

# Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

## Frederic W. Stancliff

(1931–2013)

On August 27, 2013, after a long and faithful life of service to the Lord, our dear brother and friend Fred Stancliff passed from this life to his eternal reward. We extend our deepest sympathy to his dear wife Rheba and her family.

Fred Stancliff was born in 1931 in Jackson, Michigan. He and his wife, Rheba, have four children, nine grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

He graduated from the University of Florida in 1957 with a BSBA in Accounting. He worked as an auditor for the University of Florida for one year and for the state of Florida for eleven years.

In 1969, he enrolled in the Sunset School of Preaching and graduated in 1971. Following graduation, they moved to Florence, South Carolina, to work with a congregation there for three years.

In 1974, they moved to Orlando, Florida, where he returned to his former work as an auditor for the state of Florida and also preached full-time without pay for a struggling congregation in Lockhart, Florida. Fred's work with the state brought them to Pensacola in 1977. Fred was put to work in the Bellview congregation as an adult Bible class teacher, a part-time teacher for the Bellview Preacher Training School, and as treasurer for the congregation. He served as an elder for the Bellview congregation from 1979 until he and Rheba

moved to Singapore in 1991, where he served as an instructor in Four Seas College for two years.

Fred had been a Bible class teacher, song leader, treasurer, deacon, full-time or fill-in preacher, and elder at various times and places.

In 1993, Fred and Rheba returned to Pensacola where he received treatments for cancer most of that year. In 1994, Fred was reappointed to the eldership and continued to serve faithfully in that capacity till his death.

We are very thankful to have known brother Fred and we look forward to our reunion in the land where the roses never fade. May God's richest blessing be upon sister Reheba as she continues her earthly pilgrimage.

To say that brother Fred will be missed does not begin to express our sentiments. Certainly he will be missed by sister Rheba and his family, but he also will be missed by all of us who counted him a faithful brother in the Lord and a friend who would not for politics sake compromise the truth. He truly was a stalwart in and for the faith who, if necessary, was willing to stand alone among men rather than compromise any aspect of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. There are all too few of his tribe in the church today.

—David P. Brown, Editor

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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 background of this editorial one may read the 2013 July/August CFTF found at [www.cftfpaper.com](http://www.cftfpaper.com). Also, the paper, and the postings concerning the same are on the CFTF facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/cftfpaper>. —Editor]*

## **IS THIS THE WAY TO UNITY?**

As noted in our last issue, clearly stated on the Shenandoah Church of Christ web page is the following about the series of religious discussions conducted in their building from April 14 - Sept. 22, 2013. The discussions were:

...not to hotly contest each other's beliefs, rather to have a genuine dialogue concerning our differences. Our goal is to resolve possible misunderstandings of each other's beliefs and hopefully, unite ourselves in the end (cf. John 17:20-21).

In that issue, we quoted brother Gabriel Rodriquez's (Shenandoah's preacher) opening remarks in the first of these religious discussions with a local Baptist preacher. Again we give Gabriel's quotation.

I told, and I stressed very importantly, that as we had these discussions that they were not going to be a debate. I told him that I'm tired of debating. Because debates in the past have not served us well. They've only caused to infuse further division. And the purpose of humanity, especially in the religious area, we would hope, would be one of unity, that we can come together and talk about our differences and to hopefully understand each other a little better and possible come to the conclusion that the difference might be a simple misunderstanding of who we are. And so this was the intent of these discussions.

Gabriel responded to our editorial in an article appearing on the Shenandoah web page. We posted said article on CFTF's facebook page. Then Gabriel and his brother Israel posted lengthy responses on CFTF's facebook page, the design of which is/was to exonerate Gabriel and Shenandoah by explaining what they meant in the preceding quotations and attacking us because we called attention to what was written and what they did. We included all comments on CFTF's facebook page, but at this writing you will *only* find Gabriel's comments on Shenandoah's website. Clearly he states and practices one position regarding debates when it comes to his denominational friends, but he gladly employed the same in dealing with those of his brethren who will not "roll over and play dead" when he commands them so to do.

*The truth of the matter regarding the preceding quotations is this; there is no context that can justify what the words in the statements of those quotations mean as they were originally stated. Gabriel's explanation of what he meant by them is not what said quotes actually say.*

In said responses to us, Gabriel and Israel had no problem impugning our motives for dealing with their publicly announced and conducted religious discussions. Furthermore, in their desperation to defend their own actions, they revealed other erroneous views held by them.

Indeed, if Gabriel and Israel's responses to our comments do not constitute debating, what would it take for them so to be? But remember Gabriel said that he was "tired of debating" because they (debates) "have not served us well." But his sentiments regarding debating did not prohibit him from engaging in the same in responding to us. For someone who thinks debates "only caused to infuse further division," Gabriel and his brother Israel were not too "tired of debating" "to infuse" more "division" by engaging in written negative speeches in their efforts to refute what we affirmed and proved to be the case with them. But we have come to expect such instability from the "**double minded**" dialoguing of dialecticians regardless of the dialectics they use (Jam. 1:8).

When Gabriel astutely explained to us lesser mortals that he was going to engage in dialogues and dialectics with his denominational friends, because of our study of philosophy, we could not help but wonder what dialectical approach he would take with them, for, indeed, there are different dialectics. But in his attempts to answer us he graced us *only* with what he was "tired of"—**debating**. *Will someone please explain the kind of thinking that permits one to condemn a thing, but in the process of condemning it, that same person engages in what he condemns—that which he says "only caused to infuse further division"?* *Strange way some brethren have of seeking unity, but then we do not fall into the denominational preacher category.*

Gabriel charges us with thinking we must "police" "every act and every word (without investigation)." 1) We do not believe that we should do anything without proper investigation (1 The. 5:21). 2) If by "police" acts and words Gabriel means we are under obligation to God to obey such passages as 1 Peter 4:11; Colossians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; Galatians 6:10; Jude 3, then we are to do so when the occasion(s) presents itself. 3) It is impossible for one person to "police" every act or every word of the universal church of Christ." David was not expected to kill every giant in the world, but when confronted by one who sought to defy God he did not hesitate to kill him with a rock and cut off his head (1 Sam. 17:45-51; Rom. 15:4). Moreover, Gabriel does not mind "policing" us when he thinks such is called for. Indeed, how many people in the world does he think he will influence by what he considers to be a "good thing" by Shenandoah's religious discussions being published to the Internet? Obviously the answer is—as many as he can. So, please pardon us if we are motivated to confront every error in the world with God's Truth as we have opportunity. And, since our Lord plainly taught "**For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned**" (Mat. 12:37), which words will Gabriel tell us not to "police"? *Did Gabriel ever read the apostle Paul's admonition, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:15-17).*

*As we did in our July/August editorial, we again recommend that everyone view and listen to said Shenandoah's religious discussions. We have not attempted to stop anyone from personally accessing them. Indeed, they serve as one of the best examples of how *not* to deal with false teachers and their doctrines. They remind us of a brother being verbose in his criticism of another brother's verbosity.*

In 1984, there were certain brethren who sought to approach unity with the Independent Christian Church in much the same manner exhibited by Gabriel and the Shenandoah Church of Christ. The following is the late brother Guy N. Woods editorial from the *Gospel Advocate* dealing with said matter. He well sets out our sentiments and position regarding such endeavors.

## THE JOPLIN UNITY MEETING

August 7-9, this year, about one hundred men, fifty of them from the Churches of Christ, and fifty from the "Independent Christian Church" conducted a "Restoration Summit" in Joplin, Missouri, the design of which was to "open lines of communication" between two groups alienated nearly a century ago when the forbears of the "Independent Christian Church" of today introduced instrumental music into the worship of God, destroying the fellowship formerly obtaining, and creating another and distinct denominational body, variously styled Christian Church/Church of Christ.

The meeting was proposed, planned and implemented by Alan Cloyd of the churches of Christ and director of the "Restoration Leadership" movement, assisted and supported by Don DeWalt of the "Independent" Christian Church and others. Meetings were conducted on the campus of Ozark Bible College, an institution supported and maintained by adherents of the "Independent Christian Church."

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**It is proper for men to confer with reference to their differences, in order to understand each other better, eliminate any prejudices which may exist and learn to treat each other more civilly.**

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Our blessed lord, in the somber shadows of Gethsemane prayed for the unity of all who profess to be his, and the New Testament writers repeatedly urged it upon all who would enjoy the approbation of God here, and eternal salvation hereafter. Rivers of tears were shed and the hearts of multitudes of the Lord's people driven from houses of worship in which they could no longer conscientiously worship because of the introduction of instrumental music into the worship were broken because of the resulting division. Every faithful disciple ought diligently to work and to pray that the causes which led to this alienation may be speedily eliminated and all barriers to fellowship removed. Any proper effort to this end is commendable.

This is not the first attempt to achieve unity nor will it be the last. Various movements similar to this have been launched through the years, and concerned and sincere brethren have sought unity in much the same fashion as that which characterized the Joplin effort. The goal is worthy one. Speeches

emphasizing the scripturalness and desirability of unity are pleasing to hear, and deeply satisfying to the soul, but usually accomplish little or nothing toward achieving the end desired. Moreover, there is always the possibility that some, in such emotionally supercharged meetings, may be tempted to allow subjective feelings to supplant reason and compromise to displace conviction. The desire for unity can become such an obsession that there is an ever-present temptation to ignore or disregard scriptural considerations involving it. We must never permit our desire for peace and harmony—to motivate us so strongly that we resort to compromise of truth in an effort to attain it.

If we do not intend to yield our convictions on what constitutes acceptable worship, what is to be gained by creating an emotional and subjective atmosphere in the quest for unity? Will we accept mechanical instruments of music in worship in order to be in fellowship with the “Independent Christian Church?” Will the “Independent Christian Church” renounce instrumental music in order to be at peace with us? Is it realistic to assume that either, to any substantial degree, will occur? Most thoughtful observers will agree that the answer is “No.” This being true the results, insofar as physical, organic union is concerned, have always been, and will always be either failure or compromise. This matter does not admit of degrees of conformity; there can be no such thing as fragmented harmony. When “united” we shall either have instrumental music in our worship, or we shall not. Here is the real issue; here the search for unity must begin and end. There is no neutral ground, no twilight zone where Christian fellowship may be enjoyed in disregard of such hindrances. Which side will yeild? Neither.

There is today an effort to breach these barriers of truth, and, whether intended or not, to create conditions conducive to the acceptance of that formerly opposed. The tragedy that some individuals, motivated by a desire to enjoy fellowship with those who use the instrument, will suffer loss of deeply embedded inhibitions, and throw off restraints formerly protecting them from unauthorized practices in worship by being influenced to tolerate, and then to accept, that which is wrong.

One enthusiastic supporter of the movement (who believes and teaches that M. C. Kurfees was in error in holding that by the New Testament era the Greek word *psallo* no longer included the idea of a mechanical instrument—a view also held and effectively utilized in debates by Joe Warlick, N. B. Hardeman, G. C. Brewer, Foy E. Wallace and every other capable defender of the faith), in describing how fellowship may be achieved with the Christian Church, said, “On a national level, we can read each others books and journals—and write for one another. We can attend each others lectureships and conventions—and interchange speakers.” He noted further that it would be desirable to establish contact with one another during gospel meetings, VBS, and special activities. “It would be wonderful,” he wrote, “to worship together and to have some pulpit exchange.” If he can worship one Lord’s day with the instrument, he can do so henceforth and forever. If the Independent Christian Church can forego its use, as a concession to those who cannot conscientiously worship where it is used on special occasions, for the sake of harmony, it could do so permanently, thus removing this barrier to Christian fellowship. Faithful brethren in the churches of Christ will never

accept it. Unity will come only when it is removed. The way to unity is simple: They give up the instrument and return to the way of worship originally characterizing us all; or, we drop our opposition to it. Which side will yield? The great and good men of an earlier day—the Campbells, Barton W. Stone, Moses E. Lard, J.W. McGarvey, John T. Johnson, John Smith, Robert Milligan, Jacob Creath, Benjamin Franklin, L. B. Wilkes, F. G. Allen, W.H. Hopson, I. B. Grubbs, Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb and a host of others, uniformly opposed instrumental music in worship, and the grounds of opposition which prompted these giants of the faith to oppose it are fully as valid today. Reasons why the Christian Churches should return to the way of worship originally characteristic of us have not influenced its leaders during the hundred years intervening. Is it realistic to suppose that they are now ready to reverse a course they have so long followed? The truth is, their journals have run more articles attempting to justify instrumental music in worship in recent months than in the 25 years preceding!

Some writers, aware of these facts, are saying that we should simply “agree to disagree,” and achieve unity by disregarding differences. Well-intentioned though such efforts may be, they neither properly address the problem, nor do they provide a solution; all too often the effort leads to abandonment of conviction by those thus influenced. Were a doctor to say, “I shall treat your malady by simply ignoring it, and by urging you to do likewise,” one would not be faulted for declining his further services and seeking treatment elsewhere. This is not unity but union—the type adopted by the confederation of denominations know as “The United Church of Christ.” It is unfortunate that many who speak and write of *unity* have confused it with *union*. The latter may indeed be accomplished by men, the former is an effect attainable only when all who enjoy it are in a right relationship with God (1 John 1:1-4). Like happiness, peace, joy, and may other blessings, unity is not inherent in man but results with others only when all involved are in fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

It is proper for men to confer with reference to their differences, in order to understand each other better, eliminate any prejudices which may exist and learn to treat each other more civilly. This is simple New Testament Christianity in action, and ought to characterize us all in all situations, whether engaged in unity efforts or not. Sadly, such movements in the past have seldom sustained the high hopes of their orginators, and as often have led to loss of conviction and eventual compromise on the part of some involved. Neither the current movement, nor any similar one, will succeed by improper reflections on the illustrious men who fought for a pure faith and a faultless practice before us, or by ignoring or minimizing the fundamental principles involved.

Under date of September 5, I wrote brother Alan Cloyd as follows: “The report has come to me that copies of the speech H. Leo Boles delivered at the ‘Unity Meeting’ in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 3, 1939, later published in both the *Gospel Advocate* and the *Christian Standard*, and recently reprinted in tract form by the Getwell Church of Christ, Memphis, Tennessee, were on display at the ‘Unity’ meeting in Joplin, Missouri, and that they were removed and burned or otherwise destroyed by you. Is this report correct?” To this he respond-

ed. “I *did* in fact remove the tracts in question. They were uninvited materials which were not appreciated. Brother Boles’ language is abusive and crude. I did not feel that these tracts would be in the best interest of the meeting...”

Brother Boles’ address was published in full in the *Gospel Advocate*, beginning with the issue of May 5, 1939. B. C. Goodpasture, then editor, introduced the series—which ran for four issues—as follows:

We are glad to give editorial space this week to the first installment of brother Boles’ address delivered at the ‘Unity meeting’ in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 3, 1939. If we may judge from the comments it has provoked, the speech made a profound impression upon those who heard it. A. T. DeGroot, in the *Christian-Evangelist* of May 11, says: ‘The strongest language employed at the conference, other than in the expected warmth of some exchanges in the open forums, came in the address of H. Leo Boles, of Nashville, Tenn.’ *The Christian Standard* of May 13, carries the statements that H. Leo Boles was ‘outspoken in argument,’ and that this manuscript (of the speech) has been promised us, and we shall publish it as soon as possible.’ W. L. Totty, of Beech Grove, Indiana, sums up the matter in these words: ‘The meeting reached its zenith the afternoon of the second day, when H. Leo Boles spoke for an hour and thirty-one minutes. He told them in no uncertain terms what had caused the division and what it would take to bring about unity—that if they expected a compromise they were mistaken. Perhaps no greater address has been given since the Restoration, especially at a time when they were attempting to win us by smooth sayings.’ Brother Boles has presented the only safe and acceptable grounds of unity. He has sounded the tocsin of war—a war of extermination—on all forms of innovation and compromise. It will likely be a long time before we see a clearer or more courageous presentation of the issues involved.

So believed and so wrote the distinguished B. C. Goodpasture regarding that historic address.

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**Neither the current movement, nor any similar one, will succeed by improper reflections on the illustrious men who fought for a pure faith and a faultless practice before us, or by ignoring or minimizing the fundamental principles involved.**

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We think that the promoters of the Joplin meeting did the Cause of Christ grave disservice in suppressing the material brother Boles assembled and delivered at a similar unity meeting in 1939. We believe that the address is as relevant and true now as when originally presented, and that his clear and forceful challenge to remain faithful to the “Old Paths” will be read and appreciated by our readers today. Because of its length we shall publish it in installments, the first of which begins on page 581 of this issue.

He. Leo Boles died February 7, 1946. He was one of the most illustrious men of his day. He preached the gospel for more than forty years; he taught for many years on the faculty of David Lipscomb College and eventually became its president; he was editor of the *Gospel Advocate* and wrote numerous books and commentaries on the New Testament. The week this is being written, David Lipscomb College is conducting the annual H. Leo Boles’ Lectureship, named in honor of this

great and good man.—Guy N. Woods

(Guy N. Woods, Editorial, “The Joplin Unity Meeting,” *Gospel Advocate*, Oct. 4, 1984)

Brother Woods well emphasized that once any misunderstandings have been corrected, errors such as the Baptist doctrine of “salvation by faith only” and “once saved always saved” must be faced and refuted, as is the case with the myriad of denominational errors. Such errors have nothing to do with prejudices and misunderstandings that may exist between the Lord’s church and denominations. Are Baptists going to give up one of their cardinal points regarding when they think a person is saved? And, that is only one of their errors that make them the denomination they are. Now what did the Shenandoah religious discussions accomplish regarding any error of the Baptist church or any of the other errors of the denominations represented in the dialogues and dialectics in which by brother Gabriel engaged? That work must still be done—and just where, how, and in what manner is it to be done without dealing directly and precisely with error in the light of what the Bible teaches? According to Gabriel, it will not be done by debating on the polemic platform because debates “only caused to infuse further division”—*unless he is dealing with us.*

As noted earlier, in the process of Gabriel’s responses to us he revealed other erroneous beliefs that he holds. The first one of these is his erroneous views of Matthew 18:15-17.

#### GUY N. WOODS AND MATTHEW 18:15-17

On page 55 of his second volume of *Questions and Answers* (Gospel Advocate Co., 1986), the late Guy N. Woods answered the following question. “*Does Matthew 18:15-17 deal with procedures for private differences between brethren, or does it also demand a private rebuke for a false teacher whose errors have been presented publicly?*” Brother Woods answered:

It is disturbing that many brethren these days have no hesitancy in taking texts out of their contexts, and using them utterly without regard to the purpose that prompted the statements, thus reaching conclusions wholly foreign to that intended. Such is very obviously the case here.

Even the most casual examination of Matthew 18:15-17 will show that our Lord had under consideration offences of a personal nature, occasions where one brother has suffered injury of one kind or other at the hands of another brother in the congregation, it has not the slightest reference to, nor may it be properly applied to those instances where erring brethren have propagated false doctrine to the detriment of the cause of Christ itself.

**Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let**

**him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican** (Mat. 18:15-17).

(1) The offence involved is a “trespass” (*amarteesee*, sin) by one brother against another brother. (2) The offending brother is to be visited by him whom he has harmed and rebuked (*elegdson auton*). It is significant that the Greek word here is not the usual term for rebuke (*epitimoo*), but one which means to rebuke for the purpose, and in the manner leading to conviction. (3) If this brings the sinning brother to repentance, fellowship is restored and a brother “gained”. (4) However, if the brother is stubborn and will not make right his wrong, “one or two” brethren are to be taken along on the assumption that their intervention may bring him to his senses. If this attempt also fails, the issue is to be brought before the church, and the matter publicly considered. And, if this, too, does not influence the brother to confess and correct his wrong-doing, he is to be withdrawn from and thenceforth regarded as a heathen and a publican. Heathens and publicans were looked upon as wicked and corrupt men, out of fellowship with the saints, and under the disapproval of God. Such was this erring and impenitent brother so long as he persisted in his impenitent way.

It is obvious, therefore, that this passage is applicable only to those instances, involving personal offenses, where one brother has sinned against another brother. Often, elsewhere, in the New Testament, when brethren were guilty of other types of wrongdoing, vastly different means were followed in dealing with them. Who, for example, could seriously believe that Paul, the apostle, should have contacted the incestuous man of 1 Corinthians 5:1, before penning his instructions to the church regarding its obligations in the matter? Are we to suppose that he was in violation of our Lord’s admonitions in Matthew 18:15-17, when he warned Timothy of Hymenaeus and philetus because of the errors they were propagation regarding the resurrection (2 Tim. 2:15-18)? And, what of his rebjke of Phygellus and Hermogenes who were responsible in turning all of the saints “in Asia,” against him? Ought he to have talked with these errorists before making their actions publicly known (2 Tim. 1:15).

It is gross misapprehension of Matthew 18:15-17, to offer it as a rule of procedure in dealing with instances where false doctrine is being advocated to the disruption of the cause and to the destruction of the souls of men; and those who thus do fall into grave sin themselves. The disposition to apologize for, or to protect anyone who is teaching error, makes those who do so parties to the effort itself and the Lord will deal with them accordingly at the last day. Paul’s admonition to the church in Rome settles the matter for those who truly respect God and his word: **“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them”** (Rom. 16:17).

Obviously, the brethren Rodriguez, the Shendoah elders, and their supporters are in error on the meaning and application of the Matthew 18:15-17. The actions in which brother Rodriguez and the Shenandoah congregation engaged were public in their nature—for members and non-members of the Lord’s church alike. Their efforts continue to be available to the public through the Internet by video and audio recordings. Thus, we responded to them publicly. Their

attempts to deal with a public matter as if it was a private and personal one constitutes nothing more or less than their throwing dust in the air in order for them to complain about why they cannot see.

## THE AUTONOMY OF THE CHURCH

Another effort those in error use in their attempts to silence their opposition is a twisted view of the autonomy of the church. In the New Testament, the word *church* is used in three senses (1) *the one church that Jesus built, containing all the saved* (Mat. 16:18; Acts 2:38, 41, 42, 47); (2) *the largest and smallest organized entity of the one church—the churches in their respective geographic locations* (Acts 14:26, 27; Rom. 1:7; 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:2, 22; Rev. 1:4); (3) *the local church assembled—convened for religious purposes*. The scriptures teach that each local church is autonomous, by which is meant each church is independent of other sister churches of Christ in organization (elders, deacons, teachers, preachers, and members compose each church). Thus, each church runs its own affairs under the head of the church, Jesus Christ as He directs the churches through His last will and testament—the New Testament of the Bible—via the shepherds of the church (Mat. 28:18; Col. 3:17; Jam. 1:25; 2 Pet. 1:1-3; John 12:48; Phi. 1:1; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Pet. 5:1, 2; Acts 20:28).

*Nothing the New Testament teaches about the autonomy of the church prohibits brethren in one congregation from exposing error, false teachers, and the sinful conduct of brethren in another congregation.* Paul had no problem rebuking errors in the Corinthian church on the basis of the reports made to him by those of the household of Chole (1 Cor. 1:11). *Was it necessary for Paul to experience personally the errors in the Corinthian church before he could rebuke them? Also, was Paul a member of the Corinthian church?* The apostle John had no problem in explicitly rebuking Diotrophes for his sinful conduct in the congregation where this man was a member, and by implication, the apostle rebuked the membership of said church for allowing Diotrophes such unscriptural power over them (3 John 9-10). *Were John and Diotrophes members of the same local church?*

By the authority of His New Testament Jesus obligates gospel preachers to preach the whole counsel of God. In so doing they are to reprove, rebuke, and exhort all who hear them as the situations and circumstances demand (Acts. 20:27; 2 Tim. 4:1-5). Are all gospel preachers who speak in gospel meetings, lectureships, or other teaching efforts members of the churches wherein they proclaim and defend the truth in said efforts. Must such preachers be members of those churches before they can expose the error in them? While visiting a sister congregation a brother sees and/or hears error expounded or practiced. Because he is not a member of said church, does said brother sin when he rebukes those members who are guilty of the sin and/or refutes their false doctrine publicly? But Gabriel erroneously

thinks and teaches that when a member of one congregation exposes the error found in a congregation where he is not a member, the exposing brother in such cases violates the autonomy of the church wherein the sin was committed. Please notice that Gabriel is not a member of the Spring Church of Christ where I am a member, but he did not hesitate to rebuke me—even calling me a Diotrophes. Obviously Gabriel binds his false views regarding autonomy on me but he does not bind the same false views on himself. The legs of the lame are not equal.

The oral debates in which we have engaged were originally conducted in public and are available on DVDs and/or the Internet. Thus, the opportunity to scrutinize them has existed for many years.

(1) Will Gabriel publicly engage in a four night oral debate wherein on the first two nights we will affirm a precisely stated proposition setting out our views regarding *the meaning and application of Matthew 18:15-17*, with Gabriel in the negative? Then on the last two nights of said debate Gabriel may affirm a precisely stated proposition setting out his views on the meaning and application of the same with us in the negative. (2) Furthermore, will Gabriel publicly engage in a second four night oral debate on *church autonomy*? That debate may follow the same format as the first one? We shall see how tired of debating Gabriel actually is.

—David P. Brown, Editor



*[In the 2013 July/August issue of CFTF we commented on some disparaging remarks made by brother Gabriel Rodriguez (preacher for the Shenandoah Church of Christ, San Antonio, TX) about religious debating between the Lord's church and religions founded on the commandments and doctrines of men. We quoted from what is written on the church's web site and from brother Rodriguez's oral comments found thereon. The church web site address is <http://www.shenandoahcofc.org/religious-discussions.html>. Brother Rodriguez's oral quotation comes from his opening remarks in his "dialogue" on April 14, 2013 with the Baptist Pastor, Bill Shockley.*

*In said July/August issue we listed several of the debates of the denominationalist, Dr. William Lane Craig, noting what a sad situation it is when a denominationalist has and is engaged in more debates than are members of the Lord's church, especially those brethren who publicly represent themselves as apologists. In his email "Question of the Week," Dr. Craig answers one who evidently holds much the same view of debating that brother Rodriguez has expressed. Again, is it not amazing that this denominationalist understands better the purpose and benefits of debating than do many in the Lord's church, including Gabriel Rodriguez? —Editor]*

## Are Debates Too Polarizing?

### Question to Dr. William Lane Craig:

*Hello. First things first, I would like to state that I am an unbeliever. My question is pertaining to the promotion of understanding toward the secular side of the debates you so often hold or participate in.*

*It seems like when you enter into these debates you take a very offensive stance that leaves little room for discussion. By only dealing with what you consider facts it seems as though you are attempting to leave yourself out of the discussion as a factor.*

*You cannot be surprised when later this is seen as disingenuous.*

*Getting to the point, I noticed watching all of your debates that you take nearly everything point by point, and disallow any wiggle room on the opposing side. Naturally not many people so adamantly conform to the outlines of the debate at hand.*

*Often you use this as evidence in your debates that there are no good secular arguments or explanations for things like morality and the fine tuning of the universe. But I see this as a sort of strong man approach to debate and limits understanding of both sides, undermining any ground one should have of respecting an atheist's opinions on any of*

*these matters and it becomes harder not to take this personally.*

*Needless to say this has a polarizing affect on the conversations themselves and they become combative rather than informative.*

*So my question would be, are you actively seeking to understand your opponents before you engage them? Not just on an intellectual level, but on a personal, moral and emotional level? Do you often ask yourself how they find meaning in their lives and behave well whilst still holding these views? And is this a priority for you? I find it absolutely necessary for two people to not only respect each other, but to understand each others points on intellectual as well as personal levels for a meaningful conversation to be had.*

*From what I have seen of your debates, you are not committed to this idea, and perhaps do not value it. Or perhaps just let your competitive nature get the best of you. In any case, I respect any form of truth seeking and I would like to hear a response to this issue. I feel like the debate structure in general is to (sic) competitive to produce any sort of impact or meaningful outcome, especially on larger issues like this. One side agrees with the atheist, one side agrees with the theist. Hardly anyone questions the validity of their own*

*side's arguments.*

*In this sense I expect it would be much more fruitful to engage in personal conversations with atheists like me, on more than a professional level. Maybe you should try to befriend Richard Dawkins instead of giving him a hard time? Maybe then he would want to debate you. That's all I'm saying. The man is clearly not a coward.*

—Adam  
USA

### **Dr. Craig responds:**

I took your question, Adam, because I've been puzzled by the intense dislike of me that I sense among many persons whom I've never even met, much less personally offended. Your letter seems to suggest that some of the dislike is due to my debating style.

Now I must say that this simply baffles me and seems to be due in some large measure to a lack of understanding of how formal debate works. You write, "By only dealing with what you consider facts it seems as though you are attempting to leave yourself out of the discussion as a factor." Right! Like a trial lawyer, the debater is supposed to deal only with the facts and not to bring himself personally into the discussion. That's why debate is such good training for those going to law school. Just as the personal relation between the prosecuting attorney and the defense attorney is irrelevant to the adjudication of the case, so in debate the adjudication of the question doesn't depend upon the persons involved. The affirmative has a case he presents in support of the resolution, and the negative tries to show why the affirmative case fails to justify the resolution. In a very real sense, you're not arguing against another person; you're arguing against his case.

For that reason I never present *ad hominem* attacks upon the person I'm debating, even when he launches such attacks against me. He may violate the rules of debate etiquette, but I will not (yes, there are such rules, such as not to make facial expressions or distracting gestures while your opponent is speaking!). I try to leave my opponent's personal life out of it. By focusing exclusively on the case presented, one avoids all the ugly *ad hominem* attacks and fruitless attempts to psychoanalyze one's opponent to discern his true motives for saying what he does. All those things are irrelevant to the soundness of the arguments he is presenting. Thus, there is a real de-personalization of the discussion that transpires in proper debate.

So I AM "surprised when later this is seen as disingenuous." In fact, I'm dumbfounded! Why would anyone think that I don't believe the arguments I'm sharing? I come away from these debates more convinced of the arguments' soundness than before because I've seen how well they hold up against objections. I suspect that some people think I'm disingenuous because they are so anti-theistic that they think that no honest, intelligent person can believe these things.

Since I seem to be intelligent, it follows that I must be dishonest. I'm lying when I defend these arguments! I don't know what to say to this. If I assure people that I really am convinced of these arguments, they'll say I'm lying about that, too! All I can do is affirm before God that I really am convinced that the arguments I present are good, sound arguments. What else can I say?

*[In the following paragraph Dr. Craig does as most denominationalists do—gives his "testimony" concerning his personal salvation experience with Jesus at his "conversion" and his personal relationship with Jesus as a "Christian," which very sadly he is not. We do not sanction his comments regarding his testimony in any form, or fashion. In fact, we oppose them for what they are—emotional, subjective, syrupy sentimental nonsense. Such "testimonies" are relative and have been and are made by everybody to "prove" the truth and value of about anything—from "holy rollers," african witch doctors, patent medicine salespersons, and used car dealers. Such "testimonies" constitute no proof at all other than the one testifying has a good feeling. —Editor]*

Having said above that debate is by nature de-personalizing, I do frequently try to introduce a bit of my personal life into my debates when I reach my last point and, after sharing my arguments in support of the proposition under debate, I'll say a brief word about knowing God in a personal way. Sometimes during the Q&A the opportunity arises to share a more extensive word of testimony of what Christ has meant to me personally. But what I won't do is try to pry into my opponent's personal life.

As for taking "nearly everything point by point," that's just good debate technique. Remember: your audience isn't taking notes, and they'll be confused if you're disorganized and jumping all over the place from point to point. You want your audience to remember the fundamental points of your case, and so you need to remind them of these points, especially if your opponent fails to respond to some of them. Otherwise, they'll slip away into oblivion. You say, "Often you use this as evidence in your debates that there are no good secular arguments or explanations for things like morality and the fine tuning of the universe." Adam, I don't think I've ever done that. Rather I use it as evidence that my opponent has no good arguments for this or that. And that will be true. I always try to characterize my opponent's responses fairly and correctly and then respond to them. Taking an opponent's arguments seriously and explaining why you disagree with them is the best way of "respecting an atheists opinions." Maybe I'm dense, but I just don't understand why so doing makes "it . . . harder not to take this personally." Personally? Why? I don't take it personally when someone presents a refutation of my case. Can't we charitably disagree without taking things personally?

Yes, debate is polarizing and combative. But that in no way implies that it is not also informative! On the contrary, a



good debate will inform you of the principal arguments pro and con concerning an issue. I have often said that the academic life is an agonistic life; that is to say, it is combative, involving the struggle of ideas. But that does not imply that we should take things personally.

Now, certainly, I seek “to understand [my] opponents before [I] engage them.” But this is almost exclusively intellectually. I read their work, I try to understand their views, and try to present them fairly. So, for example, you’ll find in my recent dialogues with Lawrence Krauss that I was careful not to characterize him as an atheist; rather I recognize that he is agnostic about God’s existence. But how am I to figure out in advance what makes Lawrence Krauss tick? To understand him “on a personal, moral and emotional level?” Adam, get real! This is something that even people who spend a great deal of time together rarely achieve.

So, honestly, no, it’s not a priority for me to “ask [myself] how they find meaning in their lives and behave well whilst still holding these views.” Those sorts of concerns are irrelevant to the issues we’ll be discussing. When I argue, for example, that on atheism there is no ultimate meaning and value in life, people too often misunderstand this to be the claim that atheists live immoral and dull lives. Asking your question would only contribute to the misunderstanding. The issue is emphatically not my opponent’s personal behavior or fulfillment in life! It is rather that no matter how we behave or how much we enjoy life, our lives are objectively worthless and purposeless if God does not exist.

Now debate is just one forum for truth-seeking, and since you value them all, you should value it, too. Other forums in which I participate include books, often with an exchange of views by multiple authors, and articles in professional journals in which a conversation takes place across the years. Sometimes I’ll engage in dialogues in which a conversation can take place. But the forum is no guarantee. What I found in my recent dialogues with Prof. Krauss in Australia is that he uses that forum, not to have a conversation, but to interrupt and even talk over his interlocutor. Such a “conversation” is no less, nay, even more combative than a debate. After our dialogues I felt as if I had been in a barroom brawl! Give me the calm civility of a formal debate any day!

I know you’re wrong, Adam, when you say that “the debate structure in general is too competitive to produce any sort of impact or meaningful outcome” because I receive testimony to the contrary. For example, here is what one atheist who attended the Melbourne dialogue wrote afterwards on Facebook:

I must say, being there as an atheist has really opened my eyes to how reasonable, intelligent people can believe in god. My mind has been changed. My opinion still hasn’t but that’s not the point.

I thought that Craig took large parts of the debate away from a very feisty Krauss. This type of dialogue reaches more people

than anyone would realize. Can’t tell people how grateful I was to be there.

Congratulations to WLC for accepting a debate such as this. The forum suits argumentative atheists like myself. WLC NAILED it.

Much credit to you guys for a super gutsy and even effort in a difficult forum. I am now going to endeavour to read all of WLC’s books with a very open mind. Might even open the bible again!!!! I will also read Krauss’ book again for some clarity.

I feel. . . Blessed! Lol.

Now I’m sure you’ll agree that that represents a pretty significant and meaningful impact.

“Befriend Richard Dawkins instead of giving him a hard time?” Seriously? Do you really think I give him a hard time? I’ve responded to his critique of theistic arguments and had some fun Eastwooding (Clint Eastwood at the 2012 Republic National Convention debated an empty chair as if President Obama was seated on it.—**Editor**) him, but is that a hard time? Others may give him a hard time, but I’ve largely ignored him. I did give his movie a negative review, I guess, but that’s about it. I wouldn’t mind at all being friends, but from the things he’s said publicly about me I doubt he’d be open to it.

Adam, you seem to be a sensitive spirit, and perhaps the debate forum is not the best for you in your search for truth. But for many others it is a valuable forum for airing the issues and helping them take some small step along life’s path.

(Question #334, <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/>, opened 9/10/2013)

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# “DEATH, BE NOT PROUD”

Lavonne McClish

The above title is that of a book by John Gunther chronicling the illness (a brain tumor) and death of his young son. I like to hope that death will not conquer me, as this quotation suggests, but it is unwise to boast of what I will do when I have not yet been tried (as Ahab said to Benhadad, “**Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off**” [1 Kin. 20:11]). Peter learned this lesson the hard way (Mat. 26:33–35, 69–75), and I hope I have learned and continue to learn from him.

I also remember a preacher who, during my childhood and teen years, was much in demand for Gospel meetings. He had a talent for arousing people’s emotions and always had many responses. He constantly preached that we should never fear death, that death is a release from the troubles of this world, that death for the faithful means entry into Heaven—not the end, but the beginning. He admonished others, even gently rebuking them for their fear; but then when he was diagnosed with terminal cancer, he was absolutely terrified. I felt sorry for him for more than one reason. First, the fact that his life was cut short and that he had to suffer was sad. Second, such unconcealed fear must have been most humiliating after he had so boldly preached to others.

Having said that, we know that pain, sorrow, discouragement, and death are part of this life. These are not a punishment for our sins, but they happen because we are human beings (Rom. 5:12). As God allowed Job to be tried and tested, he will allow us to be tried, tested, and proved also (Job 5:6–7; 13:15; 14:1). Since this is without a doubt true, let us study some ways to deal with this pain and sorrow and with the knowledge that death is not far away.

In July of 2004 I was diagnosed with Mantle Cell Lymphoma, a very rare and very aggressive form of non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. From one viewpoint, it was almost a relief, because I had felt so bad for so long and no cause could be found. My relief, however, was short-lived when I began to research this disease. Because it was so newly isolated (from the other Lymphomas) and so rare, little research had been done on it and, consequently, few treatments were available. The survival rate was two to four years, according to the Internet information I found. I began to experience that sinking feeling!

I was sent to Baylor Hospital, Sammons Cancer Center, in Dallas, TX. The oncologist/blood/bone marrow transplant specialist assigned to me outlined the basics of the disease with my husband Dub and me and then the proposed treatment, step by step. He said that, without treatment, I would be dead in six months; with treatment, maybe I would live two to four years. He felt very confident that we could beat the odds. He has always said “Don’t say if it comes back, say when. It will come back.” When I asked what we would do when it comes back, he replied, “We’ll hit it again!”

So I am truly thankful for Sammons Cancer Center, the staff, and my oncologist. The care—of every kind—that they have given me cannot be bought with money, and I know it has made all the difference in my attitude. They have inspired confidence.

There is some advantage in knowing that my death is likely to come sooner rather than later. It forces me to think about my life,

changes I need to make, things I need to say and do, people whose forgiveness I may need to seek. We should be conscious at all times that death is certain: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27), but there is nothing like a terminal illness to make one face the fact that death is not somewhere out there in the nebulous, distant future, but is before me in the here and now. Compared with a lifetime, it is imminent.

I have been blessed to have the prayers of Christians literally all over the world. I have been mentioned in countless church bulletins and oral announcements; some still include me regularly, after all this time. I have lost count of the cards, e-mails, letters, and phone calls I have received and still receive. Whenever I start feeling sorry for myself, I try to remember those who care about me. I also know there are many who are much worse off than I am. I keep a list, and I try to send cards, e-mails, and notes often to encourage others who are sick, suffering, or in despair. When my mind is on other people, it is more difficult to think about myself (Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 13:4–5; Jam. 2:8).

I have also been blessed with a husband who loves me and who has cared for me faithfully and uncomplainingly throughout this ordeal. I realize many are not so blessed. We have so much for which to be thankful in that he is in excellent health. When I was undergoing chemotherapy, he would take his laptop computer and work while my treatments were going on. He does the same when I have my semi-annual PET scans. He has had to take over more of the chores than he was accustomed to doing, since my strength will not stretch to cover very much. Our children’s love and care have been a source of strength, as well. I include Paige, our granddaughter who lived with us for many years, who was here to help me in so many ways, and was unfailingly kind, generous, and patient.

One of the most valuable lessons I have learned from my illness is the necessity of determining what is important and what is less so. I try to use my strength and my time to do things that will matter for my family and others, both now and for eternity. I remind myself not to worry about things that are insignificant (some would say I carry that policy to extremes when it comes to housekeeping!). I am very conscious of the example I am setting, and continually monitor my speech accordingly.

God has promised that He would be with me in all aspects of my life (Psa. 23:4). He did not promise that I would not have to suffer or that I would not die prematurely. I have been surprised at the people who have assured me that God will answer my prayers, meaning He will spare me if I pray fervently. “Prayer works,” they tell me. Yes, God will answer my prayers; I do not doubt that God is able to deliver me, but why should I expect special treatment? If God could allow His own Son to suffer a horrible death and not intervene, even when that Son cried and begged for deliverance (Mat. 26:39; Heb. 5:7), why should I think I am better than Jesus Christ? God told Paul, when he asked that his “thorn” be removed, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12:7–9). I think of the three young Hebrews who told the king, “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us...but if not...we will not serve thy gods” (Dan. 3:16–18).

Two verses of a beautiful folk song, “Wayfaring Stranger,” express our longing for a better place and our hope of the comfort it will provide (I quote from memory):

I am a poor wayfaring stranger, while trav’ling through this world of woe.

Yet there’s no sickness, toil, nor danger in that bright land to which I go.

I know dark clouds will gather o’er me, I know my way is rough and steep.

Yet beauteous fields lie just before me, Where God’s redeemed their vigils keep.

As Abraham looked, so I am looking for a city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10). **“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”** (Rev. 21:4). What a beautiful description of what awaits the faithful! These things help me to be confident and unafraid, and encourage me when I am weak.

I hope these thoughts will be of help to others who are, like me, struggling with fear and discouragement.

—Deceased



## RECOMMENDED READING: CHRIST THE GREAT CONTROVERSIALIST

Gary W. Summers

A much needed and helpful volume came from the annual Spring Church of Christ *Contending for the Faith* lectureship earlier this year. Many erroneously view Jesus as an individual who loved everybody to the point of never speaking a harsh word or confronting anyone. Although He did love everyone (meaning that he acted in their best interests), He can correctly be called Christ the Great Controversialist. Before discussing the book’s contents, it is worthy of note that the book is dedicated to Lavonne James McClish, who departed from this life just a few weeks before this book was published. The dedication to her serves as a fitting and touching tribute.

The introduction, written by the book’s editor, David Brown, provides a convincing rationale for the bold claim of the title. Many in the religious community, as well as a certain segment of brethren, probably think that we are the only ones who would come up with such an idea, since we have had so many debates with those representing various denominations—not to mention a few amongst ourselves—but the first reference is to a book written by Nathaniel Haynes, a member of the Christian Church. He wrote *Jesus as a Controversialist* 102 years ago in 1911. Writing the Introduction to that book was B. J. Radford, a preacher, college professor, college president, editor, and poet (also a member of the Christian Church).

Brother Brown decided to reprint that Introduction as part of his for three reasons: 1) Because what Radford wrote is the truth, serving therefore as an appropriate beginning; and 2) “...it shows that the Christian Church and Disciples of Christ have lost the militancy they once taught and to some extent practiced”; 3) It serves as a warning to us (members of the body of Christ) that in a relatively short time people can “lose their concern for the truth,” along with their convictions re-

garding it (1). However, if there is one thing the past teaches us, it is that we never learn from the past.

Radford writes a thought-provoking introduction—one line of which is often-repeated (and may not have been original with him): “The only antidote for evil is good, and the only antidote for error is truth” (3). The author of the 1911 book, Haynes, published a list of controversies in which Jesus was involved; some are specific events, and some are general references. He divided the Lord’s confrontations into four groups: 1) those with wicked spirits (including Satan); 2) those with His disciples; 3) those with the various parties of the Jews; and 4) those with various other people.

This outline of controversies is useful. Among those with His disciples, twenty are listed, including ones involving their personal ambitions and several with Peter. Jesus’ confrontations with the Sadducees and the Pharisees are quite well known; nineteen are listed. The miscellaneous category includes the woman of Samaria, neighbors in Nazareth, professional mourners, Pilate, and seven others (5-7).

The editor wrote the first chapter, and its title mirrors the title of the book. The material is rich, including such observations as Jesus “is perceived as accepting sinners in their sins, and never demanding that they cease and desist from their sinful conduct” and that He was “not crucified for saying, ‘Consider the lilies of the field’” (11).

Brother Brown takes issue with a book published in 1989 which seeks to encourage members of the church to not challenge either error or false teachers. The title of that book is *Among Friends: You Can Make Your Church a Warmer Place* by James Hinkle and Tim Woodroof. Some of the false allega-

tions and misrepresentations of Jesus made in that book are refuted with the Scriptures (12-17). Also included is an amusing story of a debate about whether or not debating has any value (21). An interesting quote is given by a denominational figure who laments that those of his own fellowship refuse to fight for (what they believe to be) the truth (23). The material in this opening segment of the book will inspire members to want to study more and speak up more.

### Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

In the past 40 years, many errors have been set forth on this topic. In his analysis of Matthew 19:3-9, Dub McClish sets forth eight points concerning why casual divorce is a violation of God's law (29). He then deals with several of the false teachings being advocated by some today which contradict or misinterpret what Jesus taught in that text. Below are those errors that are explained and refuted.

1. Jesus' Teaching Applies Only to Christians (31-32).
2. Adultery Does Not Refer to a Physical Act of Immorality (32-33).
3. Adultery Is a One-time Sinful Act (33-34).
4. The Guilty Mate Has the Right to Remarry (34).
5. God Recognizes Every Divorce and Marriage Sanctioned by Civil Law (34-37).

All of the above are positions held by some brethren, and every one of them is false. They are soundly refuted by the Scriptures.

### Traditions and Hypocrisy

Michael Hatcher provides a thorough analysis of Matthew 15:1-9. After a discussion of the traditions of men versus the traditions of God, he explains what those who were saying, **"It is Corban"** (cf. Mark 7:11), were actually doing. He concludes that those who used this technique of attempting to circumvent God's command (**"Honor your father and mother"**) were guilty of: 1) transgressing God's command (which should be obvious, since that was their goal); 2) being hypocritical (which Jesus charged them with because they were pretending to uphold God's law while actually defying it by their tradition); and 3) making their worship vain (which was Jesus' conclusion concerning their actions) (49). Although Jesus tied false teaching to vain worship in this text, some brethren still do not see any connection and remain blithely unconcerned about what is taught in their congregation.

Danny Douglas deals a little more at length with the subject of hypocrisy, noting that Jesus referred to the Jewish rulers this way in 14 verses of the New Testament (some of which are duplicates) (52). Concerning Matthew 23, where 8 of these are found, Douglas shows how each one of these relates to hypocrisy (55-60). Afterward, he offers a statement that many will understand immediately, while others will not know the application yet accept the truth of it (60).

When men well-known to the brotherhood have rightly preached for years that Christians are to have no fellowship

with darkness, and are to refuse false teachers, then neglect this teaching by their own personal practices, it is hypocritical.

### Worship

Correct worship was a high priority for Jesus, as already seen in Matthew 15:1-9. Other passages that relate to this subject are Colossians 2:20-23 and John 4, to which brother Douglas makes reference in this chapter. He also includes some interesting, if not bizarre, material to relate some of the current trends in the country. One reference is to Jamie Foxx ascribing Deity to our current president (68). Another and rather different outlook on worship concerns a program called Nurture 2013, which occurred earlier this year at David Lipscomb University. The leader of the event was the president of a college and seminary "which has its background in The Church of the Nazarene Canada" (72). Seriously? Are there no members of the Lord's church who could handle such an assignment?

Lipscomb was also offering "A Personal Ignatian Retreat," based on the "Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola" (72). He was a Roman Catholic who founded the Jesuits. And this is being done by one of "our" schools? If people's eyes have not been open about Lipscomb before, they should be by now. But, wait! Lipscomb is having a blue light special. For only \$1,999, a student can engage in a year-long program that concentrates on the subject of prayer—led by two women! One is an "adjunct professor of spiritual formation at Fuller Theological Seminary...a frequent leader of spiritual retreats...a recurrent speaker at Laity Lodge in Texas...a senior fellow with the Institute for Christian Spirituality at Lipscomb..." As Douglas says: "If this is not the **'speech of Ashdod,'** what would it be (Num. 13:24-25)?" (72-73).

Who could have imagined such nonsense 50 years ago? As the introduction to this book indicates, it does not take long for people to forget about truth and follow error. Brother Douglas includes more information and details about such things—more than can be included in a brief review. He also includes a valuable section, which is subtitled, "The Lord Refutes Error by Implication." He lists nine points relating to this heading (76-78).

### Civil Government

Terry Hightower includes a wealth of material on the subject of civil government; it could be its own book. He provides several quotes which will delight the reader, one of which was stated by Dallas Willard: "We need to understand that Jesus is a thinker, that this is not a dirty word..." (112). In today's society, much more emphasis is placed upon "feeling" than "thinking," yet God gave us the ability to think critically. Hightower examines Jesus' exchange with Pontius Pilate from a logical viewpoint that makes the familiar passage even more interesting (116-21). This section is followed by the heading: "Is the Devil Really the Acting CEO of All Civil Governments?" In pointing out Jesus' relationship with the civil government, it is noted that Jesus referred to Herod as **"that fox"** in Luke 13:31-33, which opens the discussion about our role with po-

litical figures.

Is all government evil? Should we pay taxes? How did Jesus deal with such questions? Hightower provides a chart logically dealing with the controversy (131). He further makes a plea for the use of logic, quoting from Geisler and Zukeran: “Since reason and logical arguments were a part of Jesus’s defense, the apologist and all Christians today should make this an area of study as they engage in the battle of ideas”(135).

Concerning the area of violence, Hightower examines the pacifist rationale together with Jesus’ overthrowing the tables of the moneychangers. Is violence ever necessary? The last portion of this chapter discusses that question (142-48). In his other chapter that deals with Jesus confronting error about the Father, Hightower provides an interesting defense of the words, beyond the sacred page, in the song, “Break Thou the Bread of Life” (201).

### The Holy Spirit

During the past century numerous errors concerning the Holy Spirit have emerged, many of these showing up in the Lord’s church during the past 50 years. Three chapters in the book address Christ’s teachings on this subject. Michael Hatcher’s chapter explains how the promise of baptism in the Holy Spirit in Matthew 3:11 is fulfilled in Acts 1:4-5 (215), how the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work, and the Day of Pentecost (215-18).

Daniel Denham’s first chapter covers the new birth with special attention being given to John 3:5. He deals with the fact that the passive voice used in “**be born again**” does not indicate “complete inactivity” (322). He also combats the idea that the word water in John 3:5 refers to natural birth (323-25). But most of the chapter is devoted to refuting errors that Mac Deaver has been setting forth in the past few years. Is being born again an exact equivalent to being baptized (325-26)? Also considered is that, if two items are listed, does the second proceed from the first, or does the order matter? Two contrasting examples are Mark 16:16 and John 4:24. The reader needs to consider this section carefully (326-27). How many immersions occur in John 3:5—one or two? These and other questions receive thorough treatment.

Denham’s other chapter deals with miracles, which begins with definitions of five words related to their use in the New Testament (360-63). It includes a discussion of providence, the supernatural, and the miraculous, along with some errors concerning these concepts. What points do all of these have in common, and how are they separate? It is important to remember: “Miracles were not an end in themselves.” They served a purpose, which was that of evidence. The importance of this evidence is treated in the discussion that follows (372-75). Those who claim to be able to do them today do not have the same reason as the Lord and His apostles did.

### The Other Chapters

Space prohibits the discussion of the other topics in the book which include many fundamental doctrines. Below is a

listing of each one—with an occasional comment. Christ confronted errors concerning:

Materialism and Money (see especially page 86 for an illustration about giving)

Satan (see esp. 91-93 for a section on confronting those taking the part of Satan)

The Kingdom (esp. 106-7 for an analysis of Luke 9:57-62)

Salvation (see esp. 158 for a brief comment about the state of prejudice in the church)

Unity and Fellowship

The Disciples’ Errors

Himself (see esp. 222-23 for Jesus’ attitudes toward challenges that He faced)

Pride

Worry

Faith and Knowledge (see esp. 257-58 for insight into the thinking of the Jews concerning the Law and its principles, as well as their use of expressions)

Truth (see esp. 266-67 for an interesting rebuttal that can be used on an occasion when liberals seek refuge in congregational autonomy as justification for their departures from God’s Word)

Love (see 281-82 for comments about Dr. Eben Alexander’s book, *Proof of Heaven*)

Repentance (study esp. 289-90, which deals with the issue of faith and repentance from Hiscox’s Standard Manual for Baptist Churches; also note a reason for refusal to pray for someone answering the invitation)

Forgiveness (see esp. 304-5 for an answer to those who try to use David and Bathsheba as a rationale for New Testament marriage and divorce practices; see also 306 for comments on “the sinner’s prayer”)

The End of Time

Heaven and Hell (see esp. 340-41 on the error of the earthly Paradise thinking as it pertains to Muslims)

The Nature of Man (see esp. 351-53 for a thorough definition and explanation of who the Sadducees were)

Women

This volume contains material that is helpful and useful to the Christian in a variety of ways with a number of topics relating to Christianity. The book costs \$17.00 plus postage for individual copies and \$10.20 plus postage for 5 or more. Churches may want to order at least the minimum amount for their elders, deacons, and other leaders. It may be ordered from *Contending for the Faith* (281-350-5516).

—5410 Lake Howell Road  
Winter Park, FL 32792

# DEVIATIONS FROM THE TRUTH

Roelf L. Ruffner, Sr.

## Do You Hear the Turning in the Graves?

**“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me” (Eze. 3:17).**

I read the other day where our apostate brethren at Lipscomb University are up to it again. The “Harold Hazelip School of Theology” has invited Dr. Scott McKnight, a Baptist seminary professor and supporter of the Emerging Church Movement, to speak at the “Biblical Preaching Seminar” October 28-30 and the “Meador Lectures.”

Once again the folks at LU are giving a preaching podium to an unbeliever. Incredible! Brethren David Lipscomb, and James A. Harding, E. A. Elam, H. Leo Boles, past LU Presidents would never have gone along with bringing in a non-Christian to lecture unchallenged on “Biblical Preaching.” But things have changed now days in the rarified atmosphere of academia and compromise. President L. Randolph Lowry III and the interim Dean of the College of Bible and Ministry Steve Joiner seem to have no problem bringing apostates and their fellow travelers to speak on the campus of this school which was once closely affiliated with the churches of Christ.

Of course all this is a clear violation of Eph. 5:11, 2 John 9-11 and a slew of other passages. But what would the Lord say? “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

If someone asks you if LU is one of “your schools” (churches of Christ) just say, “No, they left us and the Bible a long time ago!”

If someone mentions that they have a relative contemplating attending LU, warn them to run from LU like Joseph fled from Potipher’s wife (<http://www.lipscomb.edu/hst/Biblical-Preaching-Seminar>, accessed August 10, 2013)!

## “Accept Christ?”

**“In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab; And their children spake half the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews language, but according to the language of each people” (Neh. 13:23,24).**

I was reminded of this 2500 year old passage as I passed a church of Christ building’s marquee sign the other day. It read “Accept Christ” in flashing electronic lettering. I thought, “Yes, we should ‘accept Christ’ in the sense that we must believe and obey Him as Lord and Master.” But the denominational world does not see it that way. They equate this phrase with the old heresy of “Just-accept-Christ-in-your-heart-as-your-personal-Savior-and-you-will-be-saved” or

“Faith only salvation.” Just ask your denominational friends. Of course they will include “And say the sinner’s prayer to God.” (Where is that in the Bible?) Faith-only salvation is a the symptom of religious schizophrenia which says that repentance, confession and baptism for the remission of sins are not needed for salvation, just belief in Christ. For them, obedience of Christ’s commands is necessary only AFTER you are saved. In other words, “You need to obey Christ in order to be saved, but not really!”

Brethren, we should rid ourselves of denominational jargon and return to the old refrain, “Use Bible words for Bible things.” Let us not confuse New Testament Christianity with phrases rooted in false doctrine. A better phrase to use on that marquee would have been “Obey Christ!” **“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...”** (1 Pet. 4:11).

## Lipscomb U. President Speaks to Interfaith Group

The Nashville, TN newspaper, *The Tennessean* reported that Randy Lowry, Lipscomb University president spoke at an interfaith gathering in the First Presbyterian Church concerning his “insights as a mediator.”

Speaking to what is known as the *Family of Abraham*, Lowry gave insights as a mediator into building relationships. The audience, numbering about 200 people, consisted of “Christians, Jews, Muslims, Bahai’s and nonbelievers” *The Tennessean* reported.

Among the things *The Tennessean* reported that Lowry advised to help settle conflicts is for those who disagree, “to focus on their interests—the things they really care about—rather the issues that divide them.”

One of three scheduled to respond to Lowry was “Amir Arain, a Vanderbilt neurologist and president of the Islamic Center.” *The Tennessean* reported that among the things Arain said regarding settling disputes was, “religious people have to give up the idea that their particular view of faith is the only one” ([http://www.tennessean.com/article/20130823/NEWS06/308230116/1971?nclick\\_check=1](http://www.tennessean.com/article/20130823/NEWS06/308230116/1971?nclick_check=1), Accessed 9:12/13).

Clearly Amir Arain does not represent the mainstream of Islam anymore than Lowry and Lipscomb University represent faithful New Testament Christians.

**—2530 Moore Court  
Columbia, TN 38401**

*GOD’S WORD IS TRUE NO MATTER WHAT!*

*If God’s word says something is so, ten thousand angels saying otherwise cannot change it. (Gal. 1:6-9). As for what man may say, “Let God be true, but every man a liar...” (Rom. 3:4).*

# Gospel Preacher Wayne Coats, 86,

Mt. Juliet, TN passed away Aug. 27, 2013

Brother Wayne Coats was a long time Gospel preacher, educator, author, and the former owner of the Mt. Juliet Funeral Home and Mt. Juliet Memorial Gardens. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Elaine Wright Coats, a son, Robert “Bob” (Jean) Coats, daughter, Gail (Larry) Lane, sister, Delma Frame, and grandchildren, Seth, and Chance Coats. He was preceded in death by his parents, sons: James D. “Bud” Coats, William L. “Bill” Coats, and a daughter, Jeannie Coats Harwell.

Funeral services were Friday, Aug. 30 at Sellars Funeral Home at Mt. Juliet with Buddy Neal and James Boyd officiating. Internment followed the service at Mt. Juliet Memorial Gardens with family and friends serving as pallbearers. Visitation with the family was Thursday, Aug. 29 and Friday, Aug. 30.

Over the years brother Coats engaged in local work, gospel meetings, and lectureships. In confronting error orally or in print he did not mince words but used “great plainness of speech.” He was frank, candid, and even blunt in his description and exposure of error and those who propagate it. In that way he exemplified the Old Testament prophets—“comforting the afflicted, and afflicting the comfortable.”

He was the owner and editor of *THE PLUMBLINE*, a gospel paper he began and edited until he was not physically able to do so. He authored many books and booklets, primarily dealing with those teaching doctrines that loosed brethren from what the Bible bound on them. A few of his books are:

*A Review of ANOTHER LIBERAL DIGRESSIVE EFFORT, As Proposed By James Woodroff, .....To Change The Church Of Christ .....*

*COME ONE—COME ALL, STEP INSIDE THE CHURCH CIRCUS TENT, get Your Babies, Pets, Dolls and Toys Affirmed, Dedicated, and Blessed*

*RUBEL’S RUBBISH OR THE MOUNTAIN SERMON MANGLED BY MODERNISM*

*How The New Liberals DIG UP THE BONES Of The Old Liberals*

*Rubel’s Case Against The Ignorant, Arrogant, Idolatrous, Traditional Church, Relative To Solos, Choirs And Quartets ...or SHELLY ON PRESENTATION MUSIC*

*A Compendium Of Pentecostal Holiness Teachings At The NASHVILLE JUBILEE 1990-1996*

*HOW RUBEL’S BLOATED WINESKINS BURST*

*HOW FLATT FLATTENED THE MASTER’S MOUNTAIN*

*SERMON... or Playing “Simon Sez” with Shelly*

*Mechanical Nut Twisters ...or The Hot Air Halitosis of Change Agents In The Church of Christ as Advocated By Lynn Anderson*

*My Sermon to the First Methodist Church*

He and his wife knew well how to give financially to support good causes and those in need, only to have some of the recipients of their help go into error of one sort or another. One such effort was the Coats’ support of the Memphis School of Preaching. Over the years they had done much to support the school, but in 2005 when the MSOP, along with several other brethren decided to remain in fellowship with brother Dave Miller, director of *Apologetics Press*, regardless of his refusal to repent of his errors, the “re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders” and his so-called “marriage intent” errors, brother Coats ceased his support, as did many of us, of the MSOP. And, sadly the school continues to practice a fellowship of brethren that in times past it openly and forth rightly opposed. But, in so far as I know, certain brethren’s departure from the truth did not move brother Coats to compromise the truth of the Gospel.

For a number of years before the events of 2005 involving Dave Miller, brother Wayne suffered from cancer as well as the consequences of the radiation used to treat it—chronic pain. As long as he could, he continued to preach in lectureships, but finally decided he no longer could participate. Thus, with MSOP’s change of course in ignoring certain sins of the brethren and their new fellowship practices, brother Coats chose to conclude his lectureship work by accepting the invitation of the Bellview elders and their lectureship director, Michael Hatcher, to speak on the 2006 Bellview Church of Christ lectureship, Pensacola, FL and by his decision publicly declaring where he stood.

Thus, after many years brother Coats ceased that part of his labors. He continued to do what he could, but as is true of all of us, he finally ended his earthly pilgrimage, having lived to a good old age, and was gathered to his people in the land of fadeless day.

Beginning on page 14 we have printed one of brother Coat’s editorials from *THE PLUMBLINE*. We believe it captures well his approach to dealing with error and the false brethren who in some way or the other support and propagate it.

—David P. Brown, Editor

“...Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord...that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 13:14).

# IN RETROSPECT

Wayne Coats

Back when Harold Hazelpip was deceiving the hearts of many by babbling heresy as a [Herald of Truth] Speaker, in sermon 986 titled [“The Search for Truth”] Harold opined,

We are [assuming] that it—the Bible—is the inspired Word of God, though this certainly is also an area in which we should be open to whatever facts are pertinent. Any observer of religion is aware that our [problem] is a legitimate one. This is not an affirmation of the Bible’s inspiration but a tenuous [assumption] fraught with legitimate problems and I suspect to whatever pertinent facts may emerge. To help us understand and believe, God has promised the Holy Spirit...When he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak on his own authority but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come—John 16:13. The Spirit of Truth has come. He is waiting to guide you into all the truth if you will let him in.

Such blasphemy! Such ignorance!

For a span of fifty-seven years of preaching the precious Word of God, I have been intensely interested in what preachers have prattled. Boxes on top of boxes of papers have been preserved of what my brethren have written and presented to the world. Some papers are unusually preposterous and silly to me.

One such piece of puerile prattle as can be seen from the above quotation, was burped by one named Harold Hazelpip in a [Herald of Truth] presentation some years ago. I think the page is of interest even now as we continue to see and hear the same kind of rot being regurgitated by some of our young infidels who should know better.

Do we have to [assume] that the Bible is inspired? Must we blindly, stupidly, and foolishly have to assume the existence of God? Do we have to assume that a specific book is the Bible, and is the Word of God? Where is there room for so much assumptions on the part of the liberals?

To assume a thing is to [presume] or [guess] about the thing. Some people think it is smart to offer their heady presumptions. One man’s assumptions are no better than that of another. The world is filled with infidels who assume that the Bible is a book of myths, tales, and legends developed by groups of illiterate people for the illiterate.

Can we know some things? Is it the case that we cannot know anything? Would one express one’s duplicity by declaring, “I know that we cannot know anything?” Can we know that there is a God in Heaven? Can we know that there is no God? Must we assume, guess, and speculate about God? Does the person who burps that there is no God absolutely know that he knows everything? If one does not know everything, even all of that which has been known in the

future; could it not be that even one unknown item, being, or subject could be the existent God?

If we accept the existence of Almighty God, then we have a no problem in accepting the eternal, inspired, unerring, Word of God. I had as soon demonstrate my stupidity in denying the existence of God as to just [assume] the inspiration of His Word. The Mormon assumes the supernatural existence of [*The Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price* and the *Doctrine and Covenants*.]

There are enough hollow-headed skeptics and agnostics in the world without being so nebulous and apologetic relative to inspiration, and thus create more doubts and questions in the minds of people.

If there is a God, and there is, and if He is omnipotent, and He is, and if He could create the world, and He did, then why do we have to be so skeptical as to [assume] inspiration?

Is inspiration a problem? To whom? Well, the infidel surely considers the matter of inspiration to be a real problem. The skeptic also has a problem with inspiration. The cowardly modernist will try to straddle the fence, speak out of both sides of his mouth, whine that he is misunderstood, declaim that his statements are taken out of context and act like a sleazy chameleon as he changes colors from one extreme to another.

Inspiration may be a “legitimate problem” to Hazelpip as an “observer of religion.” I claim to an observer of religion, but inspiration is no problem for me. Could it be that I am afflicted with spiritual cataracts? Is there some modernist assumption that I have not heard of? Is God, Christ, the Bible, a problem to observers of religions?

Relative to inspiration, “...we should be open to whatever facts are pertinent.” That sounds wonderful, but just where do we look for [FACTS]? Are there scholars who have the facts? Who are they? What are the facts? Facts are different from assumptions. Each of the old German modernists tried to get people to think they had the facts.

Hazelpip spoke of “a tenuous assumption fraught with legitimate problems and subject to whatever pertinent facts may emerge?” The trouble with such a flimsy assumption is that any quack can present his own “facts” about inspiration, which to him is most pertinent.

Notice the tripe that, “To help us understand and believe, God has promised the Holy Spirit.” How any man could be so dense and ignorant of the purpose of the Holy Spirit as evinced by Hazelpip is simply amazing. There is no excuse for such blindness and perversion of the truth. To offer a semblance of proof, we are cited John 16:13. Does it not



matter that one of the simplest rules in studying the Bible is that one must consider to whom a passage or statement is addressed? Heaven help us! Little children know better than this.

Beginning back in John 14:1 and continuing on through chapter 17, with the exception of a very few verses, Jesus is speaking to his disciples. Anyone who cares can see this. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to the disciples saying, “**...he shall [teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance] whatsoever I have said unto you**”—John 14:26. Suppose one wants to just assume the deity of Jesus? Suppose one wants to assume the existence of the Holy Spirit? A good question for Hazelip would be, did Jesus promise that the Holy Spirit would teach you ALL THINGS? Can you repeat ALL THINGS Jesus taught? Many things Jesus taught are not revealed in the scriptures—John 20:30-31. Tell us all the other things Jesus taught. As to that which Jesus said, please, out of your memory, repeat all those things. A fellow who claims to have the complete fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to his disciples should not be bashful to repeat from memory, “**...whatsoever I have said unto you.**”

The same persons to whom Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit had been with Jesus, “**...from the beginning**”—John 15:27. Maybe Brother Hazelip would like to tell us what it was like to live with Jesus from the beginning along with the disciples. A little sneer, snarl, or smile will not answer these pointers. Silence is the best answer any liberal can give. False teachers know when to chatter.

I wonder which synagogue Harold was ejected—John 16:2. Were those who would be put out of the synagogue the same who would receive the Holy Spirit? Of course! Our Lord continued his conversation and He stated, “**Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you [into all truth]...and he will show you things to come**”—John 16:13. Is Brother Hazelip a prophet equal to the inspired apostles? Why will he take a passage out of its context, completely away from the persons to whom it was addressed and try to apply it to himself and others today? I speak plainly when I declare that there is no excuse for such patent perversions.

It is a perversion of the most rancid sort to assert, “to help us to [understand] and [believe], God has promised the Holy Spirit.” To enable us to believe, we have the written Word of God. The inspired preacher wrote, “**So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God**”—Rom.10:17.

**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 20:30-31.**

What tidbit of information does Harold have about the mind of God which has not come from the written word?

How much faith–belief–does he have which has been additionally derived from the Holy Spirit? That would be a marvelous revelation indeed, if he would put such into print. I feel so inferior since I do not have the Holy Spirit to help me and if a skeptic reads my scribbling he can attribute my deficiency to a failure to have the Holy Spirit. My lack of understanding is truly a shame. Many of us have worn out numerous Bibles and have read the precious Word each day for many years but the Holy Spirit just seems to have forgotten us, if Hazelip heresy has any validity to it. What does he know about the Holy Spirit that we do not know?

Paul, the inspired preacher wrote, “**When ye [read], ye may [understand] my knowledge in the mystery of Christ**”—Eph. 5:3. Should we believe Paul or Harold? Can we not read the Bible? How much arrogance do we need to read?

Yes, the Spirit of Truth has come and the apostles were the recipients of the Holy Spirit. They were able to cast out devils, speak with new tongues, take up serpents, drink deadly poison, heal the sick, and raise the dead. I do not mean to be unkind, but I deny that brother Hazelip can perform any such miracles. Let him try if he will. Someone will furnish the poison and the vipers if he will demonstrate. Such offers usually still the tongues of the heretics.

What he quipped about the Holy Spirit, “...waiting to guide you into all truth, if you will let him in,” could be heard in any Holy roller church house in the country. I know how liberals tend to ignore any criticism of their foolish perversions. Oh, but we just do not understand. I devoutly wish brethren would exercise some care and discretion in what they say instead of running off their mouths. There is enough heresy, false doctrine and foolishness being propagated by sectarian preachers which will lead to the eternal damnation of millions. Tis a pity when brethren start babbling the same heretical theories.

One further word needs to be expressed. So very often when a faithful brother, “withstands a false teacher to the face,” the whimper is made, “you just didn’t understand me.” If that doesn’t sound convincing enough, one is completely destroyed, annihilated, put to flight and totally overthrown by such powerful words as: “you took my statements out of context.”

If a liberal is so deficient, weak, and helpless as to be unable to express his views in language so as to be understood by normal people, he needs to keep his mouth shut. If a brother condescends to take statements of another out of context, this is dishonest, wicked, and a reflection upon one’s character. There is no reason to misdirect, mis-state or pervert the utterances of another. The truth can be defended, the faith can be affirmed, and heresy can be exposed and opposed in the same spirit as that which our Lord and the apostles used. May God be pleased with our efforts, attitudes, and attempts to please Him.

The most frequent, helpful, and handy tool of the liberals and modernists in the church is to do as one university scholar decided to do with my exposure of his foolishness: He said, “I am just going to ignore him.” That is about as brilliant and profound as any modernist can get.

—Editor, *THE PLUMBLINE*, Volume 6, Number 10, May 2002

# THE OLD PATHS PULPIT

Sermon Outline

Danny Douglas

## HELL

MARK 9:42-48



### INTRODUCTION:

1. Several yrs. Ago: a survey among seminary students revealed that over 50% did not believe in Hell as a real place. A grandfather made light of hell, said he'd never been there or seen it, was then asked by his seven year-old grandson said: "Granddaddy, have you been dead yet?"

2. "Hell" (Greek, *Gehenna*)—Jesus used this term to refer to everlasting punishment in the lake of fire. The word comes from the valley of the son of Hinnom, a deep ravine south of Jerusalem and has a grim history: It was there that God's people offered their children in human sacrifice, fire. 2 Chr. 28:3; 33:6; Jer. 7:31; 2 Kin 23:10. It was said to be a place where waste was cast & continual fires burned there.

3. Jesus warned!—Mat. 10:28.

4. The Father and the Son paid the price so that we would not go there (Gal. 1:4; 2:20; John 3:16; Rom. 5:8-9).

5. Why would the Lord warns us in such a way (Gal. 4:16)? Because of His great love.

### I. Why Jesus does not want us to go there—

A. A place of outer darkness—Mat. 25:25, 26, 30; 1 John 1:5; Exo. 10:21; Jam. 4:17; Heb. 2:3; Num. 32:23.

1. A place without God—1 John 1:5.

2. But in Heaven: **"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof"** (Rev. 21:23).

3. Jesus appeared to Saul in a brightness greater than the sun, and at midday when the sun's rays are the straightest—Acts 26:23; cf. 1 Tim. 6:15-16.

B. A Place of eternal Regret—"Too late."

1. "Son, remember" (Luke 16:25).

2. **"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out"** (Luke 13:28). vs. 24.

3. Imagine watching godly loved ones going over into heaven while you are thrust out!

4. Some things regretted on earth will be longed for in hell: 1 more service, sermon, invitation song, concerned Christian, opportunity, hour, etc.

5. **"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth..."**

C. A Lonely Place—Eph. 2:12 (without the Lord). If you are **"in Christ Jesus,"** you should be thankful! —Eph. 2:13.

1. Last words: **"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"** (Mat. 7:23; cf. Mat. 25:41). **"DEPART FROM ME."** [The last thing king Zedekiah saw—Jer. 39:6-7].

2. The ungodly people:

**But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death"** (Rev. 21:8; cf. 20:15).

3. No godly people (Rev. 20:15); no babies; no little children (Mat. 19:14), but only the devil and his angels, and the wicked (Mat. 25:41).

4. Hypocrites will be there. If don't want to be with hypocrites, then obey God!

5. A highly populated place, but very lonely, like NY, LA, Boston, etc. AP Newspaper article by Jeff Donn, 10/27/1993: "Woman forgotten in life, also overlooked in death." Woman found dead in Worcester, MA; "All the while, the 73-year-old recluse lay dead, probably for four years, in trash on the kitchen floor." How lonely!

6. Yet, hell will be lonelier, without God and no hope for coming to Him!

D. A Painful Place—The Most Painful (Luke 16:23-24)!

1. Matthew 13:41-43—

**The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.**

2. There was a truck wreck on Monteagle Mountain near Chattanooga, TN. The driver's foot caught behind the clutch. About twelve men could not pull him out of the burning truck, although they even tried to pull his leg off to loose him from the flames, they were unable to do so. In the meantime, the trucker was begging for the highway patrolman to shoot him and take him out of his misery!

3. While living in Cambridge, England, one day I was returning from Heathrow airport. There was a traffic

jam. I learned later that a head-on train crash had occurred in London (Sept. 1999) and over 30 people were killed; some were burned to death!

4. But hell is never ending. No hope for relief! Imagine the pain! **“eternal fire” “everlasting punishment”** (Mat. 25:41, 46). Forever and ever. No end!

## II. What Price Should We Be Willing To Pay?

A. Jesus paid a great price (1 Pet. 3:18), but what price are we willing to pay?

B. Mark 9:42. Discuss a millstone weighing 100’s or 1000’s of lbs. Marianas Trench off the coast of Guam over 7 miles deep. Imagine being cast into that with a millstone about one’s neck.

C. Mark 9:43-44. Consider a young man at NW Naval Base who was cleaning a big govt. paper shredder and the power came on. Went to see him at Portsmouth Naval Hospital, his arm was severed above the elbow.

D. Mark 9:45-46. Also consider a grade school boy in Nashville, TN caught on RR tracks—train cut off both legs, but he survived, but what pain for the little chap!

1. **“...into hell, the fire that never shall be quenched”** (vss. 43, 45).

2. **“Where there worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”** (vss. 44, 46, 48). This is a figure from Isa. 66:24, of continual decay and ruin as worms feed on carcasses.

E. Mark 9:47-48. Man in Chattanooga, TN, in early 1980’s, took a pair of scissors and cut out one of his eye balls. Is this what the Lord meant? No, He meant for us to pay any price that we must in order to escape hell and go to heaven!

F. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus warned:

**Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell** (Mat. 5:27-30).

## III. Applications.

A. Cut off sin at the root! Pro. 4:23; 23:7.

B. Sin becomes a part of man, like his hand, eye, foot and it takes great pains and sacrifice at times to get rid of it (Luke 9:23). Paul used a powerful word, “crucified,” to express the meaning of becoming Christ-like and Him living in us (cf. Gal. 2:20).

C. Sin exacts a heavy price (Rom. 6:23). Look at what it cost the Lord (Rev. 1:5).

D. People say:

1. “I can’t change religion, ‘churches’, etc.” What would my friends think, family, etc.?

Which is harder to do? To sever hand, foot, eye, or be lost in hell? Mat. 10:37-38.

2. “I like my alcohol, my beer, etc.” Can’t let go of it. Would it be easier to cut off your hand? Pro. 20:1; Phi. 4:13.

3. “I love the world..my worldly pleasures..my worldly friends, etc.” 1 Cor. 15:33. They can’t keep you out of hell and might even lead you there! (Esau bartered his birthright for a mess of pottage. Will you barter your soul for the **“pleasures of sin for a season”**? Heb. 11:24-26; 2 Tim. 4:10; Jam. 4:4. The love of the world and the loss of the soul! 1 John 2:15.

4. “I can’t give up my companion.” Adulterous, fornication, or homosexual even! But what is easier? Mk. 9:43-48. Heb. 13:4; Mt. 19:6, 9. One day you will have to give up that person anyway!

5. “I like my lust.” (Mat. 5:27-29). Had you rather give it up or cut out your eye? Or worse, be lost in hell?

6. “The Christian life is too hard.” Although the Christian life can be hard, it is not nearly as hard as the consequences of sin. Phi. 4:13; Rom. 8:31, 37; Pro. 13:15; Isa. 57:21.

7. “I’ve been this way for too long.” What about your hand, your foot, your eye? Heb. 12:1-2.

## Conclusion.

1. It is worth any price to miss hell and make it to heaven! Rev. 21:3-4. While there will be weeping in hell and gnashing of teeth, there will be tears wiped away in heaven.

2. We must be in Lamb’s book of life if we are to be in heaven and not in the lake of fire (Rev. 21:27; 20:15; Luke 10:17-20).

3. To have your name written there, you must obey God’s Plan of salvation and remain faithful!—2 The. 1:7-9; Heb. 5:8-9; Rev. 3:4-5). Hear & Believe the gospel of Christ (Acts 18:8; Rom. 10:17; 1:16); Repent (Acts 2:38); Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be baptized to have your sins washed away by blood of Christ (Acts 8:32-39; 22:16; Rev. 1:5). By so doing you will put on Christ and be saved (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4; Mark 16:16). The Lord will add you to His body—the church (Acts 2:38, 41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13). The erring—Jam. 5:16, 19-20; 1 John 1:9; Acts 8:22-24.

4. Consider the words of the following song—Why Not Now—Why Not Now—Why Not Come to Jesus now?

5. He loves you and wants you to come—Mat. 11:28-30.

6. 2 Cor. 6:2, **“(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)”**

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The lectureship was presented from Wednesday, February 20—Sunday, February 24 in the facilities of the Spring Church of Christ. The congregation is superintended by elders: Kenneth D. Cohn, Buddy Roth, and Jack Stephens. David P. Brown is the evangelist working full time with the church. He is also the director of the annual lectureship and editor of the book.

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**Michael Hatcher:** *Christ Confronted Religious Traditions*

**Ken Chumbley:** *Christ Confronted Error About Truth*

**Don Tarbet:** *Christ Confronted Error About Repentance*

**Gene Hill:** *Christ Confronted Error About the End of Time*

**Daniel Denham:** *Christ Confronted Errors About Miracles*

**Charles Pogue:** *Christ Confronted Error About Unity and Fellowship*

**Lester Kamp:** *Christ Confronted Error About Himself*

**Skip Francis:** *Christ Confronted Error About Materialism and Money*

**Geoff Litke:** *Christ Confronted His Disciples' Errors*

**Wayne Blake:** *Christ Confronted Worry*

**Daniel Denham:** *Christ Confronted Error About the New Birth*

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Daniel Denham

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Dub McClish

*Dedicating Babies*

Danny Douglas

*Special Services (Easter, Christmas)*

Michael Hatcher

*Kitchens in the Building?*

Jess Whitlock

*Logic and the Bible*

Terry Hightower

*Modern Translations*

Daniel Denham

*Direct Operation of the Spirit*

Johnny Oxendine

*Voting on Elders*

David Watson

*Drama Teams/Puppet Ministry*

Lee Moses

*Special Ministers*

Tim Cozad

*Disaster Relief Organizations*

David P. Brown

*The Social Gospel*

Lee Moses

*Female Leaders*

Bruce Stulting

*Missionary Societies*

Ken Chumbley

*Ecumenism*

Danny Douglas

*Children's Worship/Divided Assembly*

Bruce Stulting

*Praise Teams*

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*Handclapping*

Jess Whitlock

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*Gymnasiums ("Family Life Centers")*

Tim Cozad

*House Church Concept*

Lynn Parker

*Mechanical Instruments of Music*

David P. Brown

*Fellowship Innovations*

Johnny Oxendine

*Theistic Evolution*

Lynn Parker

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### -Colorado-

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

### -England-

**Cambridgeshire**—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 Sauffley 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., Daniel Coe, evangelist (406) 475-4686 or 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.

### -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.

**New Braunfels**—225 Saenger Halle Rd. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. Wed. 7:30 p.m. Lynn Parker, evangelist. (830) 625-9367. www.nbchurchofchrist.com.

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