



Talmid תלמיד a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is.”

Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)

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STUDY TO SHEW THEMSELVES APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY
DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15



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None Dare Call It Heresy (Part 1)

Is the flamboyant faith healer Benny Hinn a heretic? He was so branded by **Hank Hanegraaff**, the “**Bible Answer Man**,” in his book *Christianity in Crisis*.

Hanegraaff’s Charge resulted in a radical outburst of indignant cries directed not at Hinn but at Hanegraaff.

It seems that the only real and intolerable heresy today is the despicable act of calling someone a heretic. If the one accused is guilty of heresy, he or she will probably elicit more sympathy than his accuser. Anyone who cries “Heretic!” today risks being identified as a native of Salem, Massachusetts.

After Hanegraaff made his charge in

print, a couple of things happened. One is that Hinn recanted his own teaching that there are nine persons in the Trinity and apologized to his hearers for that teaching. Such recantations are rare in church history, and it is gratifying that at least in this case on that point Hinn repented of his false teaching.

The second interesting footnote to the Hanegraaff-Hinn saga was the appearance of an editorial by the editor of a leading charismatic magazine in which Hanegraaff was castigated for calling Hinn a heretic. At the 1993 Christian Booksellers Association convention, I was present for and witness to a discussion between Hanegraaff and the magazine editor. I asked the editor a few questions. The first was, “Is there such a thing as heresy?” The editor acknowledged that there was. My second question was, “Is heresy a serious matter?” Again he agreed that it was. My next question was obvious. “Then why are you criticizing Hanegraaff for saying that Hinn was teaching heresy when even Hinn admits it now?”

The editor expressed concern about tolerance, charity, the unity of Christians, and matters of that sort. He expressed a concern about witch hunts in the evangelical church. My sentiments about that are clear. We don’t need to hunt witches in the evangelical world. There is no need to hunt what is not hiding. The “**witches**” are in plain view, every day on national television, teaching blatant heresy without fear of censure.

Consider the case of Jimmy Swaggart. For years Swaggart has publicly repudiated the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Swaggart was not challenged (to my knowledge) by his church for his heresy. He was censured for sexual immorality but not heresy. I guess this church regards romping with prostitutes in private a more serious offense than denying the Trinity before the watching world.

As documented in *The Agony of Deceit*, Paul Crouch teaches heresy. So do Kenneth Copeland and Kenneth Hagen. These men seem to teach their heresies with impunity.

But what do we mean by heresy? Is every theological error a heresy? In a broad sense, every departure from biblical truth may be regarded as a heresy. But in the currency of Christian thought, the term *heresy* has usually been reserved for gross and heinous distortions of biblical truth, for errors so grave that they threaten either the essence (*esse*) of the Christian faith or the well-being (*bene esse*) of the Christian church.

Luther was excommunicated by Rome and declared a heretic for teaching justification by faith alone. Luther replied that the church had embraced a heretical view of salvation. The issue still burns as to who the heretic is.

In Luther's response to **Erasmus' *Diatribes***, he acknowledged that many of the points at issue were trifles. They did not warrant rupturing the unity of the church. They could be "**covered**" by the love and forbearance that covers a multitude of sins. When it came to justification, however, Luther sang a different tune. He called justification the article upon which the church stands or falls, a doctrine so vital that it touches the very heart of the Gospel. A church that rejects justification by faith alone (and anathematizes it as a deadly heresy) is no longer an orthodox church. Luther wasn't shadow boxing on that issue; nor was the Reformation a mere misunderstanding between warring factions in the church. No teapot was big enough to contain the tempest it provoked.

In graduate school, it was the custom of my professor to lecture on one doctrine per year. In 1982 he departed from his normal policy and lectured on

"The History of Heresy in the Christian Church."

The professor canvassed the most important struggles the church faced against heresy. It was Marcion's heretical canon that made it necessary for the church to formalize the contents of the true canon of sacred Scripture. It was Arius's adoptionism that necessitated the conciliar decrees of Nicaea. It was the heresies of Eutyches (monophysitism) and Nestorius that provoked the watershed ecumenical council of Chalcedon in 451. The heresies of Sabellius, Apollinarius, the Socinians, and others have driven the church through the ages to define the limits of orthodoxy.

One of the major points in Louis Berkouwer's study was the historical tendency for heresies to beget other heresies, particularly heresies in the opposite direction. For example, efforts to defend the true humanity of Jesus often led to the denial of His deity. Zeal to defend the deity of Christ often led to a denial of His humanity. Likewise the zeal for the unity of the Godhead and monotheism have led to the denial of the personal distinctions in the being of God, whereas zeal for personal distinctives have led to tritheism and a denial of the essential unity of God. Likewise, efforts to correct the heresy of legalism have produced the antinomian heresy and vice versa.

We live in a climate where heresy is embraced and proclaimed with the greatest of ease. I can't think of any of these major heresies that I haven't heard repeatedly and openly on national TV by so-called "evangelical preachers" such as Hinn, Crouch, and the like. Where our fathers saw these issues as matters of life and death, indeed of eternal life and death, we have so surrendered to relativism and pluralism that we simply don't care about serious doctrinal error. We prefer peace to truth and accuse the orthodox of being divisive when they call a heretic a heretic. It is the heretic who divides the church and disrupts the unity of the body of Christ.

Heresy in the Early Church

"**There is nothing new under the sun,**" the Preacher wrote ([Eccl. 1:9](#)). According to Professor Klaus Haacker of Wuppertal, Germany, one of the primary sources of error in theology is the desire to say something new. As a teacher of theology, I have noticed this: It is extremely hard for a theologian today to say something that is not either borrowed from an earlier, orthodox

writer or heretical. Indeed, even the newest heresies, sometimes presented as the latest discoveries in biblical scholarship, usually turn out to be plagiarized from earlier heretics.

As a young student of theology, I determined to delve into church history and find the time when the Christian faith was pure and undistorted, the **“faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”** ([Jude 3](#)). The difficulty soon became apparent. Even in the New Testament itself, we find evidence that there were disputes about doctrine among believers. Was there never a time when all Christians knew right Christian doctrine? Was there never actually a faith **“once for all delivered to the saints”**? How could a third-, sixth-, 16th-, or 20th-century Christian know what to believe when even in the New Testament we see evidence that heresy was present alongside of solid doctrine, almost from the very birth of the church? There is indeed a faith once delivered to the saints.

It is a curious fact about Christianity that it is the only major religion many of whose paid, full-time priests, prelates, and professors spend much time and energy trying to show that it is false and should be totally changed or perhaps even abandoned. Buddhists do not do this; neither do Hindus. Muslims certainly do not, or if they do they do not live long. This shows I believe, that the religion of Scripture, historic, biblical Christianity, is obnoxious to the Prince of Darkness, so that he makes a point of tempting the professors and priests of Christianity to undermine their own doctrines.

In the book *Heresies* by **Harold O.J. Brown**, it follows the practice of the early Christians in defining as heresies only those doctrines or teachings that change the nature of the faith so fundamentally that it no longer can be trusted to be saving faith. There are three principal concepts dealt with in the New Testament that can be defined as heretical in this sense. Curiously enough—or perhaps not so curiously, if we recall the Preacher’s words above—these three New Testament problems persist.

They are **(1)** legalism (often called Judaizing in the days of the early church), which can also be called salvation by works or works righteousness; **(2)** the opposite concept of antinomianism; and per-

haps most significant for our own day **(3)** the curious complex of fantastic ideas and doctrines that goes by the name of Gnosticism.

Paul confronted each of these in several epistles, notably Romans, Galatians, and Colossians. John also deals with Gnosticism in his first two letters. In Galatians 1, Paul warns against deserting the One who called us for **“a different Gospel, which is really no Gospel at all”** ([Galatians 1:6–7](#) NIV). In the context of the epistle, it becomes evident that he is speaking of the tendency to add works to the Gospel of justification by faith in the finished, once-for-all work of Christ. In our own day, in which there is licentiousness on all sides, some Christians drift toward legalism, though Paul warns explicitly against it in his parody, **“Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle”** ([Colossians 2:21](#)). Roman Catholicism is particularly prone to this error, although it certainly is not limited to Catholics.

Others, however, fall into the concept of antinomianism, probably a greater danger for Christians today. We can express it thus: **“Once saved, anything goes.”** Paul asks ironically, **“Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?”** ([Romans 6:1](#)). And of course he counters this in a number of places, including **“faith working through love”** ([Galatians 5:6](#)), and **“neither circumcision [keeping the Law] nor uncircumcision [ignoring the Law] avails anything; but [what counts is] a new creation”** ([Galatians 6:15](#)).

One is not saved by works, but a faith that produces nothing is no evidence that one has become a **“new creation”** in Christ. Modern varieties of this antinomian error are found in some Protestant circles that believe a simple verbal profession of faith will save one, without reference to the kind of *conversio cordis* (**conversion of the heart**) that produces evidence in a transformed life. Many individuals take refuge in this kind of antinomianism, which is so convenient for those who wish to go on sinning without worrying about the consequences.

Undoubtedly the most dangerous error in our day, however, is that of Gnosticism, a worldview presenting a complex panoply of errors, afflicting non-Christians as well as Christians. It represents the temptation of the natural man to cook up speculative schemes that free him from any awareness of personal sin and guilt and offer him an inexpensive salvation. Gnosticism is hard to describe in a few words, but one can mention two

common elements: secret lore and elitism. Ordinary people may make do with simple faith, but the Gnostic knows the secrets and belongs to a spiritual elite. Paul criticizes this (in [Colossians 2:18](#), for example). It is typical of the Gnostics to honor Christ in a way, but to deny that the historic, human Jesus is the one **“name under heaven ... by which we must be saved”** ([Acts 4:12](#)). They say Jesus was but one manifestation of “the Christ”; there were others, and there will be still more.

Although full-blown Gnosticism was not yet in evidence at the time he wrote, John argued against this incipient tendency in the first two of his New Testament letters (for example: [1 John 1:1–2](#); [1 John 2:22–23](#); [1 John 5:1](#)).

The Gnostics believed in an incredible variety of spiritual beings. Most Gnostics taught that the material world is unreal and the body is unreal or evil. There is a recent parallel to Gnosticism in Mary Baker Eddy’s Christian Science and a very contemporary parallel in the New Age movement.

Obviously, I could say more, and indeed **Harold O. J. Brown** has done so in *Heresies*. But the important thing about these “heresies” is the fact that they are not just permissible variations, options, or choices, but by their very nature so undermine Christian faith that they may well render salvation unattainable for the one who makes the mistake of embracing them.

Heresy and those Who Fought It

To murder the soul is worse than murdering the body, so the teaching of heresy should be punishable by death.” I have never forgotten this statement made to me 20 years ago by a monk in a monastery in the south of Israel. Though I could not agree with the penalty, he had joltingly reminded me of the seriousness of heresy in a century which tends to take it very lightly.

It has been said that the history of the church is the history of heresies. To forget or neglect them is to lay oneself open to repeating them.

One of the earliest church fathers, Ignatius, who was martyred perhaps as early as the end of the first century, gave us a modern-sounding warning when he compared heresy with the working of lethal drugs: **“Where God builds a church, the devil builds a chapel close by.”** But there is a bright side to this dolorous topic. Many of our greatest theological works have been written as responses to heresies. Indeed, the New Testament Scriptures themselves are in large part the result of firm resistance to the distortions Christianity faced from the first. But as **Philip Schaff** reminds us, **“In the hands of Providence all errors must redound to the unfolding and the final victory of the truth.”**

So with that cheering thought, let us look at some of the major heresies which have plagued the church in its long history. We must be very selective, for even by the fifth century Augustine could list 88 different heresies.

The deity of Christ was at issue at the **Council of Nicaea (325)** which condemned Arianism. Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, rose above the aforementioned heresies in maintaining the preexistence of the Son but fell far short of orthodoxy in teaching that the Son was the first creation of God. The young deacon Athanasius was the leader of the orthodox party, and he would later be exiled five times for his stand as the threat of Arianism waxed and waned with the succession of emperors.

Succeeding church councils would condemn other heresies regarding the person of Christ, including the Nestorians for dividing Christ into two persons (one divine and one human) and the opposing Monophysites, or Eutychians, for mingling Christ’s two natures into one. The Council of Chalcedon (451) affirmed that Christ is one person with a fully divine nature and a fully human nature. This has remained the normative view of Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant churches. The Coptic Church of Egypt, among others, remained Monophysite.

The fifth century also saw the conflict between Augustine of Hippo and the British monk Pelagius in the anthropological and soteriological areas of sin and grace. This was mainly a Latin, not a Greek, controversy. Pelagius denied original sin and man’s need of redemption. The heresy was condemned at two North African synods in 416 and at the Council of Ephesus in 431.

Before Christianity's triumph over paganism, its major tool in punishing heretics was excommunication. But from the end of the fourth century the emperors generally felt bound to use their power to preserve orthodox doctrine. Penalties for heretics included confiscation of property, banishment, and death. Another dimension was added in the Middle Ages with the rapidly growing power of the papacy. Heresy became defined as disobedience to the pope in the area of doctrine.

The church finally came to deny to the state the authority to tolerate a heresy which the church had condemned. The state carried out the death penalty so often that the medieval church shed more blood than did pagan Rome with the early martyrs. One need only mention the Albigensians (or Cathari), who were apparently dualistic and extremely ascetic, and the Waldensians, who were evangelical and would later join forces with Reformed groups. Thousands of these and others would perish at the hands of the Inquisition led by the Dominicans. This medieval "engine of iniquity" would continue into Reformation times with Protestants as targets, for they were regarded as heretics (the Eastern Orthodox were considered only schismatics). The Reformers themselves inherited the doctrine of persecution from their mother church and practiced it in varying and lesser degrees with the goal of preserving the Reformation.

Reaction to persecution has often happily led to greater toleration. The downside is sometimes indifference which can lead to intolerance of the faith, as in the French Revolution.

The coming of liberal Protestant theology in the last century represented a most radical intellectual schism in the church. Heresy seems an inadequate term for liberalism, in that it denied the basic doctrines of Christianity to the degree that **J. Gresham Machen** called it a new religion (*Christianity and Liberalism*). The ancient denials of Christ's deity hardly entitled liberalism to be called *modernism*. The partly Arian Christology of the Jehovah's Witnesses belongs on a higher rung than does the unreconstructed liberal Christology. Study of the old heresies can still help us. Some of the second-century arguments of Irenaeus against the Gnostics can be used today against New Age thought.

The dreary and lamentable trail of real heresy through the ages has generally involved a satanic snatch at the crown of the King of kings and Lord of lords, who is the way, the truth, and the life. It is comforting to remember Augustine's words: "Nothing conquers but truth, the victory of truth is love."

Drifting into Heresy

More than 120 years before the American Revolution, the charter of Harvard College was established. But the "**Rules and Precepts**" of the college adopted in 1646 show that the leaders saw education (and all of life) as an arena in which God was central, and theology they considered the crown jewel of the arts and sciences. Almost 350 years later, the professors of law, ethics, theology, and history at this esteemed institution hold convictions and teach perspectives that would chill the already cold bones of the school's founders, not to mention those godly people who endowed the school with their fortunes.

Similarly, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was started in 1844 by a group of 12 men in London. As it spread west, the Boston branch declared "a strong desire for the promotion of evangelical religion among young men," they hoped to be "a social organization in whom the love of Christ has produced love to men; who shall meet the young stranger as he enters our city, ... introduce him to the church and Sabbath school, and in every way throw around him good influences."

"RULES & PRECEPTS"

Adopted by Harvard College in 1646

1. When any scholar is able to read [the classics] *ex tempore*, ... speak and read Latin ... and decline perfectly [Greek paradigms of nouns and verbs], then may he be admitted in to the college....
2. Every one shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life.
3. Seeing the Lord giveth wisdom, every one shall seriously by prayer in secret seek wisdom of Him.
4. Every one shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that they be ready to give an account of their proficiency therein, both in theoretical observations of language and logic, and in practical and spiritual truths....

Just a century later (1947), the San Francisco branch showed institutional decline, saying, "The YMCA believes that its Christian objectives can be realized even though its members consist of Jews, Roman Catholics,

Protestants, and persons who have no religious affiliation. This belief is based on a simple philosophy: In its [YMCA] program, ... everyone ... is encouraged to find the spiritual home that meets his own needs.”

When we consider the history of faith, it seems almost axiomatic that over time institutions tend to liberalize and apostatize. There is at work in the universe of institutions a law of entropy. Organizations begin with great heat and intensity. But over time this fire cools, and the intensity eventually dissipates until the school, church, or ministry completely detaches itself from its founding vision and purpose.

The Tides of Institutional Drift

Why does this dismal hypothesis have so much historical support?

First, while growth is always a goal in order to further the Gospel, as ministries grow, bureaucracies develop to handle such growth and the hard edge of belief soon becomes soft. The intention is usually good—more impact on more people—but almost unavoidably, pragmatism creeps in to keep the growth curve climbing. The school or ministry begins practices which may not overtly contradict the founding belief, but, though they help growth, they weaken the grip on belief. Soon, the once well-defined distinctives of the organization have degenerated to a more generic, mediocre state.

We can draw an example of such entropy from the commercial realm. One can eat “Buffalo wings” in Miami or a “Philly cheese steak” in San Diego. But as the popularity of such local specialties demand mass distribution, pragmatic production means the experience in Miami will not have the “local Buffalo flavor.” So also with evangelical belief—in order to translate the belief to the masses, to package it for greater public consumption, certain distinctives invariably seem to disappear. This is nothing less than cultural accommodation. Charles Colson has correctly said, “Accommodation always dulls the Gospel’s sharp edge. The church must never confuse technique with truth. Times change; truth doesn’t” (**The Body**, p. 239).

Second, history is replete with groups that began to tolerate beliefs ever-so-slightly divergent from

the past. This done, it is a short step to pluralism—the view that these differing perspectives are mutually valuable and appropriate. Such pluralism springs from a desire for unity and peace. The ecumenical movement believed that compromise on certain distinctives could bring unity. But **Luther** rightly said, “**Peace if possible, but truth at all cost.**”

Finally, there is the tendency to forget. Having first tolerated heterodox belief only eventually to embrace it, the original is soon forgotten. How many students or faculty at Harvard know the founding rules and precepts? Such loss of memory leads not only to violations of historic belief (of which we are all guilty), but to outright repudiation of the covenants and promises of the past. In Israel, those who forgot always were the first to leave. Thus said the psalmist, “**Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.**”

Swimming Against the Tides

What about you? Perhaps your church is drifting into heresy. Since institutions tend to liberalize, such drift is virtually inevitable. History shows that no church has ever come back once the slide begins. Maybe your parachurch ministry or educational institution now denies its founding vision. Do you stay and fight or do you separate?

Dr. John Gerstner suggests three considerations. First, if your church has not embraced apostasy, you *must* stay faithful to your membership vows. Second, if the organization has undeniably capitulated the faith, embracing heresy, you *must* leave (**Colossians 2:8**). Third, and most common, when the lines are blurry (it seems the slide has begun, but the present situation may not qualify as outright heresy), ask yourself this question: “Where can I most effectively serve Jesus Christ?” If unbelief in your institution inhibits your service to the King, and you can better serve Him elsewhere, there is no question as to the course you must take.

In 1934 a retiring leader in the YMCA wrote, “We have chosen, rated, and retained our [local leaders] primarily on the basis of their financial and business ability at whatever cost that might be to our spiritual and religious leadership. Ours is not the only flaming youth movement in religious history which has been cooled, hardened, and cramped by the commercial mind, ... and the failure to be both conservative and progressive, both stable and mobile.... We should have done much bet-

ter.”

Remember: individuals, not institutions last forever. The goal is to hear our heavenly Father say, “**Well done good and faithful servant.**”

Continued in next edition...



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HERESY (Part 1)

As an introductory statement to his very brief letter, Jude makes this statement in **Jude 3**,

³Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

The obvious question that immediately comes to mind with such a declaration has to be why was Jude exhorting Christians to “**contend earnestly for the faith**”? In reality, the answer to that question is relatively simple – there were individuals who were undermining, destabilizing, and even trying to destroy and sabotage the very core of the Christian faith. The core doctrines and teachings of the apostles were being challenged, opposed, and disputed. In similar fashion, the issues of today are neither

trivial or irrelevant. In his book **The Truth War**, **John MacArthur** made this statement relative to how the very essence of what was occurring in the day of Jude is just as current and relevant today,

“Practically anyone today can advocate the most outlandish ideas or innovations and still be invited to join the evangelical conversation.”

His point is that at times the church has lost both its discernment and its will to be discerning, and in the interim has replaced it with spiritual accommodation and tolerance. In fact, in many evangelical circles today tolerance is regarded much more highly than doctrinal accuracy and is given preference over the unchanging truth of Scripture. This church age is mesmerized with messages that are rich in experience, but bereft of vital doctrinal content. No wonder there is such a decline in the level of spiritual commitment in the lives of those who simply “profess” faith in Christ. Any church or church era that is faithful in combatting heresy in its midst will undergo some meaningful level of corporate purification and even reformation. The struggle against heresy is actually one means by which God strengthens the Church. **A.W. Tozer** in his book called **I Call It Heresy** deals with some of the issues in **I Peter**. And he speaks of what he called the “*notable heresy*” of someone choosing to accept Christ only because they need Him as a Saviour, but then deferring obedience to Him as Lord until they choose to do so. He further clarifies the issue by saying,

“The truth is that salvation apart from obedience is unknown in the sacred Scriptures.”

The issue is that there is no biblical doctrine of salvation that treats obedience in the Christian life as simply being optional and discretionary to the Christian. It is a core doctrine of the Christian faith, but one that has been highly publicized and debated. **John MacArthur** in his book entitled **The Gospel According to Jesus** was highly criticized by very conservative theological individuals and institutions for his stance on the lordship of Christ. The issue was extremely and adamantly debated on both sides by godly men, and to this date there has been no doctrinal consensus and probably never will be this side of heaven. This is mentioned to simply identify that there will always be differences of opinion between very godly men regarding major doctrines of the faith. And for that reason, if no other, there

must be careful and deliberate academics, hermeneutics, and exposition when handling the Scripture.

However, this debate was not a debate raised by heretical individuals. There may have been men of a heretical mindset who saw an opportunity to highlight their false teaching through all of this, but the primary players were godly men who have devoted their lives to the gospel and the Christian faith. Each of those involved in the debate were godly men who drew their conclusions from Scripture. None of them could be considered heretical, even though one side of the debate is incorrect and therefore unbiblical in its doctrinal position. So, it must be appreciated that heresy has a much different theological characteristic to it than does a debate of this nature between recognized and credentialed godly men.

This is a constant battle within the Christian faith, and one that cannot be ignored simply because core doctrines and core values are the very foundation and building blocks of the Christian faith, and there must be a very high degree of discernment when dealing with divine truth and how people approach it. And part of the discerning process and the maintaining of doctrinal integrity is this principle of being willing to “**contend earnestly for the faith.**” The two English words “**contend earnestly**” are just one word in the Greek – “*epagonizomai*”. It is only found in [Jude 3](#) within the New Testament and is a verb that was used to describe athletes that were contending in athletic competitions. It is a word that speaks of a very intense, vigorous, and determined struggle to defeat an opponent. The English language derives the word “**agony**” from this Greek word.

The issue with heresy is that on the surface it appears to be Christian in nature, but in reality it is an enemy of the truth and generally comes from within the framework of the Church itself. Heresy is much more subtle and eventually dilutes Scriptural teachings for what appears to be more attractive and appealing doctrines. It could easily be argued that the internal threat of heresy has the potential of being much more damaging to the Church than a threat that originates from the outside. However, it must be appreciated that not all forms of heresy originat-

ed with an intent to harm the church. To the contrary, their initiators sincerely considered their doctrinal stance to be an authentic development of the Christian faith and its related doctrine.

In the formation of the early church, it must be remembered that the young church was still somewhat fragmented and undeveloped, and what that condition provided was an atmosphere where many divergent views were being expressed about the theological meaning of the texts that were being circulated throughout the various biblical regions of the New Testament. And within each geographical setting there were multiple cultural, ethical, political, and moral values being postulated by individuals who wanted to impose their values on the interpretation of the circulated letters. And to make matters worse, there were non-biblical as well as apocryphal writings which were competing for inclusion in the discussion. So, in this formative environment, it is easy to understand how non-biblical teachings and ideas could be developed and imposed on the young believers. Authenticity and authority were difficult to define and non-biblical sources problematic and challenging.

So, even though there was a fundamental and foundational belief system in place that had been handed down by the New Testament writers, there was still immense diversity of interpretation and understanding of the apostolic intent. Teaching was varied and in essence created an environment for factions and divisions to form within the Christian faith. The potential for disunity was enormous, and the prospect for heretical teachings to filter throughout the New Testament church was very prevalent. Obviously, not every divergent view was intentionally heretical, but still the misalignment of early New Testament doctrine and design was at stake. For instance, one example would be what happened in the late second century with what is known as Montanism. The problem that developed with Montanism was a sincere effort to try and relate to the culture of that day. It was an issue of adapting Christianity to a pagan environment to make the gospel more acceptable. It was an overall accommodation to the Phrygian culture. There was no subtle kind of “takeover” inherent in this emphasis, but simply an effort to develop a meaningful form of Christianity that could relate to the pagan culture in which it found itself. Obviously, there are many parallels within many segments of contemporary Christianity – revising the em-

phasis of the local church in order to appeal to those who are obviously offended at the cross, at Christ, and at having to come to God on His terms and not ours. **Michael Horton** has captured some of this contemporary dilemma when he states,

“...the church in America today is so obsessed with being practical, relevant, helpful, successful, and perhaps even well-liked that it nearly mirrors the world itself....Assimilating the disruptive, surprising, and disorienting power of the gospel to the felt needs, moral crises, and socio-political headlines of our passing age, we end up saying very little that the world could not hear from Dr. Phil, Dr. Laura, or Oprah.””

The obvious problem that the issue of divergent views presented to the early church that had to be resolved was who was the authority that determined what was to be included in the canon of Scripture or not. How was the authority of how doctrine was developed and accepted to be understood? **Alister McGrath** identifies the issue when he states, *“If any norm or institution outside or apart from the Bible is recognized as authoritatively determining its meaning, that norm or institution is in effect superior to the Bible. That was a dangerous vulnerability, which many believe remains at best incompletely resolved within Protestantism.”*

It cannot be ignored that in its inception from Luther forward that the Protestant faith and its doctrine was considered to be heresy and false teaching that challenged the authority and teachings of the Catholic Church. Who actually decides how to interpret Scripture? Who decides the rules of hermeneutics? Who determines what is orthodox or not? Is there a governing body identified in Scripture that completes this task? The Protestant Reformation, far from being heretical, is an example of how established authority was contested on doctrinal issues. It was a necessary part of ensuring the integrity and validity of biblical doctrine. And because every age has false teachers and false doctrine, the continued safeguarding of the truth will always be an issue with which the Church must address.

James McGoldrick writes concerning this issue as it relates to the church and its “authority”. *“All religious bodies which claim to be Christian*

profess to accept the inspiration and authority of the Bible in some way. Not all of them, however, subscribe to the sole authority and sufficiency of Scripture in all matters of faith and life. The Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church are clear in their insistence upon extra-biblical authority. As part of the reverence for ecclesiastical tradition, they cite the writings of ancient church Fathers...All serious students of Christian history acknowledge the importance of the Church Fathers as sources of information about the ancient church period. It is a mistake, nevertheless, to elevate them to a level of authority comparable to that of the New Testament, as the Roman Catholic Church and Greek Orthodox churches have done.

Erwin Lutzer writes the following concerning the issue of “tradition”, *“Once the principle of tradition was admitted as a legitimate source of doctrine, the way was open for all kinds of other teachings to be accepted by the church. The exaltation of Mary, prayers to the saints, the perpetuation of Peter’s authority, and a host of other doctrines not explicitly found in the New Testament were considered as authoritative as the Bible itself.”*

The early church, well into the second century, had been fairly aggressive in guarding what were considered to be fundamental precepts of the Christian faith. The apostolic teachings, even though they had been challenged, were still supernaturally preserved and promoted and even further developed for the sake of clarity and articulation. This was really a very good development for the early church simply because it forced them to both define and defend themselves against the variant views that were emerging. Clarification of foundational expressions of the faith was critical to the survival of the young church. This clarification can be understood as the development and maturing of doctrine within the confines of the Christian faith and was essential to safeguard the core truths and principles of the Christian faith. The simple issue for contemporary Christianity is the issue of tolerance being stretched for some kind of doctrinal charity or theological peace, but in reality when the church majors on tolerance it does so at the expense of doctrine, and the results are disastrous. **Herman Hanko** states the issue this way when he says,

“...tolerance or error very soon becomes intolerance of that church where the truth is truly confessed.”

No reasonable Christian or theologian would deny the fact that because of any Christian's overall learning and spiritual growing process that it requires forbearance and patience on the part of others. There has to be the exercise of various Christian graces that allows others to grow into the truth and out of error. Everyone reading this article can most likely attest to various doctrines that they once held, but now do not hold. Why? Because every Christian grows in the grace and knowledge of Christ, and because of that spiritual process, there must be those Christian graces afforded to individuals to help them in that spiritual progression and development. But patience, forbearance, Christian restraint, and self-control should never be confused with spiritual, cultural, and theological tolerance. They are two different animals and have two very divergent consequences. One establishes the basis for truth being properly aligned with Scripture and the other formulates a basis for continued theological error.

Historically every major heresy within the Christian faith was given as a legitimate interpretation of Scripture that challenged the doctrinal integrity of the established religious teachings of that era. **Alister McGrath** states that, *...by the fourth century, the term 'heresy' was generally being used regularly to designate a teaching that emerges from within the community of faith on the one hand, yet is ultimately destructive of that faith on the other. The central defining paradox of heresy is that it is not unbelief; it is rather a vulnerable and fragile form of Christianity that proves incapable of sustaining itself in the long term."*

Those who claim to be orthodox are not the only ones who can use the Scripture as a proof text of their theological position. To the contrary, every legitimate heresy that the Church has contended with has had Scripture as its foundation. For instance, the Arian controversy of the fourth century between Arius and Athanasius was a major theological disagreement over the interpretation of Scriptures found in the gospel of John relative to the identity and significance of Christ Himself. Arius claimed that Christ was a created being and that there was a time when He did not exist. Obviously, this was no small debate and severely threatened the doctrinal integrity of the church. But at its founda-

tion, it was simply an issue of interpretation and which one was correct. These were individuals who were active participants in the Christian faith, and many were sincere in their desire to faithfully and effectively present and teach the message of Scripture to the Church. It is not that all of these men were trying to destroy or defeat the Church, but rather they were men who were trying to defend what they believed to be Scriptural. They believed themselves to be stalwart defenders of the faith. They considered that they were the individuals who had taken [Jude 3](#) seriously and that in reality they were the ones contending for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints.

John Calvin once commented that when the church loses the Word of God that it is as if its throat has been cut. The problem with not contending for the faith is simply that it becomes the breeding ground for the inner decay of truth in the life of the church, and ultimately what prevents Christ and the Bible from being the centerpiece of the Christian faith. In essence, it is a marginalizing of the truth and yielding to prevailing philosophies that are counter to the revelation of God's Word. It appears that the general tendency of the church at large is to simply define truth based on the philosophy and ethos of the current philosophical, social, and intellectual environment. For anyone who teaches the Word of God, it must be clearly understood and embraced that Scripture is its own authority and is not something that is flexible and negotiable. Everything that is related to both the faith and the practice of the Christian life are fully grounded in the Word of God – and grounded there forever. That is exactly why the Reformation was founded on the principle of "[sola Scriptura](#)".

There is much at stake in the discussion of the implications of heresy relative to the church. There will always be heretics and false teachers within the church. There is no escaping that basic truth. And in some ways, it is their very presence that becomes the testing ground for the fidelity and commitment of the church to the Word of God. It seems to this author that the fundamental premise that is at risk in the discussion is that of authority. In other words, what is the church going to use as the standard and the rule by which doctrinal questions are answered and evaluated? And without any reservation, God and the Scriptures are and always will be the final authority – and not the religious opinions, spiritual fancies, and sentiments of men. Oral tradition certainly is not a valid authority as espoused by

the Catholic church. Unfortunately this espoused position has given rise to centuries of revelations and declarations being handed down to the church that were not a part of Scripture. And these false assumptions and declarations have been handed down to the church from generation to generation as if they were the gospel themselves, and in many doctrinal instances have actually replaced Scripture itself. Papal declarations are declared to be divine and life binding. False doctrines which have arisen and been maintained included the immaculate conception, the infallibility and perpetuity of the pope, the doctrine of works, and the binding and infallible teaching of the Roman Catholic Church where the laity has been suppressed. In essence, tradition has replaced Scripture and has become the foundation of the Catholic church. This is simply one example that has been multiplied over and over again in denomination after denomination. False cults have arisen from such doctrinal looseness and the souls of men have been eternally lost to such erroneous fabrications and spiritual illusions of self-imposed authority. The Word of God stands alone in its claim to authority and it and it alone is the final rule and standard by which the church is to function.

John MacArthur has aptly addressed this issue of authority when he concluded, *“All truth sets itself against error. Where Scripture speaks, it speaks with authority. It speaks definitively. It speaks decisively. It calls for absolute conviction. It demands that we submit to God and resist the devil ([James 4:7](#)). It urges us to discern between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error ([1 John 4:6](#)). It command us to turn away from evil and do good ([1 Peter 3:11](#)). It bids us reject the broad way that seems right to the human mind ([Proverbs 14:12](#); [Proverbs 16:25](#)) and follow the narrow way prescribed by God ([Matthew 7:13-14](#)).”*

It is almost an anomaly and spiritual abnormality that the modern church seems to be so infatuated with fads and novelties. The church has become captivated by pragmatism, and unfortunately if something seems more “contemporary” then it is given a lofty measure of credence and acceptance. But it must always be kept in mind that that which is culturally contemporary is most likely spiritually transient and lacks an overall and enduring value for

the church. Everything seems to be affected in this wholesale acceptance of contemporaneous ideas and values, not the least of which is that of morality. And with each wave of novel ideas, technological whims, and cultural adaptations is a corresponding loss of moral values and divine purpose. One example of how this affects the church is the almost blasphemous acceptance of charismatic television personalities with their widespread proliferation of false doctrine to all parts of the globe while their continued public lack of integrity and character is so prevalent. Their opulence and affluence is almost nauseating. And yet many parts of the Christian community seem to accept their widespread spiritual immorality without ever acknowledging their biblical irreverence for the truth. These men and women are heretical in their approach to the Scriptures, to the Christian life, and to the precepts of divine morality – and yet their ministries continue with great outward success! The spirit of this age has cast its shadow over the church’s discernment and will to contend earnestly for the faith.

Those who globally espouse their false theology on the world are in great demand. There are the likes of T.D. Jakes, Benny Hinn, Paula White, and Joyce Meyer. They have spun the gospel message so that the inner self is divine. Take for instance someone like Kenneth Copeland and the Word of Faith message that he teaches. He states, *“You don’t have a God living in you. You are one. You are part and parcel of God.”* Then there is Joel Osteen with whom America seems to have a love affair. His theology is a combination of Pelagian self-help and Gnostic self-deification. In essence, God is there for you to help you and to provide you with great happiness. His message is simply that if you fail it does not really matter simply because all that God wants is for you to do your best, and He will take care of the rest. In this heretical message, the question is simply *“Then who needs Christ?”* Where does God’s holiness enter into that kind of message? Where is the message of a cross and a Lamb that takes away the sin of the world? Well, in this therapeutic self-help mentality, it is not there. It is obviously vacant, obviously non-existent. There is no mourning over sin, no personal remorse for the gravity of personal sin against a holy God. To the contrary, we are just good people who need a little instruction and motivation to do what God wants us to do. In reality, there is no gospel in this message whatsoever. It has been called the false gospel of “God Loves You Anyway” where God is our buddy and friend.

Take, for instance, someone like **Charles Finney**. At the core of Finney's false premises regarding the gospel and salvation was his denial of original sin. The following are statements from his book **Finney's Systematic Theology**. He actually called justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness as "*absurd*" and something that actually undermines any motivation for personal holiness. He stated that no one can be justified "*while sin, any degree of sin, remains in him.*" He further states that "*whenever a Christian sins, he comes under condemnation and must repent and do his first works, or be lost.*" He continues that, "*Christ's righteousness could do no more than justify himself. It can never be imputed to us.... It was naturally impossible, then, for him to obey in our behalf. Representing the atonement as the ground of the sinner's justification has been a sad occasion of stumbling to many.*"

The word "**heresy**" is derived from the Greek term "**hairesis**" and within its meaning it has very strong associations with the ability to choose and assert ideas that control personal lifestyles and directions.

W.E. Vines states simply "*a choosing, choice*". He further states that it represents "*that which is chosen, and hence, an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects....Such erroneous opinions are frequently the outcome of personal preference or the prospect of advantage.*" (Emphasis added).

In today's intellectual and spiritual culture, everything is about choice, about alternatives, about preferences. And in that preferential climate men feel compelled that they "deserve" choices and alternatives. However, in an environment where the choice has already been determined, men are quick to rebel so that they can satisfy their insatiable hunger for personal satisfaction, gratification, and fulfillment. And the resulting dialogue is one that is more than willing to challenge and confront unbending and unyielding spiritual truth and dogma that is well established in the Word of God. So, what Jude was really seeking was someone who would be willing to defend the faith that had been committed to

the church. His problem was identified in **Jude 4** when he stated that "**certain men have crept in unnoticed**". In other words, false teachers who intended to undermine the teaching of the apostles had already gained access into the early church and were having a destabilizing influence on it.

In his book entitled **Our Legacy: The History of Christian Doctrine**, **John Hannah** has a quote by Thomas C. Oden written in an article he entitled "**On Whoring After the Spirit of the Age**". He suggests that the current state of the Christian church is that of an "*ecclesiastical swamp*" produced by three different sources, "*...an intellectual immune deficiency syndrome, a marked decline of the Christian content with a corresponding emphasis on the emotions; an acceptance of many of the premises of modernity; and an ignorance of the roots of the church in classic orthodoxy.*"

What happens in spiritual controversy is that adversaries to the truth are much inclined to distort and manipulate the truth through the subtleties of how ideas are identified and developed. It is the very language that people use that actually conceals their positions rather than clarifying what it is they actually believe. **John Piper** has aptly pointed out that clarity of speech is much more inviting to criticism than ambiguous statements. Many politicians are more than adept at this mechanism, but unfortunately many theologians have embraced the same practice with vague and indistinct theological arguments. Generally this manipulation of ideas does not occur at the laity level, but at the higher critic level, at a seminary level, or at a denominational hierarchical level. And when this happens, the unfortunate tendency of some is to search for a safe haven rather than a willingness to engage in a controversy. Obviously, defending the truth is not without cost. In the past, it has cost men everything – even their lives. It is not without effort, but demands intense study and diligence in researching and seeking the truth. It is not something that someone can enter into lightly. And so, passivity becomes more attractive. Paul declared his position in **II Corinthians 4:2** when he stated,

²But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of

the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

At times the defense of the truth may require someone to be confrontational, and that approach is one that most often is seen as unacceptable, even unchristian. Those who hold forth the truth must be individuals with courage and the basic conviction that at times leadership, even though it is to be compassionate, may demand a level of spiritual aggression commensurate with the issue. A leader's compassion is never to cancel out their willingness to stand for the truth. Generally the very life of the church is at stake. Once again, **John MacArthur** seems to have identified the problem when in referring to those who are not willing to aggressively defend the truth he states,

"They have in effect embraced the postmodern axiom that dialogue is morally superior to debate, a conversation is inherently more edifying than a controversy, and fellowship is always better than a fight."

Each of those are impossible positions for any Christian to take. The truth is not something to which the church can be socially passive and intellectually indifferent. The truth is not negotiable. If someone were to break into your home and try to rape your wife or kill your children, they have immediately placed you into a non-negotiable position for which some kind of militant action would be required. And in the same way, when it comes to defending the truth, there is no place for complacency, passivity, or indifference. Truth is not pliable and adjustable. It is not something designed to be elastic, compliant, and accommodating. To the contrary, the truth is inflexible, uncompromising, unmovable, and demanding. However, in a post-modern environment, the truth is not seen as fixed and unchanging, but as that which is tolerant and subjective, and therefore ultimately becomes irrelevant.

So, before a dialogue can be started regarding heresy, there must be a discussion regarding truth. The truth – what is it and how does it affect people's lives? **Renn's Expository Dictionary** states that truth is a virtue describing *"that which accords with reality."* The word "**truth**" means true as opposed to what is false. It refers to what really is, what ac-

tually exists, and what exactly takes place. It is the Greek word "*alētheia*" and is one of the defining elements of who God is and what God is like. And because of that, the truth simply cannot be separated or somehow disconnected and detached from God. That is exactly why people who do not like the truth do not like God. What defiant unbelievers are unwilling to embrace and accept is that God alone is the sole author of truth. Truth never exists apart from God. Truth is not derived apart from God. Truth is not independent of God. To the contrary, all truth is inextricably from God, from God's character, and from His very Person. There is no other source of truth, no other birthplace from where truth has descended. God is both the only source and the final source of truth, and His truth will always remain fixed. **John MacArthur** explains it this way,

"...ultimate truth is an objective reality. Truth exists outside of us and remains the same regardless of how we may perceive it. Truth by definition is as fixed and constant as God is immutable. That is because real truth (what Francis Schaeffer called 'true truth') is the unchanging expression of who God is; it is not our own personal and arbitrary interpretation of reality."

The word "**truth**" carries within it the technical meaning that with the truth there is nothing that is hidden. The Greek prefix "*a*" is the negative prefix that gives another Greek word the opposite meaning, and in this case "*lanthano*" which simply means to be hidden or concealed. Thus, truth means to not be hidden or concealed. Therefore, "**truth**" is the actual and tangible connection that exists between a reality and a declaration which professes to set forth or describe that particular reality. In other words, when things that are spoken or written are actually true, then they agree with their own objective reality. Persons, words, and things are said to be "true" when they correspond with their profession. Truth describes things as they really are. The truth has both certainty and validity integrated into its very nature and therefore provides the fundamental Scriptural basis for man's actions.

God is the very definition of truth simply because all that God declares is true and all that God is as God is based on His truthfulness and as revealed in His Word. God can neither say nor do anything that is not true. The very essence and substance of His being is truth and therefore it is impossible for God to declare something that is not true. His very being is the source of all

truth. Truth is not something that man facetiously develops independent of God, but something that God simply declares as evidence of His character, person, and will. In fact, truth is considered to be the defining characteristic of God's Word. In **Precept Austin** under "The God of Truth" it states, *"God's plan, principles, and promises are completely reliable, accurate, real, and factual. God is real not imaginary, vain and empty like the idols of the pagans, who represent a so-called god of their own vain imagination. Truth can be depended upon and does not fail, change, or disappoint and so practically God's promises are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus and His word cannot fail or disappoint. The practical aspect of God's unchanging truthfulness is that we can stand on His promises with full assurance of faith no matter how we feel, no matter how dire our circumstances. We can trust and rest on this great attribute of God, forever and forever. Amen. And since God is truth, He desires that those who would give a proper opinion of Him also be truthful in the words and deeds."*

Scripture tells us that truth is also embodied in the very person of Christ. [John 1:14](#) declares,

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

[John 14:6](#) declares that Christ Himself is divine truth,

⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

In the same chapter, the Holy Spirit is declared to be the very "**Spirit of truth**" in [John 14:16-17](#),

¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever - ¹⁷the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

He is also called the "**Spirit of truth**" in [John 15:26](#),

²⁶"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth

who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

When the word "**truth**" is used in reference to any member of the Trinity, it denotes absolute integrity and honesty. [John 17:17](#) declares that believers are sanctified by the truth as found in the Word of God.

¹⁷Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Why would Christ make this simple statement to His disciples? It is because He knew and fully understood that the Word of God is not something that is subjective, fluid, unstable, and always changing. To the contrary, the Word of God is objective, accurate, and something that can be known both in the mind and in the heart. The Word of God has not been designed in such a way to promote one person seeing it one way and then another person seeing it quite differently. It is fully understood that that happens very often, but in reality, truth is not that flexible. Without any question, the Holy Spirit is not the author of confusion and ambiguity, but of intelligibility and clearness. He is the divine author of spiritual precision and theological articulation. A very significant and crucial principle to understand is that every biblical text has only one true and fixed meaning, even though it may have many different applications, and it is the occupation of everyone who handles and teaches the Word of God to discover that true and fixed meaning. Hermeneutically every portion of Scripture must be examined in its historical-grammatical context, or simply what did the passage mean to those people to whom it was written. It is this unchanging and divine nature of truth that gives it its credibility in relation to error and heresy – which is ever-changing.

The Word also declares that sinful men "**suppress the truth**" in [Romans 1:18](#),

¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness....

And to compound the problem, not only do unrighteous men "**suppress the truth**", but they are also willing to "**exchange the truth**" for that which is not true – a very deficient exchange to say the least. [Romans 1:25](#) declares,

²⁵who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

In [II Corinthians 4:2](#) Paul declared that it is by a Christian manifesting the truth in their life that men are convicted in their conscience.

²But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

In [Ephesians 6:14](#), the truth is declared to be a part of the whole armor of God.

¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth....

[II Thessalonians 2:10 and 12](#) clearly state that men who do not “receive” or “believe” the truth will not be saved.

¹⁰and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹²that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Simply stated from an eternal perspective, truth matters. A person's final and eternal destiny is integrally woven with how they receive and respond to the truth.

And for those men involved in the ministry of a local church, it has the most profound of all responsibilities simply because the church is the very “**pillar and ground of the truth**”. [I Timothy 3:15](#) declares,

¹⁵but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Continued in next edition...

ENDNOTES:

¹All Scriptural quotations are taken from the New King James Bible.

²McGrath, 11-12.

³Lutzer, 21.

⁴MacArthur, Truth, 97.

⁵Lutzer, 241.

⁶Hanko, 5.

⁷Tozer, 1-3.

⁸Wuest, 235.

⁹McGoldrick, 10.

¹⁰McGrath, 34-35.

¹¹McGrath, 48.

¹²McGrath, 57.

¹³McGrath, 72.

¹⁴Horton, 16, 18.

¹⁵McGrath, 53.

¹⁶McGoldrick, 171-172.

¹⁷Lutzer, 20.

¹⁸McGrath, 79-80.

¹⁹Hanko, 6.

²⁰McGrath, 83.

²¹McGrath, 54.

²²McGrath, 58.

²³Swindoll, 1125.

²⁴Swindoll, 1126.

²⁵Murray, 299.

²⁶Murray, 300.

²⁷MacArthur, Truth, 196.

²⁸Hannah, 11.

²⁹Horton, 67-68.

³⁰Horton, 68-70.

³¹Horton, 71-72.

³²Horton, 44-45.

³³McGrath, 7.

³⁴Vines, 547.

³⁵Hannah, 10.

³⁶Piper, 35.

³⁷Piper, 169.

³⁸MacArthur, Leadership, 134-136.

³⁹MacArthur, Truth, 99.

⁴⁰Expository, webpage.

⁴¹Practical, webpage..

⁴²MacArthur, Truth, xx.

⁴³Precept, webpage.

⁴⁴Precept, webpage.

⁴⁵Precept, webpage.

⁴⁶Expository, webpage.

⁴⁷Precept, webpage.

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