

## Correspondence

**From: Mr. J. M. Brentnall of Derby.**

Dear Editor,

After reading your pages of scholastic juggling (BRJ No. 15 pp.42-48), I challenge you to :

(i) print in capitals these words from the lips of the only Redeemer of God's elect: "How often would I have gathered thy children together....and ye would not", and then explain them according to your scheme of salvation;

(ii) let your readers know how often you and Mr. Baird have wept over one lost soul, not to mention a whole city.

Yours sincerely, **John M. Brentnall.**

### **Editor's response:**

It is with some regret that we print this latest response from Mr. Brentnall. With deepest respect to him, we have to say that we find his response not only inadequate, but also rather offensive and unScriptural. We do herewith stand firmly against him, according to our convictions from the Word of God.

He has effectively *damned us out of hand* in that he has dismissed 7 pages of our closely argued refutation (BRJ 15 pp.42-48) of his previous letter (BRJ 15 pp.40-42) with just two words, viz. : "scholastic juggling". He has produced no evidence to support this verdict, he has just produced a bald, sweeping assertion. Not to mention the inaccuracy of the "scholasticism" part of his judgment, the assertion that we are "juggling" appears to us to be insinuating that we are being dishonest in matters of God's Holy Word. We have to say, with respect, that this is no way to carry on theological debate. We ask, is Mr. Brentnall's latest response theological debating to his own recommended calibre of "Tyndale v. More", etc. as he recommended for Mr. Baird's education in BRJ 15 p.40? In his first letter, he accused Mr. Baird of "blus-

ter", an unwarranted charge indeed, and we are bound to say that Mr. Brentnall's latest response with its out-of-hand dismissal looks to us like a first class example of "bluster" on his part.

It appears to us, at least, that Mr. Brentnall has walked away from our argumentation, we wonder why? And he has *still* not made *any attempt* to answer to the telling quotations from Calvin which Mr. Baird put in his article in BRJ 12, quotations which utterly vitiated Mr. Brentnall's original article in the Banner of Truth, Aug. 1995.

To cap it all, he has now dragged a red hering across the path of the dispute by issuing his two "challenges" to us, in an attempt, it seems, to shift the ground of the discussion away from the facts, and on to an *ad hominem* level.

First, he has challenged us to print in capitals a mutated form of Matt.23: 37, the bulk of the verse being excised. (Not to mention the idiosyncracies that that verse will throw up when divorced from its total context in Matt. 23.) As we fear the Lord, and remember his injunction against taking away from the text of His Word (See: Rev. 22:19; and Deut. 12:31-32), we have to say categorically that we are not in the business of responding to challenges to print, in capitals or otherwise, texts of Scripture that have been carved up, especially when the carving looks to us suspiciously like the work of an Arminian knife.

We are then challenged to explain this verse "according to your scheme of salvation". We have no scheme of salvation of our own. We believe in God's scheme of salvation alone. As revealed in His Word.

Secondly, we are challenged to print for our readers "how often (we) have wept over one lost soul...etc." But to do this would be to put ourselves in breach of our Lord Jesus' teaching on prayer, i.e., that personal perfor-

mances in prayer before the Most High are not matters for public parade. To advertise such would be hypocrisy, bearing in mind our Saviour's teaching in Matt. 6:vv.5-6. Surely Mr. Brentnall must realise this? But in connection with personal and private prayer, we are conscious of the opposite and important teachings of St. Paul in Romans 8:26. We remember too, no matter how fervent and faithful one may be in prayer and all the duties to which the Lord calls us, at the end of it all we have to endorse from the heart what He taught in Luke 17:10. We conclude, therefore, that Mr. Brentnall ought not to issue challenges that effectively try to induce the Lord's people into breaching the Lord's express instructions regarding personal prayer.

Again, what has anyone's personal performance in terms of "weeping-over-lost-souls" got to do with the honest exegesis of God's Holy Word? How high up on the League table, as it were, of "weepers-over-lost-souls" does one have to be before one is qualified to interpret Scripture? Who sets the going standards in these stakes? (seeing *there is no sign of any of it in Scripture*).

But let Mr. Brentnall rise to our Scriptural challenge. Let him answer to Mr. Baird's documented quotes from Calvin, (BRJ 12), and to his admirable critique of the false philosophy permeating Dabney's much vaunted lecture (BRJ 15 pp.42-45). And let him answer to our strictures (BRJ 15 pp.45-48) on the six matters he raised in his letter printed in BRJ 15 pp.40-42. Or let him graciously accept he was wrong in these respects. At some time or other, all of us have had to make such admissions and changes, it is part of the human condition. It is no dishonour so to do. And we urge him again, respectfully, to reconsider these matters without prejudice.

*It is hoped (DV) to print a thorough critique of Dabney's "Discussion" on these matters in an issue of the BRJ in 1997, which will deal with these matters in far greater depth, with a detailed exegesis of Matt. ch.23 and critique of Dabney's gross*

*mis-handling of verse 37 of that chapter and other scriptures. Dabney's influence in this respect has been deplorable in that his lecture has been seized upon by scores and used to promote Amyraldianism and moderate Calvinism, or Neo-Calvinism.*

**From Mr. R.J.Barker  
Hockley ESSEX**

Dear Mr. Horne,

I feel constrained to write again to thank you and all concerned in producing the British Reformed Journal. I received my copy this morning and have (quickly) read it all through. I would like to echo the sentiments expressed by your correspondent Mr. Greg Fields ( See BRJ No. 12), being in a very similar situation. May I assure him, and others like him, of my prayers.

I too, would like any back issues that you have available (from 1 to 10 ). Yesterday I was reading "Calvin's Calvinism" and searched high and low for the identity of "H.A." ( footnote on p. 31) to no avail -when there it was in your magazine, this morning ! Thank you.

Also, I was quite amused to discover the meaning of the word "obfuscation", a word with which I was not familiar.

I look forward to further bountiful supplies in the Journal.

**From Mr. H.C.Mullin,  
Hamiltonhill,  
GLASGOW, N.**

Sir,

I read Mark Punford's engrossing letter (BRJ No. 13) with much interest. His brief reference to loving our enemies caught my attention, with the editor's response.

An atmosphere has been created these days in which even the mildest criticisms of perceived wrongs is regarded as being unloving. For example, I once loaned a copy of Archibald Hughes' stimulating study, "A New Heavens and a New Earth" (which argues for the a-millennial schema) to an acquaintance of mine. I had actually heard this man state

from a platform in a small mission hall that the Church was a mere parenthesis in the plan of God.

This as you will be aware is the view printed in the Scofield Reference notes. Now Hughes' work does a total and decisive demolition job on these views of Scofield and the whole Dispensational school. On point after point their errors of interpreting the Bible are proven to be wrong by sound Biblical exegesis.

A few weeks later I had my book returned to me. When I asked what the "parenthesis" reader thought of Hughes' book, he replied rather sniffily that it was not very loving. Obviously his pet prophetic delusions had been assailed by Hughes, and let us face it, they are delusions produced by failing to rightly divide the Word of the Lord, or to accept the help of the Church in her past history, who resolved lots of modern-day theological problems.

But how can men from the Dispensational School, who think Augustine, Luther, and Calvin "mere cyphers" alongside Darby, Kelly, and "CHM", get any help from the Church in days gone by? Do they not despise that Church, and call it Babylon? Would they not refuse God's servants of old the right to partake of their communion service?

Why are criticisms of the errors of others perceived to be unloving? Was Martin Luther unloving when he wrote, "Cursed be that love and unity for whose sake the Word of God must be put at stake"? If I say  $2 + 2 = 5$ , is the person who shows me my error unloving?

Moses proclaimed the Word of the Lord to Israel. When Korah and company tried to lead the people of God away from that Word, and Moses as the Lord's anointed servant in effect pronounced an awful curse upon them so that they went down quick into the pit, was Moses being unloving? (See Numbers 16). If so, why did the Lord confirm the words and authority of Moses with signs following, so that the earth opened up and swallowed them "alive into the pit"? Will the "love lobby" have us believe the Lord was unlo-

ving to Korah and company? Should we accept the thesis that they deserved to be loved by God, and that the "Old Testament" is terribly harsh and merely expresses the opinions of men who were not very loving? Should we listen to the voice of the serpent after all, when he says: "Hath God said?"

I personally have struggled for years with this verse, "Love your enemies". (**Lu 6:27** *But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you.*). Inside I have felt a secret grudging along the lines of "surely the Lord cannot expect me to love this horrible person?" But the word stands still, "Love your enemies".

I have now somewhat resolved the problem by saying, "Love is the fulfilling of the Law" (**Rm. 13:10** *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love [is] the fulfilling of the law.* ) This commands us not to murder our neighbour; not to commit adultery with his wife; or covet his wife, son, daughter, etc.; or steal from him; or bear false witness against him. (See Exodus Ch. 20.). When I obey these laws of my God, I am showing my neighbour love; when I disobey them I am not. My neighbour may be utterly obnoxious to me, so that I have to avoid him as much as possible for my own peace of mind and to prevent strife from erupting between us; but if I obey God's law in relation to him, I am showing him love.

This rather unsatisfactory position is as far as I have been able to progress. Although I do feel genuine pity, even sorrow for some miserable wretches that I see, I cannot help thinking that their misery is brought on them by their sinful conduct. However, if I suggest such, the bleeding-heart brigade denounce me as being unloving (especially the women amongst them). Quite frankly, I deplore this attitude of wallowing in guilt all the time, as if the sinner's condition was all our fault.

I don't regard pats on the back and wide smiles (oily, ingratiating smiles) as being manifestations of loving my neighbour, if you know what I mean? Might it not be a truer display of love to warn him to flee from the wrath to come?