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Integrity

INTEGRITY, a journal published bimonthly by an independent nonprofit corporation, is intended to be a ministry of reconciliation which utilizes the varied talents of a large community of believers. These believers, united in faith, but divergent in opinions, seek to accurately reveal God to both the church and the world so that all may become one as He is one. Accordingly, it should not be assumed that the views expressed by individual authors necessarily represent the opinions of either the editors or the Board as a whole.

Readers' Response

(Continued from page 79)

Would you please include me in your list of subscribers? A fellow member at church loaned me a couple issues of Integrity and I found the articles on small churches very interesting. We used to subscribe years ago and I would like to resume again.

Weldon L. Abels
Columbus, OH

Enclosed is a check to show my appreciation for your continued efforts to allow articles such as Cecil Hook's and other authors to bring us new ideas to study and think about.

Those with closed minds won't consider new thoughts on "old" Church of Christ doctrinal subjects and won't appreciate your journal.

This donation should help offset Mr. McCann's who no longer wants to be on your mailing list because of my dear friend Cecil Hook's article on "Does Baptize Mean to Immerse."

Myrtle Clark
New Braunfels, TX

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Putting On The Coat Of Grace

I tried to live a perfect life for a week once. (It's okay for you to laugh.) I was about eleven years old and the self-imposed test was a prerequisite I thought up to prove to myself that I was really ready to be baptized. Of course, I set myself up for failure (my interactions with my siblings were never quite up to par and I knew it).

Eventually I got the courage to "get baptized" anyway but my church friends and I yearned often for that clean slate/fresh start feeling we experienced right after our baptism. Through my young eyes it appeared that even the adults sought that "clean again" condition by repeatedly "going forward" and sometimes getting rebaptized. Only one honest moment of introspection is all it took for any of us to see the lack of love in our hearts. Our efforts to be perfect in life (or at least at the moment we died) were constantly frustrated. Salvation became a vague, uneasy possibility and, frankly, trying to be good enough sucked the very joy of life from most of us.

No wonder the explanation of God's gracious gift of righteousness through Jesus was such good news to me! Late in high school I learned about God's grace plus another important fact: the Holy Spirit was still freely operating through and beyond the Bible. Once those two pieces of information settled into my mind and heart, I could begin to believe that Jesus didn't leave us "as orphans" (John 14:15-18) and that abundant living really could begin now!

I began to picture myself in a new coat--a brilliantly bright white, luminous coat bought by Jesus with his blood to make me presentable to the Father. In my mind the Father now continuously sees me in an acceptable form--wrapped in this coat of Jesus' righteousness. This constant conciliatory condition allows me fellowship with the Godhead. No more wondering if I'm acceptable to God, or if I've done enough to be good enough, or if I'm in or out of heaven today. Because Jesus died for me, I know God loves me and accepts me as I am. Now I am free to make mistakes, to misunderstand, to be imperfect, to be wrong. I am free to pursue truth as far as it goes; actions are no longer based on what seems "safest."

Do I think this "coat of grace" frees me to sin all I want? Of course not and why would I want to when I can still see the repulsive, decadent parts of my self under the clean,

(Continued on page 70)

Worshipping "In Spirit And Truth"

CECIL HOOK

Jesus informed the Samaritan woman that God wants mankind to worship him "in spirit and truth." What does that mean?

In our search for a clear understanding of what Jesus said, let us consider the setting again. The context is John 4. In Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well, the old question surfaced as to which worship was authentic, that of the Jews or Samaritans.

Who were these Samaritans? After Jeroboam divided the kingdom, Samaria became the capital of the Kingdom of Israel which consisted of ten tribes of Israel. Through succeeding generations, the people became increasingly idolatrous and corrupt. In 722 B.C. God allowed Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, to capture them and take the people away into captivity. He repopulated the land with Assyrians. Because these new inhabitants were ravaged by wild beasts, they assumed that they had offended the god of the land. So a captive priest was sent to teach "how they should fear the Lord." Thus, along with their own gods, they also feared God and were instructed from the Pentateuch.

Generations later, as Judah returned from captivity and began to rebuild the temple, the Samaritans wanted to help. Their help was refused. That further inflamed long-felt animosities. A man named Manasseh, of priestly lineage in Judah, married a Samaritan and was expelled by Nehemiah about 432 B.C. He went to Samaria and became high priest of a temple built on Mt. Gerizim and there the Samaritans offered sacrifices of the Law. In their nationalistic zeal they claimed that both their temple and their copy of the Law were greater than those at Jerusalem. On the other hand, Jewish animosity was so entrenched that a traveler went around Samaria on his journey from Judea to Galilee.

Presumably authorized by the Law, two mutually exclusive religions centered on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem and Mt. Gerizim in Samaria, only a few miles apart. Sounds modern, doesn't it? In their attempts to keep the rituals of Moses, the Jews and Samaritans differed. The Samaritan woman was eager to learn which side was right. So, as soon as she became convinced that Jesus was a prophet, she put that question to him. Although Jesus assured her that salvation was of the Jews, he did not let their dispute become the issue.

As related by John, "The woman said to him, 'Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.'" (John 4:19-24).

Jesus gave that sinful woman a startling revelation. The time had come, he told her, when worship would be centered in neither of those localities, but true worshipers would worship in spirit and truth. But what does it mean to worship in spirit and truth?

What Does It Mean?

The most common attempt to answer this question reveals our sad misdirection in legalism, patternism, and ritualism. It urges that we must worship according to truth; that is, we must be cautious to discern and keep the specific details and

pattern of each of the ritualistic "five acts of worship" in weekly assemblies. And we must go through these forms with meditation, mood, and feeling (though not exhibited too exuberantly!) that supposedly lifts them above mere rituals. It becomes ritual and emotion by command and demand.

In each locality they were ritually sacrificing fleshly, earthly offerings that only pictured the truth. They offered the prescribed ritual sacrifices of the Law in order to gain God's expressed forgiveness, but these things could only depict in type and shadow what would be fulfilled in Christ. Although truth from the Books of Moses was involved in guiding their actions, they were not worshipping *in truth*. Whatever thing was offered, it only anticipated fulfillment in Christ who is the true passover lamb, sin offering, scapegoat, firstfruits, etc. depicted in their symbolic ceremonies.

In contrast to God sending a code of law, "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." He was "full of grace and truth." He is the Truth, the fulfillment of the rituals and shadows, the forms and types, through which both Jew and Samaritan sought to approach God. Happily, our approach to God in relationship and worship is in Him, the Truth, not through another law but a Person.

God, being spirit, is not localized in man-made temples, and his worship is spiritual communion rather than ritual, in the heart rather than from a literal altar. No longer would the Temple visit bring the disciple into the Presence, for that person is a temple themselves with the Spirit of God within her or him. The Temple priest is

superseded by the priesthood of the believer. The truth has fulfilled all that foreshadowed it.

What Is Acceptable Worship?

Now, Jesus was affirming, acceptable worship no longer depends upon regulated expressions at certain places or specified times. There are no holy altars, rituals, and sacraments but sanctified persons who are temples of his Spirit and whose hearts are holy altars offering continual sacrifice. Our worship/praise is thought, lived, spoken, and sung as a response to our consciousness of God's infinite qualities, his indwelling, and his love. We exchanged symbolic rituals for a whole-life spiritual relationship in which we seek to honor God in every thought and action. We worship him in truth and in spirit, that is, truly and spiritually, through the dedication of our inner selves to God in Christ.

Jesus was not pointing the Samaritan woman to assemblies and "five acts of worship," another system regulated by law like the one her question was about. He did not bring us into bondage to another set of demanded rituals, but he liberated our spirits to serve and praise in his presence at all times and in every place.

Our temple fires never go out.

The preceding article is one chapter in Cecil's recently published book "Free To Accept" which can be ordered by sending \$5 to: Cecil and Lea Hook, 1350 Hulsache, New Braunfels, TX 78130-5725. Cecil retired 10 years ago as a minister in the non-instrumental Churches of Christ.

The Bible And Drinking Wine

JOHN W. LOFTUS

I must begin by apologizing for not having written on a much larger issue than I have here. A particular church asked me to do some research on this issue, and having done so I want to share it with a larger audience.

As we approach this topic, as with any other one we might face, we need to refrain from the desire to force the Bible to conform to our previously held beliefs. To do this we should refrain from explaining away any text that doesn't fit our preconceived notions. We should also attempt to study every important Biblical passage on the topic.

The era of "Prohibition" in the 1920's has hindered American Christians in honestly looking at this issue. During those days American Christians were forced to take a stand one way or the other on this issue. Because bars were a bad idea most American Christians argued for abstaining. This is a good choice if the alternative wrecks lives. European Christians, however, don't see it as an issue at all, and most of them drink (one wonders, though, at what cost to their society as a whole). We must deal honestly with the biblical text regardless of the fact that many people want sure and simple answers to every issue they have questions about.

Texts And Context

The general Greek word for wine is *oinos*. Sometimes wine was mixed with various amounts of water, vinegar (Luke 23:36), gall (Matthew 27:34), myrrh (Mark 15:23) or pomegranate juice (Song of Solomon 8:2) for various purposes. The strength of unmixed wine was about 15% alcohol (30 proof). The ancient world knew little about unfermented wine, although some exegetes disagree.

Some exegetes claim, however, that

oinos is a generic term that may or may not mean fermented wine--so it depends upon the context. It is true that in the Hebrew Old Testament there are several words that can range in meaning from a cluster of grapes (*yayin*--Isaiah 65:8) to Noah's intoxicating drink (*yayin*--Gen. 9:21). The Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament translates eight of these words with the Greek word, *oinos*.

My response is threefold:

(1) Even if *oinos* can mean unfermented wine, there are no clear cases where *oinos* can be translated as unfermented wine or grape juice in the New Testament.

(2) Even if *oinos* is interpreted to be a generic word describing both wine and grape juice, this doesn't lead us to the conclusion that *oinos* signified two different drinks. On the contrary, one word was used to describe the whole process that began as harvested grapes but eventually reached its goal as fermented wine served in a cup. When these ancient people harvested grapes they thought of fermented wine precisely because that's what harvested grapes produced. "The Mishna provides no such evidence of the practice of having unfermented wine. There seems to have been no attempts to preserve wine in an unfermented state; it may have been a near impossible task. ["Wine" in *Baker's Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 2, ed. by Walter Elwell (Baker, 1988)].

3) There actually is a Greek word for unfermented grape juice: *trux*, which is probably related to *truygao*: to gather ripe fruit, especially grapes (Luke 6:44; Rev. 14:18). If the New Testament writers wanted to speak of unfermented grape juice they had a word for it. (See *oinos* in Bauer Arndt and Gingrich *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (U. of Chicago, 5th ed. 1979).

Prohibition Or Caution?

One truth is assured: Excess drinking and drunkenness are universally condemned in the Bible (Proverbs 20:1; 21:17; 23:19-21, 29-35; Isaiah 28:1-8; Ephesians 5:18; I Peter 4:3). Also, certain leaders were to abstain from drinking while performing their duties or vows to God: priests (Leviticus 10:9; Ezek. 44:21), Nazirites (Numbers 6:3), and kings (Proverbs 31:4). Only the Rechabites (Jeremiah 35:6) and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15) were total abstainers throughout their lives due to special circumstances not directly applicable to us today.

Other than these cautions there is no general prohibition against drinking wine. The abundance of wine was a sign of the blessing of God (Gen. 27:28; Joel 2:24). Wine satisfied people's thirst as did milk (Gen. 14:18; Judges 19:19; I Sam. 16:20; esp. Isaiah 55:1). Wine gladdened people's hearts (Judges 9:13; Psalms 104:15; Eccl. 10:19; Zech. 10:7). Wine was used in connection with feasts (Job 1:16, 18) and wedding celebrations (John 2:1-11). It inspired romance (Song of Solomon 4:10; 5:1, 7:9; 8:2). It was also used as a medicine for wounds (Luke 10:34), illnesses (I Timothy 5:23), weariness (II Sam. 16:2) and stress (Proverbs 31:6-7). A drink offering of wine was burnt with every sacrifice as "an aroma pleasing to the Lord" (Ex. 29:40-41; Lev. 23:13, 18; Numb. 28:7).

Elders and deacons are given instructions about wine. In I Timothy 3:3 (and Titus 1:7) an elder should "not be a drunkard" (NRSV), "not be addicted to wine" (NASV), "Not given to drunkenness" (NIV), or "not be given to drink" (KJV & NEB). This phrase is expressed as *me paroinon* (from *para* "beside" and *oinos* "wine"), or not "one who sits long at his wine" (A.T. Robertson). In I Timothy 3:8 a deacon likewise should not be "indulging in much wine" (NRSV & NIV), "not addicted to much wine" (NASV), or "not given to excessive drinking" (NEB). This

phrase is expressed as *me oinoi polloi prosechontas* (the last word is from *prosecho* "to pay close attention to") or "not holding the mind on much wine" (A.T. Robertson).

Unlike John the Baptist who abstained from drinking, Jesus claimed to drink wine which allowed his enemies to falsely call him a drunkard (Matthew 11:18-19; Luke 7:33-35). Jesus created wine for a wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11). Jesus celebrated the Passover according to Jewish customs with "the fruit of the vine" (Matthew 26:29). Rabbinic sources in the Mishna reveal that wine was a normal part of the Passover meal in which four cups of wine were drunk, three of which were mixed with two parts water.

The Era of "New Wine"

It should also be noted that the New Testament era is described as the age of "new wine." New wine was the already fermenting sweet grape must (juice from crushing) that came from the winepress. It produced the choicest wines. The passage in Amos 9:11-12 is quoted in Acts 15:16-18 as being fulfilled in the gospel age. In the very same Old Testament context Amos speaks of that era as one in which "new wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills...they will plant vineyards and drink their wine" (*yayin*--9:13-14). Other prophets spoke like this, too (cf. Isaiah 62:9; Joel 3:18). This metaphoric language pictured the inauguration of the gospel and the coming of the Messianic bridegroom (Mark 2:19) as a glorious celebration. The imagery was well understood by the people of that time who drank wine in connection with wedding celebrations and feasts (John 2:1-11; Job 1:16,18). Again, the abundance of wine was a sign of the blessing of God (Gen. 27:28; Joel 2:24).

Jesus himself likened the new covenant age to be one of new wine needing new wineskins (Matt. 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:37-39). This was a

fitting metaphor precisely because the already fermented new wine was put into wineskins or pottery jars until the desired fermentation was complete. The process of fermentation would eventually burst old wineskins which would have already been stretched to the breaking point.

There are some Biblical cautions:

(1) We shouldn't cause another Christian to "stumble" because of our drinking (Romans 14:21);

(2) We are not to be enslaved by anything (II Peter 2:19; I Corinthians 6:12;

(3) If we drink when we think we shouldn't, then it is sin (Romans 14:23);

(4) God can take care of the situations that drive us to problem drinking: anxiety, guilt, frustration, low self-esteem, etc. Alcoholics should totally abstain along with anyone else who cannot drink in moderation.

Contemporary Concerns

There are several additional cautions. With the invention of modern distillation techniques that can produce strong drinks like whiskey at 80% alcohol (160 proof), I question whether such beverages can be drunk in moderation without first reducing the alcoholic content. More importantly, in America today alcohol is probably the number one drug problem in terms of its social costs. There are alarming statistics of alcohol related deaths (25,000 per year), alcohol related crimes (Los Angeles

in 1976--80% of all juvenile crime) and alcohol related domestic violence (35%--50% of all such violence). The overall financial cost involved per year is \$117 billion (*Time* 10/30/87), yet alcoholics continue to increase in numbers (including 3.3 million teenagers).

Nothing of what I've written permits someone to drink alcohol up until the point at which he or she is almost but not quite drunk, and then to stay that way all day long. The Bible won't allow for this at all. Colin Brown reminds us that "moderation must not be confused with license." [See *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan, 1978) "Vine, Wine", Vol. 3, p.922.]

God treats adults as adults and asks each of us to make our own choices within his guidelines. Many Christians don't want the responsibility of making choices. They would rather be told what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. Many times they don't even want to know why they should do it--only that they should. These Christians just need an authority figure to tell them what to do (Bill Gothard take note!). This provides them with security and keeps them from unnecessary worry. However, the Bible doesn't lend itself to that Pharisaic mentality.

John W. Loftus teaches ethics and philosophy at Great Lakes Bible College in Lansing, Michigan.

"He who walks in Integrity, walks securely." Proverbs 10:9

Up In The Clouds At Pepperdine

CURTIS D. McCLANE

As I looked out my plane window while descending to the LAX airport, I had an incredible bird's eye view. Just to the south of the city I spied the most ominous-looking thunderhead I had ever seen. The billows of the thunderhead were accentuated with hues of blue and dark grey. I don't ever remember seeing such a powerful or beautiful cloud formation before in my life. That unforgettable memory seen while I was in the clouds, literally, became a metaphor for my "up in the clouds at Pepperdine" experience during the coming week!

My preparation for the Pepperdine lectures actually began two weeks earlier while attending a minister's retreat at St. Meinrad, Indiana. This three day retreat gave me opportunity to pray, meditate, journal and focus on my relationship with God. Before I had left for that retreat, one of the precious women in our congregation asked if there was anything specific that she could pray for on my behalf while I was gone. I responded that I really needed prayers for strength and wisdom in the area of spiritual leadership in my home and in the congregation.

Focussing on that area set me up for my experience at Pepperdine. When I arrived in Malibu I wasn't quite sure where I wanted to go for classes. I scanned the program and picked out three specific tracks that ended up emphasizing the very things I had been praying for in my life!

Sample Workshops...

Drs. Steve and Emily Lowe of Pepperdine taught a class together on "Marital Intimacy." The content was exactly what I had been praying for. The insights I learned on how to communicate and share spiritual intimacy with my wife was invaluable.

Another track of classes featured Dr. Daryl Tippens from Abilene, who spoke on

the spirituality of the Desert Fathers. One aspect he dealt with was the family meal functioning as a communal gathering in which traditions and stories are passed on in the context of the formation of faith. His suggestions for fathers who want to provide spiritual leadership for their children in a meaningful way were very practical.

My roommate, Mark Frost, also made a presentation during the week on how to help traditional churches go forward and learn to change slowly. He emphasized our need to take the message of the gospel seriously while at the same time adapting to the culture in responsible ways so as to reach the greatest number of people possible. Mark preaches for the Trenton Church of Christ outside of Detroit and our times of prayer and sharing were a special part of the Pepperdine experience for me.

Overall Theme: Christ Crucified

The focus and overall theme of the lectureship this year was "Christ and Him Crucified" from the book of Galatians. Several presentations were of a scholarly nature, actually dealing with the Galatian text by way of exegesis and theology. Some presentations were in the area of practical theology and offered ways of understanding the book within the context of contemporary church life.

Although various ideas were presented about the exact nature of the "legalism" in the book of Galatians and the hermeneutical process one follows in determining the applicability of such "legalism" in our own culture, it seemed that the presentations were united on one theme: the grace of God is sufficient for our salvation! Anything more gets in the way of a gospel-oriented missiology in which the crucified Christ is lifted up as the one who unifies believers. Anything

more smacks of human effort. Anything more becomes divisive. Anything more is falling from grace!

Was this a timely message and theme? It certainly seems so. From what I read in some of our journals and church newsletters, it still is a much misunderstood topic. But if the heirs of the Campbell-Stone movement need any corrective teaching it is on our theology of grace. I praise God that the Spirit used this lectureship to address such a needed topic that never ceases to be timely.

Until we reach the day in which we can feel comfortable in talking, sharing and offering the grace of God as the ground and totality of our salvation, we will merely be forcing people to embrace a religious system rather than a saving relationship.

Special Worship Services

Can you imagine yourself worshipping for three hours every night? I can't, but I did!

Every evening in the Smothers Theatre, Ken Young and the Hallal Singers from Midland, Texas directed a worship experience from 9:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight. Praise songs that they had written themselves were part of the program. A theme was pursued every night. Scriptures were read, testimonies of God working in people's lives were shared, and exciting praise was lifted up with exuberance and enthusiasm toward God.

Some of the songs were so touching that I found myself blinking through the tears to try and focus on the words being shown on the overhead screen. My spirit was touched, my soul inspired, my heart was ministered to, and my faith was fortified. Never before in the Churches of Christ have I ever encountered such a rich worship experience as this! I came away

transformed by the worship assembly.

One More Lecture

Then the most riveting and spellbinding experience for all who attended the lectures happened on Friday night at the closing program. Dr. C. Leonard Allen was scheduled to speak on "The Cruciform Life." Having read his book, *The Cruciform Church*, I presumed to know what his presentation was going to be like. God humbled me for making such a premature judgment and for thinking that I would not learn much.

What Dr. Allen actually did was give a confession. It was the most touching and heart-wrenching story I have ever heard. The entire auditorium remained silent as Dr. Allen shared how his career and academic pursuits had become his god. He related how circumstances in his life caused his little world to come crashing down. And he told how he experienced the love of God. Dr. Allen emphasized that in the church we need to be talking about the Spirit and how He can change lives instead of relying on our human efforts and ingenuity to take us where we want to go. His message was powerful and penetrating.

Dr. Allen also confessed that, for all practical purposes, he had kept his wife shut out of his life. She felt lonely and isolated. The entire presentation came to her as a surprise. I don't think she knew that Leonard was going to bare his soul like that.

Every now and then I felt the tears trickle down my cheeks. My own spiritual journey had similar contours; I could relate to what he was sharing. That night you could tell that the Holy Spirit was convicting each one of us. It took a lot of courage for Dr. Allen to share on such a personal level before a crowd. His "lecture" was the culmination of my

experience in the clouds at Pepperdine.

Back Home Again

I returned home to Lansing a changed person. God directly answered my earlier prayers and that of the woman in our congregation. I have a lot of work to do in my own spiritual journey, but the experience at Pepperdine left me in the clouds. Emotionally, spiritually or relationally I could not imagine a more powerful experience.

I heartily recommend that you make

plans to attend next year's lectureship if at all possible. The lectureship director, Jerry Rushford, is a native Michigander whom God is using in a unique way to provide a lectureship program that is on the cutting edge of the a cappella Churches of Christ. But if you go, prepare to have your "head in the clouds" as your spirit is nurtured as never before!

Dr. Curtis D. McClane is a Minister of the Word and Pastoral Counselor for the Holmes Road Church of Christ in Lansing, Michigan and is a member of the *Integrity* Board of Directors.

Then what *is* my responsibility if I'm not to earn my right to be saved or even charter my own spiritual path?

The Bible teaches me to just do what I know is good to do and do it with all my heart. Love God with all my heart. And love my neighbor. And myself. Do the good works which God prepared in advance for me to walk in. Take up my cross daily.

No matter how grateful we are to Jesus, no matter how earnest our intentions, you and I will do all of these good things imperfectly. We'll also sin some more. But God is faithful to us; consequently life retains hope and joy!

...how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! (Romans 5:17b)

Diane G. H. Kilmer
Co-editor

Grace Or Antinomianism At Pepperdine?

JIM WHITFIELD

Pepperdine University in Malibu has survived unscathed recent area fires, earthquakes, and mudslides. But will its annual Bible lectures survive the likes of F. LaGard Smith?

The natural disasters did not seem to deter many people from attending the 51st lectures at the end of April. Firestone Fieldhouse was nearly full every evening, a bit less so for the morning lectures, as all seven of the main speakers heralded the gospel of grace and freedom from law in their bold expositions of this year's theme--"Crucified With Christ: The Gospel of Grace in Galatians." This theme resounded in numerous class sessions as well. The message of salvation by grace rumbled through the hills with such velocity that one lecturer, in his final class session, lambasted the lectures for fostering antinomianism.

Smith Off The Subject

Assigned to discuss "Sodom's Second Coming: Combating the Deadly Homosexual Assault," La Gard Smith, a professor of law in Pepperdine's School of Law, a popular author and emerging popular speaker at certain lectureships, used the platform of his third lecture in Elkins Auditorium to berate with scorching denigration "the grace-only theology" resonating throughout the campus. "The grace-only message of this week, I'm sad to say, has been a poorly analyzed, unfairly balanced presentation of Galatians with potentially disastrous consequences both doctrinally and morally."¹ He further disparaged the message of "lawless grace." "If a stranger had been among us this week, he could be excused for getting the idea that where there is grace there is no law." And then toward the end he incriminated his fellow lecturers for teaching lawlessness: "What we have witnessed this week is not merely a

challenge to legalism, nor Restorationist tradition, but a new spirit of antinomianism--a disdain for law, rules, and doctrine."

One does not have to scrutinize Churches of Christ these days to sense "a new spirit" rising. But I for one prefer to acknowledge it as an awakening to the real significance and consequences of the gospel of grace rather than as a flight into antinomianism. The Pepperdine lectures this year, I believe, championed the essence of the gospel and our freedom in Christ more so than previous lectures I attended.

Director Jerry Rushford, in his resolve to encourage free expression of varying viewpoints, has repeatedly invited speakers representing a wide range of ideas. I wonder, though, if he had any suspicion of what LaGard Smith had in store for his third lecture. The assigned topic would not suggest Rushford anticipated here a rebuttal to the main lectures. After all, how could a lecture on homosexuality, without deviating drastically from the topic, turn into a refutation of a vigorous exposition of the gospel of grace? Smith found a way.

He did not at the last moment decide to incorporate in his final lecture a few reprimands of "the grace gurus [who] are dancing a popular jig." Much of what he said he had intended to say from the beginning. "I came here intending to say many of the things that I want to say today, but since I have been here this week I have found much, much more to say even than what I had intended to say." One, of course, often hears what one wants to hear. What Smith heard he found to be "poorly analyzed," "shameful," "straw-man arguments," "silliness," "cheap shots unworthy of a serious pursuit of truth," a "lack of clear analysis and fair balance," an "inversion, perversion of law and grace," "a perversion of the gospel."

Editorial

(Continued from page 61)

white cover? Part of the good news about the constant state of redemption provided by Jesus to any of us who believe is that God's Spirit is now free to do his transforming "undercover" work. Now that I am free of the anxiety to know and do everything perfectly today, there is time for my character to grow less selfish and more like Jesus'.

The products of the Spirit's work listed in Galatians 5 are the characteristics of true maturity displayed in Jesus' life. And this condition of grace I'm writing about gives breathing room for these qualities to develop. Not only am I relieved from the pressure to be good enough to be saved, but I'm not even in charge of my own Christian character development! Paul says in Philippians 1:6:

...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

And his most disparaging and vilifying accusation of all: "What we have heard this week is not a clearly articulated exposition of grace from the letter to the Galatians, but rather a subtle, sophisticated form of idolatry!"

Does Grace Lead To Idolatry?

One gets the impression that Smith has reached all the way to the bottom of his lawyer's bag to extricate the most inflammatory invectives available in his arsenal. As a professor of criminal law, he knows all the tricks. And he unabashedly uses them when they serve his purpose. One of these is the so-called "slippery-slope" argument. He fears all this emphasis on grace will eventually lead to our endorsement of practicing homosexuals in the pulpit! And this is how he justifies including in a lecture on homosexuality his condemnation of a fearless exposition of the gospel of grace.

In the first part of his lecture, Smith reviewed briefly "pro-gay theologians and their hermeneutic," and then warned, "Now, I got to tell you this, the relationship between the role of women and homosexual behavior could not be closer. On this campus, in past lectureships, we have laid a hermeneutical foundation for both. It has been happening quietly, subtly, without seeming controversy...Hermeneutically, it's a straight line. Hermeneutically, open one door and everybody comes in."

If that's not a prime example of a non sequitur, I wish someone would explain to me what one is.²

Smith sees us following exactly the same path other churches have taken. "Not one church, denomination, or fellowship--*not one*--that has opened the wider role for women beyond biblical bounds has not begun to struggle--*not one*--has not begun to struggle with homosexual activity. Do we think we are somehow immune?"

He deplored what he saw happening at the lectures. "Women's roles in this

lectureship this week would have been unthinkable even five years ago." I don't know what he may have seen this year that was so different from lectures five years ago. But I do know there were several classes taught or co-taught by women, open to both men and women, but that has long been Pepperdine's policy (no woman main speaker yet, though). I saw no woman song leader, Bible reader, or prayer leader, though some classes suggested the possibility of using women in these capacities in our churches. But Smith believed preaching in the pulpit and lecturing in a lectureship is "tantamount to the same thing," and "it will not stop until there are elders who are women, women who are elders--you cannot stop it...you just have to go all the way."

And it won't stop there. "I wonder, in that regard, how long it will be before at this lectureship we will have classes entitled "Neither Heterosexual Nor Homosexual"...The hermeneutic of our age is a hermeneutic of accommodation which will not stop until it accommodates even homosexual practice."

Idolatry Defined

Based on Paul's description of pagan practices in Romans 1, Smith defined idolatry as "the reversal of the natural order," homosexual activity being the ultimate example of the "inversion" or "perversion" of the natural order. There is, of course, inversion/perversion and idolatry in all sin, but one sees it best, most clearly, Smith states, in the shameless and repulsive picture of homosexual behavior. In this, I believe, Smith has made a valuable contribution to our understanding of the nature and ugliness of sin and idolatry.

But then he lost all credibility with me when he added scathingly: "I suggest we've witnessed another disturbing example of the inverting of the natural order this week in the breaking down of gender barriers in our lecture presenters. Idolatry is presenting ourselves on a par

with God. In 1 Corinthians 11 God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of man, man is the head of woman. If man is no longer the head of woman, then neither is God the head of Christ, nor Christ the head of man. An egalitarian view of men and women in their role relationships is ultimately an egalitarian view of God and man and that is idolatry!"

I refuse to countenance the incendiary charge that the results of current discussions on the role of women are a form of idolatry.³ Through rigorous literary and historical controls in the interpretation of the relevant passages, many of our leading scholars today are finding our traditional restrictions of women to be simply indefensible. Several of the classes at the Pepperdine lectures added to the growing body of research data that many believe will eventually result in an increased role of our women.

Does Grace Lead To Immorality?

Returning to the subject of grace, Smith lamented "the inversion/perversion of law and grace where grace comes before law." He labeled the "lawless-grace" he heard proclaimed in the lectures a "theological oxymoron," "a perversion of the gospel." It was, as he saw it, "a spirit of antinomianism [that] doesn't merely redefine law, it rejects law altogether." If that's what he heard, he must be wearing a different make of ears than I. It's easy, though, to understand how a bold, clear, unadulterated exposition of the gospel of grace could be misconstrued as an endorsement of antinomianism. Paul himself faced the same problem. And I'm prompted to respond as he did: *me genoito*.⁴

While touring Malibu before the lectures, we spotted several palm trees with blackened trunks all the way to the tops, charred by last fall's fires. The branches one normally sees hanging from the tops of palm trees had been completely consumed. But stretching up

from the tops of the tall trunks, new, shiny, green branches were sprouting, reminding us of nature's ability to survive and flourish following devastating conflagrations. Nearby hills that had been stripped of all vegetation by the fire's "scorched-earth policy" were now ablaze with golden mustard plant blossoms.

I don't know what LaGard Smith has in mind for Pepperdine. What he did at this year's lectures was sufficient to inflame passions that could well ignite into blazing protests. The abundant "amens" heard throughout the lecture and the standing ovation he received at the end indicated the presence of a number of sympathizers. But I know of at least two who refused to stand or applaud. If the lectures should become somewhat scorched and blackened by raging denunciations, its reputation no doubt will revive, like the charred palm trees and scorched hills, with renewed splendor.

A faculty member's wife told me that LaGard Smith is somewhat of an "enigma" at Pepperdine. One wonders why he chooses to remain at a university where the faculty of the religion division does not share his theological viewpoint. Perhaps he expects single-handedly to divert the university from what he sees as further digression into apostasy. But whether he chooses to leave or remain, I'm convinced the annual lectures will survive unscathed his fiery assaults, his earth-shaking tirades, and his mud-slinging diatribes.

Endnotes

1. All quotations are transcribed from tape.

2. Lynn E. Mitchell, Jr., Resident Scholar in Religion, University of Houston, in his insightful review of Smith's book *What Most Women Want, What Few Women Find*, formerly entitled *Men of Strength For Women Of God* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1989) in *Wineskins*, vol. 2, no. 1 (May, 1993), pp. 21-23, calls attention to Smith's "remarkable line of reasoning" and suggests "a logician might be tempted to characterize it as 'rhetorical coquetry.'" He refers to Smith's "other lines of

reasoning in the book [as] equally extraordinary" and calls his view of women's role in the church "very subjective and idiosyncratic." Cf. Carroll D. Osburn, *Women in the Church: Refocusing the Discussion* (Abilene, TX: Restoration Perspectives, 1994), p. 36, who classifies Smith's position as an example of "paternalism" and includes it, along with "radical feminism," in the "extreme approaches to the problem." "Both views," writes Osburn, "are steeped in prejudice..., essentially isolationist..., influenced tremendously by cultural bias..., [and] ignore passages that do not support their presuppositions...Each overstates its case and promotes a charged emotional atmosphere in which objectivity seems impossible." Although he was not on the program, Osburn, a professor of New Testament at Abilene Christian University, was at the Pepperdine lectures promoting his book as well as the *Essays* book he edited referenced in the following note.

3. For an excellent example of the results of some current studies by "some of the best-

known scholars from among the churches of Christ," see Carroll D. Osburn, ed., *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, vol. 1 (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1993). See my review in *Image*, vol. 10, no. 2 (March/April, 1994), pp. 39-40. In his review of the book at the Pepperdine lectures, Jack S. Hicks of Carrollton, TX called it "a truly unique collection of 20 essays...[that] include some of the best writing yet from restorationist writers." A representative of College Press told me they hope to have vol. 2 available by next February, in time for the Abilene Christian University lectures.

4. Optative form of the Greek verb "to become," variously translated as "God forbid," "by no means," "may it never be," "certainly not."

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been given that could make alive, it would have been a contradiction of the promise.

It was because Paul so well understood the principle of justification by faith in Christ Jesus that it became necessary for him to reprimand Peter for his behavior at Antioch (Gal. 2:11ff). Paul was not worried about where or with whom Peter ate his meals, nor was he primarily concerned about the animosity between Jew and Gentile (as some class leaders belabor, entirely missing the principle involved). But he was deadly serious about the fact that such behavior

was causing the whole assembly to lose sight of their true and only means of justification--faith in the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not come to earth for the purpose of giving us a "new law" to be saved by. He had a threefold purpose in coming: to show us the Father (Jn. 14:6-10); to die for our sins (Heb. 10:12); and to be raised for our justification (Rom.4:25).

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God...Upon this rock I will build my ekklesia (Mt. 16:16, 18).

It is quite evident that many are trying to build the assembly of Christ upon something very different from what he said he would build upon, yet they claim for themselves the distinction of being the ekklesia of Christ.

The numerous "fellowships" in any given community will probably, without exception, be built upon: (1) unique interpretations of certain Bible texts; (2) an amalgamation of texts and tradition; (3) a postulate based upon the absence of scripture. Such understructure thus becomes elevated to the status of law. This law in turn becomes the decisive factor in determining whether one is fit for the kingdom of heaven. This law also determines whether one shall be burned at the stake, stoned to death, excommunicated, disfellowshipped, barred from participation in so-called "study" groups, loved, hated, or just declared "not one of us." To take the teachings of Christ and form them into laws with which to destroy other believers and justify oneself is an insult to the grace of God and an open declaration that Jesus knew nothing about building his own ekklesia, and that his sacrifice was insufficient. Furthermore, law is a continual weapon in the hands of Satan for the dividing of God's people.

The practice of forming parties around a law or set of laws was, and is, the direct cause of almost 100% of the burnings, beheadings, excommunications, insults, slanderings, and other abusive treatment

perpetrated against God's people from the very inception of Christianity up to the present moment. Persecution is the inevitable result of law. Those who look to lawkeeping as a means of justification before God have never been noted for their compassion.

"We have a law and by that law he ought to die." Of whom was this said? Jesus our Lord (Jn. 19:7). "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live." Why? Because he was an immoral person, a thief, or a murderer? No, because someone had a law that Jesus did not quite fit into.

Modern Instances...

It was ever thus and ever will be as long as men and women seek justification by law. The spirit that prompted the burning of John Huss is the same spirit that prompted the disfellowshipping of whole families in present times, the only difference being the severity of the sentence. If secular government had not stepped in to prevent further burnings and bloodshed, there is small doubt that some who harbor such bitter zeal for their particular party law would still be employing the death penalty as a measure in preserving their "pure doctrine." "Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (Jn. 16:2). May God forgive such "purity" (Lk. 18:9-15).

What Christian family has not felt the pangs of heartache resulting from denominational creeds (law) which segregate one (or more) member from the rest of the family, notwithstanding that all believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God and live lives above reproach?

It is next to impossible for a person living in reliance upon being justified by his own rightness to have genuine love in his heart for those who differ with him in the least way.

The leaders of many law-oriented fellowships openly advocate a cloistered life for their members, thus destroying any

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The Enemy Of Grace

ELIZABETH A. MANSUR

"The law came by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17). God did not send "the old law" and later send "the new law." He sent the law of Moses, then he sent his *Son*. One was to be kept, the other was to be believed in.

Paul, several years after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, wrote a letter to the saints in Galatia in which he told them that "if a law had been given which could make alive, then indeed righteousness would have come from keeping the law" (Gal. 3:21). He also implies in the same verse that if a law had

opportunity they might have to extricate themselves from their bondage to law. There is, humanly speaking, a justifiable fear which compels sect leaders to take such an attitude, for there is the constant danger that should a convert hear and weigh the thoughts of other believers, he very well may see the discrepancies in what he has been taught. If one has been in the habit of hearing certain scriptures "explained" in a certain way, it can be quite startling to learn that they mean something quite different. Truth is not nearly as perishable as our leaders would have us believe. Neither is the average adult so void of perception that he needs

Denouement

ALINE EDSON

After about seventy years of life, forty or fifty of them in the active arena, you become aware of the classroom of life and the scope of the subject matter--but no way has there been time (or capacity) to examine in depth all there is.

Still, if there is the luxury of hours of contemplation at the end--time to think about it--to sift the wheat from the chaff, it's possible to pull it together somewhat. At least you have most of your personal puzzle pieces, and you can see how they fit together better in retrospect than in prospect. And although there cannot be total clarity, it is satisfying to move in that direction.

But what becomes abundantly clear is the realization that you haven't touched the hem of the garment. Here you are,

to sit, Sunday after Sunday, year in and year out, in a class conducted in a manner fit for retarded children.

It would be useless to enumerate all of the laws employed today for the purpose of dividing God's people into sects. If they were all compiled into one book, the book would be huge and unintelligible, full of lies, misused scriptures, false claims, and every imaginable hindrance to a simple trusting faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God...Upon this rock I will build my ekklesia" (Matthew 16:16,18).

skills honed, curiosity whetted, the desire to learn enhanced--and you're in kindergarten. The sheer magnitude of what's out there: to be thought about, mulled over, contemplated, absorbed--is overwhelming. But maybe just arriving at that realization makes the trip worthwhile. Maybe to have had the dream was enough with accomplishment secondary and partial. Maybe it's all our little moment of time will allow for. Maybe, like Moses, we're allowed just to look over into the Promised Land. What do you think?

Aline Edson, who has completed full careers in both teaching and civil service and raised four children, lives in Kerrville, Texas, with her husband. They are members of the Sydney Baker Church of Christ.

Intercepted Correspondence

The following "Intercepted Correspondence" is a continuing feature begun in the January/February 1988 issue of *Integrity*. These letters are *Integrity's* version of C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* and Os Guinness' *Gravedigger Files* and are written by two different *Integrity* board members.

To refresh your memory and inform new readers, our imaginary setting has Bruce attending WordPerfect computer classes, where he accidentally begins intercepting subversive communication between two devils on his computer screen. The *Integrity* board decides that we must inform Christians everywhere of the destructively evil plots of the nefarious teacher Apollyon and his young student Ichabod by publishing the letters for as long as they can be intercepted.

My Dear Frustrated Nephew:

I could scarcely believe what my eyes saw in your last letter. It is a mystery to me how you could be so easily taken in by the subtlety of our Enemy's work through Whitesoul! Have you forgotten Rule #1 in your Manual of Instruction: Turn a deaf ear to the Enemy's soft soap, i.e., His propaganda about love and mercy and pardon. It is all offal, to use a polite word.

I am obliged to inform you that you are also in violation of regulations #14 and #16b. The former, as you should remember, specifies that you are **never** to pray! That approaches the height of demonic apostasy, and, if perpetuated, it is punishable in a mode I cannot disclose; but believe me, it is horrendous! I say this with the certainty that your "prayer" was more an unplanned and inappropriate response to a situation in which you were entrapped. The third violated regulation is 16b: Always have a ready, credible excuse for avoiding situations which have the potential of exposing your cover. Relative to this point, I should like to know to whom your prayer was addressed, for Hell's sake! More of this later...

Following deep consideration of your experience, my analysis of the state of affairs is, I think, both wise and, when properly carried out, of great gain to our cause. An efficient use of my proposed strategy should accomplish a major victory.

First, let me point out that you have

penetrated into the confidence of Whitesoul to a degree which would have been impossible without your feigned acceptance of his words and your cleverly devious commitment to the Enemy's power. You nearly convinced me! But of course I perceived your ruse. Now you have the upper hand, and are in a position to deliver a stiff, perhaps a fatal blow to the solar plexus at Broad Way church! Having admitted his sins to you, can you not see what an explosive brouhaha can be fomented by letting the juicy facts (which he cannot deny) slip out inadvertently in an unguarded moment? The loose tongues, of which there is an abundance at Broad Way, should take care of the rest of our plan.

Second, I strongly advise a brief return to our infirmary for a renewal of your conscience-killing inoculation. It is an easy, painless procedure, as you should recall, and it will make you immune to what the humans call a "guilt complex." You may resume your regular work within hours, without qualms. The mere fact that you were disturbed by Whitesoul's attitude and words is an obvious red flag. You may need some re-indoctrination, depending upon the degree to which Whitesoul's propaganda has penetrated, and, it is possible, you may be given a reassignment. Be assured that I will be happy to assist you in overthrowing all the clap-trap, the accidental delusion, the

illusory effects of this sad and non-representative aberration. Indeed, if you react properly, your unfortunate experience may be transformed into a splendid opportunity!

Finally, you are certainly in no position to understand or receive what the Enemy calls "love." This is, as you would learn later, to your chagrin, a purely psychological weakness to be applied when a prospective victim is enticed to listen to the Enemy's line. We can quickly cure you of this temporary delusion and restore to you the supreme satisfaction seen in the subversion of souls.

Be assured, dear Nephew, that, following your conformity to my suggestions, I will intercede in your behalf to the Council in order to lessen any retaliation which might be proposed against you for this lamentable but temporary lapse.

With every confidence that you shall be able to throw off any and all residual effects of your appalling experience, I confidently await your favorable response.

Your settling uncle,
Apollyon

P.S. On the remote and most improbably chance that your letter is to be taken as actually representative of your present sentiments, Lucifer forbid, I would have you turn to Section R. 255 of our Subversion Manual, which sets forth the frightening price paid by defectors from Our Demonic Master's Espionage Network.

My Dear Pathetic Uncle,

In my present state of mind, I cannot even bring myself to be defiant to you. I recognize now that underneath the facade of hearty collaboration among devils is our loathing and contempt for each other, and that means that we have no capacity to do anything except turn all pleasure into pain, for ourselves as well as others. Having deadened ourselves to any real

satisfactions (because we are at war with the only Source of satisfaction), we are compelled to justify our emptiness by perverting pleasure in others. All of your threats about torment, then, have no meaning unless I give them substance by fearing the prospect. Moreover, you do not even refer to the only real pain that can be done to us, and that is the judgment of God (yes, I dare to use His Name now, out of the depths of my personal pit) which is justly reserved for all of us; and even that is merely the objectification and final result of what we have done to ourselves by turning away from Him.

So rave on, wily uncle, and promise me deliverance from crude evil merely in order to provide me with the more sophisticated kind that distracts our attention from our inevitable doom. I do not yet have certainty that salvation is possible for me, but I no longer fear you, nor the Infernal Master to whom we have both sold ourselves and whom we have allowed to take the Creator's place. I would rather have the Almighty's punishment, acknowledging who He is, than to have your reward and be self-deceived.

I am now in a limbo of understanding without fulfillment. I really don't know why I am not in a state of abject terror, having seen the Light that shows me what I am. It's hard to believe that the transcendent Love of which I had a glimpse in Brother Whitesoul's study can be concerned with those who rebel against Him. Yet I know, with a perception that goes beyond the intellect, that He was reaching out to me, seeking to pierce even the dark veil that shrouds our Lying Father's kingdom. I cannot even sink into the self-preoccupied, perverse comfort of despair that I have often foisted onto my "patients" as a palliative against facing reality. Even though I am now fathoming the gravity of my position before the Great I AM, being utterly without answer to Him, there is a strange comfort in accepting my helplessness before Him. I understand

something of what His servant Job said: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

How far does God's mercy extend? I don't know; the path I now walk is uncharted territory, so far as I can tell. Has a demon ever repented? If so, it is not recorded. Nevertheless, I have heard that true repentance is never without result. If it is only human beings who can experience salvation, then I shall gladly relinquish my created nature and experience all the vicissitudes to which humanity has been subjected because of

what we led them to; I shall even embrace the grave as a bride if it brings me into contact with the One who brought Love to earth and conquered death. The most wretched state a human could endure would be a welcome penance to prepare me for the glory of deliverance from the body of the first Adam, a liberation that even angels cannot look forward to. Yes, Uncle, though all the fires of hell consume me, I will utter the Name Above All Names--Jesus!

Yours finally, in hope beyond reason,
Ichabod

No further correspondence between these two devils has been intercepted. Judging from Ichabod's profound declaration of allegiance, we do not expect to come across any more letters from either one. Perhaps the best closing statement regarding *Intercepted Correspondence* and all that these letters have revealed to us is the Apostle Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:21: "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

Readers' Response

Please send me your publication regularly. I'm a graduate of International Christian University. Since my return home I'm isolated from the brethren. I hope your publication can help me in keeping my faith. God bless you.

Ervin Nemeth
Mako, Hungary

As a former subscriber to Restoration Review, I received your Integrity Sampler (Sept./Oct. 1992) and have long meant to ask for an Integrity subscription. I finally got around to it. Please sign me up.

I attend Sunset Ridge in San Antonio where Dean Smith preaches. We are beginning a serious study of the role of women and found your article on "Freedom for Men and Women" most enlightening.

Randy Rutland
San Antonio, TX

Please send no more copies of Integrity to me. Someone sent it to me. Sorry, do not think the title fits the contents!

Laura Moss
Carlsbad, N.M.