



Diakrisis (Australia)

'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)

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TA Ministries is a non-denominational faith ministry,
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Homiletics (Preaching) Course

In August 17th-21st this year the Pacific Bible Institute students, as part of their Graduate studies, will be attending a week long Homiletics course.

We are opening this course free of charge to any pastors or those who would like to sit in on a week of morning lectures. Certificates will be issued for those who complete the week. For more information see P.20.

Editor's Comment

Are the 66 books of the Bible 'the Scriptures'? Is the word of God only in these books? Is it the final word? Can we hear from God in other ways?

A large proportion of Christianity today believe the Word of God is *not* just in the written words of the Bible. Every week there are new words from God given in 'prophecies', 'tongues' or words given to people in dreams and visions. My question is: Why, if these are words from God, are these not added to our Bible? Is revelation from God now closed or is it still open and we are receiving new revelation? Does the Holy Spirit still speak to us like He spoke to the prophets and apostles? What does the Bible itself say?

Revelation from God is now ended, closed.

'God who at sundry times and in various manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son...' (Heb.1:1,2).

The '***sundry times***' literally refers to '*many parts*'. God gave revelation in '*many*' incremental and progressive '*parts*'. The final revelation is Jesus Christ. The phrase '***various manners***' means this revelation came by *many means*, including by the '*prophets*'. This included all the dreams, visions, angelic visitations, etc. The word '***spoken***' in verse 2 is Greek Aorist indicative active - a snapshot of something that *has occurred* in the past ('***in time past***'), at a set time (indicative) and spoken (active) by God alone. *There is no room here for any continuing revelation!* This Word became '***the faith once delivered to the saints***' (Jude 3) by the prophets and apostles who were the '*foundation*' of the church (Eph.2:20). Do we need to continue to build the 'foundation' set down by '*past*' prophets and apostles? If words were to continue then why did God not give more prophets and apostles? Why the silence for nearly 2,000 years? Why did the church fathers unanimously acknowledge revelation as ceased?

The 'more sure word of God' is now 'the Scripture'.

2 Peter 1:19 speaks of the '***more sure word of prophecy***'. But the *context* is often missed. The previous verse 16 shows the context is about extra biblical revelation: '***For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty***'. What is this '*eyewitnesses of his majesty*' referring to? The next verse explains it as the transfiguration on the mount: '***For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount***' (vs.17,18).

Firstly, the word '***fables***' in verse 16 is the Greek '*muthos*' from which we derive 'mythology'. The apostle Paul also used this word when referring to

false teachers turning people away from ‘*sound doctrine*’ and to ‘*fables*’ (2Tim.4:2-4). The context of Peter is also about listening to people bringing extra biblical revelation and here it is called ‘*cunningly devised fables*’.

But there is also the mention here of the Transfiguration (Matt.17:2; Mk.9:2). This was a *vision*, an *appearance* of Moses and Elijah and an *audible voice* from God (vs.17,18). Yet the next verse contrasts something even ‘*more sure*’ than even this vision and audible voice!: ‘***We have also a more sure word of prophecy...***’ (vs.19). What is this ‘*prophecy*’? It is the ‘***prophecy of THE scripture***’ (vs.20)! Is this ‘***Scripture***’ now the written word of God as in the Bible? Yes! The next verse says so: ‘***For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost***’. Is this not what the prophets and apostles gave us? Is this revelation not now in the ‘*past*’ (Heb.1:1-3)? Is this revelation not what we have in the Bible, or are we to *add* new words from prophecies, visions, dreams, tongues...?

Some say we ‘limit God’ by not accepting new revelations as His Word? But has God not limited His Word when He states that these methods are ‘*past*’ (Heb.1:1-3) and now there is a ‘***more sure word***’? God does the ‘limiting’!

What would it be like with no written word, the ‘*more sure word of prophecy*’? Answer: exactly what it is like now in many churches - uncertain visions, dreams, experiences and new words as revelation from God!

The ‘*more sure*’ here is the Greek ‘*bebaios*’ - something ‘fixed, certain’. This ‘*more sure word*’ is said to be ‘***the scriptures***’ which are ‘fixed, certain’! At the end of the 2nd century the Jews and the church Fathers set it down as a ‘canon’ of Scripture which was ratified in several Councils afterwards. Are we not to ‘***earnestly contend for***’ this - ‘***the faith once delivered***’ (Jude 3)?

Listen to one who was once an advocate of extra biblical revelation: ‘*And why not both? Why not the illumination of Scripture coupled with new revelations of the Spirit? Simply because if you declare a need for both, you have implied the insufficiency of one. You have placed yourself back in the framework of the Old Covenant, in a time when new revelations were required because of the incompleteness of the old. But Christ is the final Word. No further word for the redemption of men in the present age is needed. In Scripture is found all the truth that is needed for life and godliness...The Reformers who paid with their life blood for freedom from dominance by the traditions of the church were especially jealous in guarding future generations from the oppressions created by supposed words from the lord. ‘Scripture Alone’ was their uncompromising cry. Only the written Word of God, an objective standard which all men can see and read, communicates infallible truth to God’s people, since God now has stopped using His former methods of revealing His will to the church (Heb.1:1). But the search goes on for a new way for God to continue revealing His will in ways other than through Holy Scripture. Each new generation offers a slightly different twist on the recurring theme*’. (‘*The Final Word*’ by O. Palmer Robertson, P.135 & P.86).

Terry Arnold

Bishop's Vision - Rosary will Bring Down Boko Haram



Rome, Italy, April 21 (CNA/EWTN News) - *A Nigerian bishop says that he has seen Christ in a vision and now knows that the rosary is the key to ridding the country of the Islamist terrorist organization Boko Haram. Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme said... 'Towards the end of last year I was in my chapel before the Blessed Sacrament [Eucharist/communion]...praying the rosary, and then suddenly the Lord appeared...Jesus...extended a sword toward him...As soon as I received the sword, it turned into a rosary'...Jesus then told him three times: 'Boko Haram is gone'...It was clear that with the rosary we would be able to expel Boko Haram'.*

Bishop Dashe leads the Diocese of Maiduguri, in north-eastern Nigeria's Borno State. In 2009, there were around 125,000 Catholics under his guidance. After a surge in violence from the Islamist extremist group called Boko Haram, today 'there are only 50 to 60 thousand left', he said.

...In 2014, Boko Haram became known world-wide when members kidnapped nearly 300 girls from a school in Borno State. On March 7, 2015, five suicide bombers killed 54 and wounded nearly three times as many in the capital city of Maidaguri, where the bishop lives and works. The group has killed 1,000 people across Nigeria in the first three months of 2015, according to Human Rights Watch, which reports that more than 6,000 have died in Boko Haram-led violence since 2009. Just last month, the group pledged its allegiance to ISIS - Islamic State...

...The nation's bishops' conference has consecrated the country to Mary twice in recent years. 'These terrorists think that by burning our churches, burning our structures, they will destroy Christianity. Never...It may take a few months or a few years...but 'Boko Haram is gone'.

(Apostasy Alert, April 2015)

Editor's comment: The 'Hail Mary' is a repetitive prayer *to Mary* which when said in 'sets' with the Lord's Prayer ('Our Father'), forms a 'Rosary'. This is done using prayer beads. 'Rosary' beads are traced from the Mohammedans. Marco Polo found the king of Mahabar in the 13th century counting prayers and St.Francis Xavier was astonished to find Buddhists in Japan using beads in a similar fashion. The Catholic Encyclopedia stated, '*There is little or no trace of the 'Hail Mary' as an accepted devotional formula before about AD 1050*' (Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol.7, P.111). The Rosary prayer beads were introduced by Peter the Hermit, AD 1090.

Jesus instructed us not to pray using vain repetitions (Matt.6:7). He gave us 'The Lords Prayer', not the Rosary. Mary is not omniscient and only God could listen to the estimated 50,000 petitions per second by Catholics. Mary needed a saviour (Lk.1:47) and brought her sin offering to the temple like all Jewish mothers (Lev.12:6-8 cp. Lk.2:21-24).

Rick Warren and Elton John?



Rick Warren appeared in Congress with pop icon and outspoken homosexual Elton John...to ask for more money for AIDS research...Did Rick ever bother to tell Elton John that he was lost and headed for Hell? After taking their seats at the witness table, the giddy pair laughed and smiled as they held hands, with Warren saying ‘Amen’ and cautioning Elton John that if they kissed it would be ‘the kiss heard ‘round the world’.

...Such is the state of the professing Christian Church in 2015, weak, powerless, effeminate. Elton John...who has worn wigs and dresses, we expect this from. But Rick Warren claims to be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ...[and] he holds hands with a gay man, and jokes about kissing him...?

‘Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God’ (1Cor.6:9,10).

(Apostasy Alert, May/2015)

More Gobbledegoek From Churches of Christ

In the May June 2014 *Diakrisis* (P.7) we printed a ‘gospel’ statement by Churches of Christ. Below is another piece of their ‘gobbledegoek’?



Postmodern Propensities and Testimony

The modern propensity to reduce an entity to its smallest components so as to analyse and comprehend the parts of a larger whole might be appropriate for machines perhaps for understanding aspects of organic life or organisations, but seldom for relationships and even less so for hearing the word of God today.

Postmodern elevation of diverse voices without distinction conveys the presumed equality and freedom of relative perspective. This may stimulate infotainment contests in asserting social truth by popular applause; it also reflects pervasive social malaise without durable relationships, with cynicism concerning any sure word that could speak with veracity and generosity today.

To align our interpretation of scripture with either propensity is to deceive ourselves and mislead others. Christian identity and purpose are not nurtured by reticence because we have not been inducted into the “right methods” for adjudicating the meaning of biblical writings, which is a modern propensity; nor are they nurtured by presuming that everyone’s viewpoint is assumedly equal as relative, which is a post-modern propensity.

Imperatives to Christian testimony surpass by terminating potentially endless talk about perspective. Christian scripture is engaged as the word of God when it is heard in testimony to the generosity and veracity of life in Christ.

Stirling Theological College - (Churches of Christ)

Why Defend the Faith? Why Polemics?

The Tension

There is a fine line between contending for the faith and being contentious. It may surprise some readers to know that the editor of this newsletter does not like contention or argumentative encounters. But when serious doctrine is wrested from its moorings, then it is the honour of the Lord himself at stake and to 'earnestly contend for the faith' (Jude 3) does not become just an option.

Increasingly in this postmodern age we don't like polemics - the refutation of errors usually involving controversy. We want 'positives', not negatives, even if the negatives are truth. 'Everyone is right'. We tolerate everyone's beliefs. There are no absolutes.

Increasingly, when I address an audience with a topic that is 'controversial' I run the risk of being judged for being 'hard' and 'unloving'. It is not popular to publicly discern spiritual matters, *even if backed by scripture or facts*. Yet the biblical word 'discernment' ('*diákrisis*') literally means to 'judge through'.

Too many Christians today seem not to realise that so many of the epistles are 'polemic' in nature! Paul constantly warns against false teachers and their teaching, even naming names (Acts 20:31; 1Cor.4:14; 1Thess.5:14; 1Tim.1:20; 2Tim.4:14). The Bible exhorts us to contend for the faith and the purity of the Gospel (Jude 1:3; Pr.28:4). We are told to 'reprove' and 'rebuke' false teaching and those that disseminate it (2Tim.4:2; Eph.5:11).

The Reformers spilled blood and were burned alive for our faith and for our freedom to have Bibles in our own languages. Had they not engaged in polemics, where would we be? They would certainly now be dismayed at the attitude today towards defending the faith! Yet, Jesus said that the sword of the Word of God would even divide households (Matt.10:34-36).

Not everyone is gifted to publicly contend for the faith, but should we not appreciate the practice, when done in love and with sound doctrine?

The Practice

Polemics can be practised in writing or in person. Before I was saved I argued arrogantly with the ones I sarcastically called 'the Born Againers'. Yet when I was saved out of the Roman Catholic system my heart immediately went out to those who were still ensnared by it. To convince them of error and truth was a non-negotiable necessity. Over many years this has broadened to a fight for the purity of the Gospel itself, for sound doctrine and the interpretation thereof. Although most of this ministry holds to a preference for literature, there are times when it becomes person to person and even face to face polemics. A difficulty with literature is that the heart and manner of the writer is not always seen and the style of writing can be easily misunderstood.

Debating

‘Debating’ is viewed as a negative word today but it simply means to state a proposition for or against and attempt to convince the other side. Practise in ‘debating’ can be useful in witnessing and contending for the faith. Polemics is about convincing and winning people over to a ‘premise’ or ‘argument’. This is largely lacking in today’s preaching. Paul’s writings are full of ‘debate’!

The following are some ‘skills’ learned in hundreds of encounters and ‘debates’ over the years:

An ‘argument’ involves a statement: ‘This [the topic] is true...or false’. In public debates, this is the first step - to state the ‘argument’. But in Christian witnessing and contending for the faith, it often short circuits the avenues to discuss and convince. An example of this is when we would speak to a cultist who does not believe in the deity of Christ. We could initially state the ‘argument’ that ‘Jesus is God’. Although this is a true statement, if used up front this often cuts off all avenues to convince them and may even harden them immediately. A better method of debate and much less contentious would be a question: ‘*Why does Jesus say ‘I am’ in John 8:24 and Jehovah says the same thing in Exodus 3:14?*’ The next step would be to discuss the two scriptures and prove that Jehovah and Jesus are indeed saying the same thing about themselves. We do not need to state the ‘premise’ (of deity). We can trust the Holy Spirit to put the pieces of the puzzle together and show the person that Jesus is saying He is deity. We can also leave the person with the warning from the same scripture: ‘*...you shall die in your sins if you believe not that I am...*’ (Jn.8:24).

The proof for the premise must be confined to the argument. We do not convince people by compiling the biggest pile of ‘facts’. Facts for an ‘argument’ are often like pieces in a Jigsaw puzzle - if you don’t link them together, they fail to give a picture. One also cannot convince someone of an argument solely by knocking down their argument. It may help to destroy some of the ‘mindset’ they have built, but to win people to an argument we must build another bridge of truth. Sometimes this new ‘mindset’ is built painstakingly piece by piece.

The Style

There is a difference between winning an argument and winning for truth. There is a difference between a critical mind and a critical spirit. And arrogance has no place in polemics. Our theology and being ‘right’ can become a ‘god’. (I have failed in this too many times in the past). If I take a shot at the false teachers for their false gospel of prosperity, healing and success, then my own life must be in line with what I advocate. Hypocrisy can be measured by the divide between what you know with what you practise in what you know. If I am to contend for the doctrines of the Sovereignty of God, then I had better make sure I don’t worry and be anxious, as that is not trusting in the ‘sovereignty of

God'!

It is important to present the argument in a coherent fashion and as simple as possible. Repetition is helpful on important points and to bringing those points into other parts of the argument. Don't use big words or intellectual ideas that we ourselves may understand well, but others may not. Pick the important points and don't get sidetracked by things that don't matter to the argument.

As there is a premise and content in an argument, so there is also a 'style'. By style I mean the *manner* that we convince someone, including the way we speak or write. Polemics should never involve anger or rudeness. Agree where you can agree and keep bridges and lines of communication open, but *never negotiate on absolute truth*. And never criticise the person themselves; never get 'personal'. ***'And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth'*** (2Tim.2:24,25).

We must consciously 'separate the person from the error', no matter how evil the error is. I once had an encounter with two attractive young women claiming to be Christians but were indoctrinated by a group called 'The Children of God'. This group encouraged fornication and even giving sexual favours to 'win people to Jesus' (called 'flirty fishing'). I was disgusted by their evil arguments and misuse of scripture. It would have been easy to accuse them of being wicked persons. But the greater need was to point them to the truth of scriptures in context and pray the Holy Spirit would convict them of truth (Jn.16:13).

In Witnessing

Today most modern 'tracts' challenge people with the 'love of God' but avoid any of the polemics of secular and religious errors that might prevent people from understanding the Gospel. The modern church has today taken the polemics out of witnessing! For example, such evils as evolution and shades of universalism often warp peoples understanding of who God really is. It is this *preparation of the heart* that the parable of the sower speaks about (Matt.13). And in that preparation we must be prepared for debate and polemics. The apostle Paul rarely presented the Gospel without polemics and debate! He was not stoned and beaten for a 'God loves you' Gospel! Be prepared for Polemics in teaching and preaching the Gospel. It also sharpens one to have 'answers' for any man (1Pet.3:15). It is part of *'earnestly contending for the faith'* (Jude 3).

Gospel Priority

People increasingly today do not like outspoken preachers. Certainly the Gospel has been lost in many a moral campaign, or hateful language. Yet today we've jumped to the opposite extreme. Now we are afraid to confront sin even

in our own churches! We can't preach about materialism because we might offend rich people. We can't preach about fornication because there are people in the church who are living together. We can't preach about homosexuality because our culture and churches say it's hateful to call that a sin.

There are preachers in my own town who avoid the word *sin* altogether because it's too negative. Marketing has taught the church that people want a positive message. A diluted gospel has produced a new trend of motivational ear tickling, sugar coated messages that have no gospel at all.

I have been preaching through the book of Acts now for over 18 months and have become acutely aware of the hardships, the beatings, the persecution, the confrontations the apostles faced in preaching the true Gospel. It's nearly on every page so far! Paul commanded Timothy to ***'Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables'*** (2Tim.4:2-4).

'*Reprove*' means to show ones fault. It can mean to reprimand. '*Rebuke*' means to admonish or express disapproval. The origin of the word is to beat or strike. '*Exhort*' is gentler - the Greek '*parakaleo*' literally means to call to the side; to comfort. It is in the same family of words for the Holy Spirit who is the '*paraklete*'. These words are hardly exemplified in the wimpish preaching and sermonising we hear today. Today it is rather '*Preach what the people want to hear! Avoid controversy! Pacify the people so they will come back next week and give even more money!*'. Is it any wonder that the church is full of anaemic professors who would never even consider polemics in the Gospel? It is spineless Christianity today which has produced masses of spineless professors.

Perhaps Paul got his polemics from the Spirit of Jesus who being against the religious leaders of the day called them '*hypocrites*', '*blind guides*', '*whited sepulchres*', '*serpents*' and said they were heading for Hell (Matt.23:13-36).

Paul summarises the need for a defence of the faith to his young preacher: ***'Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers...Whose mouths must be stopped...rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith'*** (Tit.1:9-13).

Polemics will be offensive to the post-modern man imbued with the spirit of this age. But it's time for today's Christians to show backbone. Polemics and contending for the faith is part of Christianity. It always has been and should always be. The 'gospel' today is increasingly about man and not Christ; at times about what Jesus has done but not why He had to do it - that is, to satisfy a wrath that cannot be satisfied by us, but only by a bloody sacrifice of suffering for our sin. Without polemics and continued defense of the faith, the Gospel will continue to be watered down and the 'offense' thereof lost (Gal.5:11).

Terry Arnold

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Billy Graham

Dear Terry, Recently I was forwarded a copy of a critique of Billy Graham by your ministry showing (in brief) the different statements made by him over the years, especially him getting alongside non-evangelical and Catholic churches, etc. I was a bit alarmed...that this has been put out in the public arena in this manner. You may well ask, am I content that this sort of thing be kept under wraps. My answer is actually 'Yes', but only 'yes' until such time as I am assured that the process given us by Christ in Matthew 18 has been implemented. ...Have you [gone] to Billy in person...Were second / third witnesses brought in to establish the charges? Did Billy fail to heed the latter?...I see no valid reason why this private process should not have been followed...unless you can prove from scripture that it should be otherwise.

(D.B. - e-mail)

Editor's reply [excerpts only]: The list of citations you read on our website are *statements only by Billy Graham*. They need no defending. There was NO editorial input by us. They need no Matthew 18 action, considering they are Billy Graham's *own statements* and not revealed out of context. It could well be updated with more statements since which show more serious apostasy by Graham. (He has since capitulated on Creation and has made statements of Universalism). Our article is actually not a '*critique*' but simply plain statements *by Billy Graham*. The reader is left to decide where Graham stands. Many liberals and Roman Catholics reading it today would actually applaud his statements!

Many years ago we sent a letter to the Billy Graham organisation. We never got any replies, nor did a host of other ministries. There are many ministries who have written to him and exposed the same issues.

I was once a supporter of Billy Graham until I saw him joining hands with Roman Catholicism and its leaders and allowing 'converts' to go back into the Catholic churches. I had left the Roman Catholic religion after I was Born Again. I had seen the danger of the ecumenical movement *from within* and its drawing unsuspecting Protestants back to Rome and its *false gospel*. Billy Graham has done more to accelerate that movement than any Protestant leader I know of.

As for Matthew 18 - this scripture applies to a church situation, not always to public ministries. Paul did not use Matthew 18 when he exposed people and named names publicly. Public error needs to be exposed publicly. Nevertheless, Billy Graham has been 'visited' by many over the decades, including well known church leaders in attempts to have him repent of his

ecumenism and apostasy, as well as applauding the World Council of Churches. [A partial list of a large file was given with details of meetings]. Many pulled out of his crusades. Martyn Lloyd Jones challenged Billy Graham face to face (1963) and then refused to fellowship with him. Jones gave Graham two conditions to agree to open one of his meetings: 1. That Billy Graham stopped his co-operation with non evangelicals and liberals 2. That he stopped his public appeal for decisions and simply preach the Gospel. But Graham could not cut off liberals and Catholics, so Dr. Lloyd Jones was dropped. It is an appalling thing that in Billy Graham's autobiography the only reference to Lloyd Jones is a one liner that in 1952 Lloyd Jones stood in a queue to shake his hand.

If you can work hand in hand with liberals who don't believe in the resurrection and the atonement - what then would convince you of the error?

Reply by D.B. *'I want to say a very big thank you for your extensive reply as you sought to respond to my concerns and leave me with no doubts whatsoever. ...You have very successfully...backed up statements...with a generous supply of facts...I wonder if there are others out there who are thinking that some have an 'axe to grind'...The details you shared...will dispel these doubts...May God bless you and the team in your efforts of 'earnestly contending for the faith'.*

Terry, How I thank God for people like you who make us take a sudden stop to rethink things through...The same with your book on 'Calvinism and Arminianism'...[But] if people reject and want nothing to do with God and His salvation, God will accept their decision...God accepts man's final answer. If you find queries in this please let me know...

(R.J., USA)

Editor's Reply: God is not impotent in bringing anyone to salvation. It is not God who 'accepts their decision'. The decision is not theirs to make when they are unsaved, unless God 'draws' them to Himself. All unsaved are only making one 'decision' and that is to *not* seek after God (Rom.3:11), and to 'by nature' be 'children of wrath' (Eph.2:3). This is the norm in unsaved people. Nowhere does Scripture teach that God 'accepts man's final answer'. Is God so impotent that he has his 'hands tied' and cannot save people because of their 'decision'? This is not the God I serve or know! The God I know is the one of Scriptures who when He 'draws' someone He saves them and promises to 'raise them' up! No one can resist Him permanently when he draws and raises up and saves (Jn.6:37-44). He 'saves to the uttermost' and is the 'author and the finisher of our faith' (Heb.7:25; 12:2). This is the same God that all the divines preached, the founders of the Brethren (Darby, Mueller), the revivalists, Spurgeon, the Reformers, all the martyrs...the KJV translators...

Mail Re: Herald of Hope Warning (May/June)

G'day Terry, a timely article on Vince Wall's articles on the '5 Points'...I doubt they will change. Keep on keeping on, our work isn't finished yet...

(Independent Baptist pastor, Sydney)

Dear Terry, Thanks for the continuing ministry of your magazine - I can't put it down once I start reading it. On P.13 Isaiah 7:6 is followed later by Isaiah 7:16. I suspect one of them is the wrong quote...

Re: 'Herald of Hope' - it's sad when we have to disagree with keen fellow evangelicals like them. Although I agree with you...I thought much of the discussion was pedantic and unnecessary (on both sides). What does it matter if 'TULIP' was not the term used at the time of Spurgeon. They were the same truths. I suspect there was a better way of handling the differences, even if Herald of Hope was rather arrogant. Sadly, as you showed, there is still a deal of prejudice against the 'Reformed' position (I noted you rejected this term, surprisingly)...We need to lead our fellow Christians gently...

(S.K., Vict)

Editor's Reply: Thanks for the typo errors shown (the scripture should be Is.7:16). Far from seeing this issue as '*pedantic*', we see it as vital. The Doctrines of Grace, *if misrepresented*, brings down the whole meaning of GRACE. But there is another issue - the deception of many readers who would read the Herald of Hope magazine and read that these doctrines are 'another gospel'. Then the refusal to take correction in the smallest of points. All of that does not make this a 'pedantic' issue?

Also, 'TULIP' I am convinced is *not* a good representation of the Doctrines of Grace. The term was invented in the 20th C. and then used negatively along with strawman arguments. For example, by association 'Irresistible Grace' is 'negative' but 'Effectual Calling' is 'positive'. 'Limited Atonement' is 'negative' but 'Particular Redemption' is 'positive'. The latter terms are rarely if ever used by Arminians. 'TULIP' suits them nicely because of the negative twists. I personally believe the Reformers, Spurgeon, etc, would never have used 'TULIP' as it does not represent the truths of the Doctrines of Grace as they taught them.

I do not prefer such 'labels' as 'Reformed', as I am arguably not 'Reformed' in other areas in which so called 'Reformed' people are. (I also don't agree with everything the 'Reformers' taught). Thus, (as is with 'TULIP'), 'Reformed' does not really represent what I believe *in total*. As with 'Calvinism', many simply do not understand what 'Reformed' means.

I admit I don't go '*gently*' as some would like when prominent public ministries say that our Gospel is 'another gospel'?

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Terry, Comments that Augustine was A-millennial by 'Herald of Hope' can be misleading. Both A-mill and Post-mill camps claim him, but from what I gather the evidence slightly favours the Post-mill camp. See Gentry below:

'Sometimes it is difficult to determine the eschatological views of writers from antiquity. Augustine is one of those. But overall he seems to hold an optimistic view of history compatible with post-millennialism.

Several statements in Book 18 of 'The City of God' certainly express a post-millennial-like optimism. Of Nahum 1:14 and 2:1 Augustine states: 'Moreover, we already see the graven and molten things, that is, the idols of the false gods, exterminated through the gospel, and given up to oblivion as of the grave, and we know that this prophecy is fulfilled in this very thing' (City of God 18:31). 'The tents of Ethiopia shall be greatly afraid, and the tents of the land of Midian' that is, even those nations which are not under the Roman authority, being suddenly terrified by the news of Thy wonderful works, shall become a Christian people. 'Wert Thou angry at the rivers, O Lord? or was Thy fury against the rivers? or was Thy rage against the sea?' This is said because He does not now come to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved' (City of God, 18:32). Augustine comments on Haggai 2:6: 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet one little while, and I will shake the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will move all nations, and the desired of all nations shall come'. The fulfilment of this prophecy is in part already seen, and in part hoped for in the end...so we see all nations moved to the faith; and the fulfilment of what follows, 'And the desired of all nations shall come,' is looked for at His last coming. For ere men can desire and wait for Him, they must believe and love Him'. (City of God, 18:35) (Kenneth Gentry)

(R.L. Vict.)

Editor's comments: Rushdooney apparently says Augustine was A-mill; Boettner claims he was Post-mill. Many others take sides on both! The Herald of Hope and others are keen to lampoon Augustine as the blame for 'Calvinism' by tacking the problem to the 'Reformed' or 'Augustinian' position. It's called guilt by association. A prominent North Queensland Independent Baptist pastor has written that he does not believe Augustine was saved and that he was steeped in paganism. The level of accuracy on this topic of the 'Doctrines of Grace' (dubbed 'Calvinism' by some) and 'guilt by association' is simply appalling.

Thanks for the work you put into the Calvinist / hyper-Calvinist article - in reply to Vince Wall. It quite helped clarify the issue. We've had many speakers from Herald of Hope...Would they be tarred with the same brush as Vince Wall? I'm a little concerned, as many 'prophecy-buffs' subscribe to Herald of Hope material...possibly unaware of the errors in their theology?

(Name withheld at editor's discretion)

Hi Terry, comments [Re: herald of Hope] - very good. One small point [Re: letter about Whitefield being a 'deformed slave owner', P.17 May/June] Whitefield did run out of money for his orphanage after a main supporter was killed by rocks when preaching in England. He had to have a couple of 'slaves' to run a garden to support the children for commercial reasons. This was near the end of his life. He usually spoke a word directed at slaves in preaching to encourage them to believe, which they appreciated. On one occasion a group of slaves came to where he was staying after a message to give a few dollars of what they had earned for the Orphanage. Whitefield was touched by this...

(R.L. Vict)

Terry, God, by His grace did not let me go and I have experienced the truth of the Doctrines of Grace in a very real way in my life. If it wasn't for God's grace I would've surely fallen away. But I'm kept by His power and it is He who enables me to keep believing and persevere until the end.

I have experienced my total depravity/inability (not just to believe but keep believing), God's gracious election and predestination, the sufficiency and efficiency of Christ's atonement, God's effectual calling/irresistible grace, and God's preserving me by enabling me to persevere. As the title of one of Spurgeon's books puts it, it's 'All of Grace'. And His grace is overwhelming.

(B.S. Brisbane)

Sabbath Question

Dear Terry, I have been doing a study on the Sabbath in the old and new Testaments. I cannot find scriptures teaching Gentiles have to obey the Sabbath. All the commandments are repeated in the NT except the 4th - the Sabbath. Yet God said all mankind must obey the Sabbath (Gen.2:2) and on the 7th day God 'rested' (Gen.2:2; Ex.20:9-11; 23:12; Dt.5:12; Lev.19:30; 26:2; Mk.2:27; Heb.4:4,10). Sabbath means 'rest'. Do we have to 'rest' on the Sabbath?

(R.M., Qld.)

Editor's reply: Several articles are on our website. The Sabbath was a 'sign' of the Mosaic covenant and given 'to Israel' (Ex.31:13-17). The scriptures you cite are addressed to Israel. That covenant had a beginning and an end (Dt.5:2,3; Gal.3:19). The Sabbaths were a 'shadow' of things to come (Col.2:17; Heb.10:1). The context of Mark 2:27 shows Jesus and his disciples *not keeping* the Sabbath. It cannot be made to teach all have to keep the Sabbath. And Hebrews ch.4 is teaching Jesus IS our 'Sabbath'.

The Gentiles were *never* expected to keep the Jewish 'Sabbath'. However, there is a principle of the Sabbath in creation with God resting (Gen.2:2,3), although not as a command here for men. The word does mean 'rest', not necessarily to be confused with a day of worship. Everybody can now choose his own 'day' for that (Rom.14:5,6; Col.2:16,17).

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Sola Scriptura; Man's will; Infants...

Hi Terry, I do appreciate your writings...I agree with you on Sola Scriptura. However, Sola Scriptura is the reason why some of these sorts of issues are being debated, because Scripture does not say enough about them. Thus we must allow different points of view provided those views do not contradict Scripture. [But some of yours below does contradict scripture outright? This is the problem with some thinking 'outside the box' with human (fallen) logic. Sola Scriptura is narrow and confined. I agree that we can have preferences, 'ideas'. But if they contradict scripture then we are NOT Sola Scriptura]...Debating these issues forces us to study the Word, sharpens our thinking, broadens our understanding. [Agree] God's thoughts are higher than ours which means there are some things we will never get a handle on this side of eternity. Predestination [Agree] and free will included. [You mean 'the responsibility of man', not 'free will'. There is no such thing as 'free will' in the scriptures or from the Reformers, evangelists, church leaders down the running centuries. None of them taught 'free will' - from Spurgeon, Whitefield, Darby, Mueller, all the martyrs, Reformers, etc. It is a term invented. 'Free agency' was a term used, but not 'free will'. In 'free agency' we have a will that is only free according to one's nature. That nature in an unsaved person is not 'free' - it is a 'servant' [doulos-'slave'] of sin (Jn.8:34). We were 'by nature' the 'children of wrath...' (Eph.2:3).

How 'free' is unsaved man's will? These following scriptures rule out a will that is entirely 'free' - 1Cor.2:14; Rom.8:7,8; Jn.6:44; Rom.3:11.

If unsaved man's will is free to choose Christ for salvation then why is it that *'the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not...'* (2Cor.4:4)? How can unsaved man's will be 'free' if his mind be 'blinded'?

If unsaved man's will is free to choose Christ for salvation then why is there the need for God to 'free' us? *'If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed'* (Jn.8:36). If we have a will entirely 'free' then what does the Son need to set us 'free' from?

If unsaved man's will is free to choose Christ for salvation then does man also have a 'free will' in Heaven? If unsaved man's will is free to choose Christ for salvation then why is it that after the new birth, man cannot freely choose to rebel against God forever? If his will is 'free', is it also 'free' to turn from his salvation and be lost forever? Is he robbed of that freedom? Why is he not 'free' to stop believing?

The difference between 'free will' and 'free agency' is not subtle

Continued next page >

semantics, but a stark chasm!...This does not deny that man has a will and is responsible to repent. They are contradictory to us but they are both scriptural and non-contradictory to God.

The truth about infant salvation may be similarly profound. [Infant salvation is not stated in scripture. 'Predestination' and the 'responsibility of man' to repent ARE stated explicitly. The truths of 'predestination' and the 'responsibility of man' can be exegetically shown. Infant salvation is simply not taught or at best implied?].

*I was forced to do a lot of thinking on the subject of infant salvation when my unsaved brother and his wife had a little girl who died...I would now say that there is a definite instant when a child changes from 'innocent in God's eyes' i.e. imputed righteousness, to sinner. [Babies are BORN in sin. 'Original Sin' which includes infants being born in sin, was held to by the earliest of church fathers and digressions on this were considered heresy (e.g. Pelagian heresy 4th C). The Cambellite brothers tried to re-establish this (this became the 'Churches of Christ' error). The teaching of 'original sin' in babies was the consensus of the early church. Irenaeus (130-202) who was a disciple of the early Polycarp wrote and taught original inherited sin (e.g. 'Against the Gnostics'). Until Pelagius, no church father openly opposed the teaching of 'Original Sin'. Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Ambrosiaster, and others, all taught it (many quotes available)...Death cannot be separated from sin. Sin causes death. Babies die. The scriptures do not separate sin from death (as did the Pelagian heresy). 'For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law' (Rom.2:12). The Bible also says the law is already 'written in their hearts' (Rom.2:15). The old Pelagian error confuses human logic with scriptural fact. Children being born in sin, suffering, child birth pain, weeds in the garden, are all the result of the inherited consequences and results of sin from Adam and Eve being 'passed' on (Rom.5). If sin is not inherited from Adam and Eve, then why is there death? Why do babies die? *Death comes from sin. 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men...' (Rom.5:12). How do you explain these verses: Ps.51:5 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me'; Is.48:8 'Yea, you heard not; yea, you knew not; yea, from that time that your ear was not opened: for I knew that you would deal very treacherously, and was called a transgressor from the womb'. And what of Rom.5:12-21?]**

I see no difference between Adam and little children today except that children, since Adam, have been born into a world of sin. [Not just 'born into a world of sin' but born sinners into a world of sin - Ps.51:5; Is.48:8; Rom.5)] Jesus too was born into a sinful world and yet was without sin. However, there was a particular instant when Adam changed from innocent to sinner and that was when he deliberately decided to disobey God's command to him. [The sin

nature was passed on to all babies - Rom.5). In the same way, I believe, a mother can tell her little child not to eat the biscuits she has just baked. Lacking an awareness of right and wrong, the child can take and eat a biscuit and it will not be a sin. [It is not the act of sin you should be looking at, but the SIN NATURE passed on which causes 'death'] However, the instant that child thinks, 'I know Mum told me not to, but I'm going to take one anyway!', and he does, then it becomes a sin, and he becomes a sinner condemned to Hell unless he repents. [This is the Pelagian error...you have missed the point of the sin nature] Any child who dies before that 'point of awareness of sin' is reached, is automatically saved. [That is an entirely new doctrine never taught in early years] I think King David's reaction to the death of his infant son by Bathsheba indicates he believed his son went to heaven. [Yes, he did]...In the case of Jesus, when He arrived at His first 'point of awareness of sin', He didn't do it, and He continued 'not doing it' for the rest of His time on earth, despite temptation, and He is still 'not doing it'. [This is most dangerous theology. Jesus was divine. He was not born in sin and to a virgin. He never could sin and never should the possibility be surmised] For different children this point would come at different ages and in different ways, [Scripture knows none of this]...by the time we can think rationally about sin, we have already 'done it' and it is too late...

[Original sin is a most foundational and historical doctrine. The idea of the 'age of accountability' is a modern invention yet Pelagian in nature, (which rejected babies being born in sin). Pelagianism was considered heresy by the early church fathers because it attacked original sin and the depravity/inability of unsaved man. The Pelagian heresy was very much about 'free will' and man having some ability in salvation.

Many of your ideas are the logic of man where the Bible is silent. What God has revealed is enough. Do you have scripture for the 'age of accountability' and infants suddenly becoming 'sinners' at a certain age?

Dear Terry, please send me another copy of 'The Churches of Christ Restoration Movement and Campbellism'. I know a lady who left Churches of Christ [Qld] when she heard from the pulpit that there was no original sin. Please send a copy of the booklet so that she can understand what is happening...

(Name withheld at editor's discretion - Gympie, Qld).

Editor's comment: This is the teaching of the Churches of Christ Queensland in the 'Restoration Movement'. It utterly defies Scripture (Ps.51:5; Is.48:8; Rom.5:12-21; 1Cor.15:22) and the earliest historical Christianity (see the citations in the booklet).

The Churches of Christ teaching also ignores the fact that *death* cannot be separated from *sin*. Sin causes death (Rom.5:12).

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

'Journaling'?

Can you give me any links or thoughts on Journaling? Currently a number in my church are being deceived by a book 'The Freedom Diaries'. The author apparently has an exclusive two way dialogue via pen to paper with God...We are seeing the New Age infiltrate the church...

(Name withheld at editor's discretion)

Editor's reply: Such books and such methods of supposedly hearing from God are just another form of extra biblical revelation. This deception is actually a low view of the Inspiration of God's word and the doctrine of Sola Scriptura. But it is titillating. We have written many articles on this disease in Christendom. Our website (www.taministries.net) has articles such as: '*The doctrine of God told me*'; '*Visions, dreams, near death*'. (These and more are in the '*Pentecostal/Charismatism*' section).

Such 'journaling' is just a re-take of 'automatic writing' which is a form of spiritism. But because it has an evangelical covering it will pass as a possible 'voice' from God. But Hebrews Ch.1 clearly states that the final revelation is in Jesus Christ and His word - that revelation is now closed (Jude 3). If these words from 'journaling' were real then they should have been added to scripture...but then that brings a 'curse'.

The Message Bible

Can you comment on the Message Bible?

(G.B. E-mail)\

Editor's reply: The 'Message' is a popular Bible 'translation' by Eugene Peterson released in 1993. It is but a poor paraphrase. Examples of inaccuracies are: Jn.14:28 is translated '*The Father is the goal and purpose of my life*' instead of '*My father is greater than I*'; 1Cor.6:18-20 the word '*fornication*' is deleted and replaced with the words '*avoids commitment and intimacy*'. The latter arguably changes the boundaries of sexual activity before marriage. In Romans 1:26,27 the words '*God gave them over*' are deleted, providing possible loopholes for homosexuality. Jn.1:14 reads '*And this sublime Word became flesh and blood and moved into our neighbourhood*'. The Greek more literally reads: '*And the Word was made [became] flesh, and dwelt among us...*'. Hundreds of other examples exist. Billy Graham, J. Packer and many other leaders supported this 'translation'.

Website Comments (www.taministries.net)

...I am a disciple, a servant of Jesus Christ...I stand on the Truth of the Word of God!...I read your article about Smith Wigglesworth and found it most upsetting, considering I have his teachings and sermons...You discredit him by taking things he said and interpreting completely out of context...It's amazing how you are so interested in 'Diakrisis', the word meaning 'to discern'...but I will leave you with a Word of Knowledge: 'If you would wholeheartedly want God to let you discern yourself for a month, you would end up not wanting to discern any more...Be very careful when you speak against Gods anointed, my friend. May we all see and hear ONLY with the eyes and ears of our God!'

(T.F.)

Editor's reply: Please show us where we have taken any 'story' out of context. The stories of Wigglesworth were mostly told by Lester Summlal who himself died a false prophet with a failed date set for Jesus to return.

Smith Wigglesworth was no more 'anointed' than you or I! We all have the 'same' anointing because that 'anointing' is the Holy Spirit (1Jn.2:27). We would err greatly in '*not wanting to discern any more*'. Your '*Word of Knowledge*' is in your imagination and not in the '*truth of the Word*' as you say. Please seek the truth and dig a little deeper...You will find the stories of Wigglesworth are not only wildly fabricated, but unscriptural.

I read part of your article trying to slander Smith Wigglesworth...I don't see in Scripture where God tells His people to declare false prophets or warn of false doctrine. I pray you ask God directly if you are doing what He wants, then listen carefully to His voice, not to be mistaken for the great deceiver...

(Melissa)

Editor's reply: The scriptures are replete with warnings to '*declare false prophets or warn people of false doctrine*'. We are to '*reprove*' (Eph.5:11; Tit.1:9); '*Try the spirits*' (1Jn.4:1); '*Prove all things*' (1Thess.5:21); and '*contend earnestly...*' (Jude 3). If we are not to warn of false prophets and teachers then why did Paul name false teachers and warn of them? (2Tim.2:17 '*Hymenaeus and Philetus*'; 2Tim.4:14 '*Alexander*'). Paul warned of their '*sleight...and cunning craftiness...*' (Eph.4:14,15).

I have as you requested, 'asked God' what He wants me to do, and I '*heard his voice*'. He has told me to be a 'lover of truth' and not to fall for the delusion of the times (2Thess.2:10,11); to '*test the spirits*' (1Jn.4:1,2; 1Thess.5:21) by the only infallible standard - the Scriptures (2Tim.3:16); and to separate from false teachers and false prophets (Rom.16:17; 2Cor.6:14-18; Eph.5:11; 2Thess.3:6). Should I listen to this 'voice' or yours?

Homiletics (Preaching) Course

In August 17th-21st this year the Pacific Bible Institute students, as part of their fortnight of Graduate studies, will be attending a week long Homiletics course in Hervey Bay, Queensland.

We are opening this course without cost to any pastors or to those who would like to attend. Certificates will be given for those completing the week. The course includes the theology and practice of preaching; sermon preparation, and much more...Lectures are each morning Monday to Friday. Accommodation (including meals) is available at \$45 per night. Those who are interested should contact this ministry.

Praise/Prayer Points

- Please pray for the Pacific Bible Institute students who will again attend lectures in August in the Graduate course. Pray that the subjects taught will equip these students to minister with power in their own churches. Pray for those who are joining in from various churches this year.
- Pray for the Hervey Bay Bible Church. We are nearing the end of a discipleship course with many new people. Praise the Lord for two ex-Jehovah Witnesses now attending. Pray for baptism classes in coming months. Pray for the training of new preachers.
- Praise the Lord for the increasingly wide readership of the *Diakrisis* newsletter. Pray for this newsletter that it will be *informative, teaching and equipping* many who would read it.

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