

## THE FLAPDOODLE OF REV. BLATHERSKITE ANSWERED

“The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is that* which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun. Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, ‘See, this *is* new?’ It hath been already of old time, which was before us. *There is* no remembrance of former *things*; neither shall there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come with *those* that shall come after. ... That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been.”

Those remarkable words are not the insightful observations of an ancient Persian magus, the utterances of an early Grecian philosopher, the meditations of a Renaissance scholar, or the pronouncements of a 1960s Guru, nor are they the learned discourses of a 2006 social pundit. Were they to be any of those, they would be enshrined on library walls and heralded by the erudite elite as profound proverbs. Could these sayings be attributed to Aristotle, Socrates, Homer, Shakespeare, Keats, Kipling, Descartes, Spinoza, or Marx, those words would become the underpinnings of international movements. Men would marvel aloud at the intelligent grasp of the sum of human experience—both historically and prophetically—in such uncomplicated phraseology. Volumes would be written expounding the profundity of the simple concept so succinctly captured in such original words. It is true that these ninety-five words of common use and unquestionable definition convey more significant information than is contained in the entirety of *The Encyclopedia Britannica*. However, since they are attributed [and rightly so] to the pen of King Solomon of Israel, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, recorded in the Book of Ecclesiastes (1:9-11; 3:15), they are sarcastically ignored by the world and strangely subjected to disdain by Christianity. Even conservative and fundamentalist commentaries largely dismiss these words, indeed all of the words in the Book of Ecclesiastes, as being no more than essentially the accurate record of the philosophical analysis of life by a spiritually enlightened man. The Book of Ecclesiastes is relegated by an increasing majority of Christians to be but a non-doctrinal appendage, affixed to Scripture by the vote of some misguided Jewish scribes and retained by a superstitious council—just a “straw book” as Martin Luther [ignorantly and presumptuously] did the Book of James. “It is,” we are confidently told by certain acclaimed Biblical scholars, “simply the way that King Solomon [or, more likely, *someone* writing in Solomonic style] viewed life from a more or less righteous view.” Ecclesiastes is declared, with great seriousness, to be the resultant reasonings of sanctified humanity examining the experiences of living and is decreed as definitely not a book of doctrine or practice. It is admitted, perhaps, to be the supreme example of the best of human answers to life questions; but it is, after all, no more than the musings of Solomon recorded accurately [under inspiration, of course] to provide an example of that human reasoning. Check the notes in the study Bible in which you invested several dollars or, if you have a contemporary commentary on Ecclesiastes, read the introduction to the Book—my casual paraphrase will be rather close to what you will find printed, with very rare exceptions. I received very direct instruction [from the Bible faculty where I attended] not to base “doctrinal sermons” on the Book of Ecclesiastes.

These editors of study Bibles and other Biblical scholars [*including those who taught me and certain individuals that I have since encountered*] never trouble themselves to explain exactly how this depreciative approach to the Book of Ecclesiastes is to be reconciled with the following passages: [*Italicized comments in brackets and parenthesis are clearly mine.*]

Deuteronomy 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word [*not the majority, but each and all*] that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD [*not from the mind of man*] doth man live.

Matthew 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word [*not the majority, but each and all*] that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Luke 4:4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every [*not the majority, but each and all*] word of God.

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures [*all Scriptures, all that was written aforetime*] might have hope.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and [*all Scripture*] is profitable for doctrine, [*and (all Scripture) is profitable*] for reproof, [*and (all Scripture) is profitable*] for correction, [*and (all Scripture) is profitable*] for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished [*by all Scripture*] unto all good works.

I believe the issue is ably summarized by a very simple proposition. Either Ecclesiastes is fully Scripture and, therefore, given by inspiration or it is not Scripture—there is no realm of “fractionalized Scripture.” The Book consists of the revelatory words of God or it only contains rationalized words expressing the quibbling of human discourse. Either Ecclesiastes is given for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, or it is not an authentic authoritative source for doctrine, reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness. Either Ecclesiastes proceedeth out of the mouth of the God of Heaven or it rose from the heart of Solomon [or some unknown deceiving counterfeiter] on earth. Either Ecclesiastes was written for our learning or it was only purposed for our entertainment. Either Ecclesiastes is to be read and understood as Scripture or it should be removed from the [so-called] canon of Scripture. The arbitrary establishment of some neutral middle category of “the elevated human reasoning of a good man” is indefensible. There is no basis for such a labeling provided within the Bible; any two-tiered structuring [God’s words and the words of a good, even a spiritual man] is entirely the product of the over-reaching reasoning of a non-spiritual man. It is abject nonsense to identify the Book as “inspired,” and then continue to label one of the Books in that Book as “untrustworthy for doctrine or instruction.” That illogical twaddle flies in the face of the every Biblical statement touching on the integrity and inspiration of the Scriptures.

Occasionally, someone rises to argue that Ecclesiastes must be considered in the same light as that with which one considers the Bible records of the words of Satan: “we do not base doctrine on the verbal tomes of Satan found within the Biblical record though we do consider them to be recorded by verbal inspiration.” To use such convoluted analysis to compare the writings of Solomon with the statements of Satan is a stretch beyond reasonableness; additionally, who would affirm that God included the words of Satan within Scripture without the identification that Satan is a liar and the truth is not in him? Who rises to dispute that no such disclaimer is to be found concerning Solomon? Solomon is a recognized recorder of inspired text. Undoubtedly, Ecclesiastes is far more than the equivalent of an accurate record of the disputations of Satan, the mutterings of Pharaoh, the questions of Pilate, or the challenges of the Pharisees. Ecclesiastes is as surely the word of God as is the Gospel of John or else it is the high-

end equivalent of The Book of Mormon or The Key To Science And Health.

I am also convinced that the act of treating the Book of Ecclesiastes in such cavalier, light fashion has a more insidious purpose than a simple attempt at the depreciation of the spiritual value of the Book of Ecclesiastes. Removing the rightful place of Ecclesiastes is but a calculated step toward destroying another Book. No Book of Scripture is non-essential. No Book is extraneous. However, not to have possession of the Gospel of John would be a greater loss than not to have the Book of 2 Peter—this is easily observed by considering which Books of the Bible are the first to be translated into new languages. Yet, I am very thankful for being able to read 2 Peter in English. I do not have the space to exposit this epistle; however, one must regret that entire peoples do not have this Book in their languages. They do not know the encouragement of chapter three or the clear definition of inspiration in chapter one. They do not know the warning of chapter two regarding how the involvement of righteous Lot in the daily affairs of Sodom affected his own soul and led to the ruin of his family. They miss the admonition for growth in chapter one and they do not see the regard of Peter for his “beloved brother Paul.” The loss of that Book is tragic for them and would be the same for us. *[Consider the awesome impact upon the life of the believer who does not read the Bible he or she owns. While you are thinking about that, consider the terrible accountability incurred by willful neglect of the Scriptures. When you finish with the terror of that thought, think about the horrific accountability incurred by those Bible teachers who, by casting reflections on the integrity and authority of the words of the Bible, cause the children of God to doubt the reliability of the Book of God.]* In the same vein, relegating Ecclesiastes to humanism [“a doctrine, attitude, or way of life centered on human interests or values; especially: a philosophy that usually rejects supernaturalism and stresses an individual's dignity and worth and capacity for self-realization through reason”—Merriam-Webster] is just the first step to downgrading another Book that Solomon wrote. In spite of the use of spiritually tinged wording, the downgrading of Ecclesiastes to the role of an inspired record of the best of human reasoning is patently the surrender to humanism. That split level roadway of designating portions of the Bible as “the inspired record of the best of human reasoning,” once followed, leads rapidly downhill and offers no place for a safe turn-around. It is not entered accidentally; it is the result of an intentional detour.

To manipulate Scripture into some weird hybrid compilation of “infallible in certain portions” while “possibly fallible in other passages,” to declare it to be “inerrant sometimes” though “fully capable of errancy elsewhere,” or pronouncing that some words “proceedeth from the mouth of God” while other words are but “those given by the mind of men” is perfidiousness exemplified. That schizophrenic concept cannot lead anywhere except to infidelity. Where else in Scripture could a sample of this elevated level of sanctified human reasoning be found? Perhaps, the next surrendered portion might be the first three chapters of Genesis or the Resurrection of the Jesus the Christ.

I am further convinced, persuaded by a substantial array of evidence, that a portion, sizeable and intentional, of the underlying motivation to defame Ecclesiastes is designed to taint also the greatest of Solomon's writing's, the Song of Songs, Canticles, or, as named in the Authorized Version, the Song of Solomon. The desire to cater to this humanistic interpretation of Scripture is nowhere more evident than in the disparaging approach of an increasing number to the Song of Solomon. Rather than seeing this Book as spiritual in nature, they walk in the pathway that the liberal Bible teachers borrowed from their modernist forefathers and chose to present the Song of Solomon as a human love story designed to teach nothing more than marriage manners. Amazingly, many who would label themselves as conservative and fundamentalist commentators

unwarily follow this strange school of interpretation, apparently unaware of either the history or the full implications of that approach. Doing so, they walk away from the rich heritage of centuries of the writings of Bible scholars.

In stark contrast to the modern frivolous approach, the old Jewish Rabbis taught that the Song of Solomon was a rich treasure of metaphor concerning the love of JEHOVAH for His people, the children of Israel. The ancient Christian divines and the great Puritan era writers universally ascribed the Song of Solomon as holy allegory of the love of Christ for His bride. Higher critics, the old modernists of the nineteenth century, promoted the concept that this was really a romantic novel depicting the love of Solomon for the daughter of Pharaoh. The more brash of the defamers argued that the Book is the exploration of a love triangle between a poor country shepherd, his beautiful lover, and a rich interloper [King Solomon], thereby making the Song little more than royal gossip. Near the mid-point of the last century, as social customs and sexual mores were revolutionized in the secular world, supposedly evangelical and conservative writers suddenly “discovered” that considerable money could be made by selling marriage manuals for spiritual people based upon the Song of Solomon. One particular commentary, *Solomon on Sex*, [Joseph Dillow, 1977] became widely accepted as a legitimate expositional commentary. Because I would embarrass my mother if I were to print passages from that book and certain other like-ilk books offered and passed as Biblical commentaries on the Song of Solomon, I will not do so. Before communities accepted the infamous Marilyn Monroe calendar and the arrival of the insolent Hugh Hefner, such books would have been banned from the open section of the public library. These books, posing as commentaries, contributed to, if they did not produce, the development of an entire industry of touting the Song of Solomon as nothing more than a discussion of sexual techniques. So engrained is this secularizing of the Scripture [*The Song of Solomon is Scripture!*], that fundamentalist Bible faculty mock the Authorized Version for having page headings in this Book that present it as an allegory of Christ and His church. A poll of preachers would likely reveal that a sizeable number of those trained in seminaries since the 1980’s have no concept of the Song of Solomon touching on anything other than the physical marriage relationship. It is little wonder that the canonicity of the Book has been called into question.

This humanistic somatic approach, however, scarcely explains why the Book is titled in the first verse, “The Song of songs.” That significant declaration [that this Song that Solomon wrote is (at the least) the greatest of all his 3000 songs—and, as is more likely intended, the greatest of all the songs of the ages] surely raises the Song of Solomon above anything common. Why does the inspired wording, *if the Book is inspired*, designate this Book so highly, while professors and commentators, including some conservative and fundamental preachers, writers, and teachers, label it so lowly? Surely, none of them would be as foolish as to tout a *marriage manual* as *the greatest song of all ages*. The first verse plainly requires that the Song of Solomon be elevated and not demeaned, or else it reveals the Book as spurious. Concerning any and all who, in this manner, are willing to cast aside the spiritual pearls of the Song of Solomon and offer it as only the best of the treasures of Egypt instead, I submit that, rather than soaking the Song of Solomon in the putrid waters of Freud and friends, they should consider applying 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17 to the passage.

The “telling” experience that I have endured with preachers who are *enchanted* with the concept that the Song of Solomon is nothing more than a discussion of married life is that they rapidly develop and sharply manifest a scoffing attitude toward the very thought that the Book could have reference to the spiritual union of Christ and believers. It then becomes great sport for

them at every opportunity to ridicule any possibility of that understanding of the Book. While it is possible that Bible students could disagree on the understanding of a passage, sneering is never a mark of spirituality in any man. Quite to the contrary, Scripture insists that variance and emulations [Galatians 5] are the works of the flesh. That conduct is, as I say, “telling” for it reveals a heart attitude. It is one thing to say, “I do not see it that way”; it is quite another to mock the thought itself. Perhaps, someone within the ranks of these scholars and clergy could satisfactorily explain why any believer would [or could] ever think that the God of Heaven included in His written word a Book that would be presented solely to exalt and to glorify the sexual union of Solomon with an Egyptian princess, the daughter of Pharaoh, when that marriage was entered in disobedience to the written word of that God of Heaven! If their theory were true, then the question becomes, “For what reason does Scripture record that Solomon built that woman a house outside the walls of the city of David specifically to separate her from the Temple ‘because the places are holy’?” Why is that particular separation deemed necessary of being explained and then emphasized?

2 Chronicles 8:11 And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because *the places are holy*, whereunto the ark of the LORD hath come. Ignoring the precepts of Scripture, and quite to the contrary of the precedent of all other scripture, these secularized scholars of Scripture would have us believe that *within the walls of Scripture*, the Holy Spirit included, as the spiritual textbook for marriage, the story of how Solomon acquired the love of one excluded from the city—that level of reasoning is hopelessly convoluted on the surface. A spin-off theory, credited to Heinrich Ewald and his commentary published in 1826, that “two suitors compete for the hand of the Shulammitte, the one a shepherd and poor, the other a wise and wealthy king” presents the Book as nothing more than “a drama celebrating the loyalty of a lowly maiden to her shepherd lover.” Whether the shepherd is a rival to Solomon or Solomon in disguise may add intrigue, but it does not elevate the discussion to a spiritual plane. I concede that most of these mistaken advocates have simply let the current of unrecognized liberal scholarship float their boat right down the critical stream and seem strangely oblivious to the origin of the tributary or its intended destination. However, I do wonder what prompts the desire to turn the wonderful typical allegory of Solomon’s Song into a textbook for lovers [If that seems harsh, check the titles of the selection of books on the Canticles.] It would seem evident that the heightened and perverted sexual consciousness of America has exerted more influence on their thinking than they realize and certainly far more authority than the reasoning of the multiple godly scholars of the previous centuries.

Since I have not spared to rebuke the commentaries that, in my view, lower this sacred Book into the gutter, I hasten to offer a listing of commentaries that honor Scripture with a proper spiritual approach to the Song of Solomon. My library has more than thirty commentaries that exposit this treasure. The following volumes are currently among those in a special place on my desk as I am working through the Book: An Exposition of the Book of Solomon’s Song, John Gill; The Holy Place, C. H. Spurgeon; The Song of Solomon, George Burrows; The Song of Solomon, James Durham; The Romance of the Ages, Paul Labotz; Song of Solomon, Harry Ironside; The Bridegroom and His Bride, Roland Thompson; Union and Communion, Hudson Taylor; and He is Altogether Lovely, Roger Ellsworth. The first two works, in my opinion, will never be matched for excellence, nor excelled for edifying. The second pair of books rises far above anything written in the last one hundred years. The Books by Ironside and Taylor are far smaller, but both are solid in presentation. The volume by John Gill consists of an unassailable

defense of the integrity, historicity, and canonicity of the Song of Solomon—answering every challenge raised to Solomon’s Song; however, it goes beyond the technical scholarly approach with by including 122 sermons, which he preached to his congregation and that are overflowing with rich devotional jewels. It is demonstrably obvious that those who would assign the Song of Solomon the role of describing the husband and wife relationship have never read these sermons by Gill or those in Spurgeon’s or Taylor’s works. I would also guarantee that they have never bothered to study through Gill’s supremely scholarly discussions. As one of the *lesser* examples of Gill’s ability to answer the critics, I submit a small portion of his overwhelming destruction of the pathetic argument to make the Song of Solomon “a loose, profane, and amorous song” because the Book was alleged not to be cited in the New Testament:

8. Another argument used by Mr. Whiston, page 29, [*Though this is the only identification given by Gill, I believe this to be William Whiston, who translated Josephus into English and was, indeed, a contemporary scholar with Gill—JLM*] is, that "our blessed Savior himself does never once make the least allusion to this book, or to any part of it, on any occasion whatsoever." To this I reply, that it appears plain and manifest, that several phrases used by our Savior bear a near resemblance with, are allusions to, and seem to be taken out of this book: thus the efficacious grace of God is expressed by drawing, Joh 6:44 agreeable to Song 1:4. In his discourse with Nicodemus, he compares the Holy Spirit to the wind, Joh 3:8 which metaphor is used So 4:16, likewise he seems manifestly to allude in Mt 13:52 where the instructed Scribe is said to bring forth things new and old, to So 7:13 where the very phrase is used: as also his comparing the church to a vineyard, and letting it out to husbandmen, are very agreeable to, and are the very phrases used So 8:11,12. To all which might be added, several other resemblances and allusions, which are to be found in the evangelic history, as Mt 25:1,5 compared with So 5:2 Mt 9:13 Joh 3:29, where Christ is called the bridegroom, and the disciples the children of the bride-chamber, agreeable to the several parties in this song.
9. He says, page 30, that "when St John, the beloved disciple, came at the end of his Revelation, to this very matter of the marriage of the Lamb, or Messiah; yet have we not a word of it; that is, this book, nor the least allusion to it, nor to any part of it, whatsoever." That John, in his book of Revelation, refers and alludes to this of Solomon’s song, seems undeniable; every one may easily observe what a likeness and resemblance there is between the description which the spouse gives of her beloved in Song 5 and that which John gives of Christ in Re 1. Moreover, the phrase of Christ’s standing at the door, and knocking, Re 3:20 manifestly refers unto and plainly appears to be taken out of So 5:2 where the spouse says, It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, etc. Besides, what John says of the marriage of the Lamb, and the preparation of the bride for it if it is not an allusion to, yet it is a confirmation of what is said in this book, where the church is represented as beautifully arrayed and adorned, and as passionately wishing for the consummation of the marriage; nay, this, is spoken of as completed, So 2:16 and the glory and pomp of the solemnity described, So 3:11 with the joy that was expressed on that occasion; for there the day of his espousals is called the day of the gladness of his heart: also it deserves our notice, that those two books of Revelation and Solomon’s Song, conclude much in the same manner. John closes his book of the Revelation, and with it the canon of the scriptures, with a passionate wish for Christ’s second coming, saying, Amen: even so, come, Lord Jesus: and the church concludes the book of Solomon’s Song thus; Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young

hart upon the mountains of spices.

10. As what he thinks will much prejudice the authority of this book, he says, page 30, that "the writers of the known books of the New Testament, with their earliest companions the apostolical fathers of the first century; St Matthew, St John, St Peter, St Paul, St Mark, St Luke, St James, St Jude, St Clement in his epistles, St Barnabas, that prodigious allegorizer, and St Hermas: I may add, says he, and St Polycarp also, one of their later companions, do never once cite or allude to this book of Canticles, or to any part of it, on any occasion whatsoever."

That the evangelists, Matthew and John, either in using their own, or in recording the words of Christ, have alluded to some passages in this book, I have already shewn; and the same may be said of the other evangelists, Mark and Luke, who mention several of the very same things; for which See Mr 2:19,20 12:1 Lu 5:34,35 and 20:9, and it seems very evident, the apostle Paul has reference to it in many passages of his writings, as wilt appear from comparing 2Co 2:14,15,16 Eph 5:2 with So 1:3 as also Col 2:16,17 Heb 10:1 with So 2:17 4:6 to which may be added Eph 5:27 compared with So 4:7. So that seeing there are so many passages in several of the writers of the known books of the New Testament, which bear so near a resemblance, and have so manifest an allusion to some parts of this book, it need not much concern us that Clement, Barnabas, Hermas, and Polycarp take no notice of it.

In tennis, that level of devastation of an opponent would be called, "game, set, and match," in baseball, a "shutout"; and in debate, it is called a victory. Whiston was certainly intellectually gifted, but he was never a worthy opponent for a man who knows his Scripture in the manner of John Gill.

The difference in reading the works of men such as Gill and Spurgeon or Taylor and Ironside and in reading those shallow mutterings of the contemporary humanistic cohorts that promote the physical over the spiritual is as the difference between drinking spring water from Zephyr Hills and canal water from New Orleans. It is sad beyond words that this present generation of preachers has been deceived into depreciating the marvelous allegory of the Song of Solomon and to treat it as an erotic novel designed only to improve the physical love life. Sexualizing the Song of Solomon sacrifices wonderful spiritual truths for the alleged gain of physical gratification and is but following the footsteps of ancient Israel. I submit that the attacks—and I cannot view the effort to depreciate any portion of scripture as anything other than an attack, *even if the perpetrator is a conservative fundamentalist*—on Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon are not isolated in nature or random in purpose. These assaults are undeniably a central component within the strategy of Satan to destroy Biblical Christianity. The word of God, however, reveals that the blatant secularization, even the overt "*sexualization*," of spirituality and worship is not a new approach originating from within the influence of these recent twisted generations in America. The idolatry of the Old Testament was inexorably entwined with immorality and believers in the New Testament lived amidst societies steeped in religious lasciviousness. The ancient worship programs of the religions of Canaan were anchored to sexual perversions—and those corruptions were exactly what enticed the children of Israel from the sanctity of the worship of JEHOVAH, with His mandate of physical and sexual purity, to the degradation of the carnal lewdness and lasciviousness of the worship of Baal, Ashtoreth, Milcom, Chemosh, the golden calves, and the legion of the gods of the Canaanites and other nations. The prophets of Judah and Israel described the sexual aspects of these vile religions in carefully worded denunciations. Moses warned Israel not to engage in the immorality and

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Hosea, and others condemned the nation for abandoning purity for filth, righteousness for unrighteousness, and JEHOVAH for gods that were no gods. Rome, Ephesus, and Corinth were not placid rivers of purity; they were swirling maelstroms of debauchery and depravity. The apostle Paul carefully instructed the residents of those cities in the necessity of separation from that spirit of spiritual perversion permeating their respective societies.

Satan has endeavored since those very earliest churches were planted to contaminate and to destroy Biblical Christianity with moral laxity. The church at Corinth was inundated with immorality. The church at Rome had members who advocated sinning that grace might abound. The churches at Pergamos, Thyatira, and Sardis had teachers rise that lead followers into acts of moral turpitude. It is only in this day, which I pray is indeed a symptom that the LORD Jesus is soon coming, that the music of promiscuity has been invited onto the platforms of evangelical, conservative, fundamental churches. This is not without a cause: the curse causeless never comes (Proverbs 26:2). Surely, it does not pass unnoticed by anyone with a modicum of spiritual discernment that the typical professed 2006 model Baptist is engaged body and mind in enjoying this present world. Demas would feel completely welcomed and comfortable were he to visit among the nominal contemporary Baptists of America, because he and they find the company of the present world preferable to fellowship with the apostle Paul.

*“Paul is too concerned with doctrine; he is legalistic.”* is the oft repeated impious lie by any number of pretendedly pious Baptists, perched both in pew and in pulpit. Baptists seem to have forgotten that the writings of the apostle Paul are not “his concerns” or “his brand of Christianity”—they are, instead, the words of the God of Heaven. Disregarding the warnings or admonitions of the apostle for separation *from* the world and *unto* the LORD is, therefore, an affront to the God Whose word is challenged by being ignored. Camouflaging the attack of Scripture as “cultural correction” is duplicitous hypocrisy. The commands of Scripture are not rooted in the traditions of any culture; they are embedded in the holiness of a sovereign eternal God. No recorder of Scripture wrote words of his own choosing: “holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.” No Scripture was phrased to conform to cultural or societal pressures, because “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” To disdain any Scripture is to impugn the name of JEHOVAH, since HE Himself has magnified His word above His very name (Psalm 138:2). To malign any of His word is to defame the character of God. Some Baptists seem to act as if they believed that it is time for God to write another Testament so as to correct and update all the stilted cultural and biased societal material in the first two. The reality, however, is that God has finished writing. The pen is empty. The scroll is filled. The Book is sealed. There will be no more Scripture recorded. The next words from Heaven to earth will be the shout of the LORD Jesus, “Come up hither.” The words of God were once delivered to the saints and God has never authorized those words to be revised, amplified, expanded, up-dated, or changed. It is foolishness to find fault with the word of God. I may not understand what is written, but I have no warrant to change a single letter. The word of God is settled forever [Psalm 119:89] and it was settled in Heaven. Pious scholar or silly socialite, neither has the power to “fix” the Scriptures to make them palatable to a neurotic world. Therefore, what the apostle Paul recorded was then and is now the very words of Almighty God. It borders [and may well cross the border] on blasphemy to charge Paul with being doctrinaire and prejudiced.

The underlying problem of contemporary Baptists is the same malady from which priest Eli suffered. The discernment of old Eli was so atrophied by reason of disuse that he could not

discern the distinction between a burdened woman in prayer and a besotted woman in a stuttering stupor. Eli is one of the tragic examples of those evangelical, conservative, fundamental Baptist preachers who have imbibed of the wine of higher criticism without ever realizing that they were sipping pseudo-religious John Barleycorn. No aspect of the Biblical teaching on the duties and responsibilities of the believer is more neglected than is the requirement of discernment. Ezekiel [44:23] taught that the priests were to have the responsibility to “teach my people *the difference* between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.” This principle is presented all through the Scriptures as incumbent upon all believers. Consider the example passages of Titus 2:11-14:

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

and Romans 12:1-2:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God

No passage touching this subject is stronger than is John 7:24: “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” The believer is to have the capability to know how to serve God and how to avoid error and sin because of the renewing of the mind—and, it is proper to take note that the believer is expected to be transformed, even as the believer is to present his or her body as a living sacrifice. That is what is defined as having discernment and that is precisely what a sizeable number of professed believers do not demonstrate in their lives.

Discernment is not an automatic reflex. Discernment is a learned pattern of examination. The apostle Paul rebuked the Hebrew believers for not having the ability to discern between good and evil. He not only identified their problem, Paul, as a good preacher ought to do, informed them how they might fix that problem: start using their senses. The exercise of the senses will enable them to discern both good and evil.

Hebrews 5:11-14 Of whom [Melchisedec] we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

I never fail to marvel as I read these verses that the apostle chides these believers for not being able to handle “strong meat.” He explains that he would teach them deeper truths, but that he cannot not because they are “dull of hearing” and are so “unskilful in the word of righteousness” that they are “babes” using “milk.” The first five chapters of Hebrews has choked many a believer on their “milk,” and the “liquid diet” of the next eight chapters has strangled even more. Yet, the apostle calls the Book of Hebrews “milk.” It shames me to think how my diet must be, in the view of Paul, little more than *ultra-skimmed milk*.

Baptists are so undiscerning that they line up to follow, like lemmings, the latest trend or fashion of the currently leading ecumenicist, who leads them toward the one world religious

organization—the great whore of Revelation—prophesied for the time of anti-Christ. As they become so interdenominational that they are undenominational, Baptists line up to surrender without a whimper those Biblical doctrine and practices that were defended by the life blood of their spiritual forefathers. A respected fundamentalist Baptist leader spoke of denominational distinctives as being in the same class of wickedness as is fornication and homosexuality. While I would like to think that his mouth and mind were not in synchronization at the time, he has not made any correction and the statement continues to be disseminated. Though baptism by immersion under the authority of a local church upon a credible confession of faith is not as important as is salvation by grace through faith, I find it highly offensive to have a man self-identified as a Baptist categorizing it as the same kind of sin as fornication and homosexuality. It is, in my view, that same kind of sneering mockery as displayed by those of whom I wrote earlier and another symptom of this age of scoffers [2 Peter 3:3].

I have wondered if some of the motivation for introducing these concepts into churches has not risen from a desire to become pertinent to the present evil age. The regard for relevancy is a misguided urge gleaned from classes on how to win friends and influence people, commonly called “salesmanship.” Dr. Bob Jones SR had a southeastern Alabama way of explaining relevancy. “If the cat’s fur is being rubbed the wrong way,” said he, “the cat can turn around.” John the Baptist, of southeastern Judah, would have appreciated that example. He never wasted a syllable on an attempt to relate to the assembled throngs—every pronouncement was to call them to understand their urgent need to relate to the God of Heaven. The theme of previous Christian generations, “This world is not my home, I am just a passing through,” has been supplanted by the slogan of this present religious generation’s “you only live once.” Catering to this sensual generation has become the pursuit of preachers. More than three hundred years ago, John Trapp wrote of “carnal gossellers.” One only wonders what descriptive terminology he might employ for the Vanity Fair cathedrals and the autotheism of 2006. A devoted pursuit of the wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and devilish (James’s description 3:15) is permeating Baptist churches in 2006. Christianity at large is devoted to the enjoyment of life. When one visits the average religious bookstore and glances over the covers produced for the contemporary “Christian” music, the display of flesh is overwhelming; and the subject material covered in the book on the shelves that provides counsel on the enjoyment of this world is startling. Six Flags and Disney World have found that Christians will swarm the gates to participate in Contemporary Christian Music concerts. The number of churches that encouraged their memberships to go see “The Passion of The Christ” was staggering. One fundamentalist Baptist leader wrote that he would not encourage anyone to go to a theater to see “The Passion” because it would be available on DVD soon enough. While Baptists of earlier generations denounced Hollywood as “Hell-wood,” the leadership and the “followership” of this generation are lined up to indulge their passions—if not in public, then in private. The current enthusiasm is for “The Chronicles of Narnia”; soon “At The Point Of A Spear” will be drawing droves of Christians in spite of the homosexual activist that has the starring role.

The desire to “reach” has become so dominant that too many appear to have no concept of what they should give this generation when they “reach” them. Newsweek magazine published an article discussing a concern among some fundamentalists regarding their inability to relate to “the MTV generation.” It intrigues me that the music predilection of no previous generation of Americans was never the nominative for that generation. Whoever heard of a minuet generation or a waltz generation? The Charleston, the be-bop, boogie-woogie, swing, jazz, or rock-and-roll eruptions never named a generation. While many philosophers from the ancient Greeks forward

have discoursed upon the commanding influence of music upon individuals and particular cultures, there has never existed the worldwide dominance of one style of music as exists today. National boundaries, cultures, social castes, even religions are amalgamated into union by the music of “the MTV generation.” The Pied Piper of souls, the great red dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, has, it would appear, finally found his anthem of damnation. Hearing this music, individuals no longer are able to discern any other voice or to feel any other affection. Individuals reared in godly spheres of influence walk trance-like away from family and faith to heed the call of this Piper of deceit. Aged saints are beguiled into smiling muteness in the pews of Baptist churches while the platforms proudly introduce the performance of the Piper’s music into houses built for Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The music of “the MTV generation” transcends every human distinction; its sensual carnality surmounts age, race, education, and language as nothing ever has in the history of the world. Not since those long ago days before the division of languages at the Tower of Babel has a single language, in this case, the language of a particular music, united every kindred, tongue, people, and nation into one tribe in the same manner as has the music of this MTV generation. Christianity has not escaped the contamination of this influence—it is intriguing to take note that the word “influence” has the first definition of “an emanation of occult power held to derive from stars.” When one considers the “stars” *influencing* this generation, the presence of occult power is not difficult to discern upon this generation, which does indeed walk to the beat of a different drummer.

The MTV generation of juvenults [*Occasionally, I must coin words when I cannot find one that fits the definition that I find floating around. Juvenults: those who have attained the age of emancipation, but who have retained the attitude of adolescence, individuals with unrestrained adult bodies and unfettered juvenile minds.*] is simply the modern counterpart of the Canaanite or Corinthian profligate. A profligate is “a person given to wildly extravagant and usually grossly self-indulgent expenditure”; what term could possibly be used to better describe the Canaanite culture, the Corinthian society, or this contemporary generation?

In the misguided drive to relate to the worldlings addicted to “this present evil world,” Baptist clergy have forgotten that the Bible was not written to explain how to get through this life with enjoyment, and that the LORD Jesus Christ did not die in an attempt to relate to the world. The LORD Jesus Christ did not found His church to become the instrument of social relevancy. The Chief Shepherd sent not His disciples into the world to mollify sinners, but to call sinners to repentance. It would appear that the Bibles of the contemporary worship pastor, praise leader, youth pastor, the twenty-something pastor, and whatever other titles have been invented for pastors must no longer include Romans 12:1-3.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. If their *versions* of Scripture do have this passage, the demand that a believer must “not be conformed to this world” is deliberately ignored. Trapp, in his commentary, records that “Erasmus rendereth it, *Ne accommodetis vos ad figuram*, Accommodate not yourselves to the figure and fashion of the world.” The present generation certainly does not understand the command, as did Erasmus—of course, they do not like his choice of texts either. To the contrary, Contemporary Christianity is doing all that it thinks “reasonable” to accommodate itself to the

figure and to the fashion of “this present evil world.” The “reasonable service” is not adapting and arranging a worship service in the manner to please the world and to make worldlings to feel comfortable. The believer is to live and to worship in ways that are found “acceptable unto God.”

The underlying concept of the seeker friendly, purpose driven ministries and the Contemporary Christian Movement is openly acknowledged by its architects and advocates to make the non-Christian feel he or she is in a familiar and comfortable environment, thereby, hopefully, causing that individual to consider the current and eventual advantages of becoming a Christian. It is difficult, however, to decipher whether the motivation is actually designed to reach *non-believers* by not threatening their lifestyles or is really calculated to allow *believers* to indulge in the lifestyle of the world. I am increasingly persuaded that whatever the original motive of the inventors of the movement, the current devotees are more interested in aping the lifestyle of the world than they are in converting the world. One of the bases for this “judgment” is that the influx in Contemporary Christian Movement churches does not flow from conversions, but comes instead from transfers. In simple terms and plain English, they attract disgruntled or disaffected members from so-called “traditional” churches.

Because of the pragmatic utilization of the figure and the fashion of “this present evil world,” which manifests itself in the entertainment tools [music, drama, etc.] designed and developed to promote conformity with “this present evil world,” the results are that individuals are made to remain *comfortable* in their sins. The believer is thereby falsely taught by example *and precept* that he or she does not have to be different from the world in appetites and practices; and the *lost, a world never used in the seeker friendly, purpose driven church*, are not told that they are to (2 Corinthians 6:14-7) “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” When I read or hear the contemporary practitioners of this ancient heterodoxy affirm that they do indeed teach such things *to those who attend the services designed for serious believers*, I remember a few *businessmen* that followed the same philosophy; it is labeled in the business world as “bait and switch” and it is rightly labeled unethical. The LORD Jesus Christ taught that His disciples would know tribulations and persecutions and should be prepared to be hated and hounded of men. Yet, these claiming to follow the LORD Jesus today are told they may sail though this world on untroubled seas amid the approbation of the very world that crucified their Saviour. Like Israel of old, they have a heart wish to be like the “other nations.”

The origin of this philosophy, so misnamed as “Contemporary Christianity,” is much farther removed in history that the 1980’s and 1990’s. The apostle Paul repeatedly warned against the attitude in passages such as the following:

Galatians 1:10-11 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-13 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye

know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God *is* witness: Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor *yet* of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. Ye *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father *doth* his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

In doing so, he was only following the example of Jeremiah, who asked Israel, (2:33) “Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways.” The doctrine of separation unto holiness begins early in Scripture, has the Book of Leviticus devoted to it, continues all through the Old and New Testaments, and is emphasized in the Book of the Revelation.

One of the saddest passages of the Psalms is found in Psalm 106. While I recognize that the context is Israel and not Baptist churches, I am also reminded that the pathway that Israel and the chastening of Israel by the LORD is recorded for our instructive application. The Biblical word is “admonition.”

1 Corinthians 10:6-12 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Therefore, I have no hesitation in calling our attention to verse 34 through 42 of Psalm 106 and of insisting that it has serious implications for the topic of discussion. The fault of Israel is the fault of the Contemporary Christianity Movement, the seeker friendly, purpose driven friendship with the world. The mingling of the worldly principles and Biblical truth that inevitably leads to compromise of doctrine. It is impossible to fellowship with the world and not acquire the appetites of the world. The more Israel adopted the ways of the neighboring nations, the more Israel attained a likeness to those peoples. The nation that was to be separated unto the LORD did not relish being the “peculiar” followers of JEHOVAH and, instead, sought to revel in becoming “like all the nations.” Matthew Poole wrote of this desire of Israel expressed in 1 Samuel 8:20: “Woeful stupidity! whereas it was their glory and happiness that they were unlike all other nations.” John Gill commented, “It was their greatest honour and glory, as well as

happiness, not to be like other nations ... but with this they could not be content.” Read very carefully this portion of admonition as to the dangers of “mingling among the heathen.”

They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

Perhaps, most tragic is the fact that this craving for compromise is not a malady of the ignorant or immature. It is true that the hireling Balaam was an early advocate of commingling the things offered to idols and the sacrifices devoted to JEHOVAH; however, it was a man with as spiritual a ministry as the High Priest Aaron who fell *on his own* into the trap of trying to unify the worship of JEHOVAH and the practice of idolatry in order to retain popularity with the crowds. While Elijah was on the “hit list” of Ahab and being fed by ravens, Obadiah was comfortable with eating his meals at Ahab’s table and smuggling the leftovers to secret believers. Demas simply loved the present world more than he loved the world to come and the man taught by the apostle Paul walked away, enamored by the world. The compromise of Contemporary Christianity is but the continuation of the desire to serve two masters—to be as Balaam amassing the treasures and pleasures of the world, while desiring to die the death of the righteous and as Demas, loving the present world. Though Demas and Balaam gained materially, they lost the durable riches, because “no man is crowned, except he strive lawfully.” Therefore, the warning is apropos in 2006 to every believer, “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”

‘Tis true, ‘tis true. It is Biblically true: “The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is that* which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun. Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, ‘See, this *is* new?’ It hath been already of old time, which was before us. *There is* no remembrance of former *things*; neither shall there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come with *those* that shall come after. ... That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been.”

—Dr. Jerald Manley