



# Storming Fortresses

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh,  
but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4

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*Beloved,  
while I was  
making every  
effort to write  
you about our  
common salva-  
tion, I felt the  
necessity to  
write to you ap-  
pealing that  
you contend  
earnestly for the  
faith which was  
once for all de-  
livered to the  
saints.*

## Keeping the Faith

### Part 3: Of Mixtures and Manipulators

By

Murray McLeod-Boyle

This is the third and final article in this series. Our aim at this point is to further highlight how Biblical Christianity is being led down a dark alley to be strangled. The tragedy of this is to be found in the fact that this cursed action is taking place from within church circles.

It is one thing to be attacked from outside by humanists and the like. It is quite a different thing when Christians either imbibe humanist doctrine or become so blind that they admit wolves to the flock without question. Regrettably, this is the current state of affairs. It is a stance that

cannot be allowed to continue by those of us who call ourselves Christian, Conservative or Orthodox.

Our Reformation heritage is a precious one. If it teaches us anything, it is that the truth must come before all else. By truth I do not speak of the opinions of men that are often submitted as reasons to rend the Body of Christ or justify a small segment of people remaining aloof from the rest of the Church. I clearly have in mind those doctrines which have been foundational to the people of God. Those doctrines for which our fathers have bled and died.

Allow me to explain by use of analogy. It is said, colloquially, that 'It takes three generations to build a fortune and one to squander it.' The question we ask is: Can the same be said of gains made by Christianity? If we answer "yes!" to this question, then we must ask ourselves seriously: How will we in our day imitate the lives and attitudes of the Reformers? The answer to this question can only be found when we look to the lives of the Reformers. When this is done one thing comes to the fore. Despite their human failings, all the Reformers were consumed by a desire to immerse themselves in

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Now we must understand this very well. The Reformers did not have a truncated Bible that only told of a way of salvation. They believed in the whole counsel of God which dictated *a complete way of life!* God's counsel was not restricted to "Come to Jesus and be saved" as so many moderns declare. It was more along the lines of "I am the Lord God, Maker of heaven and earth and you, My creation, shall obey all that I have commanded. You shall only be able to do this properly when you are restored to fellowship with Me, nonetheless, I have declared My will for you, My creation, and you are obliged to do all that I have commanded."

The Reformers knew and believed this because it was the message so forcefully declared by Scripture itself. Rather than shun such a message, they sought to put it into practice. The consequences were enormous. By taking the *whole* counsel of God the Reformers were able to address a *whole* range of issues, precisely because God's Word spoke to those issues. Justice, economics, freedom, law, family, Scripture, worship, property and so on were all addressed from a Biblical point of view.

These changes were tumultuous and shaped societies and cultures for centuries. The issue before us, Brethren, is whether or not we have maintained the standard set by the Reformers. Have we continued in the full light of Scripture's rays and the whole counsel God, or have we allowed a truncated Bible to be placed on the table to the extent that we can once more feel the chilling winds of winter's onset?

I would like to suggest that an honest appraisal of the situation will cause us to see that we have put our

overcoats on and that we now stare at the sunscreen lotion in an attempt to rekindle fond memories.

### Proof of the Pudding

We have already considered how many institutions have been infiltrated. At this point I would like to consider a few more statements made by organisations. The intent this time is to show how feeble minded we have become by highlighting the discrepancies found therein.

Most Christian institutions and Denominations have doctrinal statements. Following a long standing formula these statements usually begin with a declaration about Scripture. In examining these statements concerning Scripture and other associated comments, we hope to show that there are, at times, glaring holes.

Consider the following statement by the Bible College of Queensland:

The Scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, are the inspired, written Word of God, and have been given by God to the Church as the final authority for what we are to believe and how we are to live.

Touché! There is little problem here. Now, consider this introductory remark:

Some truths are foundational to the Christian faith and are non-negotiable. They are taught at BCQ with authority and unity is expected in relation to them. Other issues are peripheral, being matters of interpretation, and many Christians have different views in regard to them. The College grants faculty, staff and students the freedom to hold to their own convictions in relation to each issue, in a context of unity and mutual respect.<sup>1</sup>

Scripture and to allow this sacred text alone to guide them.

The Reformers realised that the oracles of God entrusted to the Church had been corrupted and that this aberration was chiefly responsible for the darkness of their day. Light would only return when the Scriptures were returned to their rightful place. Corruption and perversion had restricted the light of the Word to such a point that it was like a winter sun— sitting low in the sky and whilst burning bright, its warmth could not be felt. The Holy Spirit was pleased to bless the actions of the Reformers. Scripture again became the standard. The light sat overhead like a summer sun, its effects inescapable. The light destroyed darkness. Shadows were scattered. Cold winds and chills were dissipated. Even those who did not embrace the new concept could not escape the obvious effects. Kings and paupers, individuals and nations were all radically changed by this one basic fact—God's Word became the measure of all things.

<sup>1</sup>. [http://www.bcq.qld.edu.au/about\\_faith.htm](http://www.bcq.qld.edu.au/about_faith.htm) accessed 01/03/2003

The immediate question must be: How do we reconcile these two statements? The former declares that God's Word is the standard by which all thoughts, actions and beliefs are to be judged. It is unclear to the present author how "final authority for what we are to believe and how we are to live" can mean anything else. Either Scripture is the standard or it is not!

If we look to the latter we find some rather disturbing information which must call into question the doctrinal statement. Note that "some truths are foundational." Now again, I must ask, if truth is truth, how can some truth be foundational and some truth non-foundational? To make such a statement must question the very nature of truth. Similarly, if the issues on which freedom of opinion are allowed do not fall within the category of truth, then there is really little point in placing this qualifier here.

Then there is the issue of "peripheral." This, I would suggest, is an inappropriate word. Truth is never "peripheral." God's Word can never be said to be peripheral—of minor importance, located at the extremities or simply a secondary device. The real issue is that of latitude. As an example, let us look at the issues of doctrine and worship. God firmly outlines what we are to believe concerning Himself and man. These are non-negotiables. God states. We comply. This is the essential nature of doctrine. Worship, however, is not regulated to this same degree. This does not mean that it is a peripheral issue and therefore one on which we may make up our own mind. Scripture still has a lot to say about what is acceptable in worship. We may have some latitude on some issues, but this latitude does not equate with the

whole topic being peripheral, and it certainly does not equate with the Bible having nothing to say about worship.

To try to make this point, we must ask about the nature of these "peripheral" issues. The BCQ statement looks at the doctrine of Scripture, the Trinity, the Person of Christ, His salvific work, Sin, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Church and the Consummation. These are very broad areas and we are therefore left with the question: Is this a list of the non-negotiables? Are people free to think their own thoughts about law, justice, creation, homosexuality, worship, polity, marriage, environment, the Sacraments, Sabbath usage, tithing, evolution, polygamy, unity and diversity in Scripture, covenant, abortion, euthanasia and whether or not **Credence Clearwater Revival** were a Christian Band!

Only the last of these can really be considered a peripheral issue. All the others will have consequences at some point in our thinking and therefore in our lives.

This lack of specificity leads to confusion and compromise. To see how, let us consider declarations made by another organisation. The Assemblies of God Minister's Manual lists both a "Doctrinal Statement" and their "Articles of Faith." The fourth of these articles states:

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, namely the Old and New Testaments in their original writings. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is infallible, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us all in all things necessary to our salvation, and is absolutely supreme and suffi-

cient in authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible does not simply contain the Word of God, but is, in reality, the complete revelation and very Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.

Once more we encounter a fairly good declaration about Scripture. It is truncated in that it is restricted to things "necessary to our salvation." Such a phrase used in modern times has a distinctly different emphasis to that of yesteryear. The Fathers used it to describe not only the technical aspect or means of salvation, but also of everything expected of that changed life. In modern terms it is a reductionist phrase which limits the scope of the Bible's authority to things which pertain to salvation or conversion. In this scheme, the Bible does speak authoritatively about the person of Christ, but not about the right discipline of children.

This aside, the quotation does conclude with a very strong tone. If we accept that the Bible is "the complete revelation and very Word of God" communicated to us by the blessed third Person of the Trinity, then we would also have to accept that Scripture's scope is rather wider than at first acknowledged by this statement.

Hence, we cannot help but raise an eyebrow when we read the following in the preamble:

We believe that creation was by the specific immediate act of God and there is room for those who believe the Gap Theory of Genesis 1:1-2 and those who accept the "Young Earth" position.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.aogq.com.au/manuals/ministers\\_05.htm](http://www.aogq.com.au/manuals/ministers_05.htm) accessed 12/03/2003. This document lists twenty Articles of Faith. I returned to this site on the 13/09/2003 and could not access this same information. A shorter, watered down version was viewed at <http://www.aogq.com.au/index.cfm?page=whatwebelieve>

For those who are not familiar with this Gap Theory, we will demonstrate it using the text of Genesis 1:1-2 which reads:

1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.<sup>3</sup>

Historically, the church has understood these verses as a logical sequence. God first created matter and then proceeded to impose order upon that matter. To conceive of this a little more clearly, think here of a potter. The first action is to place the basic slab of clay upon the wheel. This matter exists, but it does so in a chaotic or random order. The craftsman then begins to shape and fashion this matter by imposing order upon it.

For those adopting the Gap Theory, Genesis 1:1-2 reads like this:

1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth—**Creation is complete. Enter a cataclysmic event which destroys creation and renders it as formless and void, possibly for vast ages—What now follows is the creation/imposition of order** Mark 2—2 And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.<sup>4</sup>

The presupposition of this theory is that verse one must, absolutely, result in the same conclusion as verse thirty-one, namely that “God saw all

that He had made, and behold, it was very good.” This must be the starting point in order to believe that some unspecified event caused such an upheaval in the creation.

Allow me to explain. If we understand verse one as the first step in the creation process as per the historical understanding, that is, God simply calls matter into being, then there is no need whatsoever to even entertain the idea that some unknown event must be inserted between the lines. The problem really only arises when one conceives of verse one as an absolute creation which ended, as stated, at the same place as 1:31—God saw all He had made, and behold, it was very good!

To return to our illustration, it presumes that when the potter threw the clay onto the wheel it was instantaneously transformed into a brightly coloured porcelain vase from the Ming Dynasty, rather than remaining as clay upon which order was to be imposed.

This argument is fallacious and is built upon a desire to compromise with science and evolution, rather than out of a concern for true Biblical exegesis. It must be remembered that the original text was not divided into verses. These indicators were added at a later time. This then begs the question: if the text were read without verses, would the flow of the text point to the fact that some unknown cataclysm had to be inserted at a certain point for the text to make sense?

Beyond these basic arguments, we would posit that there is a greater and more sinister aspect that must be contemplated. The Gap Theory and others of that ilk really call into question the absolute sovereignty of God. These theories all explicitly challenge the concept that God is actually able to control the world that He has created. It is this same belief that we see pervading Dispensational concepts of salvation—plan A of salvation failed, so God had to roll out plan B—and lets hope that works or we are all in the soup!!! We need to stop and ask ourselves: What sort of a God do these people believe in? The Gap theorists want you to believe in a God who cannot control His creation, so much so that some unique event can completely undo all the good work He has done. Now think about this. Scripture tells us that “sin” is the greatest curse that has been unleashed upon creation. When man rebelled as viceregent, all that he ruled was subject to the same covenant penalties. The heinousness of this rebellion can only be truly appreciated when we apprehend the magnitude of the cure. Man’s rebellion saw God’s only Son, Jesus Christ, humiliated by men and put to death on a cursed tree. The Son of eternity, took upon Himself the form of a man forever, in order to right this most terrible wrong. We suggest that this drastic remedy would clearly indicate that Adam’s rebellion would have to rank as *the cataclysmic event* to which creation has been subject.

Our reasoning continues. If Adam’s rebellion was such that the

3. *The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977. All references are from this source unless otherwise stated.

4. Article 20 reads: “We believe that the heavens and the earth and all original life-forms, including man, were made by the specific immediate creative acts of God as described in the account of origins presented in Genesis, and that all biological changes which have occurred since creation are limited to variation within species.” The difficult issue here is that this statement really rules out any evolutionary belief. The point of theories like the Gap Theory is to introduce long, unspecified periods of time into the Biblical account in order to accommodate the evolutionary time-scale. This is done purely to try and combine evolution with Christianity or to give credence to theistic-evolution. Therefore we must ask, if evolution is out, why accommodate the Gap Theory.

whole universe and everything in it was subject to death, corruption and decay and yet it retained its form, laws and basic constitution, what could possibly have happened to cause creation to be formless and void? Logically, you must be talking about a greater act of sin and rebellion against the Creator for which the creation was subject to unparalleled covenant curses. This then leads us to ask, what remedy was put forward to appease God's wrath in this situation? Are we to believe that Christ may have had another role as saviour and mediator at some other point in creation?

Such suggestions are fanciful at best. However, we must understand that flights of fancy are the only option that is left when we depart from the Scripture's teaching.

The point to be made. How do we reconcile the latitude in the preamble with:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is infallible, inerrantly revealing the will of God ... and is absolutely supreme and sufficient in authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible ... is, in reality, the complete revelation and very Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.

The Gap Theory is not mentioned in Scripture, so how is it "enjoined as an article of faith." Why is such a ludicrous theory even countenanced? This question takes on potency when we read in the preamble that those who do not speak in tongues have not received the "Baptism of the Spirit" and will therefore not be accepted as candidates for ministry. This they claim is Biblical. Therefore, they take a firm stand. Why then do they

not take the same stand on creation? In light of their Scriptural affirmation, how do they allow two contradictory theories to be held and taught? Truth demands an answer. Both cannot be right!

Similar vacillation can be found in the documents of the Salvation Army. Their central document is known as the "Articles Of War" and in this document there are some interesting contradictions.

The Articles state:<sup>5</sup>

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God; and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.

Everybody happy? Good! Scripture is *affirmed* as our only rule. From this we would be led to believe that **Scripture is our only rule** and that Scripture's commands are to be followed. Not so, apparently.

The preamble to this affirmation is one which creates confusion. It reads, in part, "so that their (soldiers') life and service may always be in keeping with the Articles of War." Also we read in the Articles, to which the soldier must subscribe, "I believe and will live by the truths of the word of God expressed in The Salvation Army's eleven articles of faith." So is Scripture the only standard or are the Articles the standard? Excellent question. To answer this we will highlight two separate issues.

The first of these issues concerns the assurance of salvation. We read the following in subsequent Articles:

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has, by His suffering and death, made an atonement for the whole world so that *whosoever will may be saved*.

We believe that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ *and regeneration by the Holy Spirit* are necessary to salvation.

We believe that *continuance in a state of salvation* depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.

Whilst we must acknowledge having a different theology to our friends in the Army, it is nonetheless apparent that these statements are incompatible. The first of these statements puts salvation in the hands of man. "Whosoever will" is a clear indicator that salvation is contingent upon the **will** of man acceding to receive the salvation that is on offer. We then read that salvation requires regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Last, we are introduced to the idea that salvation is a state that can be lost.

We can accept that the first and last statements can be put together. If salvation is only of man, then he can will himself in and out of salvation. This would be something akin to the run-to-the-church-if-you-think-you're-in-trouble theology found in Romanism. As an example, that suspicious lump on your abdomen may cause you to will yourself into a state of salvation. Then when you find out it is a harmless growth, you will yourself out of salvation so that you can "hit on" that rather lovely looking theatre nurse or so you can sue the surgeon without a conscience. This would all be possible **if** salvation were only a matter of the human will.

However, the second of these statements shows quite clearly that salvation is not a matter of man's will. If regeneration by the Holy Spirit is necessary to the salvific process, then we are confronted with several difficulties. One such difficulty has to do with the very term "re-

5. <http://www1.salvationarmy.org/heritage.nsf/36c107e27b0ba7a98025692e0032abaa/fea> accessed 07/03/2003

generation.” As men we cannot *generate* the required power or work to save ourselves. We were alive. We had been generated by God, but chose to throw that away in Adam’s rebellion. Consequently, we are dead in trespass and sin. This is precisely why we need **R**egeneration!

Another difficulty in this same area has to do with how we would control the Holy Spirit so that at our command He would regenerate and then degenerate us according to our whim. If the Holy Spirit can be controlled by us, sinful men, then we are back at square one and we are in control of salvation—everybody’s salvation. Think about this. If we can control the Holy Spirit, that is, He is bound to do our bidding, then we must be able to control Him even in matters not concerning ourselves. This being the case we could wake up feeling good and save the whole world or we could wake up cranky and destroy it!

Such a ludicrous notion can only be found in the realms of fancy. To state such is in essence to say that we can control God. Nothing could be further from the truth and nothing of this sort will be found within the pages of Scripture. In fact, the pages of Scripture bear the opposite testimony, saying:

“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you... “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remem-

brance all that I said to you...“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, and you *will* bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning... “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged... “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. “He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose *it* to you. “All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose *it* to you (John 14:16-18, 25; 15:26-27; 16:7-11, 13-15.)

These texts clearly indicate that the Spirit’s role is to cause people to abandon sin so that they may glorify Christ, which is the Father’s will. These words are Trinitarian to the core. They reflect both the unity and the righteousness of the Trinity. In such glorious light, it is impossible to see how people can devise or lend credence to dark schemes like that outlined by the Army.

We hope to show by this that statements, especially those concerning the faith, must be consistent in thought and, more importantly, with Scripture.

The second issue that arises from

the Army’s articles has to do with the Sacraments. We have already read their stated position on Scripture which upholds the Bible as our “Divine rule.” One would think, therefore, that things which the Scriptures clearly command would be held in the highest esteem. Not so.

When the Salvation Army states its position in regard to the Sacraments, it has this to say:

Unlike most other Christian denominations, The Salvation Army does not observe the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. The Army believes it is possible to experience the inward grace of which the sacraments are outward signs, without the need for the rituals themselves.<sup>6</sup>

This assertion, along with others in their documents, really show that the Army have set their own standards apart from the Bible and that they bind the lives and consciences of their people to those standards.

Luke 22:14-20 says:

And when the hour had come He reclined *at the table*, and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” And when He had taken a cup *and* given thanks, He said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.” And when He had taken *some bread and* given thanks, He broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; **do this**<sup>7</sup> in remembrance of Me.” And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is

6. <http://www.salvos.org.au/salvos/new/me.get?site.sitesections.show&ffff304> accessed 26/08/2003

7. This is an imperative in Greek. In other words, this is a specific command. Bold added.

poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 must also be allowed to speak:

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you; **do this** in remembrance of Me." In the same way *He took* the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; **do this**, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." **For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes** (Bold added).

You will note that Paul's account varies little. The major difference is that Paul repeats the command to "do this" after each aspect of the Supper. We must also note his concluding remarks. The celebration of the Supper is an outward proclamation of the Lord's death. Therefore, the Supper is not simply an inward mystical experience that has no external value. On the contrary, it is mystical in its inward and outward operation. This is the correct understanding based on Scripture. The Sacraments derive their meaning from the Word. This is why mainstream Churches do not celebrate the Supper apart from the preaching of the Word—the symbol has no meaning without the reality! The Word is preached externally, but it does not remain external only. There is a real inward work wrought by the power of the Word and the Power of the Holy Spirit.

The error occurs when people perceive of the Supper as an inward ordinance *only* with absolutely no external value. This is an aberration which has crept into the Church

through Pietism and rank individualism. It is this belief that leads organisations like the Army to believe falsehood and to proclaim that falsehood. Yes, the Supper is mystical (internal) as it is a means of grace. Yet, as Paul declares, it is also a visible (external) proclamation of the Lord's death.

The Army have chosen to internalise their belief system and in so doing are refusing the direct command of Christ to proclaim His death.

Similar comments could be added here about the importance of baptism as a covenantal sign which speaks to the world and declares our incorporation into the Body of Christ. However, we will limit ourselves to one observation. It is intrinsically amusing that an organisation that looks at saving the lost and which makes converts sign pledges to change their lives and abstain from certain behaviours exclude *a priori* the one Biblical sign which outwardly declares rebirth, separation from the world and inclusion in Christ.

We have looked at two instances where the Army has put forward contradictory and erroneous statements. The melancholy notes to this tune are sounded when we realise that these contradictions and errors could have been avoided if the Salvation Army had stood by its word to uphold *the* Word.

Instead of upholding the Holy Word of God, this quasi-church has instituted its own Articles of War as the standard by which a Christian life is to be measured. Theology is performed according to these articles, rather than the articles being derived from sound theology. The flow of this train-of-thought can be seen to permeate the whole organisation and

accounts for many of the liberal tendencies that are now being exhibited.

Lastly, we would like to draw your attention to one example of brazen doctrinal tampering. Thus far we have looked at institutions who have said one thing and done another. In short, they have made claims in line with historic Christianity, but have not really lived up to those claims. This is only one area in which modern thought has penetrated. In the world today we are also witnessing a more bold departure from the orthodox standard of historic Christianity.

Many will be familiar with Joyce Meyer Ministries. Although she is an American, her shows are televised regularly here in Australia. This ministry has made inroads in a large way in certain sectors of our society.

So what does Joyce have to say about Scripture? Let's find out, shall we:

The Bible is the inspired Word of God, the product of holy men of old who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The New Covenant, as recorded in the New Testament, we accept as our infallible guide in matters pertaining to conduct and doctrine. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)<sup>8</sup>

This my friends is the stripped down race version of Biblical, historic Christianity! This is where we are headed if we do not make every effort to stop the rot that has beset the Church. What many churches do in practice, Joyce Meyer has put onto paper.

In one fell swoop, Joyce has rewritten orthodoxy and given credence to the Gideon's penchant for handing out New Testaments only!

8. <http://www.joycemeyer.org/cgi-bin/msc.cgi?pagegroup=docfaith> accessed 13/03/2003. Texts are part of the original.

What can we say? At least the Gideon's add the Psalms!

The errors of the Meyer position should be evident to all, but we will highlight them just in case. In the first instance, "the Bible" is ascribed as being the inspired Word of God. It is hailed as the work of holy men inspired by the Holy Spirit. So far, so good. Unfortunately, this is just the precipice. The slippery slope awaits. At this point a large knife is taken out. Pages are thumbed through until the last words of Malachi are turned over. The knife is then wielded. The Bible is rent in two.

According to Meyer's next statement it is only the New Testament that is valid for doctrine and life. Well, that is good to know, is it not? Just think, your daily devotional material just got seventy-five per cent shorter. Bible study material, the same. We will not need half of those memory verses. Best of all, no more dreary Old Testament sermons!

This dictum has just reduced the content of the Christian life by seventy-five percent! We have done away with the Decalogue. Creation is abandoned. There is no Holiness Code. There are no promises that Messiah will come. Father Abraham is no more. We have no Covenant framework. Obedience has gone. Blessing and curse are redundant. In short, we stand at the opening words of Matthew with an extremely puzzled look on our face. It is the same look that you would find on the face of a patient who, after awaking from a forty year coma, stands in the hospital doorway about to step into a world that is totally unknown.

Brethren, we must understand the danger that this statement unveils and the perilous precedent it sets. We will be pilloried for speaking ill of the Gideons. However, we must under-

stand that for years there has been a very strong leaning to this idea of a New Testament **only** type of Christianity. It has been pervasive, but has generally remained below the surface. People distribute New Testaments **only** on a regular basis. The issues we have looked at in this article really stem from this very same root. Faith articles are framed in terms of historic Christianity, but all the while the new thoughts hold sway and find their way into practice. Further, this 'New Testament only' concept can be seen in many modern worship services where readings and sermons focus exclusively on texts from this source. We have personally witnessed preachers start with an Old Testament text and end up preaching from one in the New Testament. They were in the Old for but a few seconds and then springboarded themselves into the New. This belies a very wicked trend of which we should all be aware.

Before moving on we are compelled to ask how the Meyer organization can claim that the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit and yet limit infallibility, guidance and doctrine to the New Testament only? Are they saying that the Holy Spirit was "off His game" for a millennium? There is really no other option; and this option should sound the alarm bells in the reader's mind to the effect that this position is heresy.

Now the ridiculous nature of this heresy can be seen in Meyer's own lack of ability to adduce texts that really support her stated position. To try and convince the reader of the Biblical nature of this claim, the following texts are appended:

**2 Timothy 3:16:** All **Scripture** is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

**2 Peter 1:21:** For no **prophecy** was

ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13:** And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the **word of God**, which also performs its work in you who believe.

When one is faced with texts such as these, we can only marvel at how they can be twisted into some false doctrine. 2 Timothy 3:16 could not be more clear. I profess to being a Form Four drop-out from Tech School, nonetheless I will take some convincing that "all" can have any other meaning than all! All Scripture is God-breathed. Not some. Not certain bits. Not the bits that mention Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed.

The only question at this point is what is meant by "Scripture?" The answer to this can be found in a word study. The Greek word translated as Scripture is *graphay* (γραφει). This particular word (in this form) is found 23 times in the New Testament. These usages can be roughly broken down as follows: 12 times the term relates to a direct quotation from the Old Testament; Once it is a reference to the Old Testament in the author's own words; 4 times the previous or subsequent verses contain a quotation from the Old Testament; 3 times there is a direct reference to the Old Testament which is not quoted.

This means that twenty out of twenty-three uses are clear references to the Old Testament as *we know it*. The same can be said of all the other forms of this word. They all overwhelmingly refer to the Old Testament.

The reason that verses like this are



misrepresented stems from a disregard for proper hermeneutics. When the New Testament authors wrote, their authority was the Old Testament canon. They did not have an authoritative body of New Testament writings on which to draw. Listen to Peter:

...our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Peter refers to Paul's extant letters. He obviously expects that people know of these letters and that they have read them. Equally we can see that people have grappled with the "hard" aspects. What cannot be overlooked however, is the fact that while Peter ascribes a status of authority to Paul's writing and even goes so far as to include them amongst Scripture, he still sets them apart from "the rest of the Scriptures."

Clarification of Peter's position can be gained if we filter the concluding remarks of chapter three through the opening reminder:

This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember *the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets* and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour spoken by your apostles (2 Peter 3:1-2)

In short, it is we with our modern versified Bibles and a disregard for the unity of Scripture who dream up these Old versus New arguments. If we were to take the overall usage of texts as presented in the New Testament, we would be constantly running back to the Old to "get the facts." This is what the Apostles did!

They did this because it is what the Master did.

We end up in error because we, in our enlightened pride, take it upon ourselves to drive wedges into the pages of Scripture. The lesson is great. He to whom the Scriptures testify and in whom rested the power to change and dictate Scripture, saw no need for change or wedges. Jesus simply said, 'Read the Scriptures and you will find me'.

2 Peter 1:21 is also offered as a prop to support this same heretical view. Verse 21 speaks of prophecy which seems to be introduced in order to promote some other teachings or ulterior motive. In reality it is one more case of claspings at straws. If we go back to verse 20 we read:

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation.

So what is this prophecy? It is the prophecy of Scripture! Yes, you guessed it. Scripture here is the same term (though a different form) found in 2 Timothy above. So Peter is once more declaring the revelatory prerogative and power of God. The Scriptures did not originate because a few men spoke and some others thought it sounded good enough to write down. No! God moved men to speak—to prophesy—just as He moved others to record these sayings and events and, in so doing, He gave birth to the Scriptures.

Last of all we shall look at 1 Thessalonians 2:13. Suffice to say at this point that the term "word of God" does not in any way point to a rupture in the unity of Scripture. In this passage the Apostle rejoices that the message has been believed as the Word of God and not the word of men. The surrounding verses speak of great change in people's lives and

of their willingness to stand firm under persecution. These events show clearly that the Word preached was of God, powerful and life changing, and not merely the imaginings of man.

Joyce Meyer has adduced three texts to support her heretical view that only the New Testament is authoritative for doctrine and life. Yet, these same three texts say nothing of the kind. If anything, these texts declare the very opposite. God gave the Scriptures, moving men by the Holy Spirit to speak, over many ages. Finally He gave His Son, Jesus Christ. The fullest, greatest and final revelation. He who beholds the Son, beholds the Father! This is the acme in revelation history.

Of note, the Son of Glory who is the exact representation of the Father turned to the very Scriptures Joyce Meyer denies to prove that he was the Kinsman Redeemer *par excellence*—"beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27). Nothing more can be said or illustrated.

The New Testament does not, therefore, record a way of life different from the Old. The New does not hold out a higher purpose. The New Testament does not command a set of different beliefs. In everything the New Testament affirms what we had learnt from the Old.

There is not one piece of the Bible that sets itself up against another. This 'playing one against the other' syndrome is the pitiful sport of men. This loathsome game is a low act and a vexation to the true Church. All that remains is to say, "One faith, One Lord"

## Conclusion<sup>9</sup>

Through this series we have tried

to expose the failings of many institutions. More precisely, we have tried to show how various institutions have gone astray because they have not held the course as dictated by Scripture. Those in charge have made the error of believing that science or the understanding of men can somehow open the Gospel up to a greater audience with more power than ever before. We have seen some institutions rest in the scholarship of men—the latest and the best, supposedly. Others have reduced their belief system so as not to be too burdensome. In doing so they have enslaved people's consciences to rules that are dubious. Similarly, they have cut their people off from the means of grace as instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. Still others have decided to rewrite orthodoxy by inventing doctrinal standards that the Church has never countenanced.

The purpose of these examples is twofold. First, we are seeking to make people aware that everyday, all around them, false beliefs are being prospered. We hope to have shown that compromise and the watering down of historic Christianity is a common event that happens far more often than many realise. Further, we hope to have shown that this watering down is not limited to moral issues like homosexuality. Through this study we have seen these faulty beliefs impact educational philosophy, the doctrine of Scripture, the nature of sin, the nature of reality, creation, authority and the like. They have even reached the point of questioning

the Person of God Himself.

This is not an isolated case of a minority group with a few screwy ideas. These wrong ideas are wide spread and are taking a real toll on the Church. Like white ants, these false ideas generally lurk in hidden places gnawing away stealthily at the foundations. Often the rot is only uncovered when, after a creak and a groan, you find yourself with that sinking feeling as you fall through the floor.

So what can be done? Well, this leads us to the second point. We hope to encourage you to be Biblical in all your dealings. We are not talking here about a pious stance in which the terms “Biblical” and “God’s Word” simply roll off your tongue at any given opportunity. No, we are speaking about the true Biblical character of a man whose every thought is soaked in the teachings of Scripture.

This is the only remedy to the current situation. “How so?” you ask. Put simply, the true Biblical character will achieve two key goals. First, the Biblical character will equip the man of God to distinguish between truth and error. Second, such a character will inspire confidence in leadership as people see the Christ likeness and warm to it.

In Psalm 139 we are given a glimpse of the character that we are speaking of:

O LORD, Thou hast searched me and known *me*. Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up; Thou

dost understand my thought from afar. Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down, And art intimately acquainted with all my ways ... Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.

When we cultivate a Biblical character we will never be happy with our condition. We will continually beseech God to search us and try us so that we may conform to the image of His Son all the more. Complacency and compromise will be done to death, for the Word which we drink down into our innermost part will show us that friendship with the world is enmity toward God. Our growth in understanding will illumine our true purpose, the glorification and enjoyment of God, to the point that it will dispel all other contenders just as the midday sun drives away the morning mist.

Keep in mind, however, that this will only be a reality when we study God’s Word and allow that Word to do its work within us. It is only in this way that we shall Keep the Faith. Jude conveyed the message this way:

**Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**

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9. It was our intention to also look at the group in America known as “More Light Presbyterians”. Unfortunately, we do not have the space to do so and to lengthen this series would, I fear, induce boredom and tedium amongst our readers. In short, this group claim to be Reformed and to uphold the “historic, biblical witness.” The dubious nature of these claims are understood when it is revealed that this organisation exists for the prospering of homosexuality within the Presbyterian Church. How anyone can believe that homosexuality can be accommodated within the scope of Reformed doctrine and heritage is beyond belief, but there it is! One more example of the world infiltrating the church.