

The University Heights Messenger

May 29, 2011

The “New Hermeneutic”—An Abandonment Of Reason

By Wayne Jackson

Hermeneutics is the procedure by which certain logical principles are applied to a document in order to ascertain the author’s original meaning. All literature is subject to hermeneutical analysis. In this country we have one branch of our government, the judiciary, which has been designed to practice legal hermeneutics, i.e., to interpret the law.

Sacred hermeneutics is the science of Bible interpretation. Everyone, to a greater or lesser degree—either correctly or incorrectly—employs hermeneutics.

Frequently these days, one hears about the so-called New Hermeneutic. This method of viewing the Bible has a number of erroneous components, one of which is this: no conclusion, which has been drawn as the result of human reasoning, can be established as a test of Christian fellowship. Note the following example of this approach:

The “Fundamentals of the Faith” must be held onto at all costs They are the only “absolutes” I know. All other matters must be arrived at “hermeneutically” (that is, by a process of reasoning!) But any conclusion reached by such a process should not be made a test of fellowship (Phillips 1990, 5-6).

In the same article, our brother lists the “Fundamentals of the Faith” as: “the existence of God, the lordship of Jesus, Bible authority, the one church, the new birth” and, “genuine commitment to the will, way, and word of God.” Excluded as a matter of fellowship, among other things, is the use of instrumental music in Christian worship.

The foregoing article, it appears to this writer, reflects a very unreasonable and inconsistent viewpoint. The fact is, not even

those matters that our brother listed as “Fundamentals of the Faith” are accepted independent of reasoning.

His own argument, therefore, if consistently pursued, would exclude the “Fundamentals” as matters of faith and fellowship. Consider the following:

(1) Does not inspiration show that reason is essential in acknowledging the existence of Jehovah? In **Romans 1**, Paul argued that the Gentiles who rejected the revelation of God in nature had become “vain in their reasonings” (v. 21). Is not the argument of **Hebrews 3:4**—“Every house is built by someone; but he that built all things is God”—based upon the reasoned premise that every effect must have an adequate cause?

(2) How is the “lordship of Jesus” established apart from reasoning? Isn’t the truth-seeker required to: (a) assemble testimony from the Bible regarding Christ; (b) ascertain that the biblical record is reliable; (c) draw conclusions from these premises relative to the nature of Jesus?

(3) Is reason involved in establishing Bible authority? How does one know that the Bible is authoritative unless he: (a) examines the Scriptures’ claim of divine origin; (b) considers evidence in support of that claim; (c) arrives at the deduction that the Bible is the word of God?

(4) How does our brother know that there is only “one church” of which the Lord approves? The New Testament does not explicitly state that there is one church. It is true that: (a) there is one body (**Ephesians 4:4**); (b) the body is the church (**Colossians 1:18**); (c) thus, there is one church.

But this conclusion is derived by reasoning—the very process repudiated by our friend.

(5) If the “new birth” is a matter of faith, this question is in order: does the new birth include immersion in water? If so, how do we know? Our misguided brother cannot demonstrate that baptism is a part of the new

birth process without employing hermeneutical reasoning.

Some contend that the “water” of **John 3:3-5** is not a reference to baptism. How would one argue the case for baptism as an element of the new birth without utilizing logic?

The tragic fact of the matter is this: the defenders of the New Hermeneutic are determined to have “fellowship” with whomever they wish—regardless of what the Scriptures teach. They do not intend that matters like instrumental music be a barrier. Hence, the New Hermeneutic has been invented to justify their coveted practice.

The arguments which they are making would not stand five minutes in a logical discussion wherein the issues could be pressed with firmness. That is why these brethren, for the most part, prefer to proselyte privately. The New Hermeneutic is a false philosophy that undermines the very authority of the Bible.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Let’s keep **Jenilee Daniels** and **Jackie Litmer** in our prayers as they progress throughout their pregnancies.

Charlene Antle (Troy’s mother) will be meeting soon with an oncologist to discuss treatment options.

Keia Burton (Ann Chrusciel’s great-niece) is pregnant and has been diagnosed with placenta previa, which can be a life-threatening condition. Let us pray for her and the baby.

Our members: **Jeff Howerton, Janice Parsons, Glenn Davis, Glenn Kimberlin.**

Others: **Edith Tirey, Tom Curtis, Rita Pagan, Linda Hill, Robin Miller, Vina Krassow, Courtney and Aubree Reeves, Tabetha Lynn, Tom Curtis, John Bennett, Dennis Brennan, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Donald Dawson, Jean Gartland, Wes Kidd, Gail Stein**

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Sun: Judg 4-5, Ps 107:23-43, Rom 9-11
Mon: Judg 6-7, Ps 108, Rom 12-13
Tue: Judg 8-9, Ps 109, Rom 14-15
Wed: Judg 10-11, Ps 110, Rom 16
Thu: Judg 12-14, Ps 111, 1 Cor 1
Fri: Judg 15-16, Ps 112, 1 Cor 2-3
Sat: Judg 17-18, Ps 113, 1 Cor 4-5

SERMON TOPICS:

Sunday AM. The central message of the Bible 6
(2 Timothy 2:11)

Sunday PM. Satan
(Revelation 12:9)

Elders: David Collins, Garry Banks, John Thompson