

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

AN OPEN LETTER TO MY FELLOW 1995 AND OTHER MSOP GRADUATES

Charles Pogue, Editor: *The Issues of Life*

Brethren:

As was true with me, one of the highlights of your life was undoubtedly the two years you spent at Memphis School of Preaching. The verse by verse study of the Bible in our classes was greatly beneficial. The related curriculum, including Bible Archeology, Logic, The Preacher and His Work, and Greek has also proven to be helpful through the succeeding years. In many ways, we will always recognize a sense of gratitude for those two years of study.

Even though I look back on the two years I attended MSOP with appreciation, I was not entirely comfortable with everything at the school then, and am now gravely concerned over the direction our alma mater is headed. My concerns began the very first day of the fall initiation process for new students. If you recall, we were told that even if a student preached on a regular basis for a congregation in the area, the bulk of his contribution should go to Knight Arnold (now Forest Hill). I never abode by that suggestion, because I personally believed it was unscriptural as well as dictating a rule that neither the school nor its director had the authority to make.

I was personally privy to a discussion that dealt with the Holy Spirit error of Mac Deaver. The gist of that conversation was to take a wait and see attitude instead of taking a stand. One comment that was made was, (and I am not putting this in quotes because I cannot remember it word for

word), let's let those crazy brethren in Texas fight it out. We will see then where to come down on the thing.

Do you remember when we were told singing hymns with the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music outside of the worship service was a matter of scruple, and after the instructor said that in class, he categorically refused to even discuss it? He would not have answered had any of us asked, but have you ever wondered why he refused to discuss it? I have not, and cannot reason to any good answer he could have given.

Surely, you must remember that one of the human innovations often condemned was the use of dramatic skits. How many of you are aware that while we were students, a dramatic skit reenacting the conversion of Eunuch was presented at the youth day on Saturday preceding the lecture-ship? I am well aware it was not a regular worship assembly, but still it was hypocritical.

How many of you know that an instructor took the position that Rahab was justified in lying about the spies according to the so-called concept of the greater good? That was not in our class, but in the one that followed us. Is that not either the human philosophy of utilitarianism or of pragmatism? I was told about this by a student in the class immediately after it happened.

None of you know this, but while I was a student at
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Contending FOR THE Faith™

David P. Brown, Editor and Publisher
dpbcftf@gmail.com

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

Editorial...

SUMMER BIBLE CAMPS

Bible camps have scriptural authority to exist because they aid parents in discharging their God given obligation to rear their children “**in the nurture and admonition of the Lord**” (Eph. 6:4). As long as the Truth is taught by faithful church members at such gatherings they are helpful. They should not and will not be supported or patronized by faithful brethren if they fail to teach the Truth overall, or any component part thereof, or they teach false doctrine, or their activities are not scriptural, or the people directing and teaching in them are not living Christian lives. Engaged in such errors they cease to be “**good works**” as the Bible uses and defines those words (Col. 3:17; Eph. 2:10; Titus 3:18; Heb. 10:24; 1 Peter 2:12; John 12:48). *Unless they correct their errors they ought to cease their existence.*

Summer Bible camps are not obligatory, but optional—they constitute one way parents and others may discharge their God given duties to children. *As such Bible camps are to benefit children spiritually and morally.*

A Word of Caution

All of us are familiar with little league ball teams. Certainly when all other things are scripturally equal they can be wholesome activities. But how many times have certain parents tried to turn little league ball teams into something other than a way for children to have organized and supervised fun as they learn team work, etc.? Some parents, coaches and others forget that little league ball teams are for the good of the kids, not something for the adults to manipulate to their own self-gratification. Thus, at times parents, et al., strike out in the eyes of their young players because of their self-serving attempts to make the ball game their own.

Those who run summer Bible camps and such like have an obligation to God, the campers, their parents and all involved to promote biblical unity and fellowship, exemplifying Godliness rather than engaging in self serving ways. *We must remember that such endeavors are for the ultimate spiritual good of the campers.* In this day of much evil in the Lord’s church cooperative optional efforts must promote scriptural unity and the fellowship of the same—always beginning with and governed by God’s Truth. Personal desires, plans, aspirations and the like must not be allowed to disrupt such activities. Such should be put aside for the good of all involved. With these salient points in mind regarding summer Bible camps we are pleased to recommend *The Lone Star Bible Camp* introduced to our readers on page three.

—David P. Brown, Editor

The Lone Star Bible Camp

Helping to Spiritually Mold Our Children Now And For The Future

Bruce Stulting

“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD” (Psa. 127:3). This being the case, the Lord has placed parents in a position of stewardship over His possession. “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). Children are to be brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Therefore, parents, who are faithful stewards, will provide for the physical and spiritual needs of their children. For whatever reason when parents fail to discharge their obligation to their children, this responsibility passes on to grandparents, other family members, and/or faithful members of the Lord’s church (2 Tim. 1:5; James 1:27).

Parents must take advantage of every available Scriptural opportunity to develop and strengthen their children’s faith. Besides the exemplary living of godly parents, such opportunities would include: (1) public worship on Sunday morning and evening; (2) Bible study classes provided by the church on Sunday and Wednesday; (3) special efforts such as vacation Bible school, lectureships and gospel meetings; and (4) home Bible studies. Each of the above events provides a unique opportunity for parents to make sure that their children are receiving the proper foundation that will help ensure years of faithful service (Prov. 22:6). There is another opportunity that parents often overlook – *summer Bible camp*.

I would like to recommend *The Lone Star Bible Camp* to the readers—sponsored by the Fish Hatchery Road, Huntsville, TX and Spring, TX Churches of Christ. The camp is located east of Columbus, TX just off of Interstate 10 on Hwy 102, traveling toward Eagle Lake. The camp is situated in the Lower Colorado River Valley – Gulf Coast Area. *The Lone Star Bible Camp* uses the facilities of the Gulf Coast Christian Camp. We emphasize Bible study, fellowship, edification and spiritual development. Bible classes and devotionals will be conducted everyday and the week will culminate in a group review of the material studied.

The Lone Star Bible Camp offers opportunities for Bible classes, physical recreation and guidance from a faithful and experienced camp staff. There is a dining hall and an up to date kitchen with Teresa Duggins supervising the kitchen. A covered pavilion housing a full court basketball and volleyball area is also available. Campers will enjoy the large (50’x30’) swimming pool staffed with licensed professional life guards. In keeping with biblical modesty boys and girls swim separately. And, all involved in the camp have a dress code by which they must abide. There is also a camp nurse, Lori Mikeska, RN, on duty throughout the week. Furthermore, there is a beautiful outdoor amphitheater in a majestic live oak grove where each evening the campers and staff assemble for worship and a sermon. It is also available for other devotional services.

The 2010 camp session is **June 20-25**. Our study theme is: *Moral Living In An Immoral World*. All involved with *The Lone Star Bible Camp* invite and urge you to send your children, grandchildren or other children to join us for a week of Bible study, fellowship and fun. I have the privilege and responsibility of serving as the camp director and I extend my personal invitation to you to be a part of this Christian endeavor. For more information or to receive registration forms please contact me at: **bruces_1@netzero.com** or at my address found at the end of this article. It is *The Lone Star Bible Camp* staff’s desire and prayer to assist parents, grandparents and other child care providers in spiritually strengthening the youth of today who truly are the future of the Lord’s church.

—925 Fish Hatchery Rd.
Huntsville, TX 77320-7009



Worship, Bible Study and Enjoying One Another’s Company Are Important Parts of Bible



Shared Humanity

What is true of Jesus is true of us - Dispelling Direct Operation Dogma

Doug Post

Religious extremes have grappled with the nature of Christ for centuries, from the early heresies of the Gnostics to the more recent “Jesus Seminar,” where one extreme denied His humanity and the other His Deity. Most Bible students, however, accept the God–Man concept of the Person of Christ. After all, Jesus was both Divine and human at the same time, a fact clearly established in Scripture. The “beloved” apostle provides a sufficient summary of the nature of Christ: “**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**” (John 1:14). Quite simply, God became human. This theological concept was earlier understood by both Jews (Isa. 7:14; Mat. 2:4-5) and Gentiles (Col. 1:16-17; Phi. 2:5ff). Jesus Christ possessed all the attributes of humanity while possessing all of the attributes of Deity. **Both human and Divine natures conjoined in one Person.**

Without being fully human, Jesus could not be one of us, yet without being fully God neither could the Christ save us. Therefore, the “Incarnation”—the coming together of both the human and divine natures—was not only a historical fact, but a necessary reality. Aside from His miraculous conception and Mary being “**found with Child of the Holy Spirit**” (Mat. 1:18), the physical development of Christ was completely human. Actually, one could say that His human development, from birth to adulthood, was completely normal. Luke writes, “**And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man**” (Luke 2:52). This is the natural human progression—the normal progression for both non-Christians and for Christians, or at least ought to be (cf. Eph. 6:1-4).

Various passages of Scripture clearly identify Jesus as being a man. In addressing the Jews, the apostle Peter declared Jesus as a “**man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs**” (Acts 2:22). Moreover, the apostle Paul writes, “**For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**” (1 Tim. 2:5). These two verses depict two facts about our Lord. First, Christ is identified as a man while He was on earth. Second, His human nature continues to be identified as such even while sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven. We know this because the apostle Paul was writing many years after Christ’s ascension, and, yet, by inspiration refers to Him as “**the man Christ Jesus.**” While detailing the superiority of Christ and His Word (the New Covenant), the writer of Hebrews also highlights His human nature. In chapter two of the book of Hebrews we read the following:

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom

are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Heb. 2:10-18).

There are at least six reasons established for the Christ becoming fully human and sharing with our humanity:

1. He had to suffer as a human before *bringing many sons to glory* (v.10).
2. He had to become one with us in order to call us *brethren* (v.11).
3. He had to fully share in *flesh and blood* to destroy the devil and death (v.14).
4. He had to partake of our human nature, choosing to help mankind (i.e. Abraham’s seed), and like us, was made a little lower than the angels (v.16; cf.2:6-7).
5. He had to become human in order to reconcile man to God and to continue being fully God in forgiving our sin and making atonement for us (v.17).
6. He had to share in our humanity in order to be tempted and suffer just as we do, yet without sin (v.18).

Two Significant Propositions

Like today, the first century church had to deal with its share of false teaching, especially with the heretical movement known as Gnosticism. One of the pillars of Gnosticism was in the denial of the humanity of Jesus Christ. These false teachers were teaching that Christ could not have shared in humanity because it was impossible for Deity to take on *flesh and blood*. In combating the early stages of Gnosticism in the church, the beloved apostle of the Lord declared:

(Continued on Page 8)

MSOP a sister in Christ, who taught me in Bible class when I was four or five years old, had gotten herself caught up in the error of the Richland Hills Church of Christ. I went to an instructor and had him listen to an awful tape of a “sermon” preached by Rick Atchley that was a defense of instrumental music. The aforementioned sister had given the tape to my parents, and they passed it on to me. I hoped the instructor would be some help in dealing with the situation. What did he do? He wrote a letter to Rick Atchley, read it to me, but then never even mailed it. I was left alone to write the sister a ten page letter (which I would have done anyway). From that day forward she would turn her back on me, and refused to even speak to me from then until the day she died. Perhaps the help of the instructor would not have changed anything, but couldn't he at least have tried?

Brethren, how many times were we made to feel that we had an obligation to raise money for the school once we graduated? You know as well as I do we were told we had a debt to Knight Arnold and MSOP that we could never repay. Since our graduation, the school has been more and more about money. Money was important enough to compromise the lectureship roster in order to secure the N.B. Hardeman library. What the enormous amounts of money MSOP has spent on the present facilities, and must spend on upkeep and maintenance I am not even willing to guess. MSOP, through its extravagance, is redirecting enormous funds from hundreds of congregations that ought to be spent funding efforts to spread the gospel. Instead, Forest Hill and MSOP are intent on building expensive facilities in which to turn out robotic preachers, who have been virtually brainwashed to toe the institutional line and back and promote the school no matter how far it moves, especially in fellowship, to the liberal left. How many of you knew that as far back as 1987, MSOP was willing to accept funds from a congregation that had hired a preacher who had been withdrawn from for his rebellion against his elders. While MSOP claimed to honor the withdrawal, they nevertheless accepted the funds from the congregation. A portion of those funds went to a student the entire time he was in school. As an older and wiser man, the student now regrets that he accepted that support. Don't let B.J. Clarke know that he now understands his mistake; he would be chided for not coming to his present knowledge 23 years ago!

Brethren, you know as well as I do that MSOP does now, and always has, been as intent on producing graduates who see their task as promoting the school as much as the Gospel of Christ. Consider this statement from the July 1, 2008 Forest Hill News:

When these men (over 1,000 of them now) complete their studies, they go out and spread the word concerning the Memphis School of Preaching. As they faithfully discharge their duties as evangelists, they represent the Lord Jesus and the school very well.

Before I entered the MSOP, I attended one session at another school of preaching. I started over at Memphis, be-

cause the director in the other school had decided to leave, and the future of the school was in doubt. Brethren, not even once in the other school were we ever told that we owed them and the host congregation a debt. Why? Because they at least realized that if they were conducting a school of preaching, it is because the debt was theirs. They understood they owed the cause of Christ the work of training preachers. It was never suggested that once we graduated that we had any responsibility to raise money for the school. Why the difference at Memphis? Because brethren, as much as I hate to say it, Memphis is, and for too long time has been, too much about money. I was informed that a past director of Memphis insisted on having a \$1,500.00 office chair purchased for him. Not only was that at a time when the school could hardly afford such an extravagance, no one needs a chair costing that much!

In recent months, your fellow graduate has adopted a saying I wish I had realized and applied a long time ago: *Foot dragging is the gait of the lame*. I should have begun speaking up a long time ago, and am writing this letter to you now in an attempt to redeem the time I lost. As you all must know, there is now a controversy surrounding MSOP'S continued support of Dave Miller who preached a sermon advocating, and was involved in, the unauthorized practice of reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders, at the Brown Trail Congregation in Bedford, Texas. Contrary to some things that have been said, he was involved by preaching a sermon and active participation in that unscriptural practice undermining the authority of the eldership. Also, contrary to what has been said by some of the same ones who deny he was involved, he has never repented of that involvement. It strikes us as odd that individuals would claim a man has repented of something they allege he never did. Brother Miller also contrived what has been called an intent doctrine in the matter of marriage, and attempted to justify the act as a scheme by which a foreign student was brought into this country to attend Brown Trail School of Preaching. Some students at Brown Trail objected, and one was even thrown out of school for making criticisms in related matters. That act, if not an outright violation of federal law, was at the very least blatantly deceptive. Those who continue to support brother Miller, including GBN, MSOP, and of course, Apologetics Press, who made him director, despite the warnings of many brethren to the contrary, are guilty of fellowshipping his error, and thereby under the condemnation of 2 John 9-11.

How many of you brethren know that virtually all, if not all, of the instructors at MSOP spoke out against the elder r/r procedure. Some of them were among the 60 brethren who signed the letter of support of Apologetics Press after the sad situation with Bert Thompson. At the time they did not know that Dave Miller would be appointed as the new director. If they had, some of them, maybe all of them, would not have signed the letter. But, instead of admitting to a mistake, they changed their tune, and began to support brother Miller. Why? Brethren, if the matter of money does not play some

role in that, the skies are not blue, the grass is not green, and the wind does not blow in March!

Many brethren over the past five years since the unwarranted forcing out of Dub McClish and David B. Watson as editor and co-editor of the original *Gospel Journal* respectively, have up until the present time focused almost exclusively on the matter of fellowshiping the false teacher, Dave Miller. Now, though, they are beginning to realize that that issue only touches the hem of the garment respecting what is transpiring at Forest Hill Irene and MSOP.

The Forest Hill congregation and the school are seriously changing their position on the crucial matter of fellowship. The lectureship this very year featured speakers who have also appeared on programs of some of the most apostate schools, including Sunset Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas. Some speakers are affiliated with schools and congregations who practice things which in and of themselves, would have excluded them from appearing on the lectureship when you and I were students. For instance, on January 10, 2010, Phil Sanders now the speaker on *In Search of the Lord's Way*, spoke on the Sunset Bible Institute Workshop. Faithful brethren withdrew from Sunset years ago. At the close of his remarks, brother Sanders very plainly extended the hand of fellowship to those at Sunset.

Have you brethren read what Phil Sanders said in a February, 2006, *Christian Chronicle*, interview? Here is his response to the question of how he perceives members of the Independent Christian Church denomination: "I can only speak for myself here. I believe baptized believers in the Independent Christian Church are my brethren, since everyone who is scripturally born of water and the Spirit is a child of God. I love my brethren, but I grieve that they have clung to an unscriptural [instrumental music] practice. I wish we could find biblical and hermeneutical unity once again." The same Phil Sanders spoke on the MSOP lectures on March 31, 2010.

Herb Alsup, who spoke on the MSOP lectures this year, also spoke on the lectures at Tennessee Bible college in 2007. TBC is a supporter of the direct operation of the Spirit error of Mac Deaver. Who spoke on the same TBC program with brother Alsup, in fact, immediately after him? None other than Mac Deaver himself!

In 2009, brother Bobby Liddell spoke on the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver Lectureship. Among the other speakers was Robert Oglesby, of Richardson, Texas. Oglesby is involved with a Sunset Bible Institute Satellite school. Another speaker on that program was Rick Walker of Golden, Colorado. Brother Walker preaches for a congregation that utilizes the divided assembly; Children's Bible Story Time, they call it. It is unclear if this is done on both Sunday morning and evening, or one or the other of the two worship periods. The congregation also is involved in the small group Bible study practice. Brethren, you know as well as I do that these things would never have been condoned, prac-

ticed, or tolerated when we were students at MSOP. You also know that a few years ago, brother Liddell would not have appeared on a lectureship with those men.

If all of the above information were not disappointing enough, there is still more. On February 10, 2009, in the Forest Hill bulletin, brother Barry Grider included three disturbing articles. The first one was entitled, "I got used to it." In that article, brother Grider defended the song, "Sweet Sweet Spirit." He denied the song makes any reference to a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, but anyone who can read, and understand what he reads, immediately recognizes that it does. The second article was by brother Tyler Young, and entitled, "Binding Where God Has Not." Brother Grider informs us that the material in the article was prepared for the 2008 Lubbock, Texas Lectureship. What brother Grider neglects to mention, though, is that the material was so far to the left that brother Tommy Hicks, the preacher for the Southside congregation in Lubbock which hosted the lectureship, refused to include the material in the lectureship book. When brother Young delivered the material orally anyway, the Southside elders would not allow the lecture to be included on the DVD with the other lectures. The material suggested that it may be legalism to bind that it would be wrong to change (even dismiss, one would have to conclude) the Sunday evening worship to accommodate brethren who do not want to miss any part of the Super Bowl. It questions whether it is wrong to forsake a worship assembly to participate in a sporting event, defended dismissing the Sunday evening service in lieu of small group gatherings instead, and expressed disdain for regulating which versions of the Bible can be used in preaching and teaching. Again, brethren, this does not sound like the Knight Arnold congregation, or the Memphis School of Preaching you and I attended. The third article was a rendition of an old poem, "I Drew My Circle Again." The poem sarcastically criticizes the limiting of fellowship only to those who are right on all points of doctrine and practice. This is the same kind of heretical thought expressed in the book, *Facing Our Failure: The Fellowship Dilemma In Conservative Churches of Christ*, by Todd Deaver. Whether it was viewed as a go ahead from the lofty Forest Hill Irene church we know not, but since Grider published the poem it has been showing up in quite a few church bulletins. According to Grider, the Forest Hill elders and his fellow faculty at MSOP have been in complete working harmony up until the present time. If this is true brethren, the MSOP brethren agree with the February 10, 2009, bulletin material; if that is true, your alma mater and mine has changed, and not for the better.

Although strange, uncertain, and completely heretical sounds have been raised in many places, a few years ago, many would have been surprised that now those places include Forest Hill and MSOP. Please read the following excerpt from page 2 of the February 14, 2006 Forest Hill bulletin, and then answer this question: Is this an indication of things still to come?

70th Annual Freed-Hardeman Lectures

This past week several thousand Christians gathered in Henderson, Tennessee for the 70th Annual Freed-Hardeman Lectures. As they have done for many years, our students in the Memphis School of Preaching, attended the lectures on Tuesday, as did I. Throughout the day I heard some wonderful preaching from the Book of Hebrews by outstanding evangelists such as James Watkins, James Meadows, Dan Winkler, and Winford Claiborne. It was good to see many friends and acquaintances, along with a number of graduates of the school of preaching who are now doing local work in various locations. The highlight of the day, perhaps of the week, was the William Woodson Appreciation dinner. Brother Woodson is a man who is highly regarded for his soundness and scholarship. I have benefited greatly from his lectures and writings. Brother Billy Smith served as master of ceremonies for the dinner. Those who spoke commending the life and work of brother Woodson were Tom Holland, Alan Highers, Dan Winkler, and Hardeman Nichols. **It was my pleasure to be asked to sit close to the front at a reserved table, along with Jim and Sherry Brown, Everett and Doris Day, and Buster and Matilene McGuire. I owe this honor to our dear sister McGuire. Sister McGuire is a multi-talented lady. She is a superb organist and provided the entertainment for the event. After an enjoyable, yet exhausting day, I could not help but realize that our own lectureship is not far away (March 26-30). We look forward with great anticipation to a marvelous week together with friends and loved ones far and near.** [emphasis Mine-C.P.]

Barry

I know this was not a worship service, but it was a religious activity, and the implication that entertainment on this occasion was an organist is very troubling. I believe it adds more fuel to a liberal fire that is already beginning to flame at Forest Hill Irene and MSOP. I would ask my former classmates and all graduates of MSOP, to consider these things very carefully. Be honest with yourselves. Ask yourselves this question, and answer yourself truthfully. Is this the MSOP I attended? I think not!

In the December 10, 2009, Forest Hill bulletin, a scathing notice of withdrawal of fellowship was announced against brethren David Brown and Dub McClish. All these two faithful Gospel preachers have been guilty of is calling upon Forest Hill, MSOP, and many others, to repent of their support of a false teacher who is not even willing to admit that he did something wrong in the eyes of God, much less repent of it. I am totally confident that in the years of 1993-1995 all of those who are involved in the Memphis work would have been shoulder to shoulder with these two brethren in calling for brother Miller to repent of his preaching in favor of elder r/r and his participation in the process. The only thing different that I can see now is that if they speak out, and brother Miller does not repent, and Apologetics Press retains him, and GBN continues in fellowship with AP, Memphis would stand to lose the support, including financial support, of many brethren. Put it all together with the pressure while attending as students and as graduates to

raise money for the school, and brethren, I fear that MSOP has lost its way and for nothing more than the pursuit of the huge amounts of money they need. No wonder the apostle Paul warned Timothy that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10). But it isn't just the love of money that springs forth in evil. Putting one's self or an entity in the position of needing more money than is responsible does the same thing. This, in my view, is what has happened to Memphis School of Preaching. And unless and until repentance is forthcoming from them, they do not have the fellowship or support of this graduate.

In the early 1990's, I received a form letter from the now totally apostate, Rubel Shelly. In that letter, Shelly claimed that he had not changed in doctrine, only in attitude. Everyone knows now that his claim was a pure fabrication. I am not sure if the Forest Hill elders, Barry Grider, and the MSOP, would even admit to undergoing a change in attitude, but the truth is, they have not only changed in attitude, they have changed in actions, too. The words and deeds of Forest Hill Irene, and the presence of false teachers on the MSOP lectureship (and 2010 is not the first time it has happened), conclusively proves this to be the case. Some of you may blindly follow the lead of the school, others may be deceived, and still others may understand and agree with the fellowship compromises. If you are in either of the first two categories, I plead with you to do some open-eye and mind investigation. If you are in the third class of individuals, you, along with the brethren at the school need to repent. Apostasy begins in different ways, including compromise in fellowship. Compromise in fellowship cannot help but lead one to the conclusion that one really cannot determine what issues are matters of fellowship and which are not. Ultimately, the only conclusion to which it can lead an individual is that the New Testament does not constitute a pattern at all. Perhaps they would deny it, and maybe you would, too, but, my brethren, that is the direction Memphis School of Preaching has been heading for a considerable number of years. I implore you to join with your fellow classmate and graduate, and plead with the school to face how they have changed and turn them back from it, before it is too late to salvage.

Yours in Christ,
/s/Charles Pogue

—12868 Bryant Lane,
Rogers, AR, 72756



Even if worry could get you anywhere, you would then be worried about how to get back.

Don't kick a man when he is down: you might be awfully surprised at his size when he gets up!

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” ... “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:1,14).

John reinforces the Truth of Jesus being fully human, sharing humanity with us. This doctrine remains a foundational tenet of Christianity. *If one does not believe that Deity became flesh in order to save mankind, then that individual does not belong to God.* John indelibly impresses this fact upon our minds when he writes:

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (1 John 4:3).

While the humanity of Jesus Christ is truly a complex topic, there is a basic characteristic uniquely common to all humans (including Jesus) and that is our moral accountability to God. Since Jesus was, indeed, human, then this was no less true for Him. The Bible tells us that He came to do the will of the Father (Heb. 10:7) and the will of the Father was for Him to be the perfect sacrifice for mankind, (i.e., as a human He had to remain sinless in order to be the sacrificial “unspotted lamb.”) The only way for Jesus to remain sinless was to obey the Father (Heb.5:8-9), personally obeying “**from the heart**” (Rom. 6:17) whatever the Father asked of Him. But was the Savior’s will actually determined directly by his own “humanness” or was His personal will taken over by His nature as Deity as some allege? This concept becomes significant when contemplating the humanity of Christ, because *whatever was true of Jesus as a human must also be true of us.* Since Jesus was completely human and was accountable as a human being (Heb.4:15), two significant propositions naturally follow:

1. Human beings do not require direct supernatural help in order to accomplish the following:
 - To be strengthened in order keep from sinning.
 - To produce “the fruit of the Spirit”.
 - To receive illumination to understand and interpret Scripture. [We are not talking about divine inspiration here, whereby some were chosen to receive direct operations of the Spirit in order to speak and write God’s Truth as they were controlled as to the message by said Spirit].
2. Being human does not automatically mean imperfection in that we have to sin.

First Proposition

James informs us that “**God cannot be tempted with evil**” (Jam. 1:13). Thus, when Jesus was on earth as a human being (as a man), the victories which He won over temptation could not have been won by resorting to His omnipotent power as the Son of God, or from receiving an equivalent

direct help from Deity. Rather, He won His victories over temptation in exactly the same way you and I must win our victories; by a personally determined will to apply the Word of God to our hearts as a result of the faith we have gained from both General Revelation and especially the Scriptures in knowing that “**after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise**” (Heb. 10:36). If Jesus had to resort to using the powers of Deity, then it cannot be said He overcame temptation as a human being. If Jesus, as a man, had to receive direct supernatural help from heaven, or if He resorted to using His own powers of Deity, then it cannot be said that He accomplished His sinlessness as a human being. Moreover, Jesus must have produced the fruit of the Spirit from the same human vantage point, by His own human will, otherwise it cannot be said He produced such fruit as one of us. If Jesus was forced into resisting all temptation by virtue of His Deity (rather than in spite of His humanity), then the power of His sinless life as a human being is robbed of its power and meaning, and the significance of His “Humility” is irrevocably diminished (Phi. 2:5ff). Though He did not “**empty**” Himself of Deity (i.e., the divine metaphysical and/or moral attributes) in becoming human, He did give up the independent exercise of such outward glory). He did His efficacy as our sin-bearer and propitiation, and this **must** absolutely rest in the fact that He did not sin as a human being, and did so without direct supernatural help (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5). If Jesus had to overcome all temptation by direct supernatural means, then the descriptions of His humanity and his sinless life are not only tarnished, but eradicated. Although Jesus was Deity in the flesh, it was His human nature that was tempted, and it was His human nature, which was forced to resist those temptations without the aid of direct Divine help. In this fact lies the extraordinary beauty of His sinless life and His expiatory sacrifice for our sins. Additionally, if the humanity of Jesus forced Him to receive Divine Illumination (i.e. a direct operation of Deity upon His mind) as a requirement in order to understand Scripture (aside from the normal processes of human learning involving educational growth and study (cf. Luke 2:52), then He did not come to know Scripture as a human being, truly as one of us. We should ask ourselves: *Did not our Lord know some Scripture and produce at least some fruit of the Spirit even BEFORE He received the Holy Spirit without measure of power* (John 3:34; Mat. 3:16)?

Similarly, if (as some erroneously claim) we as human beings today must and do have direct, enabling help from the Holy Spirit (Deity), being directly infused with power in order to produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) (i.e. required human ethical characteristics or traits); or to be immediately strengthened in order to overcome temptation and sin (Eph. 3:16); or to receive direct supernatural wisdom or illumination in order to comprehend or interpret the Bible (1 Cor. 2:10-13), then why are we not now in possession of almost sinless perfection? How can it be argued, as some do,

that we “sin all the time”? Though divine inspiration gave a person the ability to combine spiritual things with spiritual words (1 Cor. 2:13), even this did not give one such alleged direct enablement in order to refrain from sin and produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 2:11-14), so why would anyone claim such for “divine illumination”?! Having this alleged direct power from Deity, how is it even possible for a Christian to legitimately be blamed for sin? If humans, Christians in particular, must be enabled by Deity, needing a direct operation of the Holy Spirit for all our spiritual victories in this earthly life, then the blame for our sin and failure cannot be placed strictly upon us, but upon Deity, and such is the consequence and theological failure of the doctrine of the modern day direct operation of the Holy Spirit. The “direct operation” doctrine assumes that the role of the Holy Spirit is for the express purpose of enabling the Christian with power and ability above and beyond mere humanity; and without this necessary direct infusion of “supernatural steroids,” Christians could never remain sanctified and make it to heaven. This dogma seems to assume an inherent design defect with humanity as well, almost mirroring Augustinianism and its error of “original sin.” Of course, prior to sinning, Adam and Eve lived sinless lives, and being formed directly by the “hands” of God, they were “born” in *total hereditary righteousness* (as opposed to *total hereditary depravity* and the impossibility of them being able to do any good on their own), how could they possibly sin and commit any evil at all? *Quite simply as human beings, they chose to sin.* They did not have to make that choice and they certainly did not have to sin.

Suggesting that Jesus’ own moral existence as a human required direct supernatural help, or that He was forced to use His Divine nature in order to accomplish His will in all of the previously mentioned areas found in the human realm, is tantamount to admitting Gnosticism. The idea completely rejects the humanity of Jesus. However, Jesus was indeed human and did not require direct supernatural help in all of these areas. Just like Jesus, who is our example, we also are not in need of supernatural help to accomplish His will and be pleasing to God. If the human nature of Christ (i.e. His humanity) needed direct help of the Holy Spirit to enable Him to be holy, then Jesus had an insufficient innate capacity for holiness in Him, which is an absolutely erroneous view, because it simply eradicates His true humanity. *Further, if the Spirit does the work, then why is Jesus the One credited with it?* The same principle would be true of the Christian. If the Spirit is the One who makes up the difference for the Christian, having to do what the Christian is personally commanded to do, then WHO is really doing it? It certainly could not be called obedience from the individual human heart (Rom. 6:17), but rather a direct supernatural, “programmed” response.

Second Proposition

The example of the humanity of Jesus also demonstrates that we, as human beings, **do not have to sin.** In His humanity,

Jesus was completely pure, both in mind and deed. Though faced with temptation, Jesus never sinned. His sinless life, therefore, is an example for us in overcoming temptation. How did Jesus overcome temptation and not sin? Quite simply, He loved the Word of God (cf. 1 The.2:10). He learned the Scriptures and applied them to His heart each day of His life. This is eternally illustrated during His “desert temptations” when He said, “**It is written**” (Mat. 4:4-10). Influenced by God’s Word and allowing it to reign and dominate His mind, Jesus fought temptation, not allowing Himself to give in to it (Heb. 4:15). This particular point is troubling for “direct operationists” because it reveals that the man Jesus (though using any and all indirect providence afforded Him such as His godly parents, the synagogue and Temple worship, the beauty of nature, etc.) relied centrally and primarily upon the Word of God in overcoming temptation and sin, not upon a direct supernatural enabling power. This example, therefore, is fundamentally antithetical to the “direct operation” dogma. Some, however, aver that the example of Jesus overcoming sin solely by the Word of God and other indirect providential influences, cannot be applied to Christians because we, as humans, are “weaker” than Jesus was. And, although most of these folks accept the idea of “free will” or free moral agency, they, nevertheless tell us that due to our humanity, it is impossible for Christians to live a sinless life. In other words, all Christians **must sin** sooner or later by virtue of just being human. They seem to read what Paul wrote as if he said: “for all **have to sin** and **have to** fall short of the glory of God.” But, of course, Paul actually wrote: “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**” (Rom. 3:23).

In addressing the presumption that all Christians must sin, a few questions naturally arise. At what point in life do we enter into a situation where we have no choice but to sin? Is it ever impossible for us not to sin? If so, how can Christians be held accountable for something we have no choice in doing? Since all human beings have been designed with volition (i.e., the ability to choose correctly or incorrectly), this freedom underscores the fact that Christians can choose **not** to sin and choose to live a sinless life. Moreover, the “direct

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operation” dogma and the position of humans having to sin by virtue of our humanity is shown biblically to be false. The apostle Paul writes:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (1 Cor. 10:13).

The fact we are promised a way of escape from temptation means we can choose the “way of escape” from sinning. Yet, some admit they do not know if or when they receive their alleged “illumination” and fail to see that there would therefore be no way in which their human spirit would be able to resist a Spirit-upon-spirit (alleged) “strengthening” or enlightenment should they desire to go against it.

Being vulnerable to sin (as all Christians are) and **having** to sin are two vastly different theological concepts, and the humanity of Jesus bears this out. We are as human as Jesus was, and sharing in the same humanity with Him means we are on the same level with Him – His humanity and ours are parallel. His humanity and our humanity are either the same in every aspect or it is not (which must be proved), and if His humanity is not parallel with ours, then it cannot be said He was completely human. Jesus was not made a “programmed” robot and neither are we. As Paul says, **“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”** (Rom. 6:1-2).

Jesus, certainly, had to fight temptation and remain sinless as a human being. To deny this point is to deny and reject the humanity of Jesus and place Him on some level above mankind much like the Gnostics did. However, since Jesus was as human as we, and we are as human as He, it stands to reason that human beings do not receive direct, immediate help outside of ourselves upon our own personal volition. For instance, Scripture records that when the Lord dealt with those who wished to **“accuse him”** regarding the man with a withered hand (Mark 3:1-4), **“when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at their hardness of heart”** (Mark 3:5) the Savior healed him. How is it that the Christ refrained from violating the principle of **“be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon thy wrath”** (Eph. 4:26)? Was it because another entity, the Holy Spirit, stepped in to directly augment His human weakness in order to keep Him from going over the line? If so, couldn’t anyone remain sinless (Heb. 4:15) under such circumstances? No, like Jesus, we do not receive such direct supernatural help from the Holy Spirit in order to maintain our moral purity (which includes overcoming temptation, producing the fruit of the Spirit, and comprehending Scripture). Rather, humans as believers or unbelievers maintain moral purity today from their innate ability and willpower as it relates to the will of God as revealed by Him to us.

Insofar as one is going to argue that Jesus maintained moral purity because His moral qualities and virtues were “directly infused” supernaturally, then one denies His Humanity and thus denigrates His remarkable personal accomplishment (Heb. 1:3,8-9; Phi. 2:8-11). Similarly, if one argues that we must have moral qualities and virtues “infused” directly by the Holy Spirit, then even our own humanity is just that much also denied, which is not only false but absurd in regard to individual human accountability. Again from Romans chapter six, Paul writes:

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law (of Moses DP), but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you (Rom. 6:11-17).

According to Paul the Christians at Rome were themselves responsible for accomplishing the above, especially in their dying to sin, not allowing sin to reign in their lives, (and above all) in their not yielding to temptation. Anything less could not be considered genuine, legitimate, accredited obedience **“from the heart.”** However, we must take notice of the fact that these Christians were responsible for keeping themselves from sin and each Christian was individually charged with that duty. Their common humanity was addressed and

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Paul was appealing to their innate human ability in putting to death sin in their lives. Obviously, these finite human beings had the capability of carrying out Paul's directives themselves, otherwise why ask them to do something they were incapable of performing? It is just here I am reminded of Calvinism, which teaches that "fallen" humanity is incapable of responding to the gospel message until and unless they are "zapped" directly (i.e. "divinely illuminated") by the Holy Spirit. Once "zapped," hearts are opened and understanding is directly supplied to them so they can respond (But, if humanity is too wicked to understand the message without a direct operation, then why did Jesus even attempt to teach the people?). Who is actually responding here? It is Deity (on behalf of the human being) responding to Deity—this makes about as much sense as Christians (or non-Christians) having to receive direct supernatural help to become more spiritual and remain sanctified. In the final analysis, if I am personally charged with having to produce obedience, but Deity **must** step in and do that which I am required to accomplish, then this simply amounts to nothing more than "Substitution or Proxy Obedience" (sometimes termed "Replacement Theology"), whereby the will of another is substituted in place of my own.

In light of this "direct operation" doctrine it is incredible to think as some claim that a non-Christian must solely use his own reasoning skills and intellectual ability in understanding the gospel in order to "get in" (i.e., remission of sins), but once the individual crosses the threshold of conversion he or she **must** be enabled with direct supernatural help, infused with Divine power (i.e., "supernatural steroids") in order to "stay in" (sanctified). In other words, the individual is "on his or her own" to think things through and make sense of Scripture PRIOR to conversion, but once the line is crossed following baptism, the individual can no longer think well enough for himself in order to abide in the Word of Christ, but must have a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, having his mind infused with raw supernatural power, reasoning ability, and even intelligence. This can easily be called the "Christian Enhanced–Willpower Theology." The lowly non-Christian is not similarly aided, as is the "supercharged" Christian, in his attempt to study and learn the meaning of any Bible passage, including Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, or John 3:16. Instead, they must use and rely solely upon their natural intellectual powers—their unaugmented and unenhanced humanity, which creates two hermeneutical procedures in interpreting the text — one for the sinner and one for the saint.

"Precision Obedience"

Related to the above is the concept of "precision obedience" or doing what God has commanded in **exactly** the way

He commanded it. Some brethren—actually despise the idea of having an exacting hermeneutic that we must be precise in our obedience to God. This liberal mindset has produced such heretical doctrines as the "core gospel," the "Man and not the plan," "Christocentrism," etc., ad nauseum. The question then becomes, what does genuine obedience mean if it does not inherently imply accuracy? Obedience without accuracy is like holding target practice without having to take aim, and advocating "almost obedience" still falls short of obedience. This would be silly if it was not so serious considering the ramifications involved with such an antinomian movement attempting to circumvent the methodology of precision hermeneutics. This current movement simply seems to despise conformity to Biblical patterns, basically rejecting them outright.

However, the example of our Lord should forever settle the matter in regard to "precision obedience." Let us take the version of the Bible most exalted by liberals (those who by their doctrines loose men from what God has bound on them) and notice what it reveals about "precision obedience." In the upper room discourse the NIV translators translate what Jesus told the apostles accordingly—"**but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me**" (John 14:31). Notice that the NIV renders Jesus did **exactly** what the Father commanded Him, and did so as a human being. If the humanity of Jesus can produce exactness, and if Jesus is our human example, can we do no less? The point is this—Jesus is, indeed, our example and we can follow Him in doing *exactly* what God's word instructs. In another passage, the beloved apostle John also advocates the idea of exact obedience in obeying the Word when he says:

I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one (1 John 2:14).

This passage demonstrates that a Christian overcomes the devil, temptation, and sin, by continuing to abide in the Word of God. John is simply repeating the principle set out by Jesus which he recorded in his gospel account: "**If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free** (John 8:31-32). The Christian is Christ's disciple when He abides in the Word of Christ and by knowing the Truth of His Word is set free from sin and the grip of the devil. A Christian is made strong and defeats the "wicked one" when he allows the Word of God to abide in his heart. By allowing the Word of God to rule and reign and have dominion in the heart, we

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will defeat the devil and be assured of heaven. However, for one to allow the Word of God to rule their heart, one must *accurately* obey the Lord.

John again writes: **“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”** The very same word the NIV translates as “exactly” in John 14:31, is also used here. The original idea of *kathos* is that of “according as” in view of its combination from *kata* and *hos*. The latter term means “so, thus,” while *kata* is used to strengthen the force of *hos*. The full idea of the word can be rendered “exactly, precisely, in this manner, according to this fashion, or in this way” The use of “exactly” and/or “precisely” in the passage captures the emphatic force of the adverb. It stresses manner and also, by implication, the degree of compliance or coordination. *Therefore, “precision obedience” is definitely enjoined by its use here just as Jesus Himself was obedient.*

Liberals in the Lord’s church often scoff at the principle of “precision obedience.” The very thought of having to conform to the Word of God in any kind of exacting measure seems to make them uneasy. In their objection to precisely handling God’s Word, they typically ask: “Is precision obedience necessary for salvation?” The simple answer is yes. For instance, the word “baptism” means “immersion,” and since this is true, is it possible for one to be “sprinkled” and it be accurately (Scripturally) called baptism? Obviously, “sprinkling” is not immersion and, therefore, the answer is “no.” In this basic example, one needs to be precise when speaking of “baptism” and the forgiveness of sins. Along the same line, can a person be saved who was immersed into Moses? Would it matter? To ask is but to answer. Aside from the beliefs of James A. Warren and Jimmy Allen, would it matter if one was baptized for (*eis*) the purpose of becoming a prophet, or to work miracles, or simply for ice cream? If one has merely obeyed the command to be baptized, does it matter what PURPOSE one is baptized for? For most rational people the answer would be “yes.” It is passing strange that some among us would contend strongly for the right candidate and mode, but be lax concerning the known reason for baptism!

However, since our liberal brethren are wont to circumvent any form of hermeneutical precision and categorical Scriptural conformity, the burning question now becomes: *Does anyone have to be precise about the liberal justification of imprecise hermeneutics due to the imperfections of mankind in order to go to heaven?* If the answer is “yes” then our liberal brethren have violated their own rule of thumb, since we now must be **exactly** right (“precise”) as to their (false) view on the matter. However, if the answer is “no,” then these same “imperfectionist wannabes” will have given up their position altogether. Either way their argument implodes. In other words, their view implies that no one need pay any attention to their inherently contradictory interpretive position.

The All-Sufficient Scriptures

The Holy Spirit, Himself, tells us that the Scriptures make

us complete and thoroughly equipped. They are all-sufficient, **“for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”** (2 Tim. 3:16-17), that is absolutely comprehensive in scope. The Bible meets our every need. The Word of His grace strengthens us (Acts 20:32) and the Scriptures comfort us (Rom. 15:4). In a good and honest heart, the Word of God (i.e., the seed, the Gospel—Luke 8:11; Rom. 1:16) produces fruit (i.e., fruit of the Spirit—(Luke 8:15). The Holy Spirit, through Scripture, reveals Christ to mankind. Along with other indirect Providential actions operating in the world, it is specifically Scripture that makes us complete in procuring and maintaining salvation. It is not the Bible and something directly affecting our personal will, either in motivation or in action. It is not Scripture plus direct illuminations, revelations, messages, promptings, prodding, and signs from God. This false, denominational concept circumvents the Scriptures—the very source which the Holy Spirit says makes us complete.

Psalm 19 is a miniature of Psalm 119. In the first six verses God reveals Himself in nature (i.e., General Revelation), but in verses seven through fourteen God reveals Himself through Scripture (i.e., Special Revelation), and it is in this particular passage where the all-sufficiency of Scripture is underscored. The God-breathed Word is called several names and is synonymous with: the law of the Lord, the testimony of the Lord, the statutes of the Lord, the commandment of the Lord, the fear of the Lord, and the judgments, or ordinances of the Lord. From this passage, there are at least ten things the Word of God can do for the individual: 1. It is complete in converting the soul (v. 7); 2. It makes the simple, wise (v. 7); 3. It causes the heart to rejoice (v.8); 4. It enlightens the eyes (v. 8); 5. It causes one to fear and respect (v. 9); 6. It offers completeness (9); 7. It warns or protects (v. 11); 8. It offers great reward (v. 11); 9. It purifies the heart (v. 2); 10 and, it restrains one from sin and apostasy (v. 13).

The Scriptures are so comprehensive that when internalized and followed by one’s Self they transform one’s life. It gives life to the inner man—the mind. It is sufficient for conversion, for transformation, for restoration, for spiritual birth and spiritual growth. The Word can mold a soul into precisely what God desires. Coupled with one’s own personal belief and volition, the Word of God can take the naive, undiscerning, uninformed, and ignorant and give them wisdom to live a godly life. It is the only source for all that is finally necessary applying God’s will to our lives in either becoming or remaining a faithful Christian.

The Bible is the place where we can go to find joy, relief, and happiness. Jeremiah, in the midst of tremendous stress and rejection, gave great testimony to the joy that comes through the Word of God by saying, **“Thy words were found and I did eat them and Thy word was in me the joy and rejoicing of my heart”** (Jer. 15:16). John writes, **“These things are written that your joy might be full”** (1

John 1:4). God gives testimony to the fact that His Word is the source and definition of joy. Even in our attempts to further understand “love” (agape), which we are commanded to have and express, we soon realize that even this kind of love is a result of one’s submission to the Word of God. John writes:

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:2-3).

Elsewhere we read,

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him” (1 John 2:3-5).

This kind of love is present as we keep the commandments of the Word of God. The process begins when the human mind processes and accepts the message of the Word, and, based upon this information, elicits the rational and appropriate response (the height and depth) of love (agape). The human mind wills to express love (Mat. 22.37) but ultimately humanity’s required and complete love is the consequence of the Word of God. In fact, as a consequence, love actually submits to the authority of the Word of God.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul said that the Spirit revealed the teaching of God to them. Paul described it this way, **“These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual”** (1 Cor. 2:13). The wisdom of God did not originate from human sources. Rather, it came from God through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit inspired Paul (and others) to reveal the mind of God to the church at Corinth. God’s revelation of His will was written by Paul (in Scripture), and provided to the Corinthians. This body of wisdom, as found in Scripture, is so comprehensive, effective, and complete, that we can judge, appraise, and evaluate **all** things (2:15) that truly matter. We can comprehend every essential spiritual thing based upon the knowledge of the word of God.

Paul concludes the matter saying, **“For who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ”** (2:16). Did you catch that? Do you understand the implications of what Paul is saying? **Paul says we have the “mind of Christ.”** What an amazing thought!. In fact, it is exhilarating because there are no insufficiencies with the mind of Christ, no limitations, and no weaknesses. There is nothing superior to the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ is complete and Paul says we have it. The inspired apostle made known the mind of Christ by revelation and we have the mind of Christ in Scripture. We have the mind of Christ when we abide in His Word, having it written in our own minds (John 8:32; cf. Heb. 8:10). There is nothing

more complete than having the mind of Christ and knowing that Scripture makes us spiritually complete (2 Tim. 3:17). Do we need anything else in addition to this? Those suggesting that Christians need something in addition to Scripture, like a direct operation of the Spirit and/or an infusion of immediate supernatural power into our minds, are implying that the blessing of having the mind of Christ is not enough (i.e., insufficient). The implication is that the mind of Christ is incomplete and not nearly enough (especially for the elite liberals among us!). Evidently, it’s not enough for them to reject the Word of God, the very power that offers salvation and all its attendant blessings (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Rom. 1:16-17; Jam. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:22-25; Luke 8:11, 15; etc.), they are now implicitly rejecting the mind of Christ as well.

Of course, many liberals and/or “direct operationists” do, indeed, despise the fact that the Scriptures make Christians “complete and thoroughly equipped.” They argue that Paul had in mind in 2 Tim. 3:16-17 the Old Testament Scriptures ONLY. However, like Martin Luther, they are guilty of adding this word “only.” Paul uses the phrase **“Sacred Writings”** (2 Tim. 3:15), and in the next verse he uses the phrase **“All Scripture.”** Therefore, Scripture and Sacred writings are the same thing, and things equal to the same are equal to each other. These “Sacred Writings” or “Scripture” must include both Old and New Testaments. To underscore this fact, Peter declares all of Paul’s writings to be **“Scripture”** (2 Pet. 3:15-16), and this would include First Timothy. Furthermore, Scripture is the final basis by which we determine spiritual Truth because it is **“profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”** (2 Tim. 3:16-17, NKJ). Peter says God has provided us with **“all things that pertain to life and godliness”** (2 Pet. 1:3). Therefore, everything pertaining to our spiritual life is provided for us through Scripture, though there certainly are (as mentioned earlier) other indirect influences that can be involved in the total picture of human circumstances. Again, while General or Natural Revelation is involved, the Special Revelation of the Scriptures make us complete. The word “complete” translates the Greek word *artios* meaning “perfect, complete, adequate, or fitted.” The phrase “thoroughly equipped” translates the Greek word *exartizó* meaning “to finish out, equip fully, to be thoroughly equipped, and to be accomplished.” Paul describes the **“man of God”** (human being) as being made “complete” (literally “fitted out”) or “thoroughly equipped” or “furnished.” It carries the idea of finality, absoluteness, and totality. By repeating the use of the same root word, Paul is emphasizing that the “man of God” is literally “fitted” and “fitted out.” In modern parlance we might say that a person is made “completely, complete,” and if one is made complete, and thoroughly so, then there is absolutely nothing to add that will make this person “more” complete. Too, Paul is saying that the Scriptures (the Word of God) are the cause of why the **“man of God”** is made **“complete, thor-**

oughly equipped.” In the context, the Holy Spirit, Himself, teaches us what the work of the Word of God truly is: to make mankind complete and furnished completely. The Scriptures accomplish this when coupled with private volition, not a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon one’s heart.

Paul makes a similar case in 2 Corinthians 3:5: **“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.”** Our sufficiency is not from human wisdom. **Our sufficiency** is not merely from human resources. Our sufficiency is from God. Just what does **“our sufficiency”** mean? It means that the capability of living life in God’s Word, in order to please Him, is from God. How do we get this sufficiency from God? Our Lord has provided us a resource to turn and refer to, and that resource is of a Divine nature. This is the point Paul makes in the context of 2 Corinthians 3. In this chapter, Paul is contrasting the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. In verse six he calls the Old Testament **“the letter,”** which **“kills,”** and contrasts that with the New Testament which he calls **“the Spirit,”** that **“gives life.”** He calls the Old Testament **“the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones”** (v.7), and the New Testament **“the ministry of the Spirit”** (v.8). Again, he calls the Old Testament **“the ministry of condemnation”** and the New Testament **“the ministry of righteousness”** (V.9). The context continues into chapter four. Paul now calls the New Covenant **“this ministry”** (4:1), **“the word of God”** and **“the truth”** (4:2). Ultimately, Paul defines the New Covenant as **“our gospel”** (4:3) or simply **“the gospel”** (4:4). Therefore, what does this entire context mean? Just this! Paul says **“our sufficiency”** is from God, and then explains that *our sufficiency comes only through the New Covenant, the gospel of Jesus Christ—the word of God.*

Again, Paul writes: **“Above all taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench ALL the fiery darts of the wicked one”** (Eph. 6:16, DP). Paul also tells us that our faith comes from the Word of God (Rom.10:17). Therefore, our faith, produced by the Word of God, quenches **all** the fiery darts from Satan. “All means All,” and there is, therefore, no “fiery dart” from Satan that the Word of God does not have the ability to **“quench”** since our faith derives from the Word of God. There are no “leftover” darts requiring a direct supernatural “extinguisher” to quench. The Word of God, producing our faith, defeats anything and everything Satan hurls at us, and this makes the (alleged) need for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit redundant and useless.

Conclusion

In the long ago, the Spirit through Isaiah proclaimed: **“To the law and to the testimony”** (Isa. 8:20). These words ought to be the marching orders for every faithful child of God today. God’s people are encouraged to go to the Scriptures to satisfy their minds, rather than relying upon the mystical false doctrines of men, including the wishful thinking of a direct illumination by the Holy Spirit. The “direct opera-

tionists” among us today are actually guilty of rejecting the comprehensive nature and work of Scripture by relegating the powerful work of God’s Word to minority status. God Almighty elevated His Word to lofty heights and so must we. The Psalmist wrote: **“I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name”** (Psa. 138:2). God raised His Word to such a high status because, just as God cannot be fully known apart from His Word, all spiritual Truth cannot be known apart from His Word.

A remarkable thought to meditate on is that Scripture uses the terms “God” and “Scripture” interchangeably. Consider Paul’s words in Galatians: **“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed”** (Gal. 3:8). The Scripture says **“all nations be blessed.”** However, in the book of Genesis we learn that it was God who said those Words (Gen. 12:2). In the context, God is equated with Scripture. The power of God and the power of His Word cannot be separated.

In our humanity, **“we are more than conquerors”** and our victories over our adversary, temptation, and sin, are won by wholly and personally committing ourselves (Luke 10:27; Rom. 12:1-2) to obeying the Lord’s Will, **exactly**, as we abide in doctrine of Christ—the Word of God. It is because of our shared humanity that we can truly say that whatever is true of Jesus regarding His humanity is true of us. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

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Back To The Bible

35th Annual Bellview Lectures

June 12 - 16, 2010

SATURDAY, JUNE 12

7:00 pm Back To The Bible Tim Cozad
 7:45 pm Back To Biblical Authority Daniel Denham

SUNDAY, JUNE 13

9:00 am Back To Biblical Music Michael Hatcher
 10:00 am Back To Biblical Living John Rose

Lunch Break

2:00 pm Back To Biblical Preaching Danny Douglas
 3:00 pm Back To The Bible View Of Communion Ken Chumbley

Dinner Break

7:00 pm Back To Biblical Grace Dub McClish
 7:45 pm Back To Biblical Faith Charles Pogue

MONDAY, JUNE 14

9:00 am Back To Biblical Prayer Lee Moses
 10:00 am Back To Biblical Attitudes Danny Douglas
 11:00 am Back To Biblical Speaking Wayne Blake

Lunch Break

1:30 pm Back To Biblical Warfare Lynn Parker
 2:30 pm Back To The Biblical View Of The Holy Spirit Daniel Denham

3:30 pm Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 pm Back To The Biblical View Of Immodesty John West
 7:45 pm Back To Biblical Repentance David Brown

TUESDAY, JUNE 15

9:00 am Back To Biblical Morality Dennis "Skip" Francis

10:00 am Back To Biblical Giving Wayne Blake
 11:00 am Back To Biblical Respect Tim Cozad

Lunch Break

1:30 pm Back To Biblical Translation Charles Pogue
 2:30 pm Back To Biblical Fellowship Ken Chumbley

3:30 pm Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 pm Back To The Biblical Organization Of The Church John West

7:45 pm Back To Biblical Confession Gene Hill

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16

9:00 am Back To Biblical Eschatology Dub McClish

10:00 am Back To The Biblical View Of God John Rose
 11:00 am Back To Biblical Homes Gene Hill

Lunch Break

1:30 pm Back To Biblical Peace Lee Moses
 2:30 pm Back To Biblical Priorities David Brown

3:30 pm Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 pm Back To The Biblical Work Of The Church Dennis "Skip" Francis

7:45 pm Back To Biblical Baptism Lynn Parker

Bellview Lectures Information

Housing

The Ramada (7051 Pensacola Blvd; Pensacola, FL 32505) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$55—to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/476-9091. *Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations.* If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

Meals

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

Books

The lectureship book, *Back To The Bible*, will be available for purchase. The price of the book has not yet been determined. The book will contain 15 chapters. This will be a soft-cover book that can be used for teaching purposes. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2010) will be available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of the CD has not yet been determined. The CD will also include the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2009), *Beacon* (1972, 1974-2009), and other material.

DVDs

All lectures will be recorded on DVDs. They may be purchased during the Bellview Lectures or by mail order afterwards. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the Bellview Lectures in keeping the pulpit area free of privately-owned recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

Transportation

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

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.

-Colorado-

Denver—Piedmont Church of Christ, 1602 S. Parker Rd. Ste. 109, Denver, CO 80231, Sunday: 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. www.piedmontcoc.net, Lester Kamp, evangelist. (720) 535-5807.

-England-

Cambridgeshire—Cambridgeshire—Cambridge City Church of Christ, meeting at The Manor Community College, Arbury Rd., Cambridge, CB4 2JF. Sun., Bible Study--10:30 a.m., Worship-- 11:30 a.m.; Tue. Bible Study--7:30 p.m. www.CambridgeCityCoC.org.uk. Keith Sisman, Gospel Preacher. Contacts: Keith Sisman [From USA, Toll Free: (281) 475-8247]; By phone inside the U.K.: Cambridge (England): 01223-911243]; Alternative Cambridge contacts: Joan Moulton - 01223-210101; Matt. Shouey (Lakenheath) - 01638-531268. Postal/ mailing Address - PO BOX 1, Ramsey Huntingdon, PE26 2YZ United Kingdom

-Florida-

Ocoee—Ocoee Church of Christ, 2 East Magnolia Street, Ocoee, FL 34761. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7:00 p.m. David Hartbarger, Evangelist, (407) 656-2516,

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.

Pensacola—Eastgate Church of Christ, 2809 E. Creighton Rd., {emsacp;a. F; 32504, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. Tim Cozad, evangelist, (850) 477-4910

-North Carolina-

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

-South Carolina-

Belvedere (Greater Augusta, Georgia Area)—Church of Christ, 535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841, www.belvederechurchofchrist.org; e-mail belvecoc@gmail.com, (803) 442-6388, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Evangelist: Ken Chumbley (803) 279-8663.

-Oklahoma-

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

- Tennessee-

Murfreesboro—Church of Christ, 1154 Park Avenue, Murfreesboro, TN 37129, Sun. Bible class 9:00 a.m., Worship 10:00 a.m., Fellowship meal 11:00 a.m., Devotional 12:00 p.m.; Wed. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. For directions and other information please visit our website at www.murfreesboro-churchofchrist.org. evangelist, Steve Yeatts.

-Texas-

Denton area—Northpoint Church of Christ, 5101 E. University Dr. (Greenbelt Business Park). Mailing address: Northpoint Church of Christ, Greenbelt Business Park, 5101 E. University Dr., Box 6, Denton, TX 76208. E-mail: northpointcoc@hotmail.com. Sunday: 9:30, 10:30, 1:00; Wednesday 7:00. Contact: Dub McClish: 940.387.1429; tgjoriginal@verizon.net. www.northpointcoc.com

Evant—Evant Church of Christ, 310 West Brooks Drive, Evant, TX 76525. Office: (254) 471-5705; Jess Whitlock, evangelist (254) 471-5717.

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

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

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

New Braunfels—225 Saenger Halle Rd. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. Wed. 7:30 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.