	14
MIRACULOUS GIFTS TODAY B. J. Clarke	15
DEMON POSSESSION Andy Cates	17
“IT IS NOT IN MAN” Rob L. Whitacre	17
WHO’S WHO SPEAKERS AND PERFORMERS AT FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY David P. Brown	19
THE CAMEL SWALLOWING SYNDROME Tom Moore	21
CAN ONE HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST WITHOUT OBEDIENCE? Marvin L. Weir	22

say or do anything about it. Nothing public was forthcoming.

Concurrent with the preceding matters the same fundamental doctrine was and is causing some confusion among certain brethren in certain parts of Tennessee. It caused enough of a stir among the brethren in those parts of Tennessee that earlier this year certain brethren had a meeting with those who are advocating their brand of the doctrine in an effort to clarify who was teaching what and to oppose the error. Again, it is basically the same doctrine that is mentioned in the first sentence of this editorial. Preceding the previously noted meeting we also waited and watched, but until the meeting little was done publicly in opposition to this error.

WE CAN—YOU CANNOT

With all that certain preachers have done in teaching this false doctrine over the last several years, why have some of our more concerned and pious brethren not charged them with deliberately setting about to split the church, or “to blow this matter wide open”, or “we don’t like the way they are dealing with this matter”, or “they should have told us what they were going to do before hand” so on and so forth? We have not been guilty of either desiring to split the church or “blowing the matter wide open”. We do plead guilty to believing we have the right and obligation to speak our mind on the matter as much as those who speak to the contrary. Especially is this the case when others have chosen to go public in the advocacy of their doctrine. And, we are not obligated to get permission from the brotherhood for what we do, any more than the men and churches who taught their false doctrine sought our approval or disapproval before propagating it. However, we have been as clear as we know how to be regarding what we will (and now are beginning to do) because of what these brethren have publicly taught and done in several places in their attempts to bring us unto bondage to their pernicious doctrine. However, to date, the preceding comments in this paragraph have come to us through “the grape vine” about our efforts in our *2005 Spring Church of Christ Contending for the Faith Lectures* wherein **Lynn Parker** exposed this false doctrine—that civil law can abrogate, dissolve or make null and void God’s law. We recommend you order the 2005 lecture book and read what was examined, upheld and refuted in the chapter. You may order it

from *Contending for the Faith*, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, TX 77383. The cost of the book is \$17.00 plus \$2.50 for S&H. You also may order Lynn Parker’s recorded sermon on this subject from Jim Green, 2711 Spring Meade Blvd., Columbia, TN 38401.

O CONSISTENCY

We must say that the inconsistent conduct on the part of some toward us does not surprise us. It saddens us, but does not surprise us. It was anticipated. And it does not move us at all to change our ways. Brethren have operated in this unfair and inconsistent manner on a number of occasions. Indeed, when brethren began to oppose and expose the “anti” orphan home, helping non-saints out of the church treasury, and so on of the 1950’s; when brethren began to oppose and expose the liberals back in the 1960’s and even at this late hour, there were and are those brethren who were and are upset because someone took exception to what they were teaching. The same happened when brethren began to expose and oppose the “Crossroad’s movement” and before that the false doctrine taught on the Herald of Truth radio and T. V. program (Do some of you remember the 1973 Memphis meeting regarding the Herald of Truth?). And, you guessed it, those who took exception to the false doctrine and called a spade a spade were the bad guys, wearing the black hats. For some reason there are always those persons who have no problem with certain ones teaching their doctrines, no matter how far fetched they are or how public the teaching is. I know this to be the case because they have not been charged with desiring to split the church, or “blowing the matter wide open”, or “we don’t like the way they are dealing with this matter”, or “they should have told us what they were going to do before hand” and like sentiments. Now, we wonder why such charitable comments were not applied to them when they publicly taught their doctrine on more than one occasion over the years. But, when we have our say on the matter they “holler” foul and squall like a cat with its tail slammed in a door. Well, all we can say is what the Lord said, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” And, as I have said on more than one occasion, there is more than one way to skin a cat, but there is no way the cat is going to like it.”

It is a sad day when people want to be free to teach whatever they desire, but they do not want anyone else to have the same freedom to respond to them

in as public a way as they have presented their doctrine. We have for a long time come to expect this kind of inconsistent conduct from the liberals in government, the liberals in the church, and especially the liberal news media. But it is sad indeed when those who repudiate such actions by those noted in the previous sentence are blind to the same attitude and action in their own lives regarding other things.

We believe that **Moses E. Lard** in the spring of 1865 set out the view that we intend to follow on the pages of *Contending for the Faith*.

The prudent man, who has the care of a family, watches well the first symptoms of disease. He does not wait till his wife is helpless, and his children prostrated. He has learned that early cures are easy cures, while late ones often fail. On this experience he resolutely acts, and the world applauds his wisdom. Why should not the same judicious policy be acted upon in the weighty matters of religion?... (Moses E. Lard, "The Work of the Past—The symptoms of the Future," *Lard's Quarterly*, Vol. II, No. 3 (April, 1865), pp. 251-262).

—David P. Brown, Editor

WHERE WE STAND

David P. Brown

The following question and the response to it came from a debate on marriage, divorce and remarriage. We offer the respondent's answer to his opponent's question as *Contending for the Faith's* position on civil laws relation to God's law and vice versa, especially civil laws and court decisions concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage.

The speaker asked the following question of his opponent:

If a man is in a situation that requires him to live celibately is it because that sentence is imposed as a punishment or is it because he is still married to his first wife?

The opponents answer:

Well, he's still bound to his first wife. That's what we intend to show, and he's also bound to God's law. He's bound to his first wife by God's law, and besides that he's obligated to obey God's law (page 24, 25). What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. God's higher law says that when the law of the land, a judge or jury, an in-law, an outlaw, anybody, puts asunder a husband and wife they are still bound in God's sight (page 46).

There are two God-given reasons why people can be loosed. From the chart: Art thou loosed from a wife? There are two God-given reasons: death, Romans 7:2,3 says that a woman is bound by law to her husband so long as he lives. Notice I Corinthians 7. The apostle Paul closes out that chapter and says, quoting the above law again, "A woman is bound by law so long as he liveth." We are affirming a higher law, which says that no matter what the law of the land does, they are still bound in God's sight. And if she goes and marries someone else, she is married to him, but it is an adulterous marriage. There are only two God-given reasons, two reasons which allow remarriage without adultery

(page 47, 48).

Now look at God's law. What therefore God hath joined together let not man: not a judge, not a jury, not an in-law, not a cousin, not an outlaw. Nobody has the right. You cannot do it. God does not allow it. This is the supreme law. God joined together, let not man put asunder (page 135).

Man says, man and wife may be divorced for many unscriptural reasons. But the law of man is null and void. It is invalid. That is what my proposition says, that succeeding marriages after those divorces are null and void. So, the divorces are null and void, therefore the marriages are null and void. They are divorced by man, but it is not approved, it is not sanctioned by God (page 136).

Mark 10:6-12: "But from the beginning of creation male and female made he them. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife." Notice, it is from the beginning of creation. God's law of marriage, from creation. "The two shall become one flesh, so there is no more two, but one flesh." Notice God's law here. We have emphasized this statement "What therefore, God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Man cannot put asunder. And if man does, he is in violation of this law of God (page 194).

Chart #53 (W) (page 186)

REASONS WHY THE MARRIAGE OF UNSCRIPTURALLY DIVORCED AND REMARRIED PEOPLE IS INVALID AND ADULTEROUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD

MARRIAGE: COVENANT & COHABITATION
1. THEIR DIVORCES WERE UNSCRIPTURAL;
THEREFORE THEIR MARRIAGE IS UNLAWFUL
BEFORE GOD. (MARK 10:9-12)

2. SHE IS ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE, THEREFORE BOUND TO HIM. (ROM. 7:2)

3. BEING BOUND SHE IS NOT "LOOSED" TO MARRY. (1 COR. 7:27-28)

4. BEING MARRIED TO ANOTHER MAN SHE IS AN ADULTERESS. (ROM. 7:3)

5. "EVERY ONE THAT PUTTETH AWAY HIS WIFE AND MARRIETH ANOTHER COMMITTETH ADULTERY" (LK. 16:18)

—25403 Lancewood Dr.
Spring, Texas 77373

The Need For A Strong Eldership

(Continued From Page One)

would thus be required to assemble in order to be fed. It is hard to imagine a Christian that would willfully miss an opportunity to come and receive spiritual nourishment for his soul.

It is sad to see so many elderships allow the flock to be fed weeds and briars in the name of good solid food! These elders allow men to mount pulpits all over the brotherhood, spewing forth their error and venom. These so-called elders allow their hirelings to deceive and destroy innocent and ignorant hearts with devilish and demonic doctrines. They are responsible for allowing the church to be led into apostasy and anarchy in many places. The Lord's church is looked at, in many places, as "The Community Church," or some other denominational body—just one among many—as a result of these false teachers. While these false teachers are responsible, so are the elders who allowed them to teach their error. If godly elders would have stood their ground one generation ago, the wolves would not have chewed the flock as they have in the past generation, even continuing to do so today.

GOD EXPECTS THE ELDERS TO PROTECT THE SHEEP

Again the apostle Paul wrote:

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

Although many do not want to believe it (for whatever the reason is), there are many false teachers **IN THE CHURCH** that will lead the sheep away from the fold. Jesus, himself, said to beware of false prophets who come in sheep's clothing: "**Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves,**" (Matthew 7:15). Yet, there are many children of God who do not believe Jesus! The elders have a responsibility before

God to know what sound doctrine is and then to exhort and convince the false teacher (Titus 1:9). They are to stop the mouths of these people (Titus 1:11).

We need strong preachers today, but this is not enough! We **MUST** have elderships that will support the preacher who still stands in the old paths. We need elders who will not bow the knee to numbers and popularity. What is "new and dynamic" is the cry heard from many of our pulpits today, but the church needs elders who will still insist on a "thus saith the Lord" regardless of whose feelings are hurt or regardless of who leaves. Elders still watch for the souls of the flock and must still give account for the way they were fed and protected (Hebrews 13:17).

Elderships also need to protect the body of Christ from sin within its ranks. We read throughout the scriptures the fact God did not tolerate sin. He instructed his people to rid Israel of the evil on many occasions. In the case of Achan God told Joshua:

Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you (Joshua 7:11-12).

They were not allowed to take Ai because Achan had disobeyed God in the taking of Jericho. There was sin in the camp and God would not allow victory under that condition.

The same is true today. Elderships need to take the lead in practicing church discipline. They need to be aware of who is involved and those who will not repent need to be withdrawn from for the protection of others. Their action will also help save the guilty, hopefully making them feel ashamed and bringing about repentance. Paul wrote: "**To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit**

may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (I Corinthians 5:5). Paul also recorded:

And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother (II Thessalonians 3:14-15).

The guilty should not be treated as the enemy, but rather, as a wayward brother. However, there are limitations God places upon them and we must observe these for the sake of the one in sin and the purity of the church.

GOD EXPECTS THE ELDERS TO BE EXAMPLES FOR THE FLOCK

They are not to “lord” over God’s heritage, but they are to set the examples for the others: **“Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock”** (I Peter 5:3). If elders want people to follow them, the people must first see the elders doing the will of God. The elders must set the example in Bible study. They must set the example in visiting the sick. They must set the example in humility.

They must set the example in exhibiting a calm personality. They must set the example by not murmuring or complaining. They must set the example of not fellowshiping those who either teach or practice error, or endorse those who do. They will not be perfect, but the spirit of humility before God must show through when mistakes are made. They must be big enough to admit wrong and then change from it. Likewise, the sheep must allow them the opportunity to change.

The need for strong leadership has not diminished one degree in time. The church today needs men who will prepare themselves and then who will serve as elders. An army cannot make much progress without a capable leadership who takes orders for the Command-In-Chief and then expedites those orders. Likewise, the church (the Lord’s army) will not progress in the saving of souls without capable leadership who expedite the laws of the Lord. May God help us to prepare ourselves and to serve when we are prepared. Brethren, it is later than we think!

—P.O. Box 383
Nesbit, Mississippi 38651

IS INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP OPINION?

Gary Summers

In his speech in October of 2002 at Restoration Forum XX in Lubbock, crowd pleaser **Rick Atchley**, after making a case for sinful activities based on culture, came back to the topic of instrumental music. Below are his words:

Romans 15:5: **“May God give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus”** [he is quoting from the NIV but omitted part of the verse, GWS]. What are you going to wind up with if you follow Jesus? You are going to wind up with a cross on your back, aren’t you? Let me just imagine—I don’t think anybody with a cross on their back, about to die, fussed about a piano (much laughter). Did they? That’s not what you talk about when you are on your way to be crucified. When you and I die to self, we can be of the same mind, even when we are not of the same opinion. I think it is crucial matter we need to get across. Be of the same mind with one another. And then second, he says, **“Accept one another.”** *Escapism and sectarianism is not the answer.*

IT IS NOT A MATTER OF OPINION

The crowd loved Rick’s ability to trivialize an im-

portant concept. The fact is that Jesus spoke about the Father seeking true worship (John 4:23-24). True worship does not fall into the category of opinion. After thinking about such derogatory comments, can the reader not imagine Rick Abihu Atchley telling Jehovah that offering a different fire from what he had specified is not an important consideration (Leviticus 10:1-2)? When King Uzziah decided that, instead of the priests, he could burn incense, God struck him with leprosy immediately, and he was a leper until the day of his death (II Chronicles 26:16-21). Atchley says correct worship is not important, but God says it is. Whom should we believe?

Anyone with a cross on his back should be reminded constantly that it is not what he thinks that is important—but rather what God commands. We should be so concerned about pleasing him that we would never want to do anything that is questionable or that lacks Biblical authority (Colossians 3:17). Where is the New Testament passage that authorizes instruments of music in our worship? No one can cite a commandment for its being added to our singing. NO one can provide

a single example of Jesus, the apostles, or the church using it in the entire New Testament. No verse implies that it ought to be used. Where does the authority come from to include it? It is nothing but “will worship” (KJV) (“self-imposed religion,” NKJV), which simply means: “We will use it because we like to use it.” Atchley’s vision is misapplied: we have no pianos upon our backs while we carry the cross; those who have brought them into their worship without God’s authority or approval are the ones bearing that burden.

JUST DO YOUR OWN THING

What is meant by *escapism and sectarianism*? The former means: “Well, we’ll just do our own thing somewhere else and put up a new sign.” Once again, Rick trivializes church problems by implying that nothing is ever important enough to compel brethren to leave a particular congregation and begin another one. Such an implication is just as irresponsible as one which would seek to justify every split that ever occurred. While it is true that some should never have happened, it is also the case that others had no choice. Either they had to participate in false worship or leave. Either they had to endure false doctrine continually or establish a church where the truth could be taught. Below is the way that Atchley chose to deal with sectarianism.

Sectarianism is not the answer. The convicting testimony of Christian unity is not that we all become alike. It’s that we all become one despite our diversities. And do you know what that means? It means I’ve got to acknowledge God’s right to use people who disagree with me. God is sovereign. He does not need my permission to use people—who don’t always agree with me.

TEACHING FALSE DOCTRINE IS NOT A MARVELOUS THING

God’s ability to bring unity out of diverse individuals is marvelous. When one thinks about the amalgamation into the body of Christ of male and female, Jew and Gentile, every race, and every social stratum, it is marvelous indeed. Regardless of all of the various *opinions* these brethren hold, they can all be one in Christ Jesus. But there is nothing marvelous about members believing, holding to, and teaching false doctrines. That kind of agreeing-to-disagree is called *compromise*—not *unity*. It is not sectarian to stand up for a Biblical doctrine that is clearly taught.

Division in doctrine did not originate from Jesus or his apostles (John 17:20-21; Acts 2:42). Obviously, Jesus did not himself teach conflicting doctrines. Neither did the apostles; they were all inspired by the same Holy Spirit, and “**God is not the author of confusion**” (I Corinthians 14:33). Neither did the apostles vary their message depending on the culture of the people. Paul, for example, wrote: “**For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and**

faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church” (I Corinthians 4:17).

Somewhere along the line (undoubtedly due to the influence of Satan) some preachers began to depart from the faith. It was already occurring in the New Testament—particularly with the Judaizing teachers. But Paul did not agree to speak at a scheduled “unity” meeting with those men so that he could encourage them to agree to disagree. Neither did John agree to a unity meeting with the Gnostics for such a purpose.

OBLIGATION OR OPTION

You have heard this idea that one can be wrong and one can be right or both can be wrong, but both cannot be right. That’s true in a courtroom, but Paul says that does not happen to be true in the church. Paul insists on matters of opinion in differing brothers: both can be right if they are fully persuaded in their own minds and if they refrain from judging each other.

The key word here is *opinions*. A Jewish Christian wants to rest on the Sabbath day; a Gentile brother wants to work. Both are “right” because there is *no law* forbidding the former or enjoining the latter. In other words, it is a matter of *indifference* to God under the Christian dispensation. The question is not, “Should we allow liberty on matters of indifference?” The controversy is: “What *are* matters of option?”

Considering that his audience on this occasion consisted of those who use the instrument, it is painfully obvious that Atchley considers instrumental music a matter of option. (Remember he termed sermons exposing the error of adding them to our worship as *lousy*. Furthermore, in his conclusion he says:

I figure I’ve got about twenty, twenty-five years of preaching left. I’m not going to spend them pushing brothers and sisters away. And in my lifetime, brothers and sisters, the walls between our heritage can come down.

Once again we see that Atchley’s philosophy of preaching is to please people. Now, no one should preach with the desire of purposely offending anyone, but many are offended by the gospel. Did not Paul write, “**Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?**” (Galatians 4:16). Did Noah worry about pushing people away? Was Jeremiah concerned about alienating his brethren in Jerusalem? What was Jesus’ response when he was told that he had offended the Pharisees (Matthew 15:12-14)? Did Paul the aged worry about pushing people away or preaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27)? The truth needs to be preached kindly yet firmly; each individual is responsible for his reaction to the word of God. Many walls will remain as long as people insist on doing that which is not authorized by the scriptures. They erected the walls when

they brought in the instrument and created division; the walls will disappear when they remove them.

IN WORSHIP TO GOD MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC ARE NOT WRONG

In the Open Forum that followed, Rick became even more adamant on this subject:

So what it's going to take from our side is some churches and some leaders and some preachers to stand up and say, "Folks, we're not trying to make you worship and violate your conscience. We're not trying to bring in pianos. We're sayin', **FLAT OUT**, it ain't wrong. You shouldn't believe its wrong—because, if you do, you haven't preached the gospel well here."

What could be plainer with respect to what Atchley and, therefore, Richland Hills believes about instrumental music? If it "ain't wrong," then it must be an optional matter—a matter of indifference. Furthermore, Rick boasts, "Most of the preachers that I run with in main-line churches of Christ do not believe instrumental music is wrong." "Mainline churches of Christ" are not defined in the New Testament; so what he means by it is anybody's guess, but we can unequivocally state this: those preachers who believe and respect the integrity of the scriptures and are preaching the Gospel to save men's souls rather than to please them and receive applause can explain precisely why instrumental music in worship is wrong. In contrast, Rick cited no biblical reason for his conclusion.

LET US IGNORE MATTHEW 15:1-9 AND JOHN 4:23-24

Consider also the vehemence with which he offers his unsupported assertions. He says that anyone who thinks it is wrong (against his pronouncement on the matter) has not understood the Gospel correctly. Really? Does the Gospel of Christ say nothing about acceptable worship? Are we supposed to ignore Matthew 15:1-9 (the traditions of men, which produces vain worship) and John 4:23-24 (worshipping in spirit and in truth)? Atchley continues:

I'm at a church that loves me and believes what I'm standing for, and I receive a lot of support. But there are some guys out there that will pay a pretty big price on my side of the Restoration Movement for sayin' what I said today. That's beginning to change in lots of churches. It really is beginning to change.... And, there is no doubt in my lifetime, in a cappella churches, this issue is no longer going to be an issue for fellowship. I really do believe that.

We pray that he is as inaccurate of his assessment of this situation as he is in his understanding of the scriptures. It does prompt the question, however: "Where are all these men who lack conviction coming from? How can they be so unlearned and ignorant?"

Just in case the reader has still failed to pick up on Atchley's position on this subject, he refers to a statement he made publicly two years ago;

I'm going to make tearing down the walls between Independent Christians Churches and Churches of Christ one of my life's missions, one of the misunderstandings that surfaced in the church...

WHY IS IT RIGHT? BECAUSE ATCHLEY SAID IT WAS

How sad that he is committed to false worship as an optional matter! How has he tried to justify it? He has not. Rick Abihu Atchley simply wills it to be a matter of indifference; so presto! It is. Since he has himself professed such commitment to its acceptance, even stating that is a matter of accepting the gospel correctly, surely he must be willing to debate at least one preacher and expose those *lousy* sermons he has been re-calling all these years. What better way to tear down those walls of separation than to show the weakness of those narrow-minded, legalistic preachers who still hold to those archaic beliefs?!

Alexander Campbell, whom he occasionally cites, believed in the power of debate, and he uses it effectively. Anyone who holds so passionately the view that instrumental music is an optional matter of indifference should be thrilled at the prospect of reaching so many people with his message. In fact, it is most surprising that he has not already challenged **Alan Highers**, who debated **Given O. Blakely** back in 1988. Everyone who knows Rick ought to encourage him in this project; it would tear down those walls much faster—if he succeeds. Here is a suggested proposition: "The Bible teaches that instrumental music in worship is not a sin and that it is a matter of indifference to God." Or: "The Bible teaches that it is sinful for brethren to divide over the use of instrumental music in worship."

"A MISUNDERSTANDING"

Notice that Atchley trivializes the division that occurred a century ago as a *misunderstanding*. How arrogant! Those brethren who fought for truth had their buildings taken over by callous "brethren" who cared nothing about violating the consciences of others and could not even find biblical support for these unauthorized additions. How unfortunate that Rick Atchley was not there to mediate in this little misunderstanding!

As for Richland Hills, here is their position:

I think you will find a lot of churches, a lot of a cappella churches that will say, "We don't think this is wrong, but we are going to honor our heritage, and this is who we are going to be." You're going to find a lot of a cappella churches that are gonna start sayin', "Sunday morning we are going to be a cappella, but after that we are going to let a lot of freedom reign"—which is pretty much what we do at Richland Hills. You walk

into our youth center Sunday morning [night? GWS] or Wednesday night; and I'm tellin' you—Christian rock and roll is just blatin'. But we tell the people, "When you come worship with us on Sunday morning, you're going to have an a cappella experience. So you're going to have a lot of that.

Well, if he is not scriptural, at least he is consistent. He has admitted that the nonuse of instrumental music on Sunday morning is a matter of option (for him). Its absence is not due to conviction but preference.

Is there a verse in the New Testament that says, "Don't use instruments of music in worship?" No. Nor is there one that says, "Don't burn incense throughout the period of worship," or "Don't engage in spiritual leaping and dancing during worship," or "Don't use peyote to enhance the spiritual experience of worship." The question must always be, "Are we, in our worship doing that which God has authorized?" We *must* have authorization for what we teach and practice (Colossians 3: 17).

WHAT IS THEIR "HERMENEUTIC"?

It is painfully obvious that some, perhaps many, no longer agree with that position. Their "hermeneutic" is: "What do we like to do? What pleases people? What will draw the crowds?" Such was not the approach of either Jesus or his apostles. It is embarrassing that such men would claim to be representatives of him when they are nothing like him. They do not have his love of the truth, his desire to please God, or his passion for saving men's souls. If they did, they would remain steadfast and true to the book instead of making up their own rules as they go along.

They are actually encouraging brethren to depart from the New Testament doctrine and New Testament worship. They can point to all their good works, but the Lord can still say to them, "**Depart from Me, you who work iniquity; I never knew you**" (Matthew 7:23). One cannot compromise on salvation, worship, and doctrine, and yet remain to the Lord Jesus Christ.

—5410 Lake Howell Dr.
Winter Park, Florida 32792

THE SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE

Victor M. Eskew

This writer graduated From the Memphis School of Preaching in 1982. At that time, the environment within the church was much different than it is now. There was a liberal element making inroads as there is today. There is no difference here. The difference lies with those who were striving to uphold truth.

The fight was on several years ago. The Faithful were on the offensive. They met to discuss the situation of the churches (II Corinthians 11:28). Error was attacked on the local level, that is, within the states, cities, and local congregations (I Corinthians) false doctrines and teachers were exposed so that all could beware (Matthew 7:15). Small congregations were formed because individuals could no longer tolerate the false teachings and practices within the congregation where they worshipped and laboured (II Corinthians 6:7).

Today, many of the battles have ceased. The mouths of the faithful have been shut. Their pens have ceased to expose error. Many of the small congregations now fellowship the "large" congregation from which they withdrew years ago. The same errors prevail. They are now overlooked, or thought not to be so serious as they once were. (This writer can cite many examples of this happening from the state of Mississippi alone).

Excuses abound for this spirit of compromise which now exists. We are told that it is impossible to do anything as a small group of individuals. We are also told that it is impossible to fight error unless one is in the household of the wicked (Note: evidence the error which once was there still abounds). Others boldly admit that they are simply tired of fighting the good fight of faith.

It is sad to see many of the brethren who once boldly defended the "walls off Jerusalem" lay down their arms. These individuals need to seriously consider a question found in the book of Jeremiah.

If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with the horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of the Jordon? (Jeremiah 12:5).

THE SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE OPPOSES TRUTH

This spirit of compromise which has developed stands in direct opposition to the truth of God's word. Many verses could be considered. We will only examine a few. In Ephesians 5:11, the apostle Paul commanded the church in Ephesus, saying, "**And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,**

but rather reprove them.” Most in the church have had a difficult time with the latter part of this command. They believe that it is unkind and unloving to reprove those who walk in darkness. The spirit of compromise, however, not only disregards the last part of Ephesians 5:11, but it also neglects the first part. In many instances, fellowship has been restored among brethren who once stood opposed to each other. This would be commendable except there has been no repentance by those who once opposed the truth. Those who were in error are still in error. The problem lies among those who were once faithful. Their spirit of compromise now allows them to fellowship the unfruitful works of darkness.

Another verse which is now opposed is Jude 3. This verse demands that we earnestly contend for the faith.

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.

Those once faithful brethren have ceased wrestling for the truth. They believe that they have not, but in reality they have. Their eyes they now close to unscriptural practices. Their ears they have closed to uncertain sounds. And their mouths they have shut in support of the faith once delivered unto the saints.

Still another verse which is transgressed by those who have developed the spirit of compromise is Romans 16:17, **“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”** As stated earlier, these individuals no longer avoid sinners; they fellowship them. And, rather than marking the ones opposed to the truth, they mark the ones who are diligently striving to walk the straight and narrow road.

Multitudes of other verses could be produced to show wherein this compromising spirit is opposed to the word of God. These which have been produced, however, should be sufficient to show that these individuals have transgressed the pure doctrine of Christ. In light of II John 9a, this is a serious matter. **“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God....”**

THE SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE OPPOSES BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

One of the most profound Old Testament characters is Nehemiah. He was a cupbearer in the Persian king's palace. His heart, though, was in the great city of Jerusalem. His love and concern for the city and its inhabitants enabled him to return to rebuild the walls thereof.

His task was enormous. His faith, however, was greater. And even though his work was fraught with many obstacles, he was not to be stopped. On one occasion, his enemies pleaded with him to come to the plains of Ono. Let us look at Nehemiah's response to their meeting.

Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messengers unto them saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner (Nehemiah 6:2-4).

Nehemiah had no time for his enemies. He was not willing to come down to them. He was in no way going to compromise the great work he was doing for his God.

Nehemiah does not portray those who have compromised today. These individuals desire to talk and eat with the enemy. They can be found even at this present time on the plains of Ono. They have laid down their tools and arms in service to God, in order to join hands with those who were once their enemies.

Another biblical example which they oppose is Jesus Christ himself. Jesus had many individuals, especially among the Jewish leaders, who opposed him. Never once do we find him sitting down to compromise with them. Rather, we find him constantly opposing and exposing them. We never once hear of his advising his followers to join their ranks in order to try to influence them to do what is right. We never once read of his complaining to his disciples that they were too small to really make a difference. And we never read of his saying that he was tired of battling the opposition.

Other examples could fill the pages of this article. Abel did not compromise his manner of worship. Noah would not compromise with the wickedness of his day. Joshua and Caleb would have no part with the ten unbelieving spies. David did not seek a compromise with Goliath. John the Baptist would not compromise the truth on marriage with Herod. And Paul and the other apostles would not compromise with the errors of Judaism, gnosticism, and paganism of the first century. Those compromising today can in no way be numbered with these great men of Old. They stand diametrically opposed in both their heart and actions.

THE SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE ALLOWS ERROR TO PREVAIL

When individuals cease to defend the truth, error is allowed to prevail. This truth is no better seen than in the conquering of the land of Canaan. The command to the children of Israel was to utterly drive out all the inhabitants of the promised land.

And the Lord spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordon near Jericho, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordon into the land of Canaan; then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places (Numbers 33:50-52).

The children of Israel compromised on this point. In the book of Joshua, we read of several occasions when the children of Israel failed to drive out all the inhabitants. The Jebusites remained in the city of Jerusalem (Joshua 15:63). The Canaanites were allowed to remain in Gezar and dwell among the Ephramites (Joshua 16:10). Manasseh also failed to drive the Canaanites out of such cities as Asher Bethshan, Iblem, Oor, Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo (Joshua 17:11-13).

This compromise led to the downfall of Israel and Judah. They were greatly plagued by the sins of the heathen. This was as God said it would be.

But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell (Numbers 33:55).

Yes, compromise by Israel allowed the heathen to prevail. The same is true today. When individuals compromise, error will always prevail. Watch, dear friends, over the next few years. We will see the instrument of music in the churches of Christ. We will see the new versions in almost every congregation of the Lord's people. We will have more and more adulterous unions inside the church walls. We will see more gymnasiums built. This time they will be built by congregations who once diametrically opposed them. We will also see more and more in our ranks willing to join

**CHECK
YOUR ADDRESS LABEL**

**IF YOURS HAS THE DATE
4/01/05**

IT IS TIME TO RENEW

**SEND RENEWALS TO:
P.O. BOX 2357
SPRING, TX 77383**

hands with those in the denominations and accept them as "brethren." This writer says these things, not as a prophet, but because compromise allows error to prevail. And the spirit of compromise is among us!

THE SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE WILL CONDEMN THE SOUL

II John 9 states that those who transgress the doctrine of Christ do not have God. Those who do not know and have God will be lost at Christ's second coming.

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

In his second epistle, Peter pictures those who turn from the truth as dogs eating their own vomit, and as pigs once washed, and returning to the mire. He proclaims that it would have been better for them to have never known the way of truth.

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed of her wallowing in the mire (II Peter 2:20-22).

Even Jesus had something to say about those who refuse to do his will. His words are recorded in Matthew 7:21-23.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Long ago, the writer of Proverbs 23:23 stated: **"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding."** Some 2000 years ago, Jesus said: **"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"** (Matthew 6:33). And during the days of the early church, Paul wrote:

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord

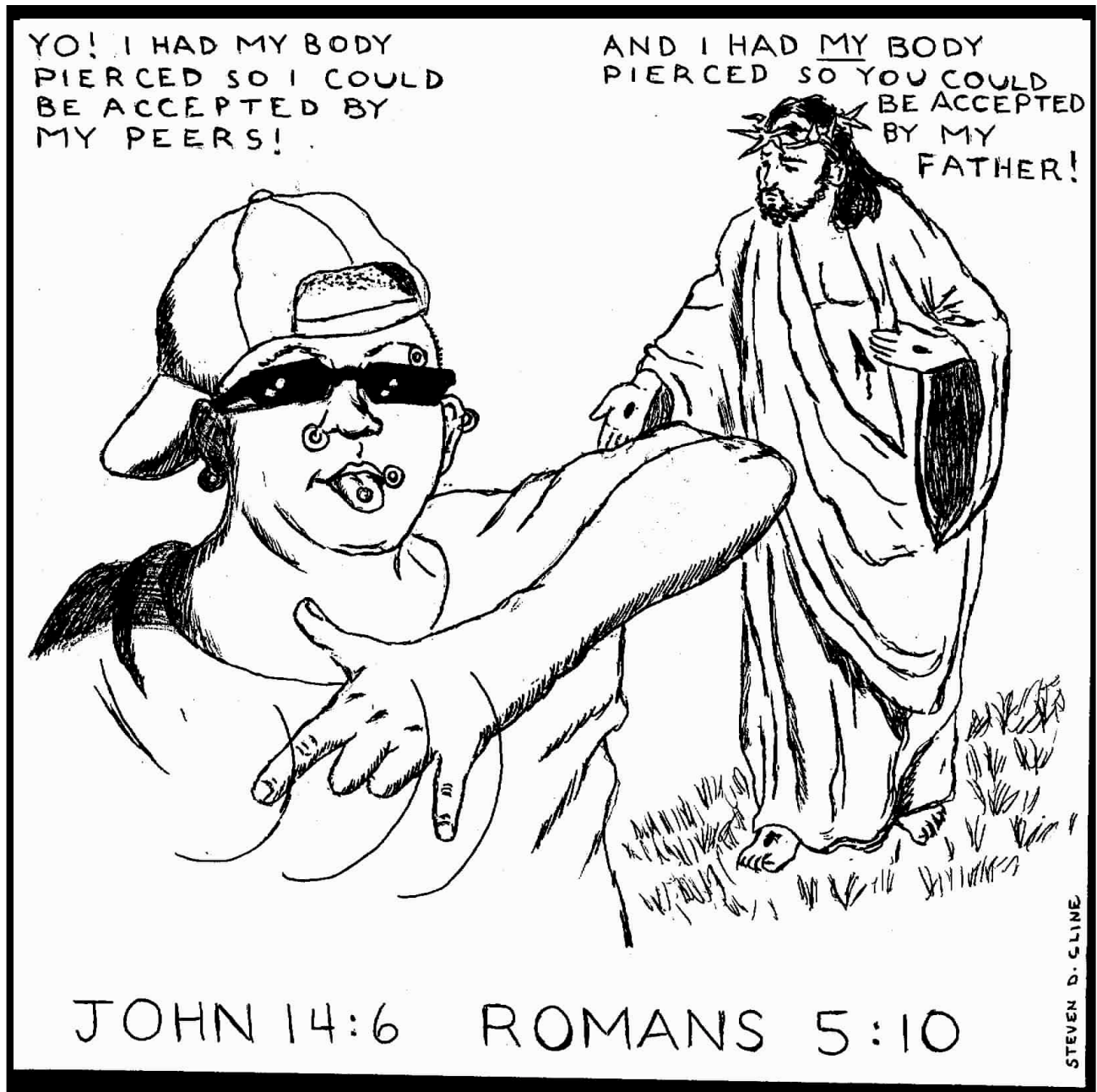
Almighty (II Corinthians 6:17-18).

Those having the spirit off compromise are violating all these scripture. They are selling the truth. They are not seeking first the righteousness of God. They not coming out from among the wicked and being separate. Rather, they are selling out to error. They seek first the praise and adoration of men. They are being joined tightly with wickedness and evil.

These words are not written out of dislike or hatred for anyone. Rather, they are penned out of a heart of love and concern for my brethren, many of which are close friends. My prayer is that those who have

yielded to the spirit of compromise will repent. It is also my prayer that those who have not yielded will continue to hold fast the form of sound words. One can only receive a crown of life by being faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10). This writer longs that all will be able to say with Paul: **“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.”** (II Timothy 4:7-8).

—9664 Hwy 49B
Brooklyn, Arkansas 72417



KEYNOTES OF SCRIPTURE AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

The keynote of I Peter is *hope*. Peter opens with hope in I Peter 1:4. His chapter alludes to the “**crown of glory that fadeth not away**” (I Peter 5:4). Brethren in the five provinces of Asia Minor, to whom he wrote, were in the throes of heavy persecutions. They needed hope as an anchor of the soul much like the Hebrews did (Hebrews 6:18-20).

The keynote of II Peter is *knowledge*. It occurs in the second verse. It occurs in the third verse. It is the second Christian virtue to be added to one's faith. Even after Peter's demise he wanted them to have the knowledge of the truth at their fingertips. Knowledge and practice of truth constituted the best antidote to false teachers and their isms portrayed in II Peter 2. The last two verses make mention of their knowing these things and the apostolic directive of growing in grace and knowledge of the Christ.

The keynotes of I John are *love* and *truth*. We are to love God and the brethren. We are to be loyal to truth and stand adamantly against all encroachments of egregious error.

The keynote of II John is *fidelity*. This is faithfulness to the doctrine of Christ. This expression does not mean teaching about Jesus—the popular view among those contending for wider and more liberal boundaries of fellowship extension, but the teaching Jesus did personally and later through his appointees. He is the source

of such—not the object of such as those who talk about him but never get around to giving what he said and authorized to be said and practiced.

The keynote of III John is *faithfulness*. The well-beloved Gaius was faithful; Demetrius was faithful and good. Diotrephes—the church dictator with assumed totalitarian tactics—was faithless. John promised to use the apostolic rod of stringent discipline upon him when he came.

The keynote of Jude is *contending*. This refers to a marching, militant contention for the faith or the Gospel system. Jude provides an arsenal of truth that equipped stalwart saints with the necessary armor to withstand all error and to attack offensively each falsehood with the sharpened sword of the Spirit. He equipped soldiers of Christ to be in position of saying about all errorists, “They shall not pass” and they will not if we do as Jude counseled Christians on the firing line in his day to do. “They shall not pass was a favorite Wallace war word and he was its personification in his day.

The keynote of Revelation is *overcome*. This concept occurs again and again in Revelation 2 and 3. Revelation has its setting in the burning midst of heavy Roman persecutions. The thrust of the book is survival at the hands of the Roman Empire and its patrons who were determined that the whole world was going to denounce Christ and proclaim Caesar as Lord and God. Revelation gave battered Christians the spiritual fortitude to say NO to this vast Empire of Evil regardless of what Rome did to every dissenter. *Be faithful unto death* is the bottom line of Revelation. This book says with power and pathos, “If you will overcome, you may come over and live with God.” We can become over-conquerors by staying loyal to the Lord and consecrated to the Christ.

—P.O. Box 464
Ripley, Tennessee 38063

Are you Moving?

PLEASE NOTIFY
CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH
OF YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES

SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:
P. O. Box 2357
Spring, TX 77383

MIRACULOUS GIFTS TODAY

B. J. Clarke

There is a diversity of opinion among Pentecostals as to the nature and number of spiritual gifts available to the church today. Without a doubt, the most popular gift among Pentecostals throughout the years has been the gift of speaking in tongues. In spite of the fact that Jesus mentioned casting out demons, healing the sick, raising the dead and taking up serpents and drinking deadly poison without harm (Mark 16:17ff), most Pentecostals are very choosy about which gifts they claim to possess today. A number of Pentecostals confine their claims of miraculous power to the gift of tongues and healing the sick.

BIZARRE AND OUTRAGEOUS

On the other hand, some in the Pentecostal movement are not the least bit shy about claiming to have powers and gifts far beyond the ability to speak in tongues and heal the sick. Consider the following bizarre and outrageous examples of such:

- One lady tells of how her flat tire was healed.
- **Jan Crouch**, of Trinity Broadcasting Network, told an audience in Costa Rica of how two twelve year-old girls had prayed to God to raise their pet chicken from the dead.
- A prominent Pentecostal leader claims that Jesus comes in the bathroom with him every morning and puts his arms around him and talks with him while he shaves.
- **Percy Collett** appeared on “The 700 Club” to tell of how he died, went to heaven, and returned to tell all about it.
- **Roberts Liardon** claims that he was given an extensive tour of heaven when he was eight years old and that, while he was there, Jesus dunked him in the river of life and he and Jesus had a water fight.
- **Maria Rubio**, was frying tortillas in her kitchen in Lake Arthur, New Mexico when she noticed that one of the tortillas seemed to have the likeness of a face etched in the burn marks. She was convinced that it was Jesus and so she built a crude shrine for it. Believe it or not thousands upon thousands of people visited “*The Shrine of the Holy Tortilla*” and touted it as a modern day miracle.
- Decayed teeth are filled and new teeth grow where none have been before.
- Some Pentecostals claim that various physi-

cal manifestations can be seen when the Spirit comes upon a person. They include: shaking, trembling, falling down (being “slain in the Spirit”), plus a euphoric state resembling drunkenness, facial contortions, stiffening of the body, trembling, rapid fluttering of the eyelids, heavy breathing, sweating, and a feeling of weight on the chest.¹

• **Rodney Howard-Browne**, the self-styled “Holy Ghost Bartender” serves up doses of “Holy Ghost Wine” to the hundreds of people who come to his crusades. As he anoints them with this “Divine beverage” all bedlam breaks loose. People are picked up and thrown over rows of chairs like a rag. A woman gets miraculously glued to the floor for six hours, unable to extricate herself from the floor. People begin laughing uncontrollably and barking like dogs.²

A LITTLE EMBARRASSED

On and on we could go, listing miraculous claim after claim of modern day Pentecostals. Even some Pentecostals are embarrassed at the claims that fellow-Pentecostals are making in the name of the Holy Spirit. However, they are very reluctant to object to a fellow Pentecostal’s testimony of what God is doing in their life because it would place them in the position of having their own personal claims of what God is doing in their life to be called into question.

If experience is the final arbiter of what miraculous power is available today, then one man’s experience is as good as another. However, if book, chapter and verse is the objective standard by which we determine the duration and nature of miracles, then man’s experience is only as good as whether it harmonizes with Holy Scripture.

IF ONE THEN ALL

From a biblical standpoint, Paul lists nine spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12:8-10. If the gift of tongues is available today then all of the other listed spiritual gifts would likewise be available. All of the gifts listed in I Corinthians 12 stand or fall together. There is no scriptural argument for the perpetuation of some of them and the cessation of others. This point is made because the majority of those who claim the ability to speak in tongues rarely mention possessing the other

gifts in this package of spiritual gifts.

Furthermore, and contrary to popular opinion, the gift of tongues was not superior to the other eight spiritual gifts listed in I Corinthians 12.

THE END OF MIRACLES

In I Corinthians 13:8-10, Paul notes that the continuance of miraculous gifts is limited. The gifts would continue until **“that which is perfect is come”** (I Corinthians 13:10). Most Pentecostals affirm that the phrase **“that which is perfect is perfect is come”** refers to the second coming of Christ. This, however, is a false conclusion. Not once in the entire New Testament is the word **“perfect”** ever used to refer to the second coming of Christ.

Paul says that tongues would cease. He goes on to say that those things that are in part shall be done away with when that which is perfect has come. The Greek word **“perfect”** (teleios) means **“having attained the end or purpose; complete.”** Paul was talking about the receiving and dispensing of divine knowledge the proclamation of the New Testament faith by inspiration.⁴

Also consider Ephesians 4:11-13:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the mea-

sure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Paul begins by discussing the various miraculous offices. He states that the purpose of these offices was to perfect the saints and build up the body of Christ. Then he places a time limit on this package. It was to last until the attainment of the unity of the faith. The inspired writer Jude refers to this faith and confirms that it has once for all been delivered (Jude 3). James 1:25 calls it the PERFECT law of liberty. Thus, the **“that which is perfect”** of I Corinthians 13:10 is the **“perfect law of liberty”** of James 1:25, i.e., the completed word of God in written form. Therefore, the age of miracles has ceased.

ENDNOTES

1. All of the preceding examples are documented in the book *Charismatic Chaos* by John MacArthur.

2. Hank Hanegraaff, *Counterfeit Revival*, pp. 21-29. John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard Movement has withdrawn his fellowship from those associated with the so-called Toronto Blessing which occurred in January of 1994 when those assembled at the Toronto Vineyard Fellowship Church in Toronto, Canada claimed to have been so overpowered by the Spirit that they were barking like dogs and roaring like lions. Furthermore, Benny Hinn, walked out on visiting speaker Rodney Howard-Browne when, in Hinn’s judgment things got out of control.

3. Arndt and Gingrich (eds.), *Greek-English Lexicon*, (U. of Chicago, 1963) p. 816.

4. Dub McClish, *Studies in I Corinthians*, (Denton, Texas: Dub McClish, 1982) p. 174.

—P.O. Box 128
Southaven, Mississippi 38671

Contending For the Faith-Spring Lectureship Books



2005	“Morals-From God or Man?”	\$17.00
2004	“Judaism-From God or Man?”	\$17.00
2003	“Islam-From God Or Man?”	\$17.00
2002	“Jehovah’s Witnesses”	\$16.00
2001	“Mormonism”	\$16.00
2000	“Catholicism”	\$16.00
1999	“Pentecostalism”	Out of Print
1998	“Premillennialism”	\$14.00
1997	“Calvinism”	Out of Print
1996	“Isaiah” Vol. 2 Chapters 40-66	\$12.00

SEND ALL ORDERS WITH PAYMENT TO:
(add \$2.50 per book S&H •TX residents add 7.25% tax)

DEMON POSSESSION

Andy Cates

Countless questions have been asked concerning demons. Who were demons? Why did they possess the bodies of some people? Is there demon possession today? Let us open God's inspired word, the Bible, and consider each of these questions.

Who were demons? They were spirits, as is brought out in Matthew 8:16. **"When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils" (demons ASV): and he cast out the spirits with his word"** In this verse the word "devils" or "demons" (ASV), is used interchangeably with the word "spirits." As spirits, demons had no physical body of their own. **"For a spirit hath not flesh and bones"** (Luke 24:39). Demons had intelligence, which is made evident by the question of Legion to Jesus in Mark 5:7: **"What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?"** This even shows they had knowledge superior to man. Demons were evil, **"evil spirits"** (Luke 7:2 1; 8:2) and proved their loyalty to Satan's camp by not desiring to be near our Lord (Mark 1:24). Demons were departed spirits of wicked men.

Why did demons possess the bodies of some people? God allowed demons to enter and possess the bodies of some during New Testament times as yet another way to prove, by Christ's and the apostles' power over such, that Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of man.

And when even was come, they brought unto him many possessed with demons: and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases (Matthew 8:16,17 ASV).

These signs **"are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name"** (John 20:30,31).

Is there demon possession today? No. We have the fully revealed word of God today, which proves Christ to be God's Son and our Savior (John 20:30-31) and is complete as man's **"instruction in righteousness"** (II Timothy 3:16) containing **"all things that pertain unto life and godliness"** (II Peter 1:3). Those of the first century did not have this advantage that mankind has had for centuries since. In the first century, miracles did the work for which they were intended, confirmation (Mark 16:15-20; Hebrews 2:24). Since that time, miracles have ceased (I Corinthians 13:8-10). Zechariah 13:1-2 says when prophecy would cease, demon possession would also cease.

Yes, Satan is in the world, but demons no longer

inhabit the bodies of humans. If you are a faithful child of God, remember, **"greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world"** (I John 4:4). Today, if we resist the evil one, he will flee from us (James 4:7).

—3935 Woodland Forest Drive
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35405

"IT IS NOT IN MAN"

Rob L. Whitacre

The Prophet Jeremiah wrote, **"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself? it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"** (Jeremiah 10:23). Man needs the Bible. We would not know how to worship or serve our God without it.

It is not in man to establish his own worship. Jesus said, **"God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"** (John 4:24).

It is not in man to establish his own church. Jesus said, **".... upon this rock I will build my church..."** (Matthew 16:18).

It is not in man to name a church after a religious act or another person. **"Neither is their salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12).

It is not in man to allow women to preach in public worship. **"But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in quietness"** (I Timothy 2:12).

It is not in man to allow marriage between the same sex.

...Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh (Matthew 19:4-5).

It is not in man to preach salvation through any one other than Jesus. **"...I am the way the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"** (John 14:6).

It is not in man to teach salvation can be obtained without baptism. Jesus said, **"He that believes and is baptized shall be saved..."** (Mark 16:16).

The word of God was given for our instruction, correction, reproof, and righteous living (II Timothy 3:16-17). *It is not in man* to make his own rules in religion. **"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness"** (I Corinthians 3:19).

—P.O. Box 37
Hillsboro, Tennessee 37342

Contending For The Faith

Old Philadelphia Meeting House Lectures



“HEINOUSNESS OF SIN”

**Friday, May 20 &
Saturday, May 21, 2005**

Friday, May 20

7:00 P.M. *David P. Brown* “Heinousness of Sin”
8:00 P.M. *B.J. Clarke* “Heinousness of Unbelief”

Saturday, May 21

9:00 A.M. *Johnie Scaggs* “Heinousness of Perverting Worship”
10:00 A.M. *James Boyd* “Heinousness of Denominationalism”
11:00 A.M. *Rob Whitacre* “Heinousness of Immorality”
1:30 P.M. *Paul Vaughn* “Heinousness of Rejecting The Restoration Plea”
2:30 P.M. *Kent Bailey* “Heinousness Of Not Contending For The Faith”

Paul Vaughn,
Lectureship Co-Director
(270) 927-9701 office
(270) 295-7868 home

David P. Brown,
Lectureship Co-Director
(281) 353-2707 office
(281) 350-5516 home

The building is easily found. Take Interstate 24 to Manchester, Tennessee and then take the Highway 55 exit toward McMinnville, Tennessee. In about ten miles exit right on Highway 287 North toward Viola, Tennessee until you reach Verville Road. Turn left and the building is on the right in about two miles. The present building is of wood frame and was built in 1832. The trip from the Interstate is only about twenty miles and well worth the visit.

WHO'S WHO SPEAKERS AND PERFORMERS AT FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY

David P. Brown

Please read the following excerpt from **Walter Cronkite's** book, "A Reporter's Life".

CAN WE DESTROY THE WORLD TO PROTECT OUR NATION?

WALTER CRONKITE

Many times during the cold war and America's near hysteria over the Communist threat, . . . I thought a lot about the fervent anti-Communists' seldom questioned slogan: "Better Dead than Red." That sort of deeply patriotic sentiment, it seems to me, might have had some rationale in the days when wars had winners and losers (sic). But does it stand up in the nuclear age, when a massive exchange of bombs would cause such great losses, even, perhaps, the destruction of life on earth as we know it?

It does not seem to me unpatriotic to offer the possibility that it might be better to be Red than dead, under those nuclear circumstances. We all know of the transient nature of governments and the philosophies that inspire them. The collapse of the Soviet version of Communism proves that point, but even if the Red dictatorship had lasted with all of its horrors for a couple of centuries, would that not have been preferable to a world altered forever by nuclear poison. Does any one country have the right to destroy humanity in its own national interest?

I think I would rather be dead than Red, but I'm not at all sure that my personal preference, or even that of a whole generation, should be a basis for sound foreign policy. From "A Reporter's Life", by Walter Cronkite: Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher.

The premise from which Cronkite reasons is terribly flawed. To be a communist we must deny the existence of God. And, even if we did not deny the existence of God, to accept Cronkite's view, would mean that we are opting for a society that is based on Godlessness.

Cronkite's erroneous idea is contrary to the truth of Revelation 2:10. Therein our Lord said our faith should be such that we would die rather than compromise the truth of God's word. Cronkite does not believe that. While he seems to think that he would personally "...rather be dead than Red", for the nation, he thinks it would be better to be "red" than die from a nuclear war brought on in defense of freedom and in opposition to God-less atheism.

Contending for the Faith—April/2005

CRONKITE AT FHU

How very, very sad it is when brethren sink so low that not even one Bible faculty member said anything in opposition to Cronkite's selection and appearance at FHU, or if they did speak out it was kept it at a very low volume.

It is a shame what some people will do for money. And, you can be sure that the only reason Walter Cronkite or anyone of his notoriety is chosen to speak at such banquets as this one in 2004 at FHU is only because they will bring in money for the school. Herein lies at least one big problem—the danger of compromising the truth of God's word to obtain money.

THE UNIVERSITY IS NOT THE CHURCH

In a weak attempt to justify using such men as Cronkite in their educational programs we are told by various schools operated by the brethren that the school is not the church. We are glad they informed us accordingly, for we doubt we could have ever figured that out for ourselves. Of course, when they tell us that the school is not the church they are telling us that a liberal arts higher educational institution operated by the brethren is authorized by God to do what the church cannot do in using all sorts and sizes of people to provide a well rounded education to their students (in the case of FHU's use of Cronkite, it was to give the school a more well-rounded pocket book).

But, what about this idea that "the school is not the church"; and since it is not the church, God approves of a school using various and sundry characters in their program for whatever reason? The truth of the matter is this: no matter what Christians do, they are to do only what is authorized by the New Testament of Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17). That being the case, where is there New Testament authority for Christians to use someone such as Walter Cronkite in a school existing for the reason that FHU does? Thus, the so-called and oft used "the school is not the church" "argument" an attempt to justify schools using such folks as Walter Cronkite falls flat on its face.

If the New Testament authorizes the use of Walter Cronkite and others of his caliber for the purpose of raising money at a special banquet, then FHU could have Cronkite to do the same thing during their annual Bible lectureship—for the same New Testament au-

thority exists for having him for one gathering as it does for the other. And, if that is not the case, then why is it not the case?

Yes, every faculty member and invited speaker must be a faithful member of the church of Christ unless money is to be raised for the school. Now the truth of the matter on this point is this, if the New Testament authorizes the school to bring Cronkite, a non-Christian, to the campus to teach for one night, they can employ any one else who is not a member of the Lord's church to teach one time or all the time. Oh, they no doubt will say: "We would never do that." And we respond with, "It makes no difference what you would or would not actually do, the same premise that authorizes one authorizes the other, whether it is done or not." That being the case, guess what could very well happen in the years to come.

SOME OF THE CELEBRITIES WHO APPEARED AT FHU IN RECENT YEARS

On December 1, 2000 former U.S. president **George H. Bush**, father of President George W. Bush, was the speaker at the keynote speaker for the 36th annual Advisory Board Benefit Dinner Dec. 1. "Three Dog Night", recognized for such chart-top-

ping hits as "Joy to the World" and "Shambala," performed their 1970s rock music at Freed-Hardeman University Nov. 13, 2001. On Dec. 7, 2001 FHU had **General H. Norman Schwarzkopf** as keynote speaker for the 37th annual Advisory Board Benefit Dinner. On December 6, 2002 **Regis Philbin** was the keynote speaker for the university's Advisory Board Benefit Dinner on the FHU campus, a scholarship fund-raiser hosted each December.

There is nothing like being eclectic when it comes to practicing unity in diversity. We are quite sure all of these people of the world exemplified New Testament Christianity. But really what difference does it make, for after all the "college is not the church?" This, no doubt, explains why the false teacher, **F. LaGuard Smith** was invited to speak to FHU business students in October 2004. From Business@FHU, Fall 2004, Volume 2, Number 1 on the internet we read:

F. LAGARD SMITH A HIT AT SENIOR RETREAT

The 2004 Senior Retreat was held on Friday, October 15, at Mid-South Youth Camp. Approximately 65 seniors showed up for a day of reflection, fellowship, and games. F. LaGard Smith, from Nashville, Tennessee, was this year's featured speaker. Smith has authored over twenty books such as *Who Is My Brother?*, *The Cultural Church*, *Radical Restoration*, and *Afterlife*. He is also the compiler of the popular *Narrated Bible* which has sold over one million copies.

Smith spoke to the seniors about making sure they integrated their faith with all aspects of their lives and not falling into the trap of separating and compartmentalizing their faith from their careers. He drew interesting parallels between the way computers work and how humans operate to make his points. (You may access this by going to FHU's home page on the Internet-DPB)

If these fellows are authorized by the New Testament to speak and perform for FHU at all, they are authorized to do so at any time. That being the case, I again ask, "Why not invite such speakers and performers as previously noted to speak and perform during the annual Bible lectures—especially F. LaGard Smith to speak on the eternal fires of Hell followed by the performance of "Joy to the World" by Three Dog Night? I can almost hear them singing: "Joy to the world, all the boys and girls. Joy to the fishes in the deep blue sea, joy to you and me." For an encore they could sing "Mama, Told Me Not to Come". And to close out the lectures I can hear Walter Cronkite declare, "And, that's the way it is." And he would be right.

—25403 Lancewood Spring, Texas 77373


MEMPHIS

SCHOOL OF PREACHING

- Intensive Two-year Collegiate Program Of Strong Bible Emphasis Under A Qualified Faculty
- Recognized For Educational Excellence In Pulpit, Local Work, And World Evangelism
- 164 Semester Hours, 2,960 Clock Hours
- Two Full Years Of Transferable College Credit
- Established 1965—Oldest School Of Preaching East Of The Mississippi
- Evangelistic Campaigns And Restoration Trip
- Classes For Wives (Diplomas Awarded)
- Third Year Graduate Program
- Lectureship Beginning Each Last Sunday In March
- New, State Of The Art Facility On 15 Acre Campus
- N. B. Hardeman Library Building On Campus
- Residence Halls Ready Soon
- Scholarships And Housing Assistance
- No Tuition Or Fees
- Approved For V. A. Benefits
- Accepting Applications Now

Curtis A. Cates, Director
Memphis School of Preaching
 3930 Forest Hill Irene Road
 Memphis, TN 38125-2560

School (901) 751-2342
 msop.org, msop@msop.org



THE CAMEL SWALLOWING SYNDROME

Tom Moore

Our Lord declared

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone. Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel! (Matthew 23:23-24).

In this section of scripture, we find a fourth in a series of seven woes pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees. The scribes and Pharisees were, as all Jews, required to give a tenth of the produce of their land to the service of the Lord. These hypocrites, in this context, are seen as tithing mint, anise, and cummin. These herbs were inexpensive and were plentiful in that day. Now, these religious pretenders found it easy to give a tithe of such beggarly items. Jesus was not condemning the tithing of these herbs, but condemned their hypocrisy in tithing these little things, and leaving undone, or disregarding, the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith.”

The Pharisees were great boasters of themselves, and all the while were neglecting the matters they “claimed” to uphold. They did not know what “justice” meant, or how to extend such to their fellows. They were not bothered about the destitute and afflicted among their own. The Pharisees would neglect the sick, the lepers, and the needy but would diligently give a tithe of their herb garden. No wonder Jesus called them hypocrites! There was no “mercy” shown the helpless. The meaning of mercy was foreign to them. The Pharisees lived only for themselves having little or no concern for anyone else.

The point of Matthew 23:24 is the same as the previous verse (verse 23). These pseudo-religionist were very careful to strain out their drink before they would partake so as not to swallow a gnat, but (figuratively speaking) would turn right around and swallow a camel. The meaning is, they would make a big ado about minor matters, but overlook the duties of major importance. The Almighty has always required more than this!

Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah 6:6-8).

Today, it seems, we find ourselves so busy in the

affairs of the world that it becomes too easy for us to forget, ignore, or simply put off those important spiritual matters that need our attending. The Pharisees intentionally ignored the more important matters—and today, many are “swallowing camels” as they follow the Pharisees of yesteryear into their errors. Have we forgotten the exhortation of the Lamb of God? **“But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”** (Matthew 6:33).

There are many today who seem to be more concerned about matters almost microscopic in size in importance when compared to the weightier matters they ignore. Many have more concern with padded pews than the saving of souls and standing foursquare for truth. Are we straining out a gnat when it comes to personal comfort and swallowing a camel when it comes to the importance of saving and edifying the souls of men? Are we majoring in minors? Do we have a mouth full of camels? For many, it is time to stop swallowing camels.

—823 North Main St.
Malvern, Arkansas 72104

**ORDER
YOUR COPY**

2005

**CONTENDING
FOR THE FAITH**

**SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST
LECTURESHIP BOOK**

**“MORALS-
FROM GOD OR MAN?”**

**\$17.00
PLUS \$2.50 S&H**

**P.O. BOX 2357
SPRING, TX 77383
EMAIL: SCOC@SWBELL.NET**

Can One Have A Relationship With Christ Without Obedience?

Marvin L. Weir

A common belief among man-made religious groups is that man can do nothing to save himself. This is sad, but even sadder is the fact that many who profess to be members of the Lord's church have drunk deeply from the polluted wells of denominational doctrine. The evidence is overwhelming, and we are now reaping what has been sown far and wide throughout the brotherhood. The following quotes are from men who at the time of these statements professed to be members of the Church of Christ.

It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation. (**Rubel Shelly**, "Arbeit Facht Frei!" article in the Oct. 31, 1990 *Lovelines*.)

I believe deeply that the New Testament teaches that salvation is a free gift of God period. You are saved by grace alone. (**Randy Mayeux** at the 1989 Youth Minister's Seminar in Lubbock. He has since this speech severed his affiliation with Churches of Christ.)

Nobody has any right to preach anything other the Gospel of pure grace. We are saved by grace plus nothing. You are saved by faith period. There is nothing you can do to be saved. There are no regulations in serving Jesus Christ (**Glen Owen** in a sermon delivered in 1982 at the Midtown church of Christ in Fort Worth, TX.)

Let us now observe a quote from the Scottish expositor, **Alexander Maclaren**. In commenting on Mark 3:35, "**For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother,**" he said:

We must carefully observe that these great words of our Lord are not intended to describe the means by which men become His kinsfolk, but the tokens that they are such. He is not saying — as superficial readers sometimes run away with the notion that He is saying — "If a man will, apart from Me, do the will of God, then he will become My true kinsman," but He is saying, "If you are My kinsman, you will do the will of God, and if you do it, you will show that you are related to Myself." In other words, **He is not speaking about the means of originating this relationship, but about the signs of its reality.** And, therefore, the words of my text need, for their full understanding, and for placing them in due relation to all the rest of Christ's teaching, to be laid side by side with other words of His such as these: "Apart from Me ye can do nothing." For the deepest truth in regard to relationship to Jesus Christ and obedience is this, that the way by which men are made able to do the will of God is by receiving into themselves the very life-blood of Jesus

Christ. **The relationship must precede the obedience, and the obedience** is the sign, because it is the sequel, of the relationship (emph. MLW).

Think about it! A relationship with Jesus Christ without obedience! This is the false doctrine that men's wisdom dreams up, but it is not what the Bible teaches. Does anyone today really care what the word of God says? It seems that only a few are inclined to believe and do what the Lord bids them to do. The Hebrews writer reminds all that "**though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became Unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation**" (5:8-9). The gospel is God's saving power (Romans 1:16), and it must be obeyed before one is saved. Man must choose to obey the gospel. On Pentecost the question was asked, "**Brethren, what shall we do?**" Peter answers, "**Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**" (Acts 2:37-38). The Bible affirms, "**They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls**" (2:41).

Why would one believe he is in a saved relationship with the Lord before obeying the gospel when God's word teaches otherwise? The scriptures declare that God will render "**vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus**" (II Thessalonians 1:8). It is a strange and false doctrine that teaches that one has a saving relationship with the Lord before baptism when the scriptures teach that "**newness of life**" occurs only after baptism (Romans 6:4). Can one have a godly relationship with the Lord before becoming "**a new creature**" (II Corinthians 5:17)?

God's word teaches that one must do the will of God to enter into the kingdom (Matthew 7:21). One has no right to call Christ the Lord if he will not obey him (Luke 6:46). The scriptures teach that "**He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...**" (Mark 16:16). You tell me, does salvation precede or follow one's obedience in being baptized?

Salvation without obedience—absolutely not! A relationship with Christ and his child without obedience—not possible! One will be wise to stand on the rock of God's word instead of the sinking sand of man-made doctrine (Matthew 7:24-27).

—5810 Liberty Grove. Rd.
Rowlett, Texas 75030

Directory of Churches...

-Alabama-

Holly Pond-Church of Christ, Hwy 278 W., P.O. Box 131, Holly Pond, AL 35083, Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (256) 796-6802, (205) 429-2026.

Somerville-Union Church of Christ, located on Hwy 36, one mile east of Hwy 67, Somerville, Alabama, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Tom Larkin, Evangelist, (256) 778-8955, (256) 778-8961.

Tuscaloosa-East Pointe Church of Christ one block from Exit 76, off I-20, I-59, Sun. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed., 7 p.m. Abiding in God's Word—The Old Paths. U of A student, visitor, or resident? Welcome! Andy Cates, Evangelist. (205)556-3062.

-England-

Cambridge-South Cambridge Church of Christ, Brian Chadwick, 198 Queen Edith's Way, Cambridge. Publishers of "Oracles of God". Tel: (01223) 501861, e-mail: brian.chadwick@ntlworld.com

Cambridgeshire-Ramsey Church of Christ, meeting at the Rainbow Centre, Ramsey, Huntingdon. Sun. 10, 11 a.m.; Wed. (Phone for venue and time); www.Ramsey-church-of-christ.org. Contact Keith Sisman, 001.44.1487.710552; fax:1487.813264 or Keith Sisman.net. Research Website of 1,000 years of the British Church of Christ; www.Traces-of-the-kingdom.org and www.Myth-and-Mystery.org.

-Florida-

Pensacola-Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, Sun. 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. Michael Hatcher, Evangelist, (850) 455-7595.

-Georgia-

Cartersville- Church of Christ, 1319 Joe Frank Harris Pkwy NW 30120-4222. 770-382-6775, www.cartersvillechurchofchrist.org. Sun. 10, 11a.m., 6:30 p.m. Wed. 7:30 p.m. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist- email: bdgayton@juno.com.

-Indiana-

Evansville-West Side Church of Christ, 3232 Edgewood Dr., Evansville, IN 47712, Sun. 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 6:30 p.m., Larry Albritton, Evangelist.

-Louisiana-

Chalmette-Church of Christ, 200 Delaronde St., Chalmette, LA 70044. Mark Lance, Evangelist, (504) 279-9438.

-Massachusetts-

Chicopee-Armory Drive Church of Christ, 26 Armory Drive; Chicopee, MA 01020, in-home, (413) 592-4834, Ken Dion, Evangelist.

-Michigan-

Garden City-Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Dan Goddard, Evangelist. (734) 422-8660. www.garden-city-coc.org

-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-

Memphis-Forest Hill Church of Christ, 3950 Forest Hill-Irene Rd., Memphis, TN 38125. Sun. 9:30, 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. (901) 751-2444, Barry Grider, Evangelist.

-Texas-

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 Spring Bible Institute and the SBI 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, Evangelist; djgoines@writeme.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-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. Jason Rollo, Evangelist, (817) 282-3239.

Lubbock-Southside Church of Christ, 8501 Quaker Ave., Box 64430, Lubbock, TX 79464. Sun. 9:00, 9:55 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. Sunday worship aired live at 10:15 a.m. over KFYO 790 AM radio. Tommy Hicks, Evangelist. (806) 794-5008 or (806)798-1019.

New Braunfels-1130 Hwy. 306, 1.5 miles west of I-35. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7 p.m. Lynn Parker, Evangelist. (830) 625-9367. www.nbchurchofchrist.com.

Richwood-1600 Brazosport, Richwood, TX. Sun. 9:30; 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (979) 265-4256.

Roanoke-Church of Christ, Corner of Rusk and Walnut, Roanoke, TX 76262. Sun. 9:45, 10:45 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7:30 pm. (817) 491-2388.

Schertz-Church of Christ, 501 Schertz Pkwy., Schertz, TX. (210) 658-0269. Sun. 9:30a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m., take Schertz Pkwy. Exit off I-35, NE of San Antonio, Kenneth Ratcliff and Stan Crowley, Evangelists.

-Wyoming-

Cheyenne-High Plains Church of Christ, 421 E. 8th St., Cheyenne, WY 82007, tel. (307) 638-7466, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Tel. (307) 635-2482. Evangelist: Tim Cozad.

Gift Subscriptions

Do you know of an individual or a congregation that needs to be made aware of the false doctrines and teachers that are afflicting the Lord's Church today? If so why not give them a subscription of *Contending for the Faith*.

THERE ARE MANY SUBSCRIPTION PLANS AVAILABLE:

Single Subscriptions: One Year, \$14.00; Two Years, \$24.00. Club Rate: Three One-Year Subscriptions, \$36; Five One-Year Subscriptions, \$58.00. Whole Congregation Rate: Any congregation entering each family of its entire membership with single copies being mailed directly to each home receives a \$3.00 discount off the Single Subscription Rate, i.e., such whole congregation subscriptions are payable in advance at the rate of \$11.00 per year per family address. Foreign Rate: One Year, \$30.

TO SEND A SUBSCRIPTION JUST FILL OUT THE FORM BELOW:

NAME _____	' 1 YEAR ' 2 YEARS
ADDRESS _____	
CITY _____ STATE _____	ZIP _____
NAME _____	' 1 YEAR ' 2 YEARS
ADDRESS _____	
CITY _____ STATE _____	ZIP _____

MAIL SUBSCRIPTION TO:

P.O. Box 2357, Spring, TX 77383-2357

•fax:281.288.0549 • e-mail: jbrow@charter.net • phone: 281.350.5516

Contending for the Faith
P.O. Box 2357
Spring, Texas 77383

PRSR STD
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
DALLAS, TX
PERMIT #1863