

Quotable

'As he [A.W. Tozer] came to the conclusion of his message the air was electrified. I was accustomed to altar calls and was fully expecting to see a mass movement forward. That surely would have been the case had he chosen to do so. Rather, in his inimitable but brusque manner he announced, 'Don't come down here to the altar and cry about it - go home and live it'! With that he dismissed the meeting...'

(*Tozer* Biography by Snyder P.151)

Prayer/Praise Points

- Praise the Lord Hervey Bay Bible Church has seen more growth in the last year with more new families having joined. We believe the Lord has blessed the dedication by the people to Biblical teaching, preaching, prayer and mission support. More than half the church are involved in several new home groups in the city. Please pray as the new pastor and his wife take on much of the busy pastoring role within the church and evangelism and outreach from the church. Pray that more leaders will be trained up to take on the increase.

- The editor is considering returning to some itinerant ministry later this year or the next. If any churches or colleges are interested, please let Terry know so he can gauge the level of interest. He has a list of seminars and sermons (topical and expository) that could be of benefit to those who would have him speak. You can e-mail him at: taministries@bigpond.com

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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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teaching, informing and equipping the church.
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The editor may not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by subscribers in this newsletter.

We welcome comments or items contributed by readers. Unless otherwise requested, these may be included in following newsletters at the discretion of the editor.

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This newsletter is distributed bi-monthly *free* of charge. The cost to this ministry is approximately \$20.00 per subscriber annually. Any donation to help with these expenses is received with gratitude.

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Editor's Comment

The study of the historical roots of any movement or teaching is often quite illuminating. New movements do not come suddenly. There is usually a gradual weakening of an already established position. Satan does not show his full hand in religious matters but rather weaves it in with mixtures of truth and error.

The Pentecostal Movement, and its later sister the Charismatic Movement, although both are attributed to events in certain years, there was a 'slippery slope' that emerged beforehand. The later nineteenth century Holiness Movement had already developed new views and 'stages' of sanctification. Thus the 'slippery slope' of new teaching was evident for decades before 1901 when Charles Parham introduced the new 'Pentecostal' teaching on the Holy Spirit.

Much more influential was another worldwide movement called the Ecumenical Movement which is normally traced to 1948. But again there was a 'slippery slope' of compromise preceding this movement. During the 1940's there were parachurch movements and some denominations which *had weakened on the all sufficiency, inspiration and inerrancy of scripture*. The Gospel was dumbed down and questions arose as to what constitutes a Christian. There was a new call for 'unity' which at first was assumed to be on scriptural grounds and the Gospel. But that soon was eroded as the *World Council of Churches* was formed in 1948. To be a Christian was widened to something more universal. In 1947 the first World Pentecostal Conference was held and a David Du Plessis advanced the idea of worldwide unity. In previous years church leaders in general strongly opposed the new Pentecostal doctrines. However, by the 1950's the barriers had been broken down as Charismatism infiltrated mainline churches.

The 'slippery slope' continued with 'new' and novel teachings on the Holy Spirit. The *Full Gospel Businessmens Fellowship International* hosted a World Convention of Pentecostals in Orlando, Florida, where they agreed to avoiding doctrinal points. A Roman Catholic speaker was a 'Father' James Bertalucci, who once said: *'When the sleeping giant of Rome comes alive, watch out world...especially in a day and age where we can co-operate and collaborate in winning the world for Jesus Christ'*.

In the 50's evangelical leaders were warning of these movements with their new distinctives of evangelism and an eroding of Gospel preaching. In decades to come the 'slippery slope' was then to take a further descent into the making of a more universal religion and a 'gospel' that covers all. It was in effect a 'union' of faiths and ideas, not a unity. In that climate the doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy would have to take a back seat. And they did.

In the years following, the Ecumenical movement would receive a boost with the rise to fame of Billy Graham and a new 'decisional' evangelism. At first Graham distanced himself from a broadening of the Gospel and a universal church. But as time went on Graham increasingly accepted and embraced the favour of the Roman church and was sending 'converts' into her welcoming arms.

Roman Catholicism was now 'Christian' which slowly became a trademark of the Ecumenical movement. Yet Rome had, and has not, changed one single

Decisional Evangelism

'An evangelist must exercise care lest by a mere appeal to self-interest he induces a 'decision' which, far from being saving, is perfectly consistent with a person remaining in an unregenerate condition. A presentation of the gospel chiefly in terms of its ability to fulfil man's need of happiness and other blessings, and which fails to show that man's wrong relationship to God 'is much worse than anything else' in his condition, may well receive a considerable though temporary success.

A salvation conceived 'not as something primarily that brings us to God but as something that gives us something' requires no real conviction of sin in order to its acceptance. Martyn Lloyd Jones was not surprised that such evangelism could be carried on with glibness and lightness and that its result was to add the unspiritual and the careless to the churches. The true convert always wants deliverance from the power as well as the guilt of sin. The 'needs' mentality has not only corrupted the Gospel, but it has also distorted the doctrine of sanctification. Many Christians think they can't be effective for the Lord until all their problems are solved and they have attained personal fulfilment. They see sanctification as the process by which that occurs'.

(*'Our Sufficiency in Christ'* by John MacArthur)

No Longer Church?

'Is there a point when church is no longer a church... Suppose I was concerned about peoples health so I opened Chan's healthy juice shop. I rented a building and painted a cool sign with a bunch of happy vegetables on it. I began making drinks by blending kale, carrots, beets, and spinach. My customers loved my drinks and came daily. There was just one problem: There are not enough health fanatics to keep my business afloat. My solution: whipped cream. Once I topped my drinks with it, more people started coming around. Soon after I added chocolate syrup and sales grew even more. Once Gummy Bears and M&M's were introduced, I started making a fortune. I would still boast that my drinks contained some healthy ingredients, even though I knew my clients were getting fatter and more lethargic. My desire to run a lucrative business at some point overpowered my original goal of health. At some point in the process, I should have taken down the sign.

This is a common scenario in churches. Prayer, communion, fellowship, and the Bible reading don't attract large crowds. So we start adding elements that will attract people...'

(Francis Chan)

Your Comments and Questions

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

Paying Pastors?

What do you think about paying a pastor a salary? Is it biblically sound? ...
(G.A. Old)

Editor's rely (excerpted):

We must not confuse a preference with a scriptural injunction. I personally *prefer* not to receive a 'salary' as 'pastor'. But nowhere does it teach a church should not pay a pastor, even a 'salary'? Arguably a working elder may be 'honoured' with provision of some sort. *'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine'. For the Scripture says, You shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his reward'* (1Tim.5:17,18)

The word 'reward' ('*misthós*') refers to a return for something done. It is translated 'wages', 'hire', 'reward'. Although it does not always refer to money, in some cases it is at least referring to a provision or payment. It may well have been provision of the basics - food, shelter, etc. Paul worked for Aquilla and Priscilla as a tentmaker and was probably supported that way. The following scriptures arguably show it is referring to wages or a payment of some kind, especially where the same Greek word is translated 'hire' or 'wage' - Matt.20:8; James 5:4 'hire' - clearly money or a payment of some kind; 1Cor.9:18 - Paul is talking about some payment; Lk.10:7 - provision with food, shelter. The same word is also translated 'wages' (Jn.4:36).

The word 'honour' has a wide usage. The context will determine the meaning. Often it is synonymous with 'to pay honour as in respect' and sometimes it is also synonymous with 'reward' (Acts 28:10; Dan.2:6 Sept.)

Most commentators see 1Tim.5:18 as at least some kind of provision or remuneration; some a wage. Greek scholar Zodhiates says of 'honour' in 1Tim.5:18: *'Compensation, remuneration, that which is paid in honour of another's work. In 1 Tim 5:7 'double honor' probably refers to an honorarium or wage'*.

It is also not wise to use Paul as an example of receiving or not receiving wages. He was more a travelling missionary/apostle/evangelist than a long term local pastor?

If churches want the work done in study, sermons, visitations, counselling and the hours of 'care of the churches' ('*mérimna*' - anxiety - 2Cor.11:8), then if they want a worker to be dedicated, single minded and not drained by two worlds (both secular job and ministry) - they may need to support the person with provisions enough to concentrate on the ministry singularly? (That also depends on the size of the church. My experience is above 70-80 gets close to full time work unless the work is shared?).

The answer is that it is not unbiblical to pay and provide for a pastor.

doctrine or dogma as clearly stated by the Pope himself in the Vatican II documents. For 1,600 years she has in fact *added* more unbiblical and extra-Biblical teachings. She still does not believe in the finished work of Calvary, (hence the 'Mass' is a 'continuing sacrifice'); she repudiates strongly that we are justified by faith alone in Christ alone without works, and instead adds her own works, (eg. sacraments, indulgences, etc.); she also embraces many traditions that contradict the Bible outright, such as praying for the dead, praying to saints, purgatory, Papal primacy and the 'immaculate conception' (Mary as sinless). The Roman Church does not believe the Bible to be the final, inerrant and infallible authority on matters of doctrine and faith.

It is not our part to judge individual Roman Catholics. But judge the system with discernment we must because it presents 'another gospel'. If it is not another gospel then why does Rome anathematise (curse) any who believe not her dogmas?

There is no unity when people believe different things on important doctrines or practices within the church. Such 'unity' is nothing short of hypocrisy. This is in fact the trademark of the Ecumenical Movement. Today, the World Council of Churches (WCC) website displays the range of views tolerated on subjects like Baptism. There is a huge effort to cover and include all views. It is a mess of pottage of varying beliefs. Is the Lord fooled by this apparent counterfeit 'unity'?

The Ecumenical church is already here with us. Most churches are ecumenical. They come in an array of denominations, yet in reality they are singing from the same sheet - *union in love, rather than unity in Biblical truth*. We are all for unity. We reject sectarianism, isolationism and any other label that teaches any unbiblical or extreme form of separation. But if being a 'witness to the world' means we join with those who present another gospel, or those who do not believe that the Bible is the very Word of God and is sufficient for our teaching and for sound doctrine, then we would be betraying the very foundation of Christianity itself! Doing so violates the very concept of holiness. In such instances the Bible clearly commands separation (Rom.16:17; 2Thess.3:6; 2Cor.6:14-17).

When this movement was spawned in the late forties and early fifties, voices were raised against it. One of those voices was Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones, one of the greatest revivalists, expositors of the twentieth century. His insight at the time was worthy in summing up this movement: *'He believed the ecumenical movement avoided the question of why the church was falling away at the time and church attendances were lessening. 'In spiritual affairs, does theology really matter at all? Does it in the last analysis, matter what a man ultimately believes? An avoidance of that question, he believed lay at the heart of the ecumenical movement... 'There is only one adequate explanation for the state of the Christian church today, it is the apostasy of the church itself...It is being said that the chief need of the church is to repent because of its 'lack of unity'...we would suggest that before she repents of her disunity, she must repent of her apostasy...here lies the reason for her lack of spiritual power and inability to deliver a living message in the power of the Holy Ghost to a world ready to perish!'*

(Martyn Lloyd Jones - *The Fight of Faith* (Vol.2) by Iain Murray, P.301)

Terry Arnold & Mike Claydon

Anne Graham's 'Revelation'

'Anne Graham Lotz (Billy Graham's daughter) has suggested there might be a deep significance attached to her battle against breast cancer...it could be a warning sign Israel is in danger of suffering a fatal attack. Lotz reasoned...she has long thought of herself and the modern state of Israel as 'entwined', given both are 70 years old...

The evangelist and author said she's questioning whether 'there is more to my cancer at the age of 70 than just a random coincidence'. 'In the Bible, God often had His spokespersons live out the message He gave them...before they delivered the message to the people', she said. 'Hosea was instructed to marry a woman who became unfaithful to him as he lived out in a very personal way the broken heart of God over unfaithful Israel...Jeremiah was told to purchase a linen belt, wear it, bury it, then dig it up when it was ruined and useless to live out a demonstration that God had bound Jerusalem to Himself...' 'Could it be God has given me a message...that I am living out in my own experience?'... 'Just as my cancer is a potentially fatal disease, is Israel in danger of being attacked in a potentially fatal way? Just as my cancer struck suddenly and unexpectedly through no fault of my own, will Israel also be struck by her enemies suddenly and unexpectedly through no fault of her own?'... 'As I have not been immediately and quickly delivered from cancer, will Israel also not be quickly delivered from her enemies as she was in the 1967 war? Just as I am having to fight the cancer with chemotherapy cell by cell, will Israel have to fight her enemies region by region, village by village, street by street, house by house?...Israel is in danger of a surprise attack in this her 70th year'...

...In 2015 Lotz told CBN News she believes Jesus Christ will return to earth in her lifetime...

(Christian Post December 2018)

Editor's Comments:

This is the extra biblical revelation that takes people away from sound doctrine! This is a figment of Lotz's imagination. There is no 'significance' between Israel being attacked and anyone's cancer, despite a similarity of '70 years'. If so why has not the Spirit revealed this anywhere in scripture? The prophets 'living out their messages he gave them' has nothing to do with Lotz who is *not a prophet* (Heb.1:1,2; Eph.2:20).

Many people around the world are 70 years of age and with cancer. Are they also to prophesy or surmise about the future of Israel? The future of Israel is already spelt out *in detail* throughout several prophetic books. Is not that revelation sufficient? One does not need to surmise or prophesy about Israel suffering a 'surprise attack'. Scripture and geopolitical events currently show that! But where is any interpretation of scripture here? Has not God spoken in the '*more sure word of prophecy...the scripture*' (2Pet.1:19,20)?

Your Comments and Questions

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

Terry, what verse can be used to say that the Righteousness of Christ is transferred through the death of Christ to the believing sinner. 2Cor.5:21 refers to the righteousness of GOD. I have heard you preach that the righteousness of Christ is exchanged for the sinner's sin or similar wording...

(G.J., Qld)

Editor's reply:

At times I have heard this 'transfer' idea stated. But I believe it is not the best theology or terminology. The 'transfer' of righteousness may imply more an idea of impartation rather than imputation (Rom.4; 2Cor.5:21) and that the believer would then be arguably righteous in and of themselves? That sounds to me more like the 'infused righteousness' as in Roman Catholic theology which is supposedly attained by sacramental means (which teaching also conveys that it can be lost).

Righteousness is always forensic and imputed but it remains *outside of us*. Our righteousness is Christ sitting at the right hand (Jer.23:6; 33:15) of God. Scriptural righteousness is such which is credited, imputed, alien and forensic rather than 'transferred'.

Hello Mike, I read your take on the Philadelphian and Laodicean Churches in the Nov/Dec 'Diakrisis'. Thanks for your observations. Great points. I'd never really thought about them in that way before. Just recently I realised that verse 9 of Revelation 3, which talks about '...the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie...' could indicate replacement theology? Thanks again, and I appreciate your publishing this one...

(H.S., Qld)

Pragmatism

'An overpowering surge of ardent pragmatism is sweeping through Evangelicalism. Traditional methodology - most notably preaching - is being discarded or downplayed in favour of the newer means, such as drama, dance, comedy, variety, side-show histrionics, pop-psychology, and other entertainment forms. The newer methods supposedly are more 'effective' - that is, they draw a bigger crowd. And since for many the chief criterion for gauging the success of a church has become attendance figures, whatever pulls in the most people is accepted without critical analysis as good. That is pragmatism...'

('Ashamed of the Gospel' P.27, by John MacArthur)

in eternal security, which, in fact and practice, Calvinism does not affirm. [Wrong. They do affirm an eternal security for the true saint. If God elects someone He cannot un-elect them! Rom.8:33]

...Regarding the character of Jesus and His payment for sin on the cross, was His atonement limited to only the elect? A yes or no answer reflects what one believes about Jesus. [Do unbelievers being punished in Hell have the atonement applied to them?] If one believes that He did not die for everyone, when He did, they don't follow the biblical Jesus. [Then most of the Reformers, martyrs, church leaders down the centuries have 'another jesus'?] If one believes that humans are so totally depraved that they have no ability or will to turn to Christ for His free gift of eternal life - they follow another Jesus. [Then rip out the following verses which clearly state unsaved man has NO such ability or power and are 'dead' in their sins? Rom.8:7,8; Eph.2:1; Rom.3:11; Jn.6:44,65; 1Cor.2:14...]

Did the Jesus with whom one claims to have a relationship predestine one to everlasting life with Him, while others, who were not predestined to salvation, are left to suffer in the Lake of Fire for all eternity? [They are justly left in their unregenerate state. Most historic 'Calvinists' do not believe in a 'double predestination' as hinted at here. All humans are condemned, and justly, to a lost eternity for their sins unless they believe the true Gospel]

The point here is that ignorance of what Calvinism authoritatively teaches about TULIP may keep many of those who regard themselves as Calvinists from the distortions of the Jesus of Calvinism. [The ignorance is on the part of the writer here! The confusion between historic 'Calvinism' and hyper-Calvinism is un scholarly. These TBC authors (T.A. McMahon and the late Dave Hunt) are well known for their misrepresentation of historic 'Calvinism', better termed 'The Doctrines of Grace'. Worse, the writers continued to misquote and print, even misquoting the likes of Spurgeon. This is utterly reprehensible and deserves the strongest of refutations and rebuke.

It will do no good to judge Christians who believe in the Doctrines of Grace (nicknamed 'Calvinism') as 'following another jesus'. This is a most serious charge, especially when the ones making the judgement are misrepresenting the issue!

Our book '*Calvinism & Arminianism - Out of the Maze*' documents the true historic position of 'Calvinism' (the Doctrines of Grace) and hyper-Calvinism and the widespread confusion between the two. It should be noted that the 'Doctrines of Grace' (called 'Calvinism' today) are evident in the major Confessions of faith which most denominations once adhered to. The 'Doctrines of Grace' were held to by most of the Reformers, the martyrs, the Puritans, missionaries, preachers, revivalists, evangelists, theologians, as well as the early translators (including KJV). Charles Spurgeon was a devout defender of these doctrines and an avid foe of hyper-Calvinism. The great revivals and 'awakenings' were all formed under 'Calvinistic' preaching which God clearly blessed. See also our booklet '*Debates on the Doctrines of Grace*' for answers to this subject in which there is much confusion!

Beth Moore's 'Revelation'



'Popular Bible teacher and author Beth Moore has sparked a fiery debate online about whether spending time reading the Bible is the same thing as spending time with God. 'Spending time with God and spending time with the Bible are not the same thing. The Bible is the Word of God, crucial to knowing Him, but it's not God. We can study our Bibles till the 2nd coming & leave God completely out of it.

We can grow in facts & never grow a whit in faith', Moore declared...The tweet, which garnered thousands of reactions, included criticisms from some who pointed to John 1:1, which says: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'. Others came to Moore's defense.

The fiery debate forced Moore to further explain her point in two more tweets. She maintained that 'people can read Scripture and remain unchanged - this is a sign that they are reading the Bible without God's presence...my point is NOT studying Scripture less...My point is that we need God in our study of His Word. I'm just saying don't leave Jesus out of Bible study'.

Reformation Charlotte, a ministry of Christians who seek to glorify God 'by exposing our culture of darkness to the light of the Gospel' argued that Moore's position is misguided. 'Well, in her world, spending time with God consists of fanciful dreams of being lifted up in the air while being told by God that He's going to unite all sectors of Christendom, or strange moments of meeting a woman at a random bus stop just to give her a handful of cash because, you know, God told her to go there and stuff', the group stated. 'Of course spending time in Scripture is the same thing as spending time with God. You cannot know God any other way. It's how He speaks to us (Hebrews 1:1). Yes, you can spend time with Him in prayer as well, and you can spend time with Him in worship. But what she's saying is essentially the same thing as saying that listening to your parents speak to you is not the same thing as spending time with them. The Scriptures are God's full and complete revelation to us. It informs all matters of our faith in Him, including our prayer and worship.'

No Compromise Radio, a ministry of Steve Cooley, also reacted with disdain to Moore's views on Thursday. 'When Beth spends time listening to her husband talk to her, too bad that does not count as spending time with him' ...

(Christian Post Jan/2019)

Editor's Comment:

There is a valuable lesson here for Bible teachers. Be clear in what you publicly are saying and prove it with scripture which is also clear.

Of course one can read the Bible and not '*spend time with God*'. But the how and why here was not made clear in the first instance. The inference and question here is whether the Bible is God's revelation. That was not made clear.

Although Beth Moore has a conservative background, a review of her

teachings will find she often does what many modern Bible teachers do - sensationalise with questionable phrases which are more akin to psychology than sound exposition. This is so common in preaching and Bible studies today. The language is often couched in vague ideas. For example, she says: ‘*God wields incomparably great power for those who choose to believe...More than enough to break the yoke of bondage. Our belief unclogs the pipe and invites the power to flow*’ (‘*Praying God’s Word: Breaking Free from Spiritual Strongholds*’, P.37). But do we have such ability to have God’s power flowing? Is God dependant on our belief? What scripture is there for this teaching? Scripture teaches God’s power is not in response to man (Eph.1:11; Acts 2:23; 4:28).

Moore’s theology is built also around revelation from God *apart from the Bible*, contrary to Heb.1 and 2Pet.1:16-21. She once praised ‘contemplative prayer’ and recommended Brother Lawrence, a Roman Catholic mystic whose teaching was also heretical. It contradicts Romans 12 and being ‘*transformed by the renewing of your mind*’ which is not done by emptying our minds but filling them with God’s revelation of himself in Christ which He revealed in the canon of scripture.

Then there are the visions and ‘words’ God supposedly gives to Beth, many which are not found in God’s infallible word. She equates these visions with scripture. The problem is that the Bible teacher here is not pointing people to the infallible inspired and inerrant word. This will only lead to more error. She claims to get revelation knowledge directly from God: ‘*What God began to say to me about five years ago and I’m telling you...my head is still whirling over it. He began to say to me, ‘I’m gonna say something right now, Beth. And boy you write this one down. And you say it as often as I give you utterance to say it. My bride is paralysed by unbelief. My bride is paralysed by unbelief’. And he said, ‘Starting with you’. Amen. Because we can do a lot of finger-pointing around here about why revival is not happening here and there. Let me tell you something, revival will always happen with faith*’. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dolcicoqyge>).

As one commentator wrote of this example: ‘*This is extra-biblical revelation on a level equal to the apostles themselves*’.

The issue at the base of this is the slippery slope of where we get our revelation from: Do we accept what the Bible says about itself - that the Spirit wrote ‘*the more sure word*’ as ‘*prophecy*’ - the ‘*prophecy of scripture*’? (2Pet.1:16-21)? What is ‘*scripture*’? Is not the Bible all sufficient? Did God leave out parts and only give it to Beth Moore? Will we put ourselves on the same level as the apostles and prophets when we put forth a word from God over that which was proclaimed by the prophets and apostles as ‘*past*’ (Heb.1)? What do we do to God’s name when we add to His revelation, when He says He has ‘*magnified His word above His name*’? (Ps.138:2)?

Finally, the root of all this variation in *where we get our revelation from* - is how we view the Bible. Do we really have the view that God has- is inspired, infallible and inerrant and all sufficient?

be no death, suffering or pain (Rev 21:4, 22:3). But if he used struggle, suffering, disease and death to create the first earth, which he called very good, why should we trust Him to keep struggle, suffering, disease and death out of the new earth?

9. *Given that Christ is the Creator who is the Truth, and since as God he cannot lie (Numbers 23:19) and His word is truth (John 17:17), why would this same Christ take millions of years to evolve the world, then tell us he created it all in six days? (Exodus 20:11)*

10. *The Apostle Paul teaches that sin and death came into the world through the actions of only one man, Adam (Romans 5:12-20), so only one actual man Jesus had to die to pay the penalty of sin (1 Corinthians 15:17ff). How can this be if the events described in Genesis 3 are not real history, but just a moral story imposed on ape-like ancestors?*

(Creation Research; Aug/2018)

Your Comments and Questions

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

More Unscholarly Judgements by TBC

Terry, this below from ‘The Berean call’ (TBC Oct/2018) seems confusing and serious judgement to me? After writing about one’s first love and relationship with the Lord he states this... [Editor’s comments in bold and brackets]...

‘One troubling and very aggressive teaching within Christianity is Calvinism, and my concern in particular has to do with a Calvinist’s relationship with Jesus Christ. [The teaching of authentic historic ‘Calvinism’ (as it is called today) as taught by almost all the Reformers, Puritans, revivalists and leaders down the running centuries is NOT ‘aggressive’! God being sovereign in predestination, election and salvation and man being unable in and of himself to respond and needing saving grace all of God, is hardly ‘aggressive’? If so the same could well be said of numerous Arminian sites which accuse the other side of heresy? Indeed, this article by TBC amazingly describes ‘Calvinists’ as ‘following another Jesus’!]

I’m convinced that most people who refer to themselves informally as Calvinists would not agree with the definitions of the acronym TULIP (Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints). [‘TULIP’ was not invented until the 20th Century. These points were named differently - Total depravity/inability; Unconditional Election; Particular Redemption; Effectual Calling; Preservation/Perseverance of the saints]...

Most such Christians consider themselves to be Calvinist because they believe

Questions For Theistic Evolutionists

Editor: The following highlights the need for a literal hermeneutic.

Recently Premier Radio UK asked us to supply a list of ten questions they could ask their very frequent speakers who are Theistic Evolutionists. Here's our Creation Research Team's list. We trust it helps you to challenge the followers of Dennis Alexander, BioLogos, theological colleges such as Moore and others who fool themselves that they actually believe the Bible.

1. If the Bible was your only source, would you ever suggest that Jesus Christ used evolution?

2. Genesis teaches that physical thorns came into existence after God cursed the ground as judgement on Adam's sin, and therefore they will be removed when the curse is removed. Why do you believe rocks containing fossil thorns are millions of years old, before mankind existed in the evolutionary timetable? We have personally collected these from Ordovician, Carboniferous, Permian, and Cretaceous rocks.

3. Evolution is a process of death, disease, struggle and starvation, none of which are regarded by God or mankind as good. Why would you believe that Jesus the Creator used such processes to create the world, and then declared it to be 'very good'? (Genesis 1:31)

4. Evolution is a process of survival of the fittest at the expense of the unfit. Why would Christ, who is all wise and all good, deliberately make anything unfit, since that is neither clever nor good.

5. If you believe the Genesis 1 narrative is 'true', but actually took millions of years, where are you going to put the long ages without making the Genesis sequence of events unbelievable and impossible, e.g. plants created on Day 3 needing to wait millions of years for their pollinators and seed dispersers (insects, birds and animals) created on Day 5?

6. If God stamped his image on some already evolving hominids, were they miraculously transformed into human beings with the potential for eternal condemnation if they didn't obey God? Surely, they would have been better off left alone?

7. If the creation of Adam and Eve as one man and one woman is not historical reality, but merely a moral story imposed on 'evolution from animals', why did Jesus base his teaching on marriage by using Genesis 1 & 2 as literal history?

8. God has promised he will create a new Heaven and Earth, where there will

The Pentecostal Dilemma

ACC Pastor Danny Guglielmucci, head pastor of ACC Edge Church in Adelaide, Australia, has been diagnosed with lymphoma (blood) cancer...

...One of his sons Pastor Michael Guglielmucci faked cancer, faked a healing and went all over Australia testifying about the healing. Then he confessed to being a fake and confessed to a big porn addiction.

...Another son, Pastor Kris Guglielmucci, was struck by lightning and died a couple of years ago....ACC pastor Ian Woods died from a long-time cancer a couple of years ago...

Editor's Comment:

Does anyone ever look at the lack of miraculous healing with these people (add Hillsong's Darlene Zschech and many others to the list)?

They get sick and die like the rest of us. They go to doctors, have chemotherapy, wear glasses and yet the Pentecostal/Charismatic gospel of the 'gift of healings' continues?

This ministry has examined hundreds of 'healings' by those claiming the gift of healings and found not one to be genuine, and certainly not by any person possessing the true, biblical apostolic gift.

The genuine 'gift' was confined to the apostolic era ('signs of an apostle'), without any failures, displaying healings of organic diseases (see our last issue (*Diakrisis* Jan/Feb). This healing gospel is a great deception of the 20th century.

Revival...What Revival?

According to a report by LifeWay Research released on Tuesday titled 'Most Teenagers Drop Out of Church as Young Adults'. 66 percent of young adults who attended a Protestant church regularly for at least a year as a teenager dropped out for at least a year between the ages of 18 and 22.

The major reasons respondents gave included 'moving to college' (34%), 'church members seeming judgmental or hypocritical' (32%), 'no longer feeling connected to people in their church' (29%), disagreement with their 'church's stance on political or social issues' (25%), and employment obligations (24%).

The report warned that for many youth, the couple of hours they spend in church and Sunday School often competes against 'something like 32-40 hours a week in a secular classroom, hundreds and hundreds of hours in a year in terms of secular media'.

(Christian Post 17/1/2019)

Editor's Comment: Some of the reasons given above are indicative of the 80% fall away rate of people who were never rooted in Christ? (Matt.13)

How Do You Read/Study the Bible?

Recently I came across a person who did not take most of the first few chapters of Genesis to be literal. The 'days' were not literal days but rather long periods of time. The words 'evening' and 'morning' were not really literal either. As I questioned him further, some parts this person took literally and other parts were figurative. Genesis 1:16 was interpreted allegorically. The greater light/sun is Christ and the lesser light/moon is the church and the stars are the saints. When I asked the person if different people interpreted these things allegorically then which meaning would be the correct one; and did the original author of Genesis intend to convey one meaning...there was no definitive answer forthcoming.

The problem with such allegorical interpretation is that it sets up *inconsistencies* as well as *subjective* interpretations from which a number of meanings can be derived. *The authority is more with the reader than the author.* Yet the original author surely had *one meaning* he wanted to convey.

When I was a Roman Catholic the Bible in many parts was said to be symbolic and I needed someone to interpret it for me. But when I went to my trusted priest I discovered his interpretation was not necessarily the same as other priests might have on various passages. It seemed like the Bible was a complex, symbolic book of vague allegorical meanings. Of course I did not have the indwelling Holy Spirit then to guide me, and being a 'natural man' and 'carnal' I was not able to understand the things of the Spirit (1Cor.2:14; Rom.8:7). It seemed like I would never be able to read the Bible for myself and understand the *plain meaning*. This matter got worse as I became interested in the last book of the Bible where there *obviously* were symbols and signs to be interpreted (Rev.12:1), as well as a strange chapter 17 which read oddly like a description of my own Roman Catholic religion! But again I was told that this book could not always be understood. I accepted that the Bible could not be read literally and gave up.

Nearly two years passed and I was challenged by a 'Protestant' (a rare breed today) to examine my religion in comparison with the Bible. Being a religious education teacher at the time I proudly took up the challenge, forgetting what I was told previously about reading the Bible. My aim was to show that what the Roman church taught and including its traditions were either found somewhere in the Bible or the Bible did not contradict it. I decided to read the Bible like a child would - *where it made sense I sought no other sense.*

God used this event to draw me to Himself and to be converted. It was only then that I had an insatiable desire to read and understand the Word of God. I read the Bible literally and attempted to attain *the understanding as the original author would have had.* Where there was *obvious* allegorical language I attempted to find the literal truth behind the language. The Holy Spirit opened up a whole new realm of God's revelation of Jesus Christ. I was unaware at this stage of any other way of reading and studying the Bible. As time went on I began to discover that some people including scholars seemed to interpret the Bible quite similar to what I had seen in prior religious circles. I wondered why if the Bible was inspired that some would concentrate on what *the interpreter could find as*

of the Father.

A literal interpretation is consistent, objective and accurate unless the language is *obviously* symbolic, figurative, allegorical.

One must also not confuse interpretation with 'application' of the text. Interpretation is done prior to 'applying' the text. Application is gained by prayerfully asking questions such as 'How does this passage affect my walk with God?'; 'Is there a sin I need to repent of?'; 'What is the Holy Spirit applying to my life here?' Preaching is also full of this 'application' after first establishing what the author means from the text.

But what about Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress'?

I have had some who favour the allegorical method of interpretation cite Bunyan's famous 'Pilgrim's Progress' as an example of allegorical interpretation. Firstly, *Pilgrim's Progress* is NOT the inspired Word of God. It was written based on dreams that John Bunyan had while in prison. It is fiction and it was written as so by Bunyan. Bunyan stated clearly it is an 'allegory' and was never meant to be interpreted literally! Secondly, it is a story of the life of a Christian which teaches clearly the sanctification process of a believer in trials, testings, sufferings and growth. It is also a powerful allegory of what are the various types of false believers. It was never meant to replace the word of God or be an argument for the allegorical method.

How do you read and study the bible? Do you read it to understand what the original author meant and prayerfully trust the Holy Spirit to show you an application for life? It is by this Word that God shows us truth and sanctifies us (Jn.17:17). Thus it behoves us to be consistent in how we read, study and thus interpret what God is saying. This is the process by which our minds are renewed. The Bible speaks of things that are '*reasonable*' ('*logikós*' Rom.12:1). The Word of God is spiritual nourishment for us in worship and in the revelation of God. How we read and study it is important to it's author.

Terry Arnold

(1) Ronald M. Johnson, '*Systematic Theology is the Hermeneutic*', Conservative Theological Journal Vol.1 (Tyndale Theological Seminary, 1997; 2002), 1:222.

(2) Mal Couch, '*An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics: A Guide to the History and Practice of Biblical Interpretation*' (Kregel Pub., 2000), 97.

(3) Kenneth R. Cooper, '*A Survey of the Case for Literal Interpretation of the Scriptures*', Journal of Dispensational Theology Vol.10 (Tyndale Theological Seminary, 2006; 2007), vnp.10.30.22.

(4) Charles Caldwell Ryrie, '*Basic Theology : A Popular Systemic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*' (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1999), 125.

Bibliography: Various articles including '*Contrasting Literal Hermeneutics With Allegorical Spiritualisation, and Genre Hermeneutics*' by David Q. Santos

And <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/revelation/introduction/the-rise-of-allegorical-interpretation.html>

unless it is obviously figurative which it is not.

Are there times when we would *not* take the word ‘thousand’ literally? Yes, and for *obvious* reason. There are times when the text is *obviously* figurative language (1Cor.4:15 ‘*ten thousand instructors*’; 14:19 ‘*ten thousand words*’). Here also a different Greek word is used for these instances - ‘*murios*’ - we get ‘myriad’ from this.

If we do not take such passages as the millennium in Revelation to be literal, then why would we take other prophetic books such as Zechariah to be literal - Jesus coming to the mount of Olives physically (Zech.14)? This latter passage directly correlates with the prophecy in Revelation chapter 20 that Jesus the Messiah will reign on the earth for a thousand years!

Similarly, allegorical interpretations do not take the many references to the Messiah’s ‘reign’ on ‘David’s throne’ on earth (Isaiah 9:6-7; Zechariah 14:1-21). Is Genesis to be taken literally? If so, why do some take the *days* literally in the first book and not the *years* in the last book?

The same problem occurs with the ‘New Jerusalem’. Is the ‘New Jerusalem’ not really what John saw but only figurative, symbolic of other things? But again, this is not the hermeneutics of the earliest church fathers but a later invention.

Then there is ‘replacement theologies’ which bring such things as the Mosaic ‘Sabbath’ into the New Testament and make it a Sunday ‘Sabbath’. And the classic is the Israel of the Old Testament being changed to the ‘church’ of the New Testament or the ‘New Israel’. Hundreds of scriptures throughout the Old Testament have to be re-read allegorically to get this.

But what about allegories, figurative language in the Bible?

Revelation has examples of *obvious* figurative language. In Revelation 12 there is a ‘woman’ giving birth to a ‘manchild’. The ‘woman’ is a ‘wonder’ (‘*semeion*’ - a ‘sign’). This ‘*sign*’ obviously has to be a metaphor for something else. The Old Testament consistently describes Israel as a ‘woman’ (Micah 4:9,10; Is.54:5, Jer.31:32, etc). Christ is born of the nation Israel (Heb.7:14). The passage is *obvious* allegory.

Some cite the ‘*seven golden candlesticks*’ mentioned in Revelation chapter 1 as figurative. But we are in fact told what the figures mean! Vs.20 tells us exactly what this ‘*mystery*’ is. The ‘*candlesticks*’ are figures, but then *we are told* that they are *literally* ‘seven churches’.

Most allegories in the Bible are *obvious*. Galatians 4:21-31 uses the metaphors of Isaac and Ishmael to refer to the two covenants, the bondage of the law and freedom and promise of the Spirit. But the reader might ask how is this *obviously* allegorical - again the answer is that the scripture tells us it is so! - ‘*Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which engenders to bondage, which is Hagar*’ (vs.24).

Some cite the parables as allegories. But they are narratives to convey literal truths. Many were designed to show the hearts of, and harden the hearts of, the pharisees. In the parable of the Prodigal Son the key person is the older brother, *whose attitude was that of the Jewish leaders of the time*. It also shows the love

the meaning rather than what the original author had written. Who was the final real interpreter, the Holy Spirit or the reader?

The History of Hermeneutics

The literal hermeneutic system, sometimes called the Grammatico-Historical method, was used by the earliest Christians and the earliest church fathers. This system allowed Scripture to say what it meant in its normal plain meaning. The words have their normal meaning as would be used in every day language by the author at the time. *The emphasis was not on the interpreter but on the original author and what they meant to say*. This simple consistent method used by the earliest of church leaders resulted in a consistent understanding of most passages.

Enter Other Methods

Towards the end of the 2nd century this literal method began to be replaced by other methods. Some believe this can be traced to pagan philosophers such as Aristobulus, who lived around 160 B.C. He believed that Greek philosophy borrowed from the Old Testament and those teachings could be uncovered only by allegorizing. Allegory is an interpretation device where the words for a character or event is used as a metaphor for a broader or secondary message to be interpreted by the reader. The end result often is a wide range of meanings depending on the subjective understanding of the interpreter.

More prominent to the time of the New Testament is Philo (20 B.C.-A.D. 54). Philo used this allegorical method to *interpret Jewish scripture but with his Greek background of philosophy*. Scholars cite hundreds of examples of his allegorization of the Old Testament. The allegorical interpretation often became a secondary meaning to a literal meaning of the text.

Enter Origen

The allegorical interpretation of Scriptures cannot be historically proved to have prevailed at the time of Christ and the apostles in the first century. The first century historian, Josephus, shows not a sign of it in his writings.

But this was to change after the first century. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 155-216) who was influenced by Philo believed a passage might have up to five differing meanings. But it was Origen, who was probably a student of Clement and who studied Platonic philosophy, who went further and popularised the allegorical method. Of the church fathers the one that is most cited as showing a shift from a literal hermeneutic to allegorical is Origen. Origen’s work ‘*On First Principles*’, teaches that if no spiritual understanding is found on the surface of a bible passage, then the verses are to be taken symbolically. Greek philosophy was most evident in Origen’s thinking as is clearly evident to the Jews in Alexandria Egypt. (1) Origen wrote ‘*I do not quote these words, however, as taking them in their literal signification, but, agreeably to the title of the book (for it is inscribed ‘Proverbs’), I investigate them as containing a secret meaning.*

For it is the custom of these writers (of Scripture) to distribute into many classes those writings which express one sense when taken literally, but which convey a different signification as their hidden meaning'. (2)

Note the mention of 'secret meaning' and 'hidden meaning' here. Any wonder there was a plethora of mystics and mystical writings in later centuries.

There were others who at the time opposed this method. Origen wrote of Celsus who complained that Origen was 'doing violence to the meaning of the writers'. (3)

Origen's explanation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) shows how far the allegorical method would go. Origen interpreted the man robbed as being Adam, Jerusalem is paradise, Jericho the world, the priest the Law, the Levites the Prophets, the Samaritan is Christ, the donkey Christ's physical body which bears the burden of the wounded man (the wounds his sins), the inn is the Church and the Samaritan's promise to return the second coming of Christ.

With the new allegorical method of interpretation came an emphasis on different 'genres' (styles/categories of books). By defining the books of the Bible into various styles, a different hermeneutical method was developed for different genres.

The allegorical method became increasingly popular among the church fathers. Some of the later allegorical interpretations are nothing short of fanciful, mystical and bordering on the ludicrous.

In later centuries Augustine's (AD 354-430) allegorical interpretation of Bible prophecy dominated the understanding of eschatology during the medieval period. The Roman church adopted this method. The allegorical method persisted up until the Reformation and the Puritans, when many in refuting the Roman church, sought more the *plain meaning of texts*. But many Reformers simply did not reform their theology in some areas. Vestments of Romish traditions persisted in infant baptism, christenings, etc. In fighting the vices and the false teaching of Rome, little time was dedicated to the reforming of eschatology or to returning to such as was taught by the early church fathers who were predominantly pre-millenarians (such as Justin Martyr, Papias, Tertullian, Victorinus and more). In the field of hermeneutics some Reformers and Puritans did go back to the literal methods. The Puritan Jonathan Edwards wrote of a literal future Israel. Spurgeon saw a literal millennium as yet to come and a physical reign of Christ on earth (see our booklet 'The Millennium - Literal or Figurative; The Early Church and Beyond - Views on the Millennium').

Hermeneutical Methods Weighed

The aim of any hermeneutics should be to answer the question - *what meaning did the original author intend to convey?* Added to this is the question - who becomes the authority here - God the Holy Spirit or the interpreter? One author argues: 'If used consistently, allegorical hermeneutics would reduce the Bible to near-fiction, for the normal meaning of words would be irrelevant and would be replaced by whatever meaning the interpreter gives to the symbols. However, for

the most part, allegorical hermeneutics is not practiced consistently or thoroughly. Evangelicals who use this system do so usually in the area of prophecy, while using normal or literal hermeneutics in other areas of biblical interpretation'. (4)

The problem with this method is what some call a 'spiritualisation' of scripture. But which 'spirit' is involved here - the one of the Holy Spirit or the interpreter?

A-millennialist Schaff is fair when he describes the great hermeneutical failings of Origen: 'His great defect is the neglect of the grammatical and historical sense and his constant desire to find a hidden mystic meaning. He even goes further in this direction than the Gnostics, who everywhere saw transcendental, unfathomable mysteries'.

Evidence is lacking within Scripture that Jesus or the Apostles understood the Old Testament in this way.

There is no doubt an argument exists for different 'genres' of books. There are clearly different literary styles in the Bible. The style of Proverbs differs from the Psalms and other books. Some styles are narrative, others poetic. The book of Revelation uses symbols and signs. Other passages use hyperbole as exaggeration to prove a point (1Cor.13:1-3; Col.1:23). But to impose different methods for different genres brings inconsistencies. Some books are also rather mixed genres. Revelation is said to be an 'apocalyptic genre' and thus cannot be taken literally. But who invented that rule? John was told to *write what he 'saw'* (Rev.1:2), not what he interpreted or understood.

With the allegorical method the 'thousand years' in Rev.20 is not a thousand years but a long or indefinite period. Yet in the Old Testament the mention of 'a thousand' in many instances is usually accepted across the board as literal (Nu.1:41 - tribes of Israel; also in 2:16,28; 31:34; Ezra 2:69 - thousands of pounds of silver and gold; Is.30:17; etc.). Are the 'loaves and the fishes', the 'two thousand swine' (Mk.5:13) and the 'three thousand' souls saved in Acts 2 - do we allegorise them also? And what about the other mentions of the word 'thousand' in the rest of the book of Revelation? In Revelation 11:3 '...two witnesses... prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days...' (3.5 years) 12:6 'And the woman fled into the wilderness...a thousand two hundred and threescore days'. 14:20 '...space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs'. What reason do we have for allegorising these? If a 'thousand years' is not literal then why did John have so much detail for this (Rev.20:3-7)? Is the 'lake of fire' and the 'torment' in the same passage literal or figurative? The text says that Satan will be tormented 'for ever and ever' - do we take that literally? Most do. Why is it we take 'for ever and ever' literally and not the 'thousand years' when it is mentioned six times in one passage (Rev.20) and further in the same book?

The problem with picking and choosing what is literal and not literal is that *inconsistencies* begin to occur. Most of the early church fathers in the first two centuries took this passage concerning the millennium literally. The passage is arguably not figurative unless one adds a hermeneutical rule that says 'prophecy' is figurative in such a passage. But the language is literal and means what it says