

THE INDEPENDENT BAPTIST REVIEW

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Jack Keep, Editor

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A DOUBLE CHECK

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We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. (1 John 3:14)

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. (1 John 5:2)

The Christian is admonished in the Word of God to examine himself to see if he is in the faith. We are reminded too, of the necessity to make our calling and election sure lest we deceive ourselves. Just as it is good and necessary for a business to make a periodic check of its resources, progress, weaknesses and liabilities, so, too it is necessary for the believer to take spiritual stock of himself. This does not mean, of course, that all our days are to be spent in doubting or in some morbid introspection; the idea is rather that Christians should have spiritual checkups in order to maintain good spiritual health.

All of the Word of God contains principles by which we may gauge the soul's condition but the epistles of John seem to be especially concerned about the spiritual vitality of those who have trusted Christ. The beloved apostle enumerates several concrete principles by which Christians may judge themselves, their relationships to the Lord and other believers. As we read John's first epistle we were impressed with the thoroughness of his diagnosis and noted how solicitous he was about the welfare of the believers of his day. Then, too, the prescription which he gives is a timeless one that may be applied by believers of any age. Let us proceed to examine this "double check."

LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN - PROOF OF REGENERATION

Since he was addressing those who had made a profession of faith in Christ, John reminds them that one evidence of the genuineness of their salvation was their love of the brethren - "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." By no means did he minimize doctrinal correctness or the necessity of striving for the faith but, side by side with them, he insists, must be a love for fellow believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is indeed true that when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, there arises a new

feeling and relationship toward the people of God. Prior to conversion there existed a hatred of spiritual things and spiritual people coupled with suspicion and mistrust of those whom we may have regarded as "religious cranks", "fanatics" or simply "queer people". The grace of God changes such sentiments so that they are replaced by a sense of kinship and love.

It is to be feared that Satan is interested in smothering this love among brethren and that he not only accuses man before God and slanders God before men but that he is also in the business of slandering brethren before brethren. It is much more to his liking to see those of like precious faith at odds with each other and to that end he would prefer to have genuine spiritual unity replaced by gnawing suspicions and bitterness of spirit. Hence the Christian must ever be on guard that he does not mistake the dictates of inflamed natural passion for the movings of the Spirit of God. Those who are saved know full well that a love for the brethren is an accompaniment of the grace of God and that the absence of such love is abnormal in the spiritual realm.

By no means are we to conclude that love for the brethren should make the Christian to be a religious pacifist who would refuse to lift his voice against error even if that error be espoused by brethren beloved. The love of which the apostle speaks does not supplant zeal for the cause of God but it should scatter to the four winds earth-born suspicions and pride which bring about needless discord and unseemly strife.

LOVE AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD THE PROOF OF LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN

Lest he be misunderstood, the apostle John states the converse of the proposition that love for the brethren is a proof of a work of grace. He declares that we may check to see if we really love the brethren by examining ourselves to determine if we love God and obey His Word - "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." Thus we are given two principles by which we may check our relationship to God and to fellow believers.

It is apparent that the apostle recognizes that some good people might become so engrossed with one aspect of the

truth (love for fellow believers) that they might go out of their way to demonstrate that love and, in their false charity, do that which is contrary to the Word and will of God. We are not to be misled into thinking that some groundless, sentimental tolerance of all error is to be denominated love. It is not love but positive disobedience!

Those, then, who truly love God will desire to walk humbly in accord with the principles of His Word. As they do, they give evidence that they truly love the brethren.

EDITORIAL

This paper is accused of printing a pack of lies (well, at least four) by the man who represents a certain denomination. We do not want to print even one lie. So if we have inaccurate information we will correct it. I hope our detractors will do the same. Pastor Streeter's article - *FIVE REASONS* - has drawn considerable static. Some have called him a liar because they differ with his use of the term "ecumenical" to describe a church that is a member of the NCC and WCC. The main question is whether it is wise for the president of an approved agency of the GARBC to speak there.

Pastor Streeter has written "An explanation and retraction" printed elsewhere in this issue clarifying a detail in his article that has been disputed.

It seems to be the thing these days to call a man a liar if he brings up something that causes embarrassment. Instead of saying, "Yeah, we really dropped the watermelon on that! We have to be more careful", the response is, "That's a dirty lie!" Certainly we have an obligation to speak the truth in love and with accuracy. We also should be temperate enough not to call a man a liar for a minor inaccuracy.

The item that follows illustrates how easy it is to be in error without being a liar.

"THAT BUSINESS OF FEMINISM"

Cedarville College had a series of workshops on "Women in the home and workplace". One of the speakers was from the Conservative Baptist Seminary in Denver [Neo-evangelical]. The series was sponsored by the honors society and concluded with a panel discussion. The panel was taped, evidently for later broadcast over the College station. One of the panel members said, "I am a feminist, I will say it before God, country and Cedarville College." In the background another member is heard to say, "Now I *know* this won't be broadcast". [You can probably find a copy of this tape for yourself.] Instead of owning up to the facts and saying, "This is how it happened", the blame is laid on one of those "East Coast fellas" who let it out. Note that he got a tape before they were "pulled". Does that mean a "cover up"?

[The following is a transcript of remarks by the Representative at Saylorville Baptist Church, Saylorville, Ia., in May, 1991.]

"That business of feminism, at Cedarville College. That was an open forum. Cedarville has open forums once in a while. And at that open forum, about the youngest man on

the faculty of Cedarville, a history professor, got up and made some statements about the ERA that were very questionable as far as our convictions are concerned. I know about what happened there 'cause I've been on the board at Cedarville for almost 30 years. Dr. Dixon immediately brought that young professor into his office and said, 'We don't believe this - believe what you're talking on this campus and if you ever say anything like that again you can look for another job.' And he pulled the tape of that thing but, uh, one of those east coast fellas somehow got ahold of one of those tapes before they were pulled, and he mailed them, with a cover letter, to every board member of Faith Baptist Bible College, saying, 'Aren't you glad Faith Baptist Bible College doesn't teach this like Cedarville does?' Well Cedarville doesn't teach that, the faculty member was reprimanded. Dr. Dixon got up in chapel and repudiated the entire tenor of that thing and that's two years ago. [emphasis his] And Dr. Dixon called the man who mailed it out all over the country as Gospel truth and said, 'Why didn't you call me before you did that?' He said, 'You know what we'd do with a Cedarville College Board member if he did that, we'd fire him off the board immediately, the rest of the board would.' And that's just two items in that paper that are lies, I could name two more if you want to take the time."

Well, no thank you, but let's just look a little more closely at this statement.

A CLOSER LOOK

1. The Cedarville Professor:

A look in the Cedarville catalogue showed that this faculty member is listed as Assistant Professor of Philosophy in the Bible department and chairman of the honors committee. He is not a History professor as stated above. He is also a graduate of the Denver Seminary [Neo-evangelical] and has as his goal to use the honors society as a vehicle for change at Cedarville (tape).

I wrote and asked him if he was indeed called into Dr. Dixon's office immediately and told "If you ever say anything like that again you can look for another job"?

- Is he the youngest professor on the faculty?
- Is he a professor of history - or philosophy?
- Did Dr. Dixon call him into the office immediately (the next day) and tell him that if he ever said anything like that again he could look for another job?
- I asked the professor if Dr. Dixon repudiated "the entire tenor of the thing in chapel."

After a month I called the professor and noted that he did not answer my letter. He said "It is my policy to turn letters like that over to the President for a response." I said that I only wanted an answer whether the allegations were correct. He said, "I am not in a position to answer that." I asked whether the President intended to respond, but he did not know. To date there has been no response.

2. The East coast fella"

Here is the exact wording of the letter from the "East coast fella" to the board members of Faith:

Dear Fellow Board Member:

This tape comes to you courtesy of _____ and myself. We wanted you to hear what is being offered to our precious youth in one of our approved schools.

Listening to this tape should make us grateful for our school in Ankeny. It can also help us to be on our guard. As Dr. Donald Brong used to preach in our churches ... "IT CAN HAPPEN HERE!"

3. Dixon's phone call

What was the conversation between Dr. Dixon and the man who mailed the tapes? I called the man in question and asked specifically what Dr. Dixon DID say. Speaking from memory the brother gave this account:

"Paul Dixon said he was very disappointed that the tape was distributed. I asked him, 'Did you discipline the faculty member?' His answer was, 'No, only a school like Bob Jones would do that.' I asked, 'How did the Board [Trustees] react to it?' His answer was 'The board was not upset about it.'"

WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

There are obviously some discrepancies between what Paul Dixon told this pastor and what the Representative says took place. The professor, who had plenty to say on the tape, isn't talking now. He has, evidently, been gagged. Is this another inconsistency that should be dismissed by saying, "That paper is full of lies?"

David wrote, "I said in my haste, all men are liars." (Psalm 116:11) He isn't the only one who has done that.

An Explanation and a Retraction by Lloyd Streeter

Some questions have been asked about our article [Five Reasons, March 1991] and especially about the item regarding the teachers at Grand Rapids Baptist College and Seminary requesting that Carl Henry be allowed to come and speak at the school.

It has been said by some that we are accusing Dr. Charles Wagner. Wagner's name was not found anywhere in the item.

In order to conserve space in the IBF Review a few words were dropped which did not change the meaning. The original written form was as follows.

"The professors at Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary reported in classes where I was in attendance that the faculty had desired for Dr. Carl Henry to come speak at the Seminary, and that the president brought Dr. Henry to his home (instead of bringing him to a seminary building in order to avoid criticism,) and that the seminarians were invited into the president's home to meet with Dr. Henry. I consider that arrangement to be both theologically compromising and deceitful."

Note that I said that I got the information from professors at the seminary. Note also that I received this report in classes I attended in 1984 and 1985. If the reader

had noticed that the alleged incident took place before the summer of 1984 they would have known that we were not accusing Wagner since he did not come to Grand Rapids until after the 1983 term.

The main point is that the teachers wanted Henry brought to the seminary. In my opinion that showed a willingness to compromise, to influence students toward a modified position and undermine the historic stand of Biblical separation.

Dr. Wilbert Welch denies that he ever invited Henry to his home and he denies that he invited the students in to visit with Henry. I believe Dr. Welch and therefore I apologize to him for the errors. I cheerfully retract that part of the story.

There was a meeting in the living room of the president of Calvin College. According to Dr. Welch he did know Dr. Henry would be there, but he did not know who the other guests would be when he went to the home. He did not say. This must have been the meeting referred to by the seminary professors in 1984.

Dr. Wagner did admit in a phone conversation with me on April 19, 1991, that the professors did, in fact ask that Henry be allowed to come to GRBC&S.

There has been a further development since I wrote the article for the IBF Review. Dr. Arthur Holmes, of Wheaton College delivered the Staley lectures at Grand Rapids Baptist College and Seminary in April, 1991. Holmes is a neo-evangelical teacher at a neo-evangelical school. He is also a "Christian Humanist". This compromise identifies the entire GARBC with Wheaton and Holmes.

[Pastor Streeter has written 2 reports in response to Paul Tassell's comments at Saylorville, Ia., and Faith Baptist Bible College in May, 1991. You may write him at P.O. Box 1043 La Salle, IL 61301. Send at least \$2 for copying and postage]

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THE IBF MEETING

The Independent Baptist Fellowship met at Crescentville Baptist Church June 17-19 for their first annual meeting. There was an excellent spirit, good music and tremendous singing. The preaching was of the finest quality.

The full doctrinal statement was adopted after lengthy business sessions discussing various doctrinal points.

The assembly adopted a subscription policy for the IBF Review. The cost to be \$5.00 per year dating from annual meetings. 116 people signed on as charter members of the Independent Baptist Fellowship. Membership is open to Pastors and members of independent Baptist churches who agree with the doctrinal statement. The 1992 IBF meeting will be held at Kansas City, June 15-17. The theme will be "Christ Above All" from Col. 1:18.

I was blessed by all the messages, but I was especially moved by the message from Pastor Virgil Romans of Terre Haute, Ind. Brother Romans truly spoke as a "dying man to dying men". His theme was "Stranger than fiction." He noted that Peter, in his first epistle uses the word "strange" several times. Introducing his message with a description of "strange" things, he mentioned some strange experiences he had in the army. He said there are some strange things in America today including a strange kind of fundamentalism and a strange music in the churches. His message focussed on Job and his experiences. It was noted that Job is not listed in Hebrews 11 although we might expect to find him there. Brother Romans developed his theme to show that Job, a righteous man repented, Job a needy man prayed for others and Job a selfless man was made rich.

In his conclusion Pastor Romans reminded us that the important thing in the day we stand before the Lord will not be how many people we have won, how large a church we have built but HOW FAITHFUL we have been. "That is the ONLY important thing -- HOW FAITHFUL ..."

[Tapes of the messages are available from Crescentville Baptist Church]

LETTERS

CONFERENCE ECHOES

"I thought it was an exceptional conference. Not only was the preaching of the Word a blessing and a challenge, but the spirit of those present was such an encouragement."

"The entire conference was a blessing, from beginning to end. I believe the seeds have been sown for a blessed fellowship for years to come."

"We are refreshed. What a blessing the conference was. It was like coming 'home'."

From Scotland: "Many thanks for sending the IBF REVIEW it is very interesting. The only Baptist church in our town is associated with the British Council of Churches, therefore I will not fellowship with groups and organizations that compromise the Word of God..."

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