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Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

[The following article by our friend, faithful brother in the Lord, and longtime fellow Gospel preacher, Dub McClish, thoroughly reviews Kevin Pendergrass' article entitled, "Where is your authority?" Following brother McClish's review, we have printed Pendergrass' article so our readers can read it for themselves. —Editor]

“WHERE IS YOUR AUTHORITY?”—A REVIEW

Dub McClish

The author (Kevin Pendergrass) of the article bearing the title above operates a blog on which he comments about a wide variety of Bible-related topics. His blog's statement of purpose begins: "The purpose of my blog is to provide honest, sincere, and in-depth Bible study and research to the best of my personal ability...." His opening paragraph indicates that he was reared in and preached in "conservative Churches of Christ," an expression he uses five times. One might wonder if he is implying that he was not honest and sincere and did not engage in in-depth Bible study and research for however many years he preached the Gospel faithfully. It is apparent that he wants readers to know that he has distanced himself from his earlier convictions. The foregoing references to the church leave the impression that he conceives of it as merely another denomination.

I commend his second-paragraph summary of some of the many passages of Scripture that establish beyond doubt the necessity of ordering behavior and speech according to that which God has authorized, a necessity that applies alike to individuals and congregations. All is well until near the paragraph's end, when he begins a sentence with "But what I began to see....," and this turns out to be a very sig-

nificant "but." For the most part, the remainder of the article undermines the author's preceding words (and the passages he referenced).

Remarkably, his third paragraph accurately sets forth principles relating to the law/transgression/sin relationship. He likewise correctly expounds on Scriptural authority, whether posited by an explicit statement or by implication. However, brother Pendergrass follows his admirable prior statements by declaring that most "conservative Churches of Christ" abuse and improperly define or apply "the concept of authority."

The remainder of his article is an attempt to correct three problems that, according to him, illustrate the mistakes of his (apparently) former church affiliation. The remainder of the article takes the reader on a journey into the Pendergrass version of the "new hermeneutics" liberals began championing a few decades ago. The immediate aim of this false scheme of interpretation was to cast aside inspired, Biblical hermeneutical principles that have been tested and proved true by both time and polemics. However, the ultimate aim

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

Editorial...

ON BEING A CHRISTIAN

The old year ends and a new year begins. But Jesus did not say sufficient to the year is the evil thereof. Our Lord taught us to live one day at a time because sufficient to the day is the evil thereof (Mat. 6:34). But people ignore living one day at a time and make a big to do about making new year's resolutions. Of course, rarely are those boasts of great things in the new year much more than lies when it comes to keeping them. One would think that we would not need to be taught such an elementary matter, seeing that no one can live but one day at a time. If we take care of today's business, we are as ready as we can be for whatever tomorrow, if it comes, will bring. Of course some day there will be no next day. As Christians, if tomorrow does not come, we get to go to our long home which is far better than anything here. But while we are here we continue to wish everyone a happy and festive season of good things and that the new year will be happy for you and yours. By the way, it will be much happier if you will learn to live one day at a time.

FRIEND OR FOE

From time to time, over my nearly 52 years of preaching, I have encountered preachers who can preach the gospel and expose error, but they never have learned how to live the Christian life. Thus, they do not know their friends from their foes.

An eldership along with their preacher and three members met with a preacher (we will call him preacher "A") to seek clarification of certain issues, have a better understanding of his work, and properly dispense with any differences that all present indicated they wanted settled, including and especially preacher "A." The meeting could not have gone better. All was handled well, with everyone leaving the meeting in a happy mood having enjoyed the fellowship, clarification of information, and the understanding reached.

Some weeks passed and preacher "A" correctly exposed publicly some hypocritical conduct of certain preachers who did not mind fellowshiping false teachers. Having seen the stand preacher "A" had taken, other preachers sought to help preacher "A" with his exposure of said sinful conduct of these erring preachers. In fact, said preachers had knowledge of these matters long before preacher "A" did. But rather than be thanked by preacher "A," they were summarily attacked by preacher "A" with all sorts of uncomplimentary verbiage he posted on Facebook and in private emails. Preacher "A" was a completely different man than when he left the earlier noted meeting. But as is all too often the case with such people, not many weeks past, and here was preacher "A" once again cooing like a dove to those whom he had earlier in print slapped. And, why such a change in preacher "A"? You guessed it—preacher "A" now sought their help in a certain matter.

What is to be done about such characters? Leave them alone. It is impossible to help them. After all they are "legends in their own minds" and really do not need anyone but themselves—until they think they can use you. Then, all of a sudden, you are important to them again. I had rather play with rattlesnakes than to deal with brethren who never have learned to live the Christian life, regardless of how well they uproot denominational evils and crack liberal nuts—which things are needed. Fundamentally, they are out for themselves and woe be to the person that in their paranoid minds are perceived as obstacles between them and their goals.

—David P. Brown, Editor

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Friday, Feb. 24

6:30 pm—*Congregational Singing*—**John West**

7:00 pm—*Does the New Testament Authorize One Church To Extend Fellowship to a Sister Church*—**Lee Moses**

8:00 pm—*Does the New Testament Authorize One Ch. To Withdraw Fellowship From a Sis. Ch.?*—**Michael Hatcher**

Saturday, Feb. 25

9:00 am—*2 John 9-11, et al., And the Seven Churches of Asia*—**Danny Douglas**

10:00 am—*The Church in Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7)*—**Geoff Litke**

11:00 am—*The Church in Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11)*—**Bruce Stulting**

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1:30 pm—*The Church in Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17)*—**Lester Kamp**

2:30 pm—*The Church in Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6)*—**Jerry Brewer**

3:30 pm—*The Church in Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7-13)*—**Lee Moses**

Sunday, Feb. 26

9:30 am—*The Church in Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-21)*—**Michael Hatcher**

10:30 am—*Ye are my Friends, If ye do Whatsoever I Command You (John 15:14)*—**Daniel Douglas**

LUNCH PROVIDED BY SPRING CONGREGATION

1:30 pm—*Attempts to Justify Church Members Who Fellowship Those in Error*—**Jerry Brewer**

2:30 pm—*How are the Faithful to Deal With Christian Family Members and Close Friends Who Remain in Fellowship With Erring Brethren?*—**Lester Kamp**

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(Continued From Page 1)

of this movement, I aver, is to pave the way for rendering obligatory matters optional—almost without limit. The fruit of the Pendergrass hermeneutic has already moved him to write at length in defense of instrumental music in worship, which he for several years correctly exposed as unauthorized. He now urges this practice as “optional” and one that should not affect fellowship between users and refusers.

The initial “problem” Pendergrass addresses is our “pre-supposition that a law has already been violated.” This he labels “a grave mistake”: “When you condemn someone for not having authority, you are assuming they [sic] are violating a law” (to which I emit, “Duh”). He suggests we should ask about any questionable doctrine or practice, “Is there a law” instead of “Where is your authority?” But what is the difference in the ultimate meaning of the two questions?” He attempts to make a distinction where there is none. His illustration of the Walmart shopper is absurd. The 8 o’clock shopper need only tell his questioner, “The sign on the door says ‘open 24 hours a day’.”

This no-law dictum, however, is Pendergrass’s way of taking a swipe at the Scriptural/logical principle of “proscription by silence.” He has fallen prey to the age-old bromide of denominationalists (and liberals in the church) when challenged for their Scriptural authority to employ mechanical instruments in worship: “Where does the New Testament forbid them?” or “There’s no law against using them.” He no longer recognizes the fact that when God specifies the means of carrying out any Divine ordinance, He does not need to specify any related exclusions—inspired silence in such cases constitutes exclusion.

Rational persons have universally employed this principle every day of their adult lives. We do so unconsciously because it is innate to rationality. When my cardiologist gave me a prescription for Brilinta several months ago, it never entered my mind to ask, “Will you please list all of the medications you’re not prescribing?” Nor did the pharmacist, upon accepting said prescription, say, “I’m sorry for the delay, Mr. McClish, but I must call your doctor to obtain the list of medications he is not prescribing.” The explicit prescription implicitly—and logically—excluded all other prescription medications without naming a single exclusion. By the “Pendergrass principle” my doctor and my pharmacist would have had to explicitly list every unauthorized prescription medication (which, of course, is a gross absurdity).

Inspired writers recognized the proscription-by-silence principle. No angel could be God’s only begotten Son, but not because God named every angel and said, “You are not my son.” Every angel was excluded by God’s saying to our Lord alone, “**Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee**” (Heb. 1:5; cf. v. 13; Acts 15:23–24). The same author (who I believe was Paul) employed this principle. In the course of comments on priests under the Mosaic Law,

he remarked that the Lord was excluded from being such a priest on earth (8:4). But upon what basis was He thus excluded? “**For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe MOSES SPAKE NOTHING concerning priests**” (7:14, emph. DM). When God specified Levi as the priestly tribe (Lev. 8, et al.), it was unnecessary—and would have been superfluous—for Him to list the remaining tribes as unqualified. God’s prescription of Levi as the priestly tribe rendered His silence about a priest from Judah or any other tribe proscriptive.

This incident is a window into the hermeneutical code of inspired men, and it perfectly illustrates the proscription-by-silence principle. This principle is nothing more than the recognition of the force of implication, to which Pendergrass paid lip service in his third paragraph. He even cited Hebrews 7:14 as an illustration of implicit authorization, yet he fails to see that his no-law-against-it contention denies the force of implication, particularly of Hebrews 7:14.

Pendergrass’s no-law-against decree opens the floodgates to erroneous doctrine and practice. Where is the thou-shalt-not statement regarding the religious acts of counting beads, lighting candles, or burning incense? Where are we forbidden to observe the Lord’s Supper on Thursday night? Where is the New Testament law forbidding a local congregation to buy and operate a Papa John’s pizza restaurant to supplement the church’s income? This list can be extended almost endlessly.

Is it really so difficult to see the application of these matters relating to instrumental music in worship? This question takes us back to the earlier mention of the stock reply of those who advocate (or at least tolerate) the addition of instruments to the church’s worship: “The New Testament doesn’t forbid them.” They are wrong; the New Testament does indeed forbid them—by specifying the spiritual music God accepts as singing (not playing) that speaks to, teaches, and admonishes the singers as they worship God (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and by being utterly silent about the use of any music other than singing. Let us rework Hebrews 7:14 relative to instrumental music: “For it evident that instrumental music in Christian worship hath sprung out of human desires; as to which practice Christ spake nothing concerning worship.”

It is difficult to overemphasize the significance and consequence of honoring or rejecting this hermeneutical principle in Bible study. Apart from it the restoration of an apostate church would have been—and is—impossible. Moreover, it would be impossible to maintain the restored church without it. For lack of understanding and/or employing this principle relating to Scriptural silence, the professed “believing” world is hopelessly divided into thousands of sects. And yes, for abandoning this principle the church of the Lord continues to be ravaged by divisive liberalism. And for lack of consistent application of the principle, division

exists even among those who are not dedicated liberals.

The second “problem” Pendergrass professes to see in “conservative Churches of Christ” is that our “misapplied view of authority is very abstract and undefined.” He then accuses us of “subjectivism,” whereby we determine what is “authorized” and “unauthorized” by mere personal whim. It would be humorous—if not so pitiable—to read his claim that a one-cup brother and another brother who defends the use of multiple containers both “use the same reasoning.” Surely, it is evident even to a neophyte in logic and Biblical knowledge that two men do not arrive at contradictory conclusions by “using the same reasoning.” My observations on this initial sample of Pendergrass’s claim that the “same reasoning” brings men to diametrically opposed positions apply likewise to the additional alleged illustrations of his accusation. It is most certain that brethren Gary Summers and Wayne Jackson did not use “the same reasoning” to reach their conclusions regarding praying directly to Jesus, as both of them would surely testify! The “problem” involved in reaching different conclusions is not that the means of ascertaining Biblical authority is “abstract and undefined.” Rather, the illustrations proffered simply illustrate that at least one of the parties is not correctly applying concrete and defined principles of Biblical hermeneutics, a fact that brother Pendergrass once doubtless understood—and followed.

The article next declares that the former “problems” have precipitated the third, described in three terms: “division, ignorance and strife.” One cannot gainsay the fact that very regrettable division exists among brethren, but such is hardly a new phenomenon. The church of the Lord has never been free of it, nor will it ever be—at least in time. I assume that our brother concedes that the apostles employed infallible hermeneutics, yet the apostolic church was beset with those who were determined to bring the Gentile saints under Moses’ Law (Acts 15:1), some who said the resurrection was already past (2 Tim. 2:18), some who denied the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12), some who rejected faithful brethren (3 John 9), and others. As then, so now, it is ridiculous to blame division on correct Biblical hermeneutics. True, some do not

correctly apply these principles, as was the case in the first century. However, much of the division of the first century church did not relate to hermeneutics. Such sinful motives as jealousy, covetousness, fear, human loyalties, pride, hunger for power, and homage to tradition caused much of the division, even as they continue to do so. It is axiomatic that the misuse of a valid principle or practice can never rightly be cited in opposition to the principle or practice itself, which our brother is attempting to do.

Employment of Biblical hermeneutics, which brother Pendergrass has abandoned, will indeed cause division wherever and whenever there are those who refuse to submit to Biblical authority. Further, may we remember that not all division displeases the Lord. Numerous passages demand it when Truth and righteousness are at issue (e.g., Mat. 18:15–17; Acts 15:22–29; Rom. 16:17–18; 1 Cor. 5:1–13; 2 The. 3:6–15; et al.). Such division and strife were not—and are not—the fault of those who demanded/demand the Lord’s authority for their/our words and deeds (Col. 3:17). We do not need a “new hermeneutic,” but that all will correctly apply the “old hermeneutic.”

Although he claims no intent to “demean” or “condemn” any of his targets, the Pendergrass rhetoric falls short of his professed intent. He accuses those whom he has condemned in his essay of “flippantly condemning others.” This is akin to liberals who are very negative about what they perceive to be “negative” preaching. Actually, “flippant” fits his censure of “others” whom he avers are misusing Biblical hermeneutical principles. But do not miss his real aim: It is not merely at some men who have differences. His target is the hermeneutics employed by the inspired writers themselves—which hermeneutics will not allow him (or those who have preceded him in the apostasy with which he is now complicit) to open the flood gates of error. I earnestly exhort brother Pendergrass to return to the solid ground he has abandoned.

—908 Imperial Drive
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AUTHORITY, PERMISSION

WHERE IS YOUR AUTHORITY?

Kevin Pendegrass

“Where is your authority?” Have you ever been asked this question by a member of the Churches of Christ? Growing up in the conservative Churches of Christ, this was a question that was often asked when discussing pretty much any belief or practice. As a former preacher, most of my sermons included the concept of “authority” and the condemnation of those who, I believed, were guilty of practicing and teaching

beliefs that lacked biblical authority.

The typical passage usually cited when teaching about Bible authority is Colossians 3:17 (See also: 1 Corinthians 10:31). Paul says, “**And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.**” The point usually made from this verse is that we must do everything in the name of Jesus. Doing something in “**the name**” of someone signifies doing something by their [one’s] authority (see: Acts 4:7). Since Jesus has all authority (Mat. 28:18) and since authority means the power or permission to act, the conclusion is that in everything we do, we must have God’s power or permis-

sion to act.

Of course, this idea is not just taught in Colossians 3:17. This concept is seen throughout all of Scripture, including verses emphasizing doing His will and meeting His approval (See: Mat. 7:21; 1 The. 5:21; Rom. 12:1-2; Phi. 1:10; etc.). Therefore, when someone accuses you for practicing without God's authority, they are in essence accusing you of acting without God's permission. But what I began to see is that the issue really wasn't the issue. After all, every sincere person attempting to follow God is wanting to act by His power and permission. The real issue is not must we act by God's authority, but how do we know if we are acting by God's authority?

We can know that we are acting by God's authority as long as we are not willfully and rebelliously violating His law (Rom. 6:1-2; Heb. 10:26; Gal. 2:18-21). In Romans 4, Paul is discussing the difference between faith and law. He states a universal truth when he says, "**where there is no law, there is no sin**" (Rom. 4:15). In order for there to be sin, there must be a violation of law for "sin is transgression of the law" (1 John. 3:4). Law can be given either explicitly (John. 13:34; e.g., Do this/Don't do this—States in an explicit way) or implicitly (Num. 3:11-13; Heb. 7:14; e.g., Specifying a speed limit of 50 would implicitly exclude any speed over 50). Sin entered the world because God gave a law and Adam and Eve violated that law (Gen. 3:11). Not only is this a biblical teaching, but this is also a practical teaching. If a city didn't have a speed limit, then there would be no speeding tickets. Authority or permission is intrinsic in the absence of law.

When properly applied, the teaching of authority is unanimously agreed upon. We should all seek God's permission, and abstain from violating God's laws. But the problem arises when the concept of authority is not properly applied and defined. In most conservative Churches of Christ, the concept of authority is abused and is not properly defined or applied. There are at least three problems of how the conservative Churches of Christ misapply biblical authority.

The first problem is the presupposition that a law has already been violated. This is a grave mistake. When you condemn someone for not having authority, you are assuming they are violating a law. In the conservative Churches of Christ, the first question is typically, "Where is your authority?" Whereas the first question should be, "Is there a law?" The next time that someone condemns you because they accuse you of lacking authority for a practice, ask them what law you are violating? You can't be guilty of lacking authority if there is no law you are violating.

Image that you are shopping at Walmart at 8:00 p.m. and a man comes up to you and asks you where your authority is to shop at Walmart past 5:00 p.m. What would your reaction be? You would probably ask him what he means. You would ask him if there is a law, rule or policy that would forbid you

for shopping past 5:00 p.m. Imagine if he responded by saying, "No, there is no law against it, but you just don't have the authority to do it." You would probably try to get the man some help or call for security because he isn't making any sense. Someone cannot properly accuse you of lacking authority until they have proven that you are violating a law. This brings us to the next problem.

The second problem I found is that this misapplied view of authority is very abstract and undefined. When one begins with an abstract belief, then any practice can be "authorized" or "unauthorized" at one's own subjective choosing. Let me illustrate exactly what I mean. All of the examples below are from preachers of the Churches of Christ.

Those in the Churches of Christ who believe that it is a sin to use multiple containers for the Lord's Supper do so because they claim that there is no authority. In an article by Andrew Richardson, he begins by asking, "What authority do men have to use multiple cups of fruit of the vine during their congregation's observance of the Lord's supper?" Their conclusion? There is no authority. But then, using the same reasoning, Wayne Jackson teaches that there is authority for multiple containers for the Lord's Supper.

Professor of Freed Hardeman University, Dr. Ralph Gilmore, believes that one is authorized to hand clap in worship (Freed Hardman University, Lectureship: Open Forum 2007). Dr. Dave Miller believes that one does not have the authority to clap in worship.

Wayne Jackson believes that one has the authority to pray directly to Jesus. Gary W. Summers does not believe that we have the authority to pray to Jesus and must pray directly to God the Father.

These examples could be endlessly multiplied. You have those in the Churches of Christ who believe there is no authority to have a kitchen in the church building. You even have those in the Churches of Christ who argue that there is no authority to support an orphans home out of a "church treasury."

It is not my intent in this article to demean or condemn any of these men. My intent is to simply show the inconsistency and to illustrate how some of these men are justifying practices under the guise of authority while others are condemning the same practice under the guise of authority, even though they are all supposedly using the exact same alleged reasoning. This is what happens when you use an abstract, undefined false presupposition. This brings me to the third problem with this belief.

The third problem is the division, ignorance and strife this belief has caused. Flippantly condemning others by presupposing that there is no authority for a practice has turned into a hobby for many preachers and has become the shallow answer for members of the conservative Churches of Christ when they don't really have an answer. Aside from the illus-

trations above, I have personally heard preachers claim that there is no authority for power point during sermons, pitch pipes during worship and even chewing gum for recreational purposes since we shouldn't be spending money on superfluous things. Of course, as stated before, the list could literally be endless.

Here is the point: Seeking God's permission is not a bad thing. It is a good thing. However, we must first understand that if there is no law being violated, then there can be no

sin. Furthermore, having your own convictions through your personal study is not a bad thing. It is a good thing. However, we should not condemn others and divide lines of fellowship where there is no law. Until we let go of shallow answers and turn to the depths of God's truth, unnecessary division will keep occurring and confusion will continue to reign king.

October 15, 2016—*This article is printed without any changes or modifications.*—**Editor**

<http://www.kevinpendergrass.com/category/authority/>



“AN IMPERFECT CHURCH FOR IMPERFECT PEOPLE”?

Lee Moses

Some time ago, this writer passed by an advertisement for a denominational group which proudly proclaimed that they were “an imperfect church for imperfect people.” Obviously, they thought that many people would find this appealing. They perhaps thought that people would reason with themselves, “Well, I’m not perfect, and neither is anybody else. Those who would claim to be perfect are just hypocrites. Since I will never be perfect, I may as well join in with those who are at least willing to admit that they are not perfect.” “Nevertheless what saith the scripture” about “an imperfect church for imperfect people”?

The Lord's church is the perfect church. It is perfect in its origin—the eternal mind of God (Eph. 3:10-11). Since it comes from the mind of God, it is perfect in its design (2:20-22). It has the perfect Builder, Christ (Mat. 16:18). It has the perfect atonement, the blood of Christ (Eph. 5:25-27). It has the perfect Head, the perfect King (5:23; Col. 1:13). It has the perfect nobility of purpose, to proclaim the saving Gospel and to glorify the King of kings (Mat. 28:18-20; Eph. 3:20-21). It has the perfect destination, the dwelling place of God (1 Cor. 15:24). Contrariwise, any other church has none of these things. They are humanly designed, built, perpetuated, governed, and will go the way of all the world (2 Pet. 3:10; 1 John 2:17). So, the church who admits they are “an imperfect church” can at least be commended for truth in advertising.

We have all heard the saying “Nobody is perfect.” It is true that nobody is sinlessly perfect, “**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God**” (Rom. 3:23); “**All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way**” (Isa. 53:6); “**If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us**” (1 John 1:8). Yet, when one is baptized for the remission of his sins to be added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:38, 41, 47), that per-

son is perfect: “**There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**” (Rom. 8:1, emphasis LM). There remains no more guilt for their sins: “**And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God**” (Rev. 14:5). As a Christian lives by the Scriptures, “**The man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works**” (2 Tim. 3:17). The apostle Paul labored to build up the church “**that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus**” (Col. 1:28). Christians are still susceptible to temptation, they still need God, and they most certainly are not God. Yet by the grace of God, they can be perfect for the use of the Lord, and they can stand perfectly pure before the Judgment Throne.

So is “an imperfect church for imperfect people” desirable? No doubt some will think so. But why? One does not have to settle for that which is vastly inferior. The Gospel invitation is open to all, regardless of how imperfect they may have been in times past (Mat. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:17). Do not settle for “an imperfect church for imperfect people.” Only accept the perfect church for perfected people.

—621 South Central High Road
Rives, TN 38253

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1:8-10; see Rom. 1:16; Gal. 3:26, 27; Acts 2:38, 41, 42, 47; Eph. 1:3; 5:27; 1 John 1:7).

DEVIATIONS FROM THE TRUTH

Roelf L. Ruffner

“PHYSICIAN, HEAL THYSELF?”

“Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them” (Luke 4:40).

I try to keep abreast of the comings and goings in the denominational world because I firmly believe in the axiom, “Know thy enemy!” Recently I saw the following article in the daily issue of *Charisma* (a Pentecostal-charismatic online magazine), “C. Peter Wagner Admitted to Hospital for ‘Weakened Condition.’” The article went on to report that the family requested the prayers of everyone since this Pentecostal preacher was in the hospital with dehydration problems.

I googled this man’s name and found that he was prominently known writer, theologian, and missionary to South America. He has even taught at the Fuller Theological Seminary in California. He has written some seventy books including one titled “How To Have A Healing Ministry” in 1988.

Hmmm! If he believes that miraculous healing is for today and he has taught others how to heal, then why doesn’t he heal himself or have one of his disciples heal him? The answer is that he is a false teacher and cannot do this (Rom. 16:17,18). Every so-called “healer” in the past has died. If their claims were true, they would still be with us.

The purpose of the miracles found in the New Testament was to confirm or “make secure” (*Vines*) the word of God. **“And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following”** (Mark 16:20). We have that confirmed word today in the form of the New Testament (Jude 3). Why do we need it confirmed again? It is once confirmed always confirmed. When a thing is confirmed, the passing of time does not unconfirm what was confirmed.

I wish no ill will toward Mr. Wagner. I hope he gets well. Yet above all my prayer is that he repents of the false doctrine(s) he has helped perpetuate for many years. The age of miracles is past and the inspired, infallible, inerrant word of God is the standard of faith and practice for Christians. **“But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away”** (1 Cor. 13:10).

[<http://www.charismanews.com/world/60109-c-peter-wagner-admitted-to-hospital-for-weakened-condition?> as of September 27, 2016.]

SPIRITUAL INJUSTICE

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:6, 7).

October 18, 2016, at Lipscomb University (LU) in Nashville, TN, Ms. Michelle Higgins of St. Louis was invited to speak in chapel services. LU, named for the late brother David Lipscomb, was once affiliated with the churches of Christ but that affiliation is long gone. It has now wholly apostatized and is in the process of morphing into another secular institution.

Ms. Higgins is “director of worship and outreach ministry at the South City Church (Presbyterian) in St. Louis, MO” and spokesperson for Black Lives Matter (BLM), a racially divisive leftist political organization. Why would LU have anything to do with this lady and BLM? They had her speak at TWO other events on campus over a two day period. In her chapel talk, she said, “White supremacy demands that only one type of worship education understanding be the center of how we view Jesus.” “White supremacy” is a phrase associated with the Ku Klux Klan and racism, not New Testament Christianity. There is no room in the Gospel for racism of any sort, whether white or brown or black. The Christianity of the New Testament was the same Christianity practiced by LU’s namesake—David Lipscomb. From what I have read, he had no place in his heart for the man-made barriers of race, ethnicity, and social class. **“And (God) hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation”** (Acts 17:26).

What is happening to LU has happened many times throughout history. Men and women have pushed God and obedience to His word out of their lives by compromise and apostasy. This spiritual void is replaced by Satan and his false gospel of “social justice.” This false gospel upends the Great Commission and righteous living with a pseudo-religious zeal for righting of all perceived “wrongs” in society (real or imagined). Dear reader, our world will always have its injustices because it is ruled by Satan (Mark 14:7; 1 John 5:19). Only at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the subsequent Judgment Day will all wrongs be revealed and made right (2 Cor. 5:10; 2 The. 1:7-9).

Also in the article was a picture of LU’s mascot – a statue of a bison or buffalo. LU allows students to write graf-

fiti and slogans on it (apparently the statue is washable). In honor of Ms. Higgins, the letters “BLM” were spray painted on the side of the statue along with the old communist salute of a clenched fist. How more disgusting can this get?

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4, NKJ).

Jesus and His faithful brethren realize that this is a sin-sick world (1 John 2:15-17). We should not make it our primary mission as Christians to right all the wrongs around us. Rather we should make it our goal to fulfill the Great Commission (Mat. 28:19,20) and reach a dying world with the Gospel. Only the word of God can change the human heart and its behavior. **“And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 22, 23).**

[<http://dailyrollcall.com/?p=13813> as of October 24, 2016

<http://fox17.com/news/local/lipscomb-university-facing-criticism-for-a-speaker-connected-to-black-lives-matter> as of October 24, 2016.

<http://luminationnetwork.com/category/news/as> of October 24, 2016.]

THE GOSPEL VS. THE WORLD

“And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25).

There Paul stood, probably in chains (cf. Acts 26:29), before the Roman Procurator of Judea, Marcus Antonius Felix and his beautiful nineteen year old wife, the princess Drusilla, great-granddaughter of King Herod the Great. Felix, a freed slave, had clawed his way to the top of the Roman bureaucracy. He was known as a very licentious person. Along the way to his position, he had seduced Drusilla away from her first husband, King Azizus of Emesa. They were now living in adultery (cf. Mat. 19:9). As Procurator, he had accepted bribes and also had a Jewish high priest assassinated. What does Paul say to them? Does he proclaim to them the need to “like and feel good about yourself” or “don’t worry, be happy” or “God accepts you the way you are?” Not Paul!

Paul knew that this pair had a knowledge of Christianity (Acts 24:22). That foregoing meant that they knew of Christianity’s claim that Jesus was the Christ and had risen from dead. They may have heard of the cry of Jesus to **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mat. 4:17)**. They knew of the thousands who had repented of their sins and been immersed in water for the remission of their sins in Jerusalem a few years before (Acts 2:38, 41).

Luke records that Paul **“reasoned”** or gave a strong argument regarding three things: **“righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.”** **“Righteousness”** meant upright conduct before God. **“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Pro. 14:34).** **“Temperance”** meant self-control, exactly what Felix and Drusilla were not practicing. **“Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness” (Pro. 30:20).** Paul also covered something many forget about today—**“the judgment to come.”**

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

Assuredly, Paul spoke “truth to power” before these two august sinners in Caesarea. He did not compromise the Gospel to suit the audience. **“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2).** Some today would accuse Paul of being “unloving and hateful” because he pointed out the sin of these sinners and the remedy. Yet, is it not the loving thing to do regarding any sinner?

Felix’s reaction to Paul’s message revealed his fear. As a judge of Paul and others he knew what judgment and justice involved. He physically shook or trembled (**“was terrified”** *ASV*, 1901) at the prospect of divine punishment for his sins. This pagan understood Paul’s plain preaching. The neo-pagans and hedonists of today can also understand plain Bible preaching. **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).** Sadly, his response was not obedience of the Gospel, but procrastination.

Drusilla’s reaction is not recorded by Luke. This pampered teenager may have just shrugged off Paul’s message as “hell fire and brimstone stuff.” As a **“Jewess” (Acts 24:24)**, she probably understood more deeply than Felix what Paul was speaking about. She may have also noticed her husbands’ reaction. Did she tremble, at least inwardly? History records that Drusilla and her son by Felix tragically died in the fire and brimstone from Mt. Vesuvius’ eruption August 24, 79 A.D. Yet, it is also just as tragic every time a sinner spurns the Truth and dies unforgiven by the blood of Christ. **“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16—NKJ).**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonius_Felix as of September 22, 2016.]

TORMENTED FOR ETERNITY

“And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come

hither to torment us before the time?” (Mat. 8:29).

The demons that possessed the two men in the country of the Gergesenes were not shy about proclaiming their belief in Hell as a place of eternal punishment. They knew what awaited them at the Judgment Day (“**the time**”) and who would send them to Hell—the Son of God. The devil and his minions will not go out of existence or be annihilated at the Judgment. **“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever”** (Rev. 22:10). Do you not believe in Hell or in eternal torment? Satan and his demons do!

Yet some religious folk and a growing number of my brethren do not believe in Hell. The idea of eternal punishment makes them squeamish at best. Their questioning usually begins with, “How could a loving God...?” In essence, they do not believe in the inspiration and authority of the Bible because the Bible is replete with warnings about and descriptions of Hell. The Prince of Peace spoke more about Hell than He did Heaven. Notice the Son of God’s explicit warning:

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:47, 48).

In other words, let nothing deter you from entering “the kingdom of God” or Heaven. While both are eternal, Hell and its punishments are incredibly horrendous. Heaven is indescribably wonderful. Hell is God’s ever burning and ever decaying refuse dump—Heaven His ever shining eternal city.

Recently, I heard of a preacher admit to the congregation that he did not believe in eternal punishment. He (including false teacher Edward Fudge and the Jehovah Witnesses.) believes that the sinner will be punished by annihilation at the Judgment Day. But Jesus in His description of the fate of those sentenced to Hell at the Judgment Day said,

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into EVERLASTING fire, prepared for the devil and his angels...And these shall go away into EVERLASTING punishment: but the righteous into life eternal (Mat. 25:41, 46—Emphasis mine, RLR).

The punishment for rebellion against the All Mighty on that great and terrible day will be as eternal as the one who gives it. And how do you “annihilate” or burn up a “living soul”—the eternal spirit given by God to a human being (Gen. 2:7)? To ask such a question is to answer it.

How could a loving God NOT send a sinner to Hell? **“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”** (Gen. 18:25). He sent His only begotten Son to this rebellious world to save us from Hell. **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in**

him SHOULD NOT PERISH, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16—Emphasis mine, RLR). The word *perish* refers to the “**second death**” (Rev. 21:8) or the eternal torment which will be worse than physical death. It is only right or just that God, who patiently put up with those who defiantly disobeyed Him in their life on earth, will sentence them to eternal separation from Him (Rom. 3:4). He warns us repeatedly of the consequences of sin in the His word (Rom. 6:23). By His grace He offers us pardon or remission of our sins (Acts 2:38). Yet He made us creatures with free will. If we fail to believe the Scriptures and accept His offer, we have only ourselves to blame for all eternity (cf. Luke 16:27-31).

Years ago, I often heard sermons preached about Hell from many pulpits and on the radio. Now even those who claim they believe in the Bible and the doctrine of eternal punishment rarely mention it. Imagine a fireman timidly knocking on the door of a burning house and telling the occupants, “I certainly don’t want to alarm you but you might consider vacating your home. I think smoke is coming out of the back window. Please don’t hurry!” Rather the Gospel should be proclaimed as a matter of great urgency with a warning that Hell is to be avoided at all costs. **“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”** (Mat. 23:33). **“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”** (Acts 22:16 - *NKJ*).

WILL YOU AND I BE ABLE TO MAKE THIS STATEMENT AT THE END OF OUR LIVES?

“Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27—*ASV*, 1901).

This statement was made by the Apostle Paul as he met for the last time with the elders from the church of Christ in Ephesus. He had labored among them for over two years as an evangelist. During this time, he had (1) twelve disciples of John the Baptist baptized; (2) preached in the local synagogue; (3) preached in the school of Tyrannus; (4) preached the word of the Lord **“to all that dwelt in Asia....both Jew and Greek”** (Acts 19:10); (4) performed miracles; and, (5) caused many to burn their books of superstition for the sake of the word of God (Acts 19:19). The inspired writer Luke summed up Paul’s work in Ephesus by writing, **“so mightily grew the word of the God and prevailed”** (Acts 19:20).

But what did Paul mean by the phrase “I am pure from the blood of all men”? He may have been referring to a passage from the Old Testament book of Ezekiel:

When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he

shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul (Eze. 3:18-19).

Paul felt no pangs of conscience for failing to teach his neighbors the Gospel of Christ. He had kept nothing back. He had proclaimed the Gospel publicly and **“from house to house”** (Acts 20:10).

The Lord Jesus Christ has given each Christian a similar mission in this life. **“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”** (Mark 16:15). This commission was not given to the apostles and the Christians of the First Century A.D. only but to us as well. What verse in the New Testament gives any Christian permission to opt out of this blessed command? Some claim they “don’t know enough” to teach others the Truth or are “too tired” or “too busy” or “too shy” to obey the Lord in this matter. The first excuse is cured by studying the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15) and even using various personal evangelism aids. “Too tired”—yet our Savior was also tired unto death as He carried our cross to Calvary. “Too busy”—the Lord was also busy with the Universe (**“upholding all things by the word of His power”** (Heb. 1:3) yet He found 33 years to come, live, and die as a man on earth. The “too shy” excuse can be remedied by the proper application of Philippians 4:13—**“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”** and the use of a Gospel tract placed in the hand of a sinner. Yet, this command of the Lord has a great blessing attached to it—Joy!

And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house (Acts 16:33, 34).

That joy is not only shown by the former sinner and his teacher but also by the inhabitants of Heaven (Luke 15:7). Have we forgotten (or ever known) the joy of being a part of a sinner’s decision to have their sins remitted by entering that watery grave of baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Col. 2:12)? Will we be able to make Paul’s claim on that great and terrible Day when we stand before the Judge to answer for our lives? **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”** (2 Cor. 5:10).

SHOWER CAP SALVATION?

“Wearing a shower cap only moments from entering the baptismal waters, Ophelia White was beaming with excitement.”

This was the first sentence from an article in a Southern Baptist publication about the baptism of a 94-year old woman in the Cook Baptist Church in Ruston, LA. The article claims the woman was baptized as a young girl and “for decades believed she had a relationship with Christ.” A friend, Joy, convinced her that she did not know “Christ

as her personal Savior.” After weeks of discussion with Joy, Ophelia “publicly announced her profession of faith to the congregation” and was re-baptized. One must assume her first experience was not good enough, according to this article, because she did not have a “personal relationship with Jesus Christ.”

In this same article, Joy relates how years earlier she discovered that her husband, who was a deacon in the Baptist Church, “admitted he did not have a saving knowledge of Christ” and as they were praying one day he “accepted Christ” and I assume was re-baptized.

I wonder what the Bible says about this. (Jerusalem, Day of Pentecost, A.D. 30, responding to Peter’s preaching) “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, have ye made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? Do ye have a relationship with Him? If not, let all of ye bow thy heads and say the sinner’s prayer with me. Then at next month’s baptismal Sunday thou wilt all be immersed in the Jordan River.” Oops! I guess Peter wasn’t a Baptist preacher because he actually answered a different way: **“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”** (Acts 2:37, 38).

Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza: “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, Knowest thou Jesus as thy personal Savior? The eunuch replied, I believe Jesus is the Son of God. Then Philip said, before thou art baptized thou needest to say this sinner’s prayer with me and be saved. And they prayed. Afterwards Philip said, Sir, this water stinketh, let us go onward to Gaza so I might baptize thee in the clean water of the Mediterranean Sea.” Oops! It actually reads,

And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him (Acts 8:36-38).

In the book of Acts it is recorded how Jesus Christ revealed Himself to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, Syria. A blinded Saul was told by Jesus to go into Damascus where **“it shall be told thee what thou must do”** (Acts 9:6). There for THREE days he fasted and PRAYED. Jesus sent the Christian Ananias of Damascus to Saul saying, “Saul, the Lord hast heard thy cry to Him and hast forgiven thy sins because thou hast accepted Him as thy personal Savior and hast called on His name. Praise the Lord! I will order thee a shower cap from Jerusalem. As soon as it arriveth we will baptize thee and the other baptismal candidates in either

the clear Abana or Pharpar Rivers, take thy choice. What size is thine head?" Sorry, that must be a Baptist rendering of the text. It should read Ananias **COMMANDING** Saul, **"And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"** (Acts 22:16). And Saul was baptized for the remission of his sins "immediately" (Acts 9:18).

Please do not take my attempt at satire as a personal attack on Ms. White, her friend or any of my Baptist friends and neighbors. The simple truth is that Baptist baptism is not Bible baptism. Baptist doctrine has one saved by faith only, **BEFORE** baptism. But the Holy Bible teaches one is saved at the point of baptism for the remission of sins after believing, repentance of sins, and confession of Jesus Christ as God's Son (cf. Rom. 10:17; Mark 16:16; Mat. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21, etc.)

Why remain in a man-made religious organization that teaches false doctrine? Are you depending upon some religious experience to save you rather than the blood of Jesus Christ? One comes into contact with that cleansing blood **ONLY** when they are immersed or buried into Christ's death (Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21; Heb. 9:14), not because of some "personal relationship" or the uttering of a "sinner's prayer" that cannot be found in the New Testament! And now why tarriest thou?

[<http://www.bpnews.net/47813/its-never-too-late-94year-old-gains-new-life> as of November 1, 2016]

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS ANSWERED ABOUT THE SABBATH

1. Didn't Jesus worship God on the Sabbath while on this earth?

Yes, but Jesus also lived and worshipped under the Law of Moses which has been done away with.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, hav-

ing forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, NAILING IT TO HIS CROSS (Col. 2:13, 14—emphasis mine, RLR).

"Having ABOLISHED in his flesh the enmity, even THE LAW OF COMMANDMENTS contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (Eph. 2:15—Emphasis mine, RLR).

2. Didn't the Apostle Paul often teach and preach on the Sabbath in synagogues?

Yes, he used every opportunity to proclaim the Gospel. Yet he preached and taught on other days of the week as well. His mission was to both Jew and Gentile.

And upon THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight (Acts 20:7—Emphasis mine, RLR).

3. Didn't Jesus actually rise from the dead on Saturday rather than Sunday, being crucified on Thursday?

Jesus was placed in the tomb late Friday afternoon and arose early Sunday morning. To the ancient Jews any part of a day was counted as a whole day (cf. Esther 4:15-17; 5:1).

Jesus' body was laid in Joseph's tomb right before the Sabbath began Friday evening.

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, THE DAY BEFORE THE SABBATH, Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph (Mark 15:42-45—Emphasis mine, RLR). He arose Sunday morning at dawn.

And WHEN THE SABBATH WAS PAST, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had

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bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning **THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK**, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun (Mark 16:1, 2—Emphasis mine—RLR).

4. Doesn't Hebrews 4:9 teach that one must keep the Sabbath?

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Heb. 4:9). The context of this verse shows that it refers to the Christian's Heavenly reward. “For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world” (Heb. 4:3). That “rest” is not on Saturday, but is an eternal rest in Heaven.

Christians must follow the inspired New Testament example of worshipping God on the first day of week—Sunday. “And upon **THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK**, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7).

THE POWER TO BECOME

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 6:12, 13).

I am thankful to God to be a simple, New Testament Christian—free from the bondage to sin; free from the tentacles of false doctrine; free from denominational trappings; free from Biblically unauthorized worship—in other words, free to do God's will.

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin,

but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:17, 18).

I am not a Christian through my own meritorious works, but through the love and grace of God and His only begotten Son (John 3:16; Titus 2:11,12). Yet I also obeyed God's Plan of Salvation for humanity—the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16,17). The Gospel or “good news” is simple, forthright, and determined. Plain-vanilla Gospel preaching saved my 12-year old soul from Hell. As the Apostle Paul explained to the Corinthians,

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (1 Cor. 2:4, 5).

It is the wonder of the ages that God allows us to partake of the atoning sacrifice of Christ and be saved from our sins. I came into contact with the blood of Christ when I became a Christian (Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:4).

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Rom. 5:8, 9).

However, obeying the Gospel also opens up a door to our true potential as children of God. As Christians we are part of something greater than ourselves—the Kingdom of Christ. New Testament Christianity helps make us what God intended for humanity to be: spiritually, socially, intellectually, emotionally, and physically. “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

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At the urging of others we are making these materials more widely available than possible by printed media. Through our Website, these are accessible at no charge to Bible students everywhere. If the things we have written help even one person to a better understanding of the Sacred Text and to a closer relationship with its Divine Author, we will feel amply rewarded. Please visit thescripturecache.com soon. —Dub McClish

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ (Eph. 4:14, 15).

The phrase “power to become” (John 1:12) involves the liberty to either obey the Gospel one has heard and believed or disobey. The language used says one gains the “power” or liberty of action to become a son of God when they believe and obey. For example, a medical school student may say, “I am studying TO BECOME a doctor.” He or she has not become a doctor yet, something must be done that only they can do. Likewise after hearing the Gospel (Rom. 10:17), the believer in Jesus Christ has the power or freedom of choice to proceed with their obedience to the Gospel (God’s Plan of Salvation). The Gospel includes not only belief in Jesus, but repentance of sins (Acts 17:30), confession of Christ as God’s Son (Rom. 10:9, 10), and baptism for the remission of their sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). If they DO this, they are

saved from their sins and are “born again” (John 3:3, 5). If they fail to act in obedient faith, they are not a New Testament Christian or “sons of God” (John 1:12) no matter how loudly they profess that they are.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Mat. 7:21-23).

Are you a New Testament Christian? Have you obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ or are you merely paying lip service to it?

—2530 Moore Court
Columbia, TN 38401



My brethren, be strong
in the Lord, and in the
power of his might.
Ephesians 6:10



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Second Debate on the Subject of:

REALIZED ESCHATOLOGY

April 20-23, 2017

**Bellview Church of Christ,
4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, Florida 32526**

The propositions to be debated are:

Howard Daniel Denham will affirm: *The Scriptures teach that the general resurrection of the dead is yet future and is a bodily resurrection.*

Holger Neubauer will affirm: *The Scriptures teach that the general resurrection is a bodily resurrection and is not still future.*



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-Oklahoma-

Elk City—Northeast Church of Christ, 616 N. Locust Ave., Mailing address P.O. Box 267, Elk City, OK 73648-0267, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m. Wed., 7:00 p.m. Jerry and Nathan Brewer, evangelists. The church building is one block east of North Van Buren, on East Avenue C in Elk City, Oklahoma . FaceBook : www.facebook.com/nechurchofchristecok. Phone: (580) 225-4395

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

-South Carolina-

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

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) 218-2892; dubmclish@gmail.com.

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. 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.

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