

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

The book of Psalms has been appropriately called “the hymn book of the Bible.” There are more than twenty-five hundred verses in its one hundred and fifty chapters, and doubtless that many songs have been composed from them through the centuries and millenniums since their sentiments swelled the bosom of Israel’s sweet singer. Many of these verses were chanted in the worship of early Christians, and they will be sung in every generation wherever people are found worshipping God until we learn the “new song” in Heaven, “when all the redeemed singers get home.”

To rob our modern productions of the sentiments and psalms of David would be, indeed, to impoverish our worship of praise.

A SONG OF UNITY. Psalm 133 is a song of unity, “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” There is nothing more stifling and stultifying to the emotions of the soul than strife and division. There is nothing more soothing and beneficent to the spirit than peace and unity.

Unity among brethren is like “the precious ointment upon the head,” in the psalmist’s refrain. The Easterners perfumed with fragrant oil. Unity perfumes the church and sweetens the atmosphere like the precious oil “than ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.”

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT. Exhorting the brethren to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,”

Paul outlines, in Ephesians 4:4-6, the basis of unity.

“There is one body, one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

The “**unity of the spirit**” is the unity the Spirit teaches, or that results when the Spirit’s Word is obeyed.

There is one God—unity in worship. A divided worship cannot be rendered “**in spirit and in truth.**” Wherever and whenever rendered, true worship must have the two elements—the right spirit and the right act; for God is one, and “**seeketh such to be his worshippers.**”

There is one Lord—unity in authority. Human authority in religion is wrong. Christ is Lord, and His Word only is authority.

There is one faith—unity in message. The Spirit, which guided “**into all truth,**” does not impart conflicting messages. The Gospel promotes unity; and where there is division, something else has been preached.

There is one baptism—unity in practice. Modes of baptism! We might as well talk about shades of white. There is no such thing.

There is one body—unity in organization. The church is one body. It is impossible to have “spiritual unity” and “organic” division. Unity is both spiritual and organic.

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

Editorial...

FOR THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

With this issue of *CFTF* we close forty-four years of continuous publication. During that time and for some years preceding it, the church has suffered many departures from the faith. Sadly, she continues to undergo departures from the divine pattern.

Many members of the Lord's church (not a few elders and preachers) refuse to understand that the Lord's church is the Lord's army. We exist to fight for the right as the Bible defines the right in every thing. In order to remain faithful, beginning with ourselves, we are to engage in spiritual warfare all day long, 365 days out of the year, as long as we are able, and until the Lord returns. But the previously mentioned brethren hold the false view that if they can just get over this present problem(s), whatever it may be, we will be for ever out of the problem business. This false mind-set is one of the devil's greatest ploys to lull the church into a false sense of security. Once he accomplishes selling the church the error that holiness is harmlessness and whispering sweet platitudes to one another in order to make each other happy in our own conceits is the way to go, the father of lies has a much easier job getting us to digress from the truth more and more.

In living the Christian life, we are in the process of getting over problems, or we are in the middle of them, or about to get into them. This is true of congregations as well as individuals and their families. Of course, this is not to say all problems are of the same magnitude. But, when we once realize that life is one problem after another, the better off we will be. And, when **"...we know that...the whole world lieth in wickedness ["in the evil one," ASV-1901]"** (1 John 5:19), should we not expect problems to abound?

The Lord never promised us a life without problems (Luke 9:23; 2 Tim. 3:12). To the contrary, Christians are promised many problems because of their faithfulness to Him. However, Jesus said He would give us the solution to those problems (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 1 Cor. 10:13). Thus, **"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed"** (Jam. 1:25).

A successful life is one lived on the Lord's terms. Although the world never will recognize it, when Stephen was stoned to death for his uncompromising stand for the truth, he died a complete success (Acts 7:54-60). He lived and died governed by God's will. Thus, Stephen continues to be an example to Christians in living and dying (Ecc. 12:13, 14; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10).

We wish all a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year and promise to continue to be faithful soldiers of the cross in exposing error and upholding the truth in all things. To that end we covet your prayers and continued support.

—David P. Brown, Editor

Contending for the Faith—November/December/2014

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6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:00 PM *Without God there is no Objective Absolute Moral Standard*—Michael Hatcher
8:00 PM *Civil Government and Morality*—Dub McClish

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21

9:00 AM *Dishonesty*—Wayne Blake
10:00 AM *Homosexuality*—Geoff Litke
11:00 AM *Dancing and Immodest Apparel*—Andy Hastings
Lunch Break
1:30 PM *God's Institution of Marriage*—Mark Townsend
2:30 PM *Divorce and Remarriage*—Bruce Stulting
3:30 PM *Domestic Violence*—John West

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

9:30 AM *Abortion*—Philip Schrei
10:30 AM *Beverage Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use*—Michael Hatcher
Lunch Break
1:30 PM *Gambling*—Eric Paluka
2:30 PM *Pornography, Pedophilia, and Sexual Immorality*—Dub McClish

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(Continued from page 1)

There is one Spirit and one hope—unity in life, in desire and expectation.

Thus, Paul outlines the only basis of unity. Let the world cease their efforts toward amalgamations, federations, alliances, and unions, and adopt the divine standard and basis of unity—oneness in Christ.

THE PRAYER FOR UNITY. The Lord's prayer in John 17:1-21 was an ardent petition for unity. "**May they all be one.**" Jesus praying for the unity of believers! Yet, it has not touched the heart of those who are promoting denominationalism in the world, nor even of brethren who sow discord and stir factions in the church. Denominationalism is the misrepresentation of Christianity—a horrid caricature—and the authors of perversions in religion are enemies of Christ, professing and even honestly thinking themselves

to be His friends.

But "charity begins at home." We cannot with good grace preach unity and practice division.

I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).

Paul's beseechment should not only be our preaching, but also our practice. The unity of Christians is the only hope of bringing the world to Christ. Jesus knew it, and therefore prayed that "**they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.**"

—Deceased

VIRGIN BIRTH—ONLY BEGOTTEN # 1

Don Tarbet

CHRIST—BEGOTTEN OR UNIQUE?

A controversial matter relating to Christ is whether He is the “only begotten” Son of God, or the “only Son, one of a kind, or unique.” It is said that early secular writers introduced “only begotten” to the passages that refer to Jesus as “the only begotten Son,” and that the original word *monogenes* should be rendered “unique.” However, before the introduction of the idea of *genos* as meaning something else (such as “unique”), there were writers that used *monogenes* with reference to Jesus’ birth, and called Him “begotten.” The concept of Jesus’ being “begotten” (with reference to the conception by Mary) is seen in the major translations of scripture through the years. This article is written in defense of the use of the rendering as seen in the *KJV*, *ASV* (1901), *NASB*, etc. Many modern (20th and 21st century) translations leave out “only begotten,” and change it to “son,” “only son,” or “one of a kind,” and claim justification for it. I would not attempt to describe their motives, but believe they are in error more so than the translators of the above mentioned translations are in error.

In the first part of this article we will examine Biblical words relating to this topic, as seen in (1) Promise, (2) Prophecy, and (3) Typology. A combination of thought from these three areas will help us to determine the validity of the proposition set forth in the above paragraph.

(1) *Promise*. We begin with the promise God made to Satan in Genesis 3:15, when He stated that the “seed” of woman would bruise the head of Satan. Without question, this is the first indication of a coming Savior, who would come from “woman.” Satan used a woman for the downfall of the human race, as he deceived Eve and tempted her to partake of the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:1-6; 1 Tim. 2:15f). God was going to redeem man through another woman, whose offspring would offer salvation to man. Paul stated in Romans 16:20 that God is bruising Satan’s head through the work of Christ and the gospel. No wonder Paul writes again in Galatians 4:4, 5, **“But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”** No reference here to the Son coming from a man, but from a woman. Everyone born into the world under God’s law of procreation is “begotten” by an earthly father. Jesus’ earthly beginning would be through a “woman”—not a man and a woman. The implication from all this is, that there would be something special (or unique) about the coming of the Messiah, and it would not be unique because He was unique, but unique because of the manner of His “conception and birth”—that part of God’s law of procreation involving a man was set aside. Of necessity a miracle was involved in Jesus becoming a fleshly human being.

Another promise relating to God’s Son is given through the prophet Samuel. In relation to God’s covenant with David, Samuel writes, **“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom...I will be his Father, and he shall be My Son...”** (2 Sam. 7:12, 14). Of course, Solomon was the next generation son of David, but God surely had more in mind than just Solomon. God is saying that a physical descendant of David, would ultimately sit on David’s throne, and He (the Son) would rule from the right hand of God in heaven. In Paul’s great sermon of Acts 13, he stated,

And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will. Of this man’s seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus (Acts 13:22, 23).

Then, in verse 32, he again refers to God’s “promise,” and then in verse 33 he quotes from Psalms 2:7, to show that it was Jesus who fulfilled the promise that stated, **“Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee.”** In this passage, the word *begotten* is quoted by the New Testament writers. In so doing the Holy Spirit guided them to use the word *genneo*. *Genneo* is one part of the compound word *monogenese* and this is the word translated “only begotten” in the *KJV*, *ASV*, *NASB*, et al. That Son has the “key” of David as He reigns over the kingdom today (Rev. 3:7; 22:16). Again, we have reference to the “Son” and the “Seed.” It was Jesus who was begotten of God through Mary to become that Savior. He is unique because of this, but the “this” must not be forgotten or minimized by “translating” it out of the scripture. Jesus was of the seed (offspring, lineage) of David. However, Jesus was the immediate seed of woman (Mary), who had no earthly husband at that time. Thus, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. This is what it took for Jesus to be “begotten” (*ASV*) or “born” (*KJV*) of the virgin Mary.

(2) *Prophecy*. There are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament that relate to the coming of the Savior, but the one that is pertinent to our study is that of Isaiah 7:14. Isaiah addressed the “house of David” (vs. 13), then says, **“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign, Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel”** (vs. 14). Involved in any discussion of whether this actually refers to Jesus is a moot point when we look at the fulfillment of it recorded in Matthew chapter one. In Matthew 1:18, the apostle writes concerning the birth of Jesus Christ, and explains that before she and Joseph **“came together”** (she continues to be a virgin),

she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Mary had been visited by an angel of the Lord who informed her that the Holy Ghost (Spirit) would overshadow her, and she would give birth to a son, who would be called the **“Son of the highest,”** who would fulfill the promise of one to sit upon David’s throne (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12-14). He would be called the **“Son of God”** (Luke 1:31-35). The *RSV* does not use the word *virgin*, but it should, as Matthew by inspiration quotes Isaiah, and uses the word *virgin* in the quotation—signifying that “virgin” is what was meant in Isaiah 7:14. Also, Matthew says this Son (Savior, Jesus) would be *Emmanuel*, or **“God with us,”** as foretold by Isaiah in Isaiah chapter seven. The implication of all this is overwhelming. A virgin was to conceive of the Holy Spirit. The child would be called the **“Son of God.”** He would have no earthly father, for God the Father would beget Him. Therefore, via the agency of the Holy Spirit Mary conceived the baby Jesus—the “only” one ever to be begotten in this manner. It is certainly proper to refer to Jesus as “the only begotten Son of God,” as do other passages in the New Testament. In Acts 13, reference is made to the fact that the only begotten one was raised, and was to become king. In Hebrews 1:5, we learn that the one who was the only begotten one was above angels. Paul quotes from Psalms 2:7 and from 2 Samuel 7:14. These passages are about Jesus being “begotten” and becoming God’s Son. Hence, as the **“first begotten”** Jesus came into the world, at which time the **“angels of God worshiped Him”** (Heb. 1:5,6; Luke 2:13, 14). The terms “begotten” and “first begotten” are thus used interchangeably. He was the “begotten” One when He came into “the world.” In Hebrews 1:5-7, we have several steps in the order of events. 1) There is the “action”—the begetting. 2) There is the “relationship”—Father/Son. 3) There is the “time”—when He came into the world. 4) There is the “response”—angels rejoicing.

(3) *Typology*. The Old Testament reveals several types, that have their anti-type or fulfillment in Christ. We see this especially in Genesis 22, when God told Abraham to go to the land of Moriah and offer Isaac, his “only son” on the altar. True, Abraham previously had another son, Ishmael, who was born to Hagar, Sarah’s handmaid. Abraham is never said to have begotten Ishmael, but is said to have begotten Isaac (Mat. 1:2). As matter of fact, when Ishmael was sent out, he could no longer be considered a son. He was “dead” (separated). This is similar to the broken relationship existing between the prodigal son and his father as recorded in Luke 15:24. Also, notice there was a substitute offering made in the place and instead of Isaac, even as Christ is a substitute offering for us. Abraham accounted Isaac as having been raised from the dead **“in a figure,”** as Abraham considered this **“seed”** to be dead (Heb. 11:19). Just as Jesus was to be offered up (as the only begotten Son), such is typified by Isaac being the **“only begotten son”** of Abraham. At this point in Abraham’s life, Isaac was the “only begotten son” (*monogenese*) of Abraham. He was the only son at

all, since Ishmael had been “cast out” (Gal. 4:30), and his relationship with Abraham is associated with the **“promise”** (Heb. 11:17). In these ways, Isaac was indeed Abraham’s only begotten son. He was the only son of Sarah at this point, as the promise to Abraham was to be through Sarah. Yes, Abraham later had other sons, but at this time Isaac was the only one through whom God would fulfill the promises He made to faithful Abraham. In passing, some have supposed that the translators saw this typology and used the same language that described Jesus in John 1 and John 3, etc.

The argument is made that since *monogenese* is a compound word, and since *genos* is used instead of *genneo*, that it takes on a different meaning entirely. However, in the Greek there are five (5) words relating to *genneo*, and all are related to and derivatives of *ginomai*, and all basically mean the same thing. For instance, Thayer lists *genos*, as one of them, and says that it means “offspring” (113).¹ It is the word used by Paul in Acts 17:28 when he referred to everyone being the “offspring” of God. This being the case, Jesus can be considered the “offspring” of God in the word *genos*. He is the *monos* (only) One of God’s offspring that was “begotten,” and the word is inclusive of that fact. All the words relating to *genneo* have to do with begetting, birth, etc. As we have noted previously, God had other sons (Adam—Luke 3:38), angels, and now has spiritual sons who have been begotten by the gospel (the work of God’s Spirit in the inspired word—Eph. 6:17; Luke 8:11; Heb. 4:12), but none were begotten like Jesus—He is the “only begotten Son” of God in the manner described in chapter one of both Matthew and Luke.

Regarding the compound word *monogenese*, we remember that the *mono* is taken from *monos*, but it does not change in meaning because it is added to another word—making a compound word. The *mono* still means the same—“only.” Why should we be forced to think that *genos* would mean anything other than *genneo* because it has been added to another word? When one word means “only,” and the other means “begotten,” (and *mono* still means “only”), would not *genos* still basically mean the same thing? If not, why not? When one letter (s) is removed from *monos*, it is not questioned, but when an (n) is removed from *genos*, all of a sudden it does not mean the same anymore (according to some). Why do they not make an issue of *mono* as well as *genos*? Could it possibly mean “unequal,” “many,” or “varied”? Surely not! Some do not want the first part of the compound word changed, but the last part. “Both *genos* and *gennaoo* derive from *ginomai* and are thus akin in meaning” (32)² As someone has said, “the legs of the lame are not equal.”

Some believe Jesus was “begotten eternally” in heaven before the world was. We find no evidence of this in scripture. Other have asked that if this is true, and Jesus was the “begotten Son of God” before His physical birth, “who was His mother?” Then some admit that Jesus was begotten

physically, but want to use the word in other ways than its literal meaning. It indeed can be used figuratively, but only under the figure of a birth, as it is used that way in regards to our being begotten by the word in the new birth (1 Cor. 4:15; John 3:3-5; Jam. 1:18). It seems perfectly clear and understandable from our good standard translations as to the meaning of “only begotten Son.” The average reader is not capable of going back into the original language and getting into a debate over such a controversial subject. We are not contending that every time we speak of Christ that we have to describe Him as “the only begotten Son,” but we should not deny that He is, or try to twist the meaning of “begotten” to make it mean something else.

Jesus is “unique” because He was “begotten of God” by the Spirit causing Mary to conceive, and is not just unique... period. He is unique because He was “begotten of God” in the manner described in the scripture, and not unique for the sake of being unique. Let us illustrate it this way. Suppose I decided I want to have a 1957 Chevrolet automobile gold plated. It will be the only one of its kind in the world. So, I announce it to the automotive world what I am about to do. The time comes, and I manage to get the car gold plated. I have it documented as the first and only “gold plated” car in the world. A hundred years later there is still no other car like it. When someone searches the records and learns what they can about it, they decide since language has changed in the last 100 years, that they need to rewrite the document. They look at the words “gold plated,” and decide to leave off the “d,” and that the words actually mean “gold painted,” and anything that unusual must be “unusual.” When questioned about it, the lawyers state that since two words were compounded, that it changes its meaning, and it simply means “unusual.” From that time on the automotive world is divided as to whether the car was gold plated or just “unusual.” The car is unusual, but not because it is unusual, but because it is “gold plated.” The most accurate way to describe is by saying it is “gold plated.” Some examine the automobile and say, “That car is gold plated,” and others say, “No, it is just unusual.”

VIRGIN BIRTH—ONLY BEGOTTEN

Much has been written about the “pre-existence” of Jesus. He did not exist before He existed, but did exist in eternity before He made His appearance on this earth. He is before all things as God and as the eternal Word, and was involved in all creation. There is no proof that He was the “Son” of God prior to His earthly appearance, but from that time on He is recognized as God’s Son—His “only begotten Son.” Before He became the Son, there had to be a begetting. Someone has written that Jesus was born, but not begotten. How could that be? Much is written about how Jesus became the Son of God. It is said that He was “born of a virgin,” though this is denied by many who fail to regard His divinity. The Savior was to come from “woman” (Gen. 3:15) and

He did (Gal. 4:4). He was born to Mary, who was the wife of Joseph. Some write about the virgin birth, but say very little about “the begotten Son of God.” Some accept the virgin birth as factual, but try to minimize the concept of His begetting—His being “the only begotten Son of God.”

Some maintain that Jesus was the Son of God in eternity before His earthly life. The director of the Open Forum at Freed-Hardeman University once stated that before He came to earth, “He chose to have the Holy Spirit as His Father” (Feb. 3, 2003), implying that deity took this manner of becoming man.³ Another has written,

This unique relationship does not imply or entail that Jesus ever began to be the Son of God; rather, it suggests an eternal relationship. He was the Son of God before His infleshment... And the baby’s father was the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:35). The begetting of the baby was the action of the Spirit, not the father.⁴

Others strongly deny this. Another writes, “Gabriel says Mary’s child would be called the Son of God because he would be begotten by the Holy Spirit, so the Father must have called him his son for that reason.”⁵ Here is a reference to the function of the Holy Spirit in the begetting, but the Father (not the Spirit) was the “Father.” “He was the Son of God because being begotten in the womb of Mary by a miracle. The angel said he was to be called the Son of the Most High God.”⁶

Jesus was the “Word” of God (John 1:1-3), the “I Am” (John 8:58), and possibly as the “Angel of the Lord” in the Old Testament ages, but where can we find that He had a subordinate role as a “Son” before coming to earth? We can best describe His earthly relationship through the term “the only begotten” (Greek, *monogenes*) of God the Father. Jesus was not the only son of Mary, for she later “knew” Joseph (Mat. 1:25), and had other children by him (Mat. 13:55-56), but Jesus was the only “begotten” Son of God, for no other was ever conceived and born physically as was Jesus. Hence, He was the “only begotten” Son of God. There is a clear association of the terms “virgin birth” and “the only begotten,” as both relate to Jesus’ deity and humanity. Some say it does not matter too much what we believe (and teach?) about either of these two terms, as long as we do not “deny” the deity of our Lord. Does this mean we must actually say “I deny the deity of Jesus” before we are guilty of such? Does not our failure to accept the Bible’s teaching of Jesus’s virgin birth as well as Him being only begotten constitute denials of the deity of Jesus? Some claim to accept Jesus as the only begotten, but try to explain it away or give it a new definition.

There has been a determined effort in the church (by a few, but most remain silent) during the last three decades, to belittle the reality of this Sonship, beginning with His birth, while all the time emphasizing Jesus’ Sonship began in eternity prior to coming to earth. Some in the “scholarly”

arena contend that the term “only begotten” simply means “unique,” or “one of a kind.” It has even been said that “beloved” might be closer to *monogenese* than “unique.” If that is true, just when did He become “beloved”? At His baptism, Jesus is called “beloved” (Mat. 3:17), and later at the transfiguration (Mat. 17:5). Would this be other times that Jesus was *monogenese*? The words *unique* and *beloved* are too broad in nature to describe the special relationship Jesus had with God. Elijah was unique in that he was the only man known to have been taken to heaven in a fiery chariot, but he was not “an only begotten son” of God. Was Jesus unique? Yes, in the sense that He was conceived of the Spirit, begotten by the Father, and born to a virgin. He was unique in other ways as well, but He was the “only begotten” in one way. He became “unique” because of his being begotten of the Father and born to a virgin. A favorite expression used by many is that Jesus was “one of a kind,” or “the one and only” Son of God. It may depend on what is meant by the word *kind*. If we mean “human-kind,” then it is false, for He was like his brethren—in the flesh (Heb. 2:12-14). If we mean that He was special because of His begetting and birth, then why not just say so, and keep using the terms “only begotten” and “virgin birth” as declared in scripture?

It is not accurate to say that Jesus is the “one and only son” of God, for God had other sons. As earlier noted, Adam is called the “son of God” (Luke 3:38). Angels were “sons of God” (Job 38:7). Job’s children were “sons of God” (Job 1:6). But, none of these were “begotten” sons of God, as was Jesus. He was the “only” one of all God’s sons, and was unique in this, but the word *unique* does not in itself tell us why, but the word “begotten” does.

We maintain that Jesus not only is the Son of God, but “the only begotten Son of the Father.” It is said by some that many translations of old do not use the word *begotten*. However, there are many old translations that do. Almost two dozen of older versions use the word. Scholarship is divided over this, and when all their arguments about the Hebrew and Greek words are expounded upon, the issue is not settled. Some of the world’s ripest scholars have included the word *begotten* in their work of the *KJV*, *ASV*, *NASB*, *American Bible Union (ABU)*, *AMPLIFIED*, and *LIVING ORACLES*. In the 20th century work of the *RSV*, the word *begotten* was dropped. Since that time, the *Living Bible*, *NIV*, *Contemporary English Version (CEV)*, *NEB*, *Goodspeed* and other free-thought versions have followed suit. They all use “only” or “the one and only.” Neither word or term is adequate to replace the word *begotten*.

Perhaps here would be a good time to take a look at the words *beget*, *begot*, and *begotten*. The *Oxford Dictionary* states that the word *beget* (when used literally) is typical of a man, sometimes of a man and woman, bringing a child into existence by the process of procreation. The example is given, “they hoped that the king might beget an heir by his new

queen.” It also can be used figuratively as, “killings beget more killings.” Synonyms given are father, sire, engender, generate, spawn, create, give life to, bring into being, bring into the world, bare, procreate, reproduce, breed. *Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary* states that the words *begotten* and *begot* are alternative participles of the word *beget*. The first definition (literal) given is “to procreate, as a father, or sire, to generate, as to beget a son.” Then, the second definition (figurative) is “to produce, as an effect, to cause to exist, to generate, as luxuries beget vice” (Vol. II, p. 167, 168). *Vine’s Expository Dictionary* states that *gennaō* (a basic part of *monogenes*) is used literally and “chiefly used of men ‘begetting’ children” (page 57). The word may sometimes be used of women bringing forth children, because the children are begotten by men.

The point is, that in the genealogies of the Bible, the word *begat* or *begot* refers to those who have been *begotten*, as is used many many times in both the Old and New testament records. This is why the word must be considered with reference to physical birth, and not simply to something or someone being “unique.” Read the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:11-16. Each time the one *begotten* was from his father, and Joseph was begotten by his father, Jacob. But, when we get to Jesus, it only says that Jesus was “born” of Mary (not begotten by Joseph, for he was not Jesus’ biological father). It was GOD Who begat Jesus by sending the Holy Spirit to cause Mary to conceive. So, in Jesus’ own begetting, He is said to have been “begotten” of God—the Father.

JESUS—BOTH LITERALLY AND SPIRITUALLY BEGOTTEN?

At this point in our study, we want to consider some of the arguments used by proponents of the “only son” movement, and the efforts of some to make the word *begotten* apply to Jesus Himself in a figurative way. We shall examine the passages where Jesus is called the “begotten” Son of God, and the use of the term in other instances.

There are two schools of thought about Jesus being the “only begotten” Son of God. 1) Conservative thinkers have long argued that He became such in connection with His advent on earth. 2) Modern day thinkers argue that the word *begotten* simply means “one of a kind,” or “unique,” and the word *begotten* need not be employed. Some of us still maintain that Jesus is not only the Son of God, but is indeed “the only begotten Son of the Father.” Some five times in our more reliable and conservative translations, He is referred to as such (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). Other passages refer to Him as the “begotten,” apart from the *mono* or *genes*, (Heb. 1:6; 5:5; Rev. 1:5; cf. Ps. 2:7).

A few years ago, a well-known brother wrote an article titled “Begotten and Unbegotten” that appeared in some of our brotherhood journals. It is now available in a public way on the Internet, which can be googled up by entering “Be-

gotten And Unbegotten.” We once referred to this brother in print, as simply the one who stated Jesus was not the “only begotten” Son of God. A stern rebuke came back as if a beloved brother was being attacked. So, I shall not use his name in this article, but simply refer to him as BB (for Beloved Brother), but he will be identified in my final endnotes. This writing is certainly not in any way an attack on BB, but is a review of what I believe to be in error. BB begins this material by saying, “Physically Jesus was ‘begotten’ in Mary’s womb ‘by the Holy Spirit,’ ” and then went on to state that He was “begotten” “figuratively” in three other ways: His Resurrection, His Coronation, and His Ordination. He bases all points on Psalms 2:7. Please note that BB says Jesus was physically begotten, so how could he ever argue that Jesus was not “the only begotten Son of God?”

To have something “figurative,” there must first be the “literal” (or physical). BB prepares his readers for that by stating Jesus was “begotten” physically. He seems to have overlooked that there must be some kind of likeness or similarity between something literal, and then something figurative, as the “literal” becomes the type of the “spiritual” (figurative). There must be a direct relation of language between the two. For instance, Israel was the literal kingdom, while the church is God’s spiritual kingdom. David was a literal shepherd over literal sheep, while Jesus is our spiritual shepherd and we are His sheep. There is absolutely no word connection between “begotten” and the words *resurrection*, *coronation*, and *ordination*. In his section on “Unbegotten,” BB again referred to Jesus being physically begotten in Mary’s womb, but was also figuratively begotten in the three named areas. We shall see!

Concerning the “resurrection,” we note what W. E. Vine says in *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*:

The declaration “thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee,” Ps. 2:7, quoted in Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5 refers to the birth of Jesus, not His resurrection. In Acts 13:33 the verb “raise up” is used of the raising up of a person to occupy a special position in the nation as of David in verse 22 (so of Christ as a Prophet in 3:22 and 7:37). The word “again” in the *KJV* in v. 33 represents nothing in the original. The *RV* rightly omits it. In v. 34 the statement as to the resurrection of Christ receives the greater stress in this respect through the emphatic contrast to that in v. 33 as to His being raised up in the nation, a stress imparted by the added words “from the dead.” Accordingly, v. 33 speaks of His incarnation, v. 34 of His resurrection.

In Heb. 1:5, that the declaration refers to the Birth is confirmed by the contrast in verse 6. Here the word “again” is rightly placed in the *RV*, “when He again bringeth in the firstborn into the world.” This points on to His second advent, which is set in contrast to His first advent, when God brought His firstborn into the world the first time. (See **FIRSTBORN**).

So again in Heb. 8:5, where the High Priesthood of Christ is shown to fulfill all that was foreshadowed in the Levitical

priesthood, the passage stresses the facts of His humanity, the days of His flesh, His perfect obedience and His sufferings. (586)

Examine the verses as explained by Vine, that Acts 13:33 is merely identifying the one who was later raised from the dead (God’s Son, who had been begotten), and quotes from Psalms 2:7. The time to which Psalms 2:7 was referring is not the resurrection day, as we shall see. But note that Acts 13:34 begins with the word *And*, signifying something else that was done. He was “**raised up**” (vs. 33), [as used in vs. 22 in reference to David being “raised up”—not resurrected, Acts 2:29], “**and**” (in addition to that), Jesus was “**raised up from the dead**” (vs. 34). Psalm 2:7 will also be quoted again in Hebrews 1:5 in connection with two major thoughts: (1) When God became the Father, and Christ became His Son, as based on 2 Samuel 7:14; and (2) When this occurred, “**when He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world**” (Heb. 1:6), at which time the angels worshiped Him (Luke 2:13, 14).

The third passage that BB alludes to also quotes from Psalm 2:7, which is significant. True, the verse is saying that Jesus became a High Priest (in heaven), and the passage simply identifies Him as the one who had been “begotten,” and reference is made to the “**days of his flesh,**” which BB admits began from his fleshly birth, and all this was prior to His becoming a high priest. Remember, all three of BB’s “figurative” begettals are based on Psalm 2:7, and each instance identifies it with His beginning on earth, when He was “**raised up**” for the purpose of later being “**raised up from the dead,**” when He brought Him into the world for this purpose. To emphasize a figurative begettal in this manner reminds us of the “argumentation” used by Edwards/Hicks as they used “adultery” in a figurative sense to justify a man putting away his wife and marrying again, when clearly the texts refer to literal adultery or fornication.

Vine’s Dictionary states it correctly, when it says:

of “raising” up a person to occupy a place in the midst of a people, said of Christ, Acts 5:30, *KJV* only (the best texts have ago, to bring, *RV*, “hath...brought”); of David, Acts 13:22 (for v. 33 see No. 2 (506)).

Vine continues:

of “raising up a person to occupy a place in the midst of a nation, said of Christ, Acts 2:36; 7:37; 13:33, *RV* “raised up Jesus,” not here by resurrection from the dead, as the superfluous “again” of the *KJV* would suggest; this is confirmed by the latter part of the verse, which explains the “raising up” as being by way of His incarnation, and by the contrast in v. 34, where stress is laid upon His being “raised” from the dead, the same verb being used (506).

So, Jesus was “the only begotten” of the Father by means of His physical birth, and all contexts use this as a basis for (1) His Resurrection, (2) His Coronation, and (3) His Ordination as High Priest. He could not have been honored or

exalted to either of these without having first been the “only begotten Son of God,” so as to enter the fleshly state and then be exalted. **“And being found in fashion as a man... Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him”** (Phi. 2:8, 9)

Now we shall look at the real and true way there is a “figurative” begetting, as there is a true likeness of a conception and birth.

ONLY BEGOTTEN SON—BEGOTTEN SONS

Previously we examined the efforts of some to put away the idea of Jesus’ being the “only begotten” Son of God, and just make Him a “son” or “one of a kind.” We also looked at the efforts of one to show that Jesus was “figuratively” begotten also in His Resurrection, Coronation, and Ordination. It is not enough to reach the conclusion that He is God’s Son, when in fact, as we describe this relationship, we note that He is God’s Son because He was “begotten” of God. It was foretold in the Old Testament that Jesus would be “begotten.” **“I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee”** (Psa. 2:7). This passage is often quoted in the New Testament, along with other passages in the book of John, to identify Jesus as that begotten Son. (The passages are: John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5,6; and Rev. 1:5). The word *begotten* is used a total of 10 times in these passages. The word *monogenes* is used in the first 6 references and once in reference to Isaac in Hebrews 11:7. Three times it comes from *protokos* (i.e., the Hebrew references and Rev. 1:5). The terms “only begotten” come exclusively from *monogenes*, which is the word under consideration in this study, but we do find that “begotten” is also used three times in four of the above verses that include a reference to Jesus or someone else in some manner. *Monogenes* is used in a few other places that have no direct bearing on our subject.

Some have contended that since the Spirit overshadowed Mary, that such made the Spirit the “Father” of Jesus. If so, some questions are in order.

- 1) Did not the Father send the Spirit upon the apostles, when it was not the Father Himself who came?
- 2) Why is the Spirit who was sent by the Father, never called “the Father”? (John 14:26).
- 3) Was not the Spirit doing the Father’s will in both instances?
- 4) Why is it said that we are born of God, when actually we are begotten by the Spirit’s word? (John 1:12, 13; 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:23).

Gabriel said Jesus would be called **“the Son of the highest”** (being the Father), or He would be **“the Son of God.”** We are children of God (or the “Highest,” being the Father).

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the highest: for he is kind unto

the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:35, 36).

Do we have two heavenly Fathers—Jehovah God and the Holy Spirit? No! Did Jesus have two Fathers—the Spirit, and the One He addresses as Father when referring to the fact that that Father would send the Spirit (another Father)? No! When we address **“Our Father which art in heaven,”** we are not addressing the Holy Spirit or the Son of God, for we pray in the “name” of Jesus, according to the instructions of the Spirit in the scripture. Are we (being children of the Highest) children of the Holy Spirit because we are begotten by the Spirit’s word, the gospel. No!

The following two quotes from Foy E. Wallace Jr. should be considered.

In John 3:16 the word is used to express the special act of creation necessary to send ‘his only begotten Son’ into the world through the virgin Mary (231).

The God of Adam could create the condition in Mary to thus produce ‘his only begotten Son.’ In the process of that word Genomai from which begotten is derived—it means bring into being, and it was this ‘power of the Highest’ that brought ‘his only begotten Son’ into being in the body of the virgin Mary (231).

Jesus was fleshly as the Son of God, and we are born spiritually as children of God. **“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”** (John 3:7). Jesus was begotten through the Spirit’s overwhelming Mary and enabling One to be born physically, while we are begotten by the Spirit’s word, or the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:23). This is in our conversion, as we become Sons of God. Though we be brethren with Jesus (Heb. 2:10, 12), we are not children of God in the same sense in which Jesus was the Son of God. He was not converted by the gospel to become God’s Son, and neither are we born to Mary or any other woman by the overshadowing of the Spirit to bring about a physical birth. Note the following chart that contrasts the conception and birth of Jesus with our spiritual birth.

GOD	GOD
SPIRIT—Luke 1:35 (Seed)	SPIRIT—1 Pet. 1:23 (Word)
WOMB—Luke 1:31	HEART—Luke 8:10-12
The Son of God. Luke 1:35 “only begotten” (John 1:14,18;3:16,18; 1 John 4:9)	Sons of God. 1 John 3:2 “begotten” (1 Cor. 4:15; Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3, 23; 1 John 5:1)

Remember, BB admits that Jesus was the literal Son of God by means of His physical birth. Yet, he says we cannot apply the word *only* to Jesus and not to us also, for we are all children of God. Yes, we (who obey the gospel) are all children of God, but Jesus is the Son of God in a different way than we are children of God. BB further says, “But to say that Jesus was ‘the only begotten Son of God’ (as in the *KJV*,

NKJV, ASV, NASB) in John 3:18 is to contradict the verses that say all Christians are ‘begotten’ of God (1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18), and the verse that says Jesus had ‘**many brothers**’ (Romans 8:29)” (6). BB rejects the scholarship of the 148 who translated the *KJV* and *ASV* into English, as well as those who translated the *NKJ* and *NASB*. In describing those who translated those born again, John records that it is “**not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,**” while Jesus was made flesh in His incarnation. We are no more God’s children literally than Jesus is the Son of God figuratively.

To say Jesus was the “only begotten Son of God” is to describe the virgin birth. *Monogenes* admittedly is used to describe Isaac in Hebrews 11:17, as the “only begotten son” of Abraham. We need to remember that Isaac was the “only begotten son” of promise, as well as being “the only begotten son” of Abraham through Sarah at this time. Abraham later had other children, but they were not “children of promise” (Gal. 4:28-29). *Monogenes* is also used in Luke 7:12; 8:42, and 9:38, but in each instance it refers to the “only” child of the person identified. Jesus is the only One who is ever said to be the “only begotten” of the Father in heaven. Sure, Mary had other children, but none of them were begotten of God. They were begotten by Joseph.

As Roy H. Lanier Sr. stated, “Jesus became the Son of God by the incarnation in Luke 1:35.” (231) Remember, the angel said that the Holy Ghost would overshadow Mary, and that which would be born “**shall be called the Son of God**” (Luke 1:35). So, when He was born, He became the Son of God. Lanier continues, “So, ‘the holy thing’ cannot refer to Jesus in His pre-existence state as the Son of God; it simply says that the human side, the humanity, of Jesus is to be called the Son of God, or rather that Person born of Mary is to be called the Son of God” (231). Then Lanier continues in the same paragraph, “And being the ‘only begotten,’ he is the only one who ever was, or ever shall be born in the manner in which he was born. Jesus was ‘the only begotten Son of God’ in the manner, or in a sense, that no other human being ever was or ever can be” (231). So, Jesus was never “figuratively” begotten, either in heaven or on earth. He had no beginning in heaven, and it might be said that He was “unbegotten” while in that relationship. He was “physically” begotten through Mary, becoming the “only begotten” through Mary, becoming the “only begotten” of the Father.

We close with this quotation from J. J. Carroll, in an article in the *Gospel Journal*.

By whom was Jesus begotten? Was He begotten by God the Father through the Medium of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary? Yes. He certainly was (Luke 1:35)! Was Jesus the only Son begotten by God the Father in the womb of the virgin Mary? Yes. He was (Luke 1:35)! Did the Father ever beget anyone other than Jesus in the womb of Mary or any other woman? No. He did not! Therefore, Jesus was and is the “only begotten Son” of God (26).

To argue that Jesus was God’s “only Son” or “the one and only Son” of God, is to plainly contradict other passages that tell us God had other “sons,” for He does, even today (those who are begotten by the gospel). To say that He was “unique” does not tell the whole truth, for others in Biblical history have been unique in their particular mission from God. Truth is, Jesus is unique, but it is because of His birth—having been begotten by the Spirit, and born of a virgin. No one else in human history has this background. He is the “only begotten Son of God,” and this should not be forgotten.

Footnotes

1. Foy E. Wallace, Jr., as quoted by Roy Lanier, Sr. in *The Timeless Trinity*.
2. Roy H. Lanier, Sr., *The Timeless Trinity*, Lanier Pub., Denver, Co., 1974.
3. J. J. Carroll, “Is Jesus the Only Begotten Son of God,” *The Gospel Journal*, Cibolo, TX, 2003.
4. *Begotten and Unbegotten*, by Hugo McCord
5. W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dict.*, Nelson Pub., Nashville, TN. 1985.

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“ONE DRINK DRUNK?”

Brock Hartwigsen

There are many Bible believing people who see nothing wrong with social drinking. Many of them are honest. They just do not know that the word *wine* in Biblical times was used to refer to both alcoholic wine and nonalcoholic grape juice. They also do not know that in Biblical times the people knew how to preserve nonalcoholic grapes juice year round without it fermenting.

These two misunderstanding have caused a lot of false assumption about what the Bible teaches about social drinking. One of these assumptions is that the Bible condemns drunkenness and not moderate drinking.

In this article, I want to address a third misunderstanding that also causes some well-meaning brethren to think that Bible condemns drunkenness and not moderate drinking. This misunderstanding is how they define the word *drunk*.

Most, if not all, of our modern-day dictionaries definitions for *drunk* conflicts with the actual meaning of the word. This should not be a surprise; after all it is not uncommon. A dictionary's primary purpose is to simply give a definition of the current cultural usage of a word.

In the case of the word *drunk* it appears to be that as a culture, we want to cloud the issue by making this word more politically correct. It was almost as if we, as a culture, want to change what the word means so we could ignore the truth. Our society has watered down the meaning of the word *drunk* to make it more palatable and we in the church have gone along with it. How one defines the word “drunk” will drastically affect how one understands scriptures where drunkenness is addressed.

Definition Of “Drunk”

What we want to define or determine about the word “drunk” can be stated in two questions. 1) “What does it mean to be drunk?” 2) “When is a person drunk?”

The definition for *drunk* in my *Webster's Abridged Dictionary* is “having the facilities impaired by alcohol.” This is the common understanding, but it only answers the first question. There is still the second question. At what point is a person's facilities impaired enough by alcohol so as to be considered drunk? Does the person have to pass out, or be stumbling about, or be slurring his speech before his facilities are sufficiently impaired before he can be considered drunk?

Simply defining drunk as having one's facilities impaired is not a complete definition. It is a comfortable way to avoid the whole truth. Here is the first example of clouding, watering down or making something politically correct. It

is the politically correct way to say, “Define drunk anyway you want to. Who are we to judge when a person is drunk?”

The *Webster's New International Dictionary's (WNID)* definition of *drunk* uses a term that my abridged dictionary didn't use. It defines *drunk* as, “Intoxicated with or as with strong drink; under the influence of an intoxicant, esp. an alcoholic liquor ...” To fully understand this definition we need to understand the word *intoxicate*. The *WNID* defines *intoxicate* as “1. To poison. Obs. 2. To make drunk.” The first definition, “To poison” is identified as obsolete, defined as “no longer in use; disused; neglected.” By identifying “to poison” as an obsolete definition the dictionary is, for all intent and purposes, telling us to ignore it because that is not how the word is used today. This leaves us with the second definition, “To make drunk.” The second definition makes the definition of “drunk” a never ending circle, like a dog chasing its own tail. Around and around we go never getting anywhere. *Drunk* means to be *intoxicated* and *intoxicated* means to be “drunk” and on and on and on. The dictionary is not defining either word. All it is doing is identifying both words as synonyms of each other.

Here is the second example of clouding, watering down or making something politically correct. It appears that the word *intoxicate* is defined consciously or unconsciously as a screen to hide the truth concerning drunkenness.

The prefix “in” of the word *intoxicate* is a Latin preposition which means in, i.e., within, into, inside, etc. *Toxic* comes from the Latin word for poison. So when the word *intoxicate* or any form of it is used in reference to the consumption of alcoholic, it means the introduction of a poison into one's body. This of course is the obsolete definition according to *WIND*.

The dictionary might call it obsolete, no longer applicable in our modern day usage, but that does not change the fact that it is an accurate definition. In fact this definition is not obsolete. It is still used as a legal term in many states. Drivers who drive drunk are charged with “driving while intoxicated” (DWI). The first definition, “to poison,” is an inconvenient definition for anyone who wants to consume alcoholic beverages.

The first definition, “to poison,” is an excellent definition because alcohol is a poison and with the very first sip of an alcoholic beverage a person is putting poison into their bodies. They are intoxicating their bodies. Ethyl alcohol is the major component of alcohol in producing intoxication. The federal government classifies ethyl alcohol as a drug. Dr. Frank Overton refers to it as a “narcotic drug.” This

narcotic drug impairs the higher reasoning functions of our brains, the cortical functions, which are responsible for planning, judgment, cognition, calculation, attention, vigilance, sequencing, and memory.

It is the main drug effect of this most active element in alcohol which leads people to drink alcoholic beverages. Most drinkers drink because it relaxes them. In other words, it makes them feel different. This relaxation or different feeling that they expressed a liking for is the impairment of their cortical functions.

The impairment of these mental functions makes a Christian more apt to not see temptation for what it is and thus more apt to give into it. When a Christian impairs these functions, they are like the Israelites in the days of Gideon who laid down their weapons and lapped the water like a dog. Putting down their weapons and bending down to lap the water impaired their ability to stay alert and be prepared. God told Gideon to send such men home because they were not fit to serve Him (Jud. 7:5-6). Is a Christian really fit to serve God when he has impaired his cortical functions, which are responsible for planning, judgment, cognition, calculation, attention, vigilance, sequencing, and memory?

A person becomes intoxicated/drunken well before there are any perceivable effects, i.e., slurring of speech, stumbling of gait or passing out. Dr. Rolla N. Harger states, "Within two or three minutes after a few sips of whisky or beer are swallowed, alcohol can be detected in the blood." According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, some impairments of judgment and self-control begin with concentrations of alcohol below those which will cause muscular incoordination.

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* goes on and says that, "The higher nerve functions of the forebrain, such as reasoning, judgment, and social restraint are impaired by very low concentrations of alcohol in the blood."

So Called "Stages Of Drunkenness"

Dr. Donald L. Gerard states,

There is a general sequence of events which commonly oc-

curs when a sober person begins to drink alcoholic beverages. These events are expressions of the degree to which a person has lost control over his speech, emotional expression, and motor behavior.

Irving Fisher stated, "So-called moderate drinking merely means moderate intoxication. A mild drinker denies that he is drunk, if he does not stagger, but a man who has drunk one glass of beer is one-glass-of-beer drunk."

Drunkenness is not a process. It is a result. A person does not get drunk after he has too many drinks. A person gets drunk as the result of his first drink, "one-drink-drunken." A person cannot be a little drunk or partially drunk. Either he has alcohol in his brain that is affecting his higher reasoning abilities and or he has no alcohol in his brain.

When the male sperm unites with the female egg the woman is pregnant, not a little pregnant or partially pregnant, but pregnant. When a person takes ethyl alcohol into his body, he is intoxicated/drunken, not a little drunk or partially drunk, but drunk.

Someone reading this article might be thinking that "one-drink-drunken" is my opinion and that the only ones who would agree with me are other anti-drinking bigots and/or narrow-minded religious conservatives who want to ban something simply because we were taught that it is wrong. They couldn't be further from the truth. The Federal Aviation Authority (FAA), which is not an association of anti-drinking bigots and/or narrow-minded religious conservatives, also believes in "one-drink-drunken."

The FAA standard for pilots is that any alcohol content in a pilot's blood makes the pilot too drunk to fly a plane. Why, because they know from tests and experience that any measurable content of alcohol, no matter how small, in a pilot's blood will mean that there is enough alcohol in his brain to impair his cortical functions which are responsible for planning, judgment, cognition, calculation, attention, vigilance, sequencing, and memory. In other words, by their standards he is too drunk to fly, "one-drink-drunken."

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AGENCY AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Gary W. Summers

Most brethren understand the concept of agency until it involves certain subjects, and then they seem eager to discard it. The purpose of this article is to establish the Biblical concept of agency. Once understood, it should be easy to understand and identify when studying the Scriptures.

The Temptation

One does not need to read very far into the Scriptures to find a credible example of agency. How was Adam tempted? We could rightly state it this way: Adam was tempted to sin by means of Satan using the serpent to approach Eve (through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life), who then gave the forbidden fruit to him. Obviously, several served as agents to tempt Adam to sin.

We know of the involvement of Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning and did not abide in the truth (John 8:44). Upon Satan God pronounced judgment—to put hatred between Eve’s seed (the seed of woman, Jesus) and Satan’s seed. Those who follow God and those who follow Satan have always been at odds. Genesis 3:15, most Bible students agree, describes the conflict of Jesus at the cross. Satan succeeds in getting Him crucified and this wins a battle against Jesus (bruises His heel), but Satan is utterly defeated (his head is bruised) when Jesus arises from the dead, thus establishing His Deity plainly once and for all.

The serpent is punished for allowing himself to be used by Satan (Gen. 3:14), and the woman also is punished for her role in the sin because she not only disobeyed herself, but also encouraged her husband to sin. Thus, Satan began the deception, using the serpent as his agent. The serpent beguiled Eve via the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). Adam still could have resisted but did not.

Who Killed Uriah the Hittite?

God spoke through Nathan the prophet (which itself is an example of agency). Nathan told David: **“You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon”** (2 Sam. 12: 9b). God (through Nathan) makes it clear that David killed Uriah—although he did not do so himself, personally. He did it through others (agents), but since he gave the order, he is fully responsible for the act of treachery.

Other agents are not mentioned in verse 9, but they are mentioned in the text. David used the agency of a note that he sent with Uriah the Hittite, which he was to give to Joab (2 Sam. 11:14). This letter to the commander read: **“Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battles, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die”** (vs. 15). Thus, this written communication became a means of bringing about Uriah’s death. Unaware of the contents, David’s loyal soldier delivered the note to Joab, who followed its instructions.

The command of a king is almost always obeyed although exceptions do exist. For example, when Saul ordered his guards to kill the priests of Nob, they would not carry out the order (1

Sam. 22:17). He found a non-Israelite to execute the atrocity. Likewise, Joab could have disobeyed what David had authorized. Or he could have written back, questioning the order. While he might have and should have balked at the notion of putting brave warriors in harm’s way, he did what the king commanded. In fact, it was not only Uriah who suffered death, other brave men also died as a result of the action taken. **“Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And some of the people of the servants of David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also”** (2 Sam. 11:17).

There were, therefore, several agents in the death of this innocent man. David’s will was carried out by means of a note sent to Joab, who chose to follow the instructions, and killed Uriah by means of the Ammonites. Although this event marks a low point in David’s reign, it does serve as an example of the way in which agency works.

Who Killed Jesus?

Occasionally, one finds an ongoing feud in which one party insists that the Jews crucified Jesus while their adversaries argue that the Romans put him to death. The argument avails nothing and is a waste of time. Both the Jews and the Romans killed Jesus; the factor that some overlook is that of agency. In case anyone could possibly miss the facts of the matter as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Peter makes it clear in Acts 3:13-15:

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

Notice the facts in the above paragraph.

1. The Jews to whom Peter was preaching delivered up Jesus to Pilate.
2. The Jews denied Jesus.
3. The Jews clamored for Jesus’ death when Pilate was determined to release Him.
4. They had an opportunity to have Jesus released, but they asked for a murderer (Barabbas) to be released to them instead.
5. They killed the Prince of life.

All that the gospel writers recorded on these matters substantiates what Peter preached in the quotation cited above. They killed Jesus. Did they do it personally? They probably would have if they could have, but they accomplished their goal in the same way David did—through agency.

Of course, the Roman soldiers scourged Jesus (at Pilate’s order); they nailed him to the cross; they furthermore, to their shame, mocked Him. It was a Roman soldier who cast a spear into Jesus’s side to make certain He was dead. Pilate, as governor, had power over the proceedings, and the Roman soldiers carried out the execution. But none of those things would have occurred if the Jews had not brought Jesus to be put to death and shouted, **“Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”** The Jews killed Jesus with the Romans as

agents.

The Holy Spirit

Most everyone understands agency as it is used throughout the Scriptures, but for some reason, when it comes to the way in which the Holy Spirit works, some want to eliminate or minimize the possibility of agency. Certain observations on this topic are in order.

First, the Holy Spirit once operated directly upon human beings for various purposes. The Holy Spirit has operated directly upon man in the case of inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). As Jesus was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem, He told His apostles that they would be brought before kings and rulers for His name's sake and that it would give them an opportunity to bear testimony of Him (Luke 21:12-13). Then He added: **"Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist"** (Luke 21:14-15).

The New Testament also mentions other direct means of the Holy Spirit influencing someone. On the Day of Pentecost, when divided tongues as of fire sat upon the apostles, **"they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance"** (Acts 2:4). Later, to the Corinthians, Paul enumerates nine spiritual gifts—all of which involve the power or direct influence of the Holy Spirit upon certain individuals (1 Cor. 12:8-10).

Those that involve inspiration are:

1. The word of wisdom.
2. The word of knowledge.
3. Prophecy.
4. Speaking in tongues.

Those that involve the Holy Spirit's power are:

1. Faith to accomplish miraculous things.
2. Gifts of healing.
3. The working of miracles.

Sometimes a supernatural ability is given:

1. The discerning of spirits.
2. The interpretation of tongues.
3. Helps.
4. Administrations.

These last two are listed later in 1 Corinthians 12:28. However, none of these miraculous gifts has continued to the present day. We speak the Word of God because we study it, and if we can discern properly, the reason is that we have practiced doing so.

Paul made it clear in 1 Corinthians 13 that these direct influences of the Holy Spirit were going to be done away (8-10). Therefore, Christians do not speak as though they are inspired directly by God. The Word that was revealed in the New Testament is what was inspired—not us. When God had given man all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), inspiration and the gifts that confirmed them ceased. When the faith had been once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3), Christians no longer needed the gifts that revealed it, nor the signs that gave the message validity.

Is the Holy Spirit Idle?

Many brethren seem to be at odds with themselves. On the

one hand, they do not want to advocate modern-day spiritual gifts, yet they seem to want to move as far in that direction as they can without actually coming out and clearly saying so. Usually, they advocate a position which shows the Holy Spirit working, but they overlook or minimize agency. Some will acknowledge that the Spirit operates through the Word, but then they want to affirm that He works directly on the non-Christian and the Christian—but in conjunction with the Word. No one has proven that. All that brethren of this stripe have shown is that the Holy Spirit works through the Word (which we all believe) and that He works through providence (which we all also believe). Proving those two points by citing the Scriptures does not, however, establish their overall point—that the Spirit is working directly on individuals today.

As to the argument of these brethren that the Holy Spirit is idle today if He is not working directly, such is a non sequitur. If we agree that He can work providentially, then that eliminates the "idleness" charge. Jesus came to earth and lived as a human being. He taught, worked miracles, and eventually was crucified. After He was raised from the dead, He ascended into heaven and has sat down on the right hand of God. Have these same brethren accused Him of being idle? No, and neither have the rest of us. He is the head of the church, and He is our Mediator. None of us knows how busy He is, but He is not necessarily idle just because He is no longer upon the earth, interacting with men. Likewise, the Holy Spirit is not necessarily idle just because He is not inspiring more Scriptures or supplying power to do more miracles. Jesus and the Spirit are idle from some of the things They once did, but that does not make Them idle, period.

What the Agency of the Word Accomplishes

In time past, then, the Spirit inspired the Word to be written, **"which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets"** (Eph. 3:5). The Spirit also provided power for the miracles. Paul spoke of the **"mighty signs and wonders"** which were accomplished **"by the power of the Spirit of God"** (Rom. 15:19). But since these two duties of the Holy Spirit have been accomplished and fulfilled, is nothing being accomplished?

The Spirit used these two techniques: 1) to communicate words; and 2) to provide convincing proof of the message. The Spirit still wields great power through that Word that He revealed. As part of the Christian armor, Paul told brethren in Ephesus to take **"the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God"** (Eph. 6:17). The Holy Spirit accomplishes much work through His Word.

How are people saved from their sins? It is through the gospel inspired by the Holy Spirit. As Peter is recounting his meeting with Cornelius, he mentions that Cornelius said he was to send to Joppa for Simon Peter, **"Who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved"** (Acts 11:14). WORDS! One must be taught the gospel in words he can understand. Does the Holy Spirit convert them? Yes—in the sense that He inspired the message. The one who does the preaching or teaching is an agent of salvation. The words themselves are the agent of the Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that **"it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe"** (1 Cor. 1:21b). Thus, whatever role the Holy Spirit has in conversion, it is not direct; it is through the agency of the Word. Add to these passages the fact that Jesus said, **"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the**

truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32). The Holy Spirit uses words, the message preached, the truth in order to save people from their sins. Why, then, would someone try to make a case for the Holy Spirit working independently of these means?

Is it possible, as some denominations teach, that the Holy Spirit must first make the heart receptive (through some sort of direct operation upon it) in order for a person to have faith? Paul objects: “**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God**” (Rom. 10:17). Notice faith is not said to come by a miraculous and irresistible imposition of the Spirit upon the heart.

“But what about being born again?” Someone might wonder. Did not Jesus say that a person had to be “born of the Spirit”? “Does not that mean that the Spirit must perform a direct operation on the heart?” Even on this matter the agency of the Word is set forth. Consider 1 Peter 1:22-25:

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, *because all flesh is as grass.... But the word of the Lord endures forever.* (Bold italics for emphasis, mine GWS)
Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

The truth is obeyed through the Spirit, since the Spirit revealed the Word. The Word is the incorruptible seed which is what is preached (since it is the gospel) and responded to. The Holy Spirit does not act apart from His Word in salvation but through His eternal Word.

—5410 Lake Howell Road
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HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICT TODAY?” (A REVIEW, PART 2)

Gary W. Summers

[Part one appeared in the 2014 September/October issue of CFTF.—Editor]

The basic issue under discussion is, “Does the Holy Spirit work directly in the 21st century, or does He only work indirectly through His Word and through providence?” Jonathan Jones of Maryville, Tennessee, at the 2014 Freed-Hardeman University lectures, affirmed that there is a third way that the Spirit works. Although he believes that the Holy Spirit operates through the Word, he also stated: “There is a dynamic, spiritual force at work behind the words that works through the Word to ‘pierce between soul and spirit’ and convict our hearts.” As we asked in the previous article: “What is the Holy Spirit doing behind the Word that does not involve the use of the Word?”

Although we could all agree that the Holy Spirit “works through the Word,” Jones is trying to get to something more than that. He asks the question: “Could the Holy Spirit work apart from the Word in a way that is more direct?” In his effort to answer this question he takes the long way around the barn; thus, we will follow his circuitous route.

Calvinism Answers Yes

“Many in the evangelical Christian world are quick to answer the question in the affirmative,” says Jones, and he is correct in this assessment, as well as his description of Calvinistic theology. He rightly denies that the Bible teaches that atonement is only offered to a few and that Holy Spirit conviction is irresistible. Citing Acts 7:51, he emphasizes that the teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit is not irresistible—which is also true.

The next three words of the speech, however, indicate a switch in direction—“Having said that....” If the reader did not have another clue, what do these words indicate—if not that he is going to try to lift a tenet out of Calvinism and attempt to justify it, while rejecting the major body of doctrine called Calvinism?

Having said that, in many ways the *Stone-Campbell Movement*

has been a theological resistance movement—especially when it comes to Calvinism.

First of all, many brethren, including this author, are offended by attempts to pigeonhole today’s (or previous) Christians as part of the *Stone-Campbell Movement*. Does anyone call the Reformation the Luther-Calvin Movement? This is the language of those with liberal leanings. In fact, it was Leroy Garrett who wrote *The Stone-Campbell Movement* in 1981. Many of us objected to the designation then, and we have not changed since, although apparently some have.

Most of us do not, and never have, believed many of the things that either Stone or Campbell believed, but they were correct in their efforts to want to do away with denominational terminology, along with denominational doctrines and traditions. It is the principle of trying to restore New Testament Christianity that we still champion, and we follow that principle—not the men who advocated it. They were mere human beings and fallible, like the rest of us. Their goal, and ours, is to determine what the Bible teaches, which is the reason that we are not postmillennialists, as Campbell was, nor do we reject the Deity of Christ, as Stone did.

The main thing we received from Stone, Campbell, and several other men like them, was the idea that we restore New Testament Christianity as God gave it and as it is presented in the New Testament. This idea is a Biblical one, and we see restorations in the time of Hezekiah and the days of Josiah. They restored the kingdom which had introduced idolatry and practices that God had not authorized. They destroyed images and made an effort to go back to the teachings of the Law of Moses. Those in the Reformation and Restoration eras also attempted to clear out the denominational clutter and return to New Testament doctrine.

In the course of the lecture, Jones quoted from Jack Cottrell,

whom he identifies as a member of the Independent Christian Church but further describes as “a part of the Restoration Movement.” Many of us do not consider such individuals as part of the Restoration Movement. They long ago gave up that ideology when they adopted the use of instrumental music. As brethren are fond of saying, “You cannot restore what was never there in the first place.” They know full well that the use of musical accompaniment is not found in the New Testament and that history confirms the absence of instrumental music for centuries after the establishment of the church, but they are determined to use it anyway. Thus they have sold their birthright for a mess of instrumental pottage and cannot seriously be listed as those who are trying to “restore” New Testament Christianity.

A Theological Resistance Movement

What kind of verbiage is this? When Josiah called the Israelites back to the Law of Moses, could it have been termed “a theological resistance movement to idolatry”? After the captivity, did Ezra lead “a theological resistance movement” against unauthorized divorce and remarriage? Are we not always supposed to resist sin and error in all its various forms? But consider the quote from Cottrell:

As Restoration leaders battled Calvinism, the only kind of direct work of the Holy Spirit that they could envision was Calvinism’s irresistible grace. The result was the development of a reactionary theology that has happened among us where any possibility of the Holy Spirit working on the heart of a human being is rejected wholesale as Calvinistic doctrine (218).

Is not Cottrell (and therefore Jones) saying that the Holy Spirit works directly on the heart, although not in a Calvinistic way? Is the point not that we overreacted to Calvinism and thus eliminated all possibilities that the Holy Spirit would work directly on the human heart in some other way? Surely, we might consider that possibility, but what would be the purpose of the Holy Spirit operating directly on the heart? And if the Holy Spirit chose to operate directly on some human hearts and not others, would that not make Him a respecter of persons—especially prior to conversion?

Next was a quote from Jimmy Jividen’s book, *Alive in the Spirit*, published by the *Gospel Advocate* (1990):

Some people reacted to this direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion and went to the other extreme, denying that the Holy Spirit had any work in the world at all. . . . In some writings of that time the reader would think the Holy Spirit should be put in a box and shipped back to the first century where He belonged. In other writings of the time, you would think that the Holy Spirit was imprisoned in the Bible and forbidden to have free course in the world (113).

The context of Jividen’s statement is uncertain. He may have simply been arguing for the Spirit to work providentially. But if not, this kind of argumentation is the same used by Pentecostals when brethren show from the Scriptures that spiritual gifts were only temporary and are no longer in existence (1 Cor. 13). They taunt, “Oh, you don’t believe that the Holy Spirit has anything to do today.” This is bad reasoning. Just because the Holy Spirit had changed His technique or His methods does not mean that He retired. Likewise, just because Jesus is no longer walking upon the earth, teaching and performing miracles, does not mean He has been shipped back to the first century, either. He is still Head over the church, His body, and greatly concerned about what is happening in it.

Regardless of the relevance of Jividen’s quote, Jones continues with another one by Cottrell—this one from his book, *Power from on High: What the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit*, page 200:

The problem with Calvinism is not a direct operation of the Holy

Spirit as such, but a specific kind of direct operation (emph. his), one that is the spawn of total depravity. . . . Calvinism’s brand of direct operation of the Holy Spirit that is selective and irresistible and proceeds [sic, it should be precedes, GWS] faith and repentance must be rejected.

Again, the question must be asked: “Of what does the non-Calvinistic brand of direct operation of the Spirit consist?” Whatever Cottrell means, Jones, after the quotation, said, “I agree with that.” He added that although we must reject Calvinism, “that does not necessarily require a wholesale abandonment of the concept of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit entirely.” Again we ask, “What is the Holy Spirit doing directly and non-Calvinistically?”

2 Timothy 3:5

Perhaps not surprisingly, Jones does two things that Mac Deaver did at this point. He says: 1) that different views on this topic should not be a matter of fellowship; and 2) If you don’t agree with his position, you are probably a deist.

It is my judgment—and you can have your own judgment (and we can extend grace and love to-ward one another)—it is my judgment that when we reject the possibility of any direct action of God in our lives today, we get dangerously close to a deistic view of God that leaves us in a place where we view God as being far removed from our world and has left us with nothing but the Bible. To deny an eminent presence of God’s work in our world today leaves us spiritually like a valley of dry bones. Scripture warns us against this tendency that would happen in the later days.

He then cited 2 Timothy 3:5 and applied it to those who would disagree with him. They are those who have a form of godliness but deny its power. He omitted the last part of the verse which says, “**And from such turn away,**” which certainly indicates that if what he is saying is true, it is most definitely a matter of fellowship, and he should not be fellowshiping anyone who disagrees with him!

It is not valid to apply 2 Timothy 3:5 in the way he did. First of all, Pentecostals would throw the same passage back at him because he does not speak in tongues. Second, denying a direct operation of the Holy Spirit is not the context of 2 Timothy 3. It would be rather silly, in a day when the Spirit was actually working directly with the miraculous gifts, to deny that the Holy Spirit worked directly. Paul is describing those who professed Christianity but did not live it. They had a form of godliness but denied the power of a godly life.

The late Winford Claiborne has spoken a number of years on the Freed-Hardeman lectureship program. He was assigned this passage for the Annual Denton Lectures on 1-2 Timothy and Titus. He wrote:

During the last days—that is, during the entire Christian era—there will be many who will have a “form of godliness,” but who deny “the power thereof; from such turn away.” The men and women Paul described in these verses may pretend to be devoted to the church of our Lord, but in reality they have only a “form of godliness.” They either do not understand the meaning of true Christianity, or they prefer to determine on their own what they will do in the work and the worship of the church. They may not deny with their mouths the Lord Jesus Christ, but they deny Him by their actions. Paul demanded that faithful saints turn away from such people. We cannot fellowship those who are unfaithful to the gospel (296).

Jonathan Jones, the speaker in the lecture under review, is also an adjunct professor in what once was called the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions. For their 12th lectureship, that school did *Studies in Timothy and Titus*. William Woodson, who also spoke on the Freed-Hardeman lectures for several years, wrote the

following on 2 Timothy 3:5:

(19) There was for them an outward show, form, semblance of having a genuine sense of submission to God, but the power and impact of genuine devotion (emph. GWS) they did not know and in fact refused to acknowledge (vs. 5).

Paul's impressive command, expressed in the middle imperative, instructed Timothy and those Timothy could influence with true [sic, it should be truth] to turn away from such teachers, to avoid, to shun these unsavory pretenders and to continue to do so (vs. 5) (207).

Clearly, Jones does not apply the verse correctly.

Deism

Jones believes that the Holy Spirit operates on the non-Christian and the Christian directly in a non-Calvinistic way. Christians who do not agree are denying the power of God. That interpretation is erroneous, but if it were correct, how could the speaker fellowship those of us who disagree? Furthermore, he accused us of being dangerously close to a Deistic view. But why would that be? We believe that the Holy Spirit still works through His providence, that Christ is the involved Head of His church, and that the Father will answer our prayers. These are not the beliefs of Deists. The speaker is just trying to coerce the audience to accept his position.

Jim Cymbala

Jones quotes from Jim Cymbala, and one wonders why. Most brethren have never heard of him, but he "pastors" the Brooklyn Chapel, a megachurch of about 16,000 people. From his own Website come the beliefs of this group. Concerning the Holy Spirit and His indwelling, they say:

We believe the Holy Spirit is the Promise of the Father, the Comforter who indwells and places every believer in the Body of Christ, bestows spiritual gifts upon the Church and convicts the world of sin and the judgment to come.

While all believers are indwelt by the Spirit of God (Romans 8), we believe the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a definite endowment of power for service and is separate from conversion.

So, Cymbala is a charismatic who believes in the baptism of the Holy Spirit today, along with all the spiritual gifts. And we should listen to his views—why? Nevertheless, he is quoted:

If I were Satan and my ultimate goal was to thwart God's kingdom and purposes, one of my main strategies would be to get church goes to ignore the Holy Spirit...but when believers live in the power of the Spirit, the evidence in their lives is supernatural.

Jones, then emphatically announced: "I agree with that statement." What does it mean? Since Cymbala is a charismatic, we might assume that he is referring to a Christian possessing a spiritual gift. What else would he mean by living "in the power of the Spirit"? If Christians were to say such a thing, we would probably infer that such a brother had studied diligently and was living by the Word that was inspired of the Holy Spirit, but Cymbala surely does not mean that.

But which of us would say that the evidence of God in our lives is supernatural? Would this assertion not lead us to conclude that God is doing something to us, directly, and therefore whatever He has done would serve as a subjective evidence of His existence? Where is Jones going with this idea?

Does the Holy Spirit Work Directly on the Christian

Previously in this review of Jonathan Jones' lecture at the 2014 Freed-Hardeman University Lectureship we have refuted the idea that the Holy Spirit works directly upon the sinner. But brother Jones

also advocated that the Holy Spirit works directly upon the Christian as well, a position held by Mac Deaver, also.

What makes Jones' errors so difficult to discern is that he surrounds them with snippets of truth. He spends a considerable amount of time arguing what Christians already believe—that the Holy Spirit works providentially. Yes, the Spirit can use situations and circumstances to provide opportunities for the non-Christian to draw closer to God and make the decision to obey the gospel. He can also arrange opportunities for the Christian to re-evaluate his life and repent of various sins he has been committing.

But neither of these does the Holy Spirit do directly. As Jones comes to the subtopic of the Spirit's work in regeneration, he makes the following statement (from his on-line notes):

Once a person is convicted of the Holy Spirit and instructed with the Word and has arrived at belief and repentance...the Holy Spirit subsequently moves the human heart to submit to his [sic] direct work of regeneration within the heart of a person.

What do these words mean? One is instructed by the Word, which is capable of bringing one to faith and repentance, but then the Holy Spirit must take over and perform a direct work of regeneration. The Holy Spirit, after one comes to a level of understanding through being taught the Word, must then move the human heart to submit. Jones takes issue with Calvinism but fails to see that the Spirit moving the heart to submit to the gospel is Arminianism (Calvinism's poor cousin).

The difference between these two isms is that Calvinism teaches that God does everything—without any compliance on the part of man. God selects the person He wants saved and operates directly on his heart so that he can receive the Word and obey. Arminianism teaches that man must be taught by the Word of God, but he still must have a direct operation of the Spirit in addition to being taught the Word. Sometimes the way this arrangement is phrased is that the Spirit is working in conjunction with the Word. Jones seems to be in favor of the Arminian view. Since he holds a Master of Divinity, is it possible that he does not know he is articulating the doctrine of Arminius?

Conversion

Apparently, the Holy Spirit must perform some sort of direct operation in the heart of a sinner between the time he repents and the time he is baptized because Jones continues in his notes: "In the event of baptism, the Holy Spirit is poured into the heart to regenerate and spiritually renew the believer (Acts 2:38; 5:32; 1 Cor. 12:13)."

The reader may be familiar with these verses; if so, he knows that they do not substantiate the claim. Acts 2:38 has Peter declaring what the Jews on Pentecost needed to do in order to be forgiven of sins: repent and be baptized. Nothing is said about the Holy Spirit being poured into their hearts to regenerate them. Peter does promise them, after they are baptized, the gift of the Holy Spirit, which some think is a miraculous gift while others would argue that it is another way of referring to salvation. Even those who believe the gift is the literal Holy Spirit, however, would disagree with Jones' strange claim here.

Acts 5:32 does not say a word about the Holy Spirit being poured into the heart to regenerate a sinner. It simply records that God has given the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him. Citing 1 Corinthians 12:13 is a huge blunder to try to establish his case; Jones disagrees with most faithful brethren in doing so. Paul wrote: "**For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews**

or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” The baptism the apostle refers to is baptism in water, which all must submit to in order to have their sins cleansed and to become Christians. It is by the teaching of the Holy Spirit that we come to that knowledge. It is through the agency of the Spirit (His teaching, to be precise) that we are baptized into the one body, the one church (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). Nothing is said about the Spirit being poured into the heart to regenerate it.

Hendiadys

Next Jones cites Titus 3:5-7. Paul does teach that we are not saved by works of righteousness (baptism, however, is the working of God—Col. 2:12). He writes that God saves us **“through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”** Jones thinks that these descriptions are referring to two different actions, but these are two expressions for the same thing, which constitutes the figure of speech called hendiadys. Not only did the inspired writers use this figure of speech; so do we. The word *hendiadys* literally means “one through two.” We use expressions such as “big and fat” or “sick and tired.” The two expressions may not be identical, but they are closely related.

We undergo the renewing of the Spirit when we undergo the washing of regeneration. Baptism is the way the Holy Spirit renews us. Another example might make it clearer. Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 2:13: **“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”**

Are these two totally different concepts? Is sanctification of the Spirit something that the Holy Spirit does personally and directly? Is it entirely different from belief in the truth? No, the two concepts are related, and John 17:17 shows that connection clearly: **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth.”** People are not sanctified because the Holy Spirit operates directly on the human heart. We are sanctified by learning, believing, and obeying the truth. These two thoughts then are expressed, but the one operates through the other. It does not mean that the two descriptions are isolated and separate in meaning.

An even simpler example is found in Ephesians 1:1b, as part of Paul’s greeting: **“To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus.”** Are the saints and the faithful two different groups of individuals? Likewise, Paul writes: **“To the saints and faithful brethren who are in Colosse”** (Col. 1:2a). Two expressions are often used to describe one basic idea.

The “Pouring Out”

The one passage that mentions the “pouring out” concept is Titus 3:6, but nothing is said about the heart. After referring to the **“renewing of the Holy Spirit,”** Paul added, **“whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”** One might make a case for Paul referring here to the Day of Pentecost, where Peter quotes Joel as saying, **“I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh”** (Acts 2:17b) and, **“I will pour out My Spirit in those days”** (Acts 2:18b). But even if one disagrees with that view, Jones has not proved his own contention at all.

Jones claims the Spirit’s direct impact upon our hearts (in conversion) is a “spiritual heart transplant.” And he cites Ezekiel 36:26-27! **“And I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep my judgments and do**

them.”

This passage is not a prophecy of the individual Christian; it is a prophecy of the nation of Israel. A quick perusal of verse 25 and verses 28-29 will demonstrate that fact. In the *LXX*, the pronouns translated “you” are in the plural. *The Pulpit Commentary* applies the passage to Israel and even says specifically that verses 28-31 “describe the results which should follow in Israel’s experience when God should have thus gathered, cleansed, and renewed them” (12:2:241). Several other commentaries could be cited to show that most scholars understand this passage in Ezekiel to be describing the restoration of Israel—not what God is going to do to the obedient in the New Testament in the conversion or sanctification process.

Moral Power

Jones asserted that the Holy Spirit gives the Christian direct, Divine help. He said: “Rather, the Spirit works to provide ‘moral power’ to assist the Christian in resisting temptation and living a holy life. The Spirit’s work is one of sanctification in our lives. Listen to Ephesians 3:16.”

Mac Deaver, in his debate with Jerry Moffitt, said essentially the same thing—that the Holy Spirit provided extra help for the Christian to overcome sin, but no one could get him to tell us how much more help the Christian received? Does the child of God get twice as much help in resisting evil? Or perhaps it is only 75% more—or 50% more. Could it be as low as only 10% more help? Of course, such questions are absurd—because the doctrine of extra help is absurd. Asking such questions serves to heighten the absurdity. The reader should also see that Jones has advanced a hypothesis which he can in no way prove—only allege.

In Ephesians 3:16 (the same verse cited by Mac Deaver when he attempted to prove the theory), Paul desires that God would grant brethren **“to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.”** Does this mean that God is going to reach into the human heart and crank up the moral courage button? No. We know the means by which God will accomplish this goal—and that is through His Word. Who is not familiar with the oft-quoted verse from Psalm 119:11: **“Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You”** (vs. 11)? Internalizing the Scriptures in our minds will provide the power to resist sin and temptation.

Another problem for Jones is that, if the Spirit is providing moral power for Christians to overcome sin, then whose fault is it when the Christian falls prey to sin? Deaver always answered that the extra power does not override someone’s free will—which leads us back to the absurdity of asking, “Well, then, just how much “extra help” do we get?”

Romans 8:13

“For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom. 8:13).

Remember that this entire passage involves a contrast between walking according to the flesh and walking according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:1). Those who set their minds on the things of the flesh live according to the flesh, and those who set their minds on the things of the Spirit live according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:5). Verse 13 simply continues this line of thought. Nothing in the verse hints that the Spirit is providing special power, but Jones says: “Our own will-power alone will never be able to produce a sanctified holy life. Paul makes that clear. Listen to Romans 8:13.”

Apparently Jones is reading into the text something that he

wants there (eisegesis). Nothing is said there about extra power from the Holy Spirit being present to aid the Christian in putting to death the deeds of the flesh. But Jones continues: “Now think about this: You can load your dishwasher full of dishes, and you can shut the door, and you can start it. And that dishwasher can work just as hard as that little dishwasher works, but those dishes probably won’t get clean if you don’t put any soap in there.”

Really? But we already have a sin-fighting agent—the Word of God. Knowing and abiding by the Word of God is sufficient to let us **“be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season...”** (Psa. 1:3). Even under the old covenant, God’s followers had the ability to restrain their feet from every evil way (Psa. 119:101). God’s Word has always provided light (Psa. 119:130, cf. 105). Yet Jones says:

Romans 8:13 indicates there are two things at work—my own force of will but also the work of the Holy Spirit in me. If I, by the Spirit, put to death the deeds of the body, I will live. Sanctification does not occur through believing the truth alone. The Holy Spirit must do His sanctifying work within us.

In John 17:17, Jesus called upon the Father to sanctify the disciples through the truth. The Father may use the Holy Spirit to accomplish that, but the Holy Spirit uses the Word He inspired—the truth. Romans 8:13 does not teach that the Spirit must act independently of His Word. Jones is reading into the text what is not in it. He cites J. W. McGarvey (*Standard Commentary*) on Romans 8:13 to help bolster his interpretation:

The testimony of Christian experience is that the aid of the Holy Spirit, though real and effectual, is not so obtrusive as to enable the one aided to take sensible notice of it. To all appearances and sensation, the victory over the flesh, is entirely the Christian’s own, and he recognizes the aid of the Spirit—not because his burdens are sensibly lightened—but because of the fact that in his efforts to do right, he

now succeeds where lately he failed.

This statement may agree with Jones, but it is not necessarily true because McGarvey (though we have tremendous respect for him) said it. However, can Jones prove that these are McGarvey’s words? *The Commentary on Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans* (also known as the third volume of the *Standard Bible Commentary*), was written by McGarvey and Pendleton. Jones omitted mentioning the co-author both in his speech and in the notes he has made available. The date of publication which Jones cited is 1916, which was five years after McGarvey’s death. The introduction to the book is written only by Philip Y. Pendleton. If Pendleton edited the final version of the book, and it was published five years after McGarvey’s death, these comments may more reflect Pendleton’s thinking than McGarvey’s.

Conclusion

We are living in an age in which the religious world craves the personal, direct touch of the Holy Spirit, in what might be viewed as the desire to exalt Self. Most brethren have not been willing to venture into the realm of tongue-speaking and Holy Spirit baptism—but they are headed in that direction. They are trying to pry open the door that leads to Pentecostalism, but if they never enter that realm themselves, their followers will.

Even in the time of miracles, it was written that Christians had been begotten by the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15) and brought forth by the Word of truth (Jam. 1:18). Sinners were born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible—through the Word of God which lives and abides forever (1 Pet. 1:23). This is the means by which the Holy Spirit operates in conversion and in sanctification.

—5410 Lake Howell Road
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THE OLD PATHS PULPIT

Sermon Outline

Danny Douglas

WHAT WOULD GOD DO FOR ME?

(Romans 8:31-32)



INTRODUCTION:

A. One day when I was a boy about 40 years ago, living on North Main St., then Columbia Hwy, in Mt. Pleasant, TN, something came in the mail from someone calling himself: “Reverend Ike.” (It is unscriptural to call any mere human being “reverend,” or by any other Divine title, Psa. 111:9; Mat. 23:8-10.)

B. It had to do with a “prayer cloth.” If you sent Ike a donation you would receive a prayer cloth, connecting you with Ike and thereby bringing you prosperity.

1. Ike supplied pictures of people who had donated money to him. They had big cars and other material things.

(Ike was headquartered in NY, NY and died in 2009—his son succeeded him in the business of “conning” people, etc. Now, you can get this “prayer cloth” for your iPad, iPhone, etc. His false teaching was that God was within you and He would cause you to prosper materially.

2. However, when Ike died, from the Bible we learn, as did the Rich man, he too found out many things (Luke 16). He took not one dime of the millions he “conned” out of others with him (1 Tim. 6:7).

C. Ike said: “The lack of money is the root of all evil,” but God’s Word says: **“The love of money is the root of all evil...”** (1 Tim. 6:10).

D. The Lord takes care of His own: **“For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,”** Psa. 84:11; cf. Mat. 6:33; Phil. 4:19.

I. Our topic for study is: What would God do for me?

A. Is God only a God of material prosperity?

1. The wealth and prosperity preachers would have us to believe that this is what God is all about.

2. They would have a difficult time dealing with the poor beggar Lazarus found in Luke 16—**“And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores”** (Luke 16:20-21).

3. But when Lazarus died he was ushered into Paradise (Luke 16:22).

4. The love of God is too great to simply give us the temporary things of Life (Titus 1:2).

B. *Note the following illustration:* When we were children, what if our parents satisfied our cravings for toys, candy, and fun all the time.

1. This is not true love (Pro. 13:24).

2. More love, patience and discipline is required to train, correct, & discipline them (Heb. 12:5ff.).

C. God is striving to make us a better people, a people who are prepared to go to Heaven!

1. *Illustration*—Can you imagine going to college without a high school preparation, or becoming a surgeon without many years of training?

2. So, God has to mold us spiritually: **“But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand”** (Isa. 64:8).

II. God Gave His Only Begotten Son.

A. God gave His only begotten Son—John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10:

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

B. *Consider this illustration:* A Bus Driver was driving bus load of miners down a narrow mountain road when a little boy appeared in the road. The driver had to make a choice. Either keep to the road and sacrifice the child's life, or go over the side of the mountain and destroy many lives. He sacrificed the child. Later, he was noticed holding the child and weeping. He had sacrificed his own son!

C. Consider Romans 8:31-32; 5:8-11. Man is unworthy and undeserving, but “the Rev Ike” said not to say that.

III. Christ Gave Himself.

A. See Galatians 1:4-5; 2:20—The Son of God gave Himself for you (Rev. 1:5; Rom. 5:6-8).

B. Notice the Following Description of the Crucifixion.

Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst (John 19:16-18).

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced” (John 19:32-37).

C. After the resurrection of Christ..

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these 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 20:25-31).

D. *Consider the following illustration:* The Daughter of a scared mother. She wondered why her mother was not pretty like other mothers. She learned that her mother received the scar while trying to save her daughter from a burning house when the child was very small. The girl exclaimed: “I have the most beautiful mother in the world!”

E. Through Christ's great sacrifice we have:

1. Redemption and Forgiveness of Sins (Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:19-21).

2. Nearness to God (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 10:19).

3. The church (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).

IV. The Holy Spirit Brought the Word of God To Man.

A. Jesus promised the apostles (John 16:13-15) and it was fulfilled (Acts 2:4; 1 Pet. 1:12; Rom. 1:16).

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God... Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:10-13).

B. The Spirit guides man only through the Word of God:

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:” (Eph. 6:17).

V. What will you do for Jesus, for he has provided greater riches than those that are temporal (Eph. 1:3; 3:8; 1 John. 2:17. 1 John 4:19; John 14:15; Luke 9:23)?

Invitation: Give the plan of salvation—Heb. 5:8-9; Mat. 11:28-30; Acts 18:8; 8:32-39; 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 15:58. Also invite the erring children of God to be restored (Acts 8:22-24; 1 John. 1:9; Jam. 5:16; Pro. 28:13).

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DEVIATIONS FROM THE TRUTH

What Would He Think?

Roelf L. Ruffner

Dr. Jerry Reed, Professor of Piano at Lipscomb University, will return to Columbia (TN) Sunday (October 26, 2014) to present a recital at First United Methodist Church. The recital will feature sacred music from the 20th Century on the church’s new Kawai grand piano. ...The event will begin with a brief dedication of the church’s new piano, given earlier this year.

The above quote is from an article in the *Columbia Daily Herald*. I was not surprised that a faculty member from an apostate college like Lipscomb University (LU) in Nashville would be performing in such a place. They have taken the “broad way” (Mat. 7:13, 14) for quite a few years now. This brother is not only guilty of unauthorized worship of God by the use of a mechanical instrument of music (John 4:24; Col. 3:16-17; Eph. 5:19), but he was fellowshiping a denomination, the Methodist Church, as well (Mat. 15:9; John 17:21; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 5:19). I personally do not know how a New Testament Christian could help “dedicate” a piano in the Methodist Church. Did they sprinkle some water on the keyboards or did Perry just lay hands on it?

I wonder what brother David Lipscomb would have thought of a “Christian” school named after him allowing a faculty member to do such a thing? I imagine he would have dismissed Dr. Reed immediately. In his day he took a strong position against the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. I came across this quote from him in “Questions Answered”:

My Position On The Organ

Brother Lipscomb: It is reported that you are not opposed to the use of the organ in the worship when the church is united in desiring to use it. Is that your position?

It discourages me to receive such questions from those who

have been readers of the *Gospel Advocate*. It seems to me there is just as much reason for asking me if I believe the Bible is true or that Jesus is the Son of God.

There was no doubt where he stood on this issue. He stood with the Bible. It is obvious that those who continue to attach his name to an educational business do not follow the Bible. LU has chosen to stand with the religious world with its gods of the piano and the organ. The question for LU is not “What would Lipscomb think?” But “What does God think?” The prophet Isaiah in speaking of the apostate Hebrews of his own day and how God viewed their attempts at vain worship wrote,

He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not (Isa. 66:3,4).

[<http://columbiadailyherald.com/lifestyles/features/renowned-pianist-perform-sunday-columbia-s-first-umc#sthash.9zQjuDCR.dpuf> as of October 28, 2014.]

["Questions Answered by Lipscomb and Sewell," M. C. Kurfees, Editor: Nashville, TN: McQuiddy Printing Company, 1957; pp. 474-475.]

“Only Sinners Worship Here”

The title of this section of *Deviations from the Truth* was taken from the marquee in front of a church building used by brethren in middle Tennessee. It is dismaying to see brethren adopt a common denominational mantra: “Christians are just sinners saved by grace.” I imagine the brethren who

put up this sign want sinners to feel welcome at their worship services. It fits well into the aura of non-judgmentalism many want to radiate nowadays.

I believe the average sinner would like this. He may feel that all Christians are hypocrites. He may think that this is a church that will accept him and his sins. Perhaps he is a social drinker, a recreational drug user, a bit covetous, an occasional adulterer or fornicator. Whatever his sin he knows that he will not be “judged” because this church is made up of sinners like him. He will not hear a message that teaches that sinners must repent before they may be accepted by God. **“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord”** (Acts 3:19).

Most brethren do not realize that this idea originated in the pit of Hell. John Calvin, the 16th Century Swiss religious reformer, taught the false doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity or the idea that all of us are BORN sinners. He further taught that as a sinner we have no part to play in our salvation. IF we are PREDESTINED to be saved by God, His IRRESISTIBLE GRACE will cause the Holy Spirit to draw us to salvation. His modern day followers are fond of saying that because we are all dirty, filthy little sinners we can do NOTHING to gain God’s grace.

But the Holy Bible informs us that no one is born a sinner (cf. Eze. 18:20-23). Sin is a spiritual state brought on by my actions or free will. Sin is breaking God’s commandments, either consciously or unconsciously (1 John 3:4). Sin is not doing what one knows is right in God’s sight (Jam. 4:17). Sin is also **“all unrighteousness”** (1 John 5:17). For a Christian, sin can also be doing whatever is **“not of faith”** (Rom. 14:23). But a person is NEVER categorized in the Bible as a sinner because they were born that way—sin or sinfulness if no an inherited condition.

Yet the question remains “Is a Christian just a forgiven sinner?” The Bible teaches that the Christian is forgiven of their sins by the grace of God through the blood of Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 1:18, 19). When we obey the gospel of Christ we come in contact with that precious blood in the watery grave of baptism (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:4). At that point our sins are remitted and we are not longer “sinners” but “saints” (2 The. 1:10).

A “sinner” is one who willfully continues in sinful behavior or in a pattern of sin. But this is not the definition of a Christian! **“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). Do Christians ever sin? Yes! And when they repent and sincerely ask God’s forgiveness in prayer they are forgiven (1 John 1:9, 10). May a Christian become a sinner once again (2 Pet. 2:20-22)? Yes! But God forgives one upon that person’s repentance, confession of sin(s), and asking God to forgive one’s sins.

Some turn to the apostle Paul in justifying their liberal use of the term “sinner.” **“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief”** (1 Tim. 1:15). But was Paul saying that he was a “saved sinner?” Paul was alluding to the terrible transgressions he had committed against the church of Christ BEFORE he became a Christian (1 Tim. 1:13). To use this verse to maintain that Paul was still a sinner or someone who habitually continued to sin is to disregard his previous writings about sin and forgiveness.

Those among us who have adopted denominational jargon should shed it and say Bible things using Bible words. If we are faithful to the Word of God we will strive not to fall back into sin. We will also lovingly invite the sinner to come hear the words of life that can make him free from sin. And we will preach sermons and teach Bible studies that will make that clear to all.

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine (2 Tim. 4:1,2).

If you are a sinner, Christian or not, please, please gain forgiveness of God today! Perhaps you have not obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ and repented of your sins. Through His precious blood your sin-scarred soul can become **“whiter than snow”** (Isa. 1:18). You need not be a sinner anymore but a son or daughter of God.

A CRACK IN THE IDOL

For one hundred and eighty-four years the religious-cult-business empire known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) has held up their slain prophet-seer-revelator as almost a semi-divine figure. They speak lovingly of “Joseph” (Joseph Smith, Jr.) and his portraits always seem to have an angelic glow about them. For Mormons his life was akin to Jesus Christ’s in righteousness and sinlessness. Just as Moses received the 10 commandments on Mt. Sinai, Smith received on the Hill of Cumorah from an angel the Golden Bible or plates of gold which he translated from “reformed Egyptian” into English and called the *Book of Mormon*. **“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed”** (Gal. 1:8).

What Smith did in the western part of New York all religious hucksters eventually do—established a church centered on oneself. Because of his heretical teachings and Smith’s financial shenanigans the Mormons were run out of New York, Ohio, and Missouri and finally settled in Nauvoo, Illinois in 1839. There Smith used his charismatic personality and zealous missionaries to draw the gullible from America and Europe to build a temple and a city with a population of 12,000 by the time of his lynching in 1844.

Charges of adultery and polygamy or “plural marriage” plagued Smith and his followers since the early 1830s. There were rumors and anti-Mormon newspaper articles reporting that Smith and his inner circle had multiple wives. These accusations were vehemently denied by Smith. Yet in 1843 he secretly had a “revelation” from God (He claimed to have had several) which proclaimed “a new and everlasting covenant” or Celestial marriage in which a Mormon male could be “sealed for time and eternity” to more than one wife. It was kept secret until after his death in 1844 when Smith’s successor Brigham Young revealed it in the LDS’s new refuge in Utah territory. Polygamy was opened practiced by Mormons there until a manifesto by LDS President William Woodruff outlawed it in 1890 just in time for Utah to become a part of the United States of America. Since then this cult has excommunicated and turned in any polygamist members to the authorities. And they have denied that Smith was a polygamist; though historians claim he was “sealed” to upwards of 48 women in his life.

But “the times they are a changin’” and the LDS is a master chameleon. Many of its members are now internet savvy and can read what others say about Mormon history and especially the charlatan Smith. Polygamy is also gradually being accepted in American society as evidenced by the reality TV shows “Sister Wives” and “My Five Wives.” Recently an essay on the church website proclaimed that research has shown that Smith did after all have more than one wife, perhaps as many as forty. Some of those women

“sealed” to Smith were for “eternity” as a “spiritual wife” and their marriage did not include sexual relations. The essay maintains that Smith and his legal wife Emma struggled mightily to accept his revelation. I imagine they did!

If Smith lied to the world about plural marriage, what other things did he lie about? The tales Smith told about seeing and talking with God, Jesus, the angel Moroni, John the Baptist, and finding the golden plates and translating them must now also be suspect. Since the LDS church hierarchy has kept this skeleton in its closet for so long, what other things has it not revealed? Their idol known as Joseph is now cracked and Lord willing it will be shattered into many pieces in the days to come.

“For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (2 Pet. 2:18, 19).

[Doctrine and Covenants/Pearl of Great Price, Salt Lake City, Utah: Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1982; pp. 266-267.]

[<https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng> as of November 17, 2014.]

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Over the past half-century-plus I have had the opportunity to write hundreds of articles and manuscripts. My late beloved wife, Lavonne, and our son, Andy, have written a considerable body of material as well. These documents treating various Bible and Bible-related subjects total several thousand pages.



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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—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 [By phone inside USA (281) 475-8247; Inside the U.K.: Cambridge (England): 01223-911243]; Alternative Cambridge contacts: Joan Moulton - 01223-210101; 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.

-Montana-

Helena—Mountain View Church of Christ, 1400 Joslyn Street, Helena, Mt. 59601, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Matt Bidmead (406) 461-9199.

-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: allenlawson@earth-comm.com.

-South Carolina-

Belvedere (Greater Augusta, Georgia Area)—Church of Christ, 535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841, www.belvederechurchofchrist.org; e-mail belvecoc@gmail.com, (8-3) 442-6388, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Evangelist: Ken Chumbley (803)279-8663

Texas-

Denton area—Northpoint Church of Christ, 4224 N. I-35 (Greenway Plaza, just north of Cracker Barrel). Mailing address: 4224 N. I-35, Denton, TX 76207. E-mail: northpointcoc@hotmail.com. Website: www.northpointcoc.com. Sunday: 9:30, 10:30, 1:00; Wednesday 7:00. Contact: Dub McClish: (940) 387-1429; dubmcclish@gmail.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., 1:30 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, evangelist. Home of the Spring *Contending for the Faith* Lectures, and the internet school, Truth Bible Institute. www.churchesofchrist.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.

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