

YOKEFELLOW

Vol. 47, No. 7

January - February 2016

FOREST HILL ELDERS
Anthony D. Callahan
Warren Davenport
Gregory D. Mangrum
Harold D. Mangrum
Keith B. McAlister

DIRECTOR: MEMPHIS
SCHOOL OF PREACHING
B. J. Clarke

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
Billy Bland

DEAN OF ACADEMICS
Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

DEAN OF PUBLIC
RELATIONS
Garland Elkins

ADMINISTRATIVE DEAN
Bobby Liddell

DEAN OF
COMMUNICATIONS
Daniel F. Cates

ALUMNI LIAISON
Mike McDaniel

INSTRUCTORS
T. J. Clarke
Gary Colley
Barry Grider
Mike McDaniel
Don Walker

LIBRARIAN
Annette B. Cates

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
Sherry Brown

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN
Jan Kuehn

FINANCIAL SECRETARY
Joyce Phillips

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
Jinnie Thornton

www.msop.org
office@msop.org
Office (901) 751-2242
Library (901) 751-7378

B.J. CLARKE, EDITOR

A RARE, ONE OF A KIND, PRINTED DEBATE COLLECTION COMES TO THE MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

Bobby O'Dell

Like most preachers, I have a great fondness for good books. Many years ago I began focusing much effort on collecting printed debates for my personal library. After about twenty years of building this collection I had put together what was, to the best of my knowledge, the largest and most complete collection of debates in our brotherhood including our colleges. This collection is primarily comprised of volumes in which members of the churches of Christ were involved (however it also includes debates involving members of the Christian Church and the Disciples). As of the printing of this article, the total number of printed debates I had amassed in my collection was 573! I am thankful that this entire collection is now housed in a special section for debates at the N.B. Hardeman Library at the Memphis School of Preaching. Since MSOP has acquired this collection, I wanted to use this article to make others aware of some of the content of this resource that is now available for students, faculty and friends of the school to use.

This collection is expansive in covering virtually every point of controversy in the history of religious discussions among our brethren. It includes: about 30 debates on instrumental music, nearly 100 debates with our non-institutional brethren, debates with every major religious denomination, debates on every aspect of the MDR issues, and debates on atheism. It includes debates on such other topics as head coverings, Lord's Supper, foot washing, slavery,

war, masonry, race issues, the Holy Spirit, smoking, everlasting punishment and Islam. If you need to research a debated topic, you can find it most likely in this collection.

This resource is also unique because of some of the one-of-a-kind materials that it contains. For example, it contains full content typeset debates that were never printed in book form, such as the G.K. Wallace and J. P. Miller debate of 1968. Another couple of examples of these rare unprinted debates are the Bales-Barber Debate and the Thurman-Bales Debate (both on Instrumental Music). These unpublished debates are labeled and contained in white three-ring binders, ready to be studied. There are also a few debates that are rare and can only be found in university holdings around our nation. If I was unable to secure my own copy of the debate I worked with various librarians around the country to make photocopies of them. These rare volumes are also contained in the white three-ring binders. As I was able to secure first edition copies of these rare debates for my collection, I then removed the copied version and replaced it with the original printing. I plan to continue doing this into the future. One such example of a photocopied book in this collection, of which we are still trying to find an original, is the Joe Warlick and E.R. Carswell Debate from 1895 on the topic of the Missionary Baptist Church.

One of the parts of this printed debate collection that is nearest to my heart is the section that contains extremely rare 1st edition volumes from the 1800's. This debate collection has a full set of all 6 of

Alexander Campbell's Debates in 1st edition leather. This includes the extremely rare 1st edition Campbell-Skinner Debate. The collection includes all 7 of Benjamin Franklin's debates from the mid-1800's. Although often the most rare and hardest to find, the collection of debates from that century involving our brethren is nearly complete in these holdings. Many of these will be housed under glass for display and for use with special librarian permission. With many of these books, the volumes now held at the N.B. Hardeman Library at MSOP are the only ones known to exist any longer.

An additional rare section of this collection is interesting because they are not all that particularly old. Some of the most rare debates ever produced by our brethren were done around the 1950's and 1960's in tract or pamphlet form. One example of this is the Cecil Douthitt and Thomas B. Warren Debate. Many of these rare debates in pamphlet form are on the topic of cooperation, the one cup, and the length of hair. Another rare section of debates is from around the early 1900's and were produced by either Rowe Printing, or McQuiddy Printing. The material on which the debates of that time frame were printed was so ephemeral that I believe they have often disintegrated beyond being usable and have been discarded. These debates were often on the topic of Valid Baptism (the issue which sparked the rise of Firm Foundation Magazine). Another example of a fragile and rare debate from that time frame is the G.C.

Brewer and Stewart J. Spence Debate on the Jehovah's Witness topic. As I have secured debates from this era I have tried to have them hard bound for preservation.

There is no adequate way to fully describe the vast holdings of this rare collection in this brief article. I encourage the reader to take a trip to the N.B. Hardeman Library during the upcoming lectures, by which time the display should be complete. I am thankful for the individuals and families who have helped me build this collection over the last 20 years. The first debates I was given came from my father Jeff O'Dell and a retired preacher from Ohio named Paul McGregor. Since then I have purchased, and more often been given, books from the families of individuals such as; G.C. Brewer, James Bales, Leonard Johnson, Rex A. Turner Sr., Franklin T Puckett, A.C. Grider, W.K. Pendleton and Virgil Hale. Some of the books in this collection were even signed by men such as G.K. Wallace and A.M. McVey.

It is my hope to make a list available at the upcoming MSOP lectures (March 27-31, 2016) of any rare debates for which I am still searching. I hope that my fellow graduates will help me secure these missing volumes in order to make the collection even more complete. I hope that together we can make this great display even greater for the benefit of future students.

In Christ,

Bobby O'Dell

The Memphis School of Preaching Acquires a Great Treasure Garland Elkins

With the approval of the Forest Hill Church of Christ elders, MSOP Director B. J. Clarke negotiated with brother Bobby Odell to purchase brother Odell's debate library.

This rare and valuable collection of books and manuscript is the largest of its kind in the brotherhood. Many of the books are first editions, and some of the manuscripts record debates which were not published. This collection provides students opportunities to research, learn, and articulate crucial and often misunderstood Bible topics.

More than a quarter-of-a-century ago, I became an Instructor in the Memphis School of Preaching. Brother Curtis A. Cates, now deceased, was the capable Director of the school. For some years, he had taught a course exposing the errors of denominationalism. During that class, "mock" debates were conducted by students. Brother Cates asked me to teach that class, and I have been honored to do so since my first year at MSOP.

In John 7:46, it was said of Jesus, the only perfect debater, "Never man spake like this man." His insightful analysis, perfect logic, penetrating questions, and powerful answers can never be equaled because He cannot be equaled: He is Divine (Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:1-10).

Alexander Campbell stated, "Hence the Prince of Peace never sheathed the Sword of the Spirit while He lived. He drew it on the banks of Jordan and threw the scabbard away."

Other than Christ, I believe that the Apostle Paul advanced Christianity through public debate more than anyone. He powerfully preached the truth, refuted error, and "disputed" with false teachers (Acts 9:29; 14:7).

Students at MSOP accept the charge to preach the Word to the lost. This debate collection will allow us to improve our preaching, debating, and general conduct so we can save others and ourselves.



**MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING
ANNUAL LECTURESHIP
March 27 – MARCH 31, 2016**

**General Theme
“PREACH THE WORD”
(2 Timothy 4:2)**

**Conducted By:
Memphis School of Preaching
Forest Hill-Irene Road
Memphis, Tennessee 38125
Telephone (901) 751-2242
www.msop.org**



Editor's Note:

We are so appreciative to brother Bobby O'Dell for the massive amount of time, energy, and resources he has invested in searching for, and securing this rare collection of books. We are also extremely grateful that he would allow us to purchase and utilize this great treasure of resources at the Memphis School of Preaching. When I was a teenager, my father handed me debate books to read, and I profited so very much from reading these volumes. I will confess to you that, especially in my youth, sometimes I would read the arguments of the denominational preacher and think to myself, "How can this be answered? This appears to be right. Have I been misled and wrong all these years?" I would then read the response from the gospel preacher for the Lord's church and be amazed at how he could so quickly and so simply show the fallacies of the denominational preacher's affirmations. The more debates I read the more I became equipped to identify where the denominational preacher was misapplying Scripture and taking it from its proper context (2 Pet. 3:17). Thanks to my exposure to the truth in this debate format, I got to the point where I could refute the arguments of the denominational preacher before having to read the response from the gospel preacher who was debating him. I had been taught that the Word of God always trumped the doctrines and commandments of men, but I did not know which

Scriptures from the Word of God to use to answer some of the doctrines and commandments of men. The value of reading these debates is that they introduced me to the Scripture citations I could use in testing the teachers to see whether they are of God (1 John 4:1). My faith in the accuracy, simplicity, harmony, and power of God's Word grew so much from reading these debates. Someone has said that the harder you rub the truth the brighter it shines! That is why I am so excited that our students, both now and for generations to come, will be able to take their Bibles in hand and examine both positions in any given debate, and discover the truth in the light of which one makes the proper scriptural arguments.

There are many places where one or some of these books may be found, but there is no place on earth (of which we are aware) where all of these books can be found in one comprehensive collection except for the N. B. Hardeman Library on the campus of the Memphis School of Preaching. The value of this library is not measured adequately in dollars and cents. Of the 583 volumes amassed so far, there are some volumes that would cost hundreds and hundreds of dollars just to purchase one copy. The elders approved the purchase of this library with the confidence in its value to our students. If you would like to help offset the cost of its purchase, please send your contributions to MSOP and put Debate Library in the memo section of the check. Thank you so much!

2016 YOUTH DAY

FOREST HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST

MARCH 26, 2016



"Faithful Love"

9:00 -9:30 Registration

9:30-10:00 Singing (Stephen Sutton, song director)

10:00-10:35 "Faithful Love in Marriage"

(Steven Ford, Benton Arkansas)

10:45-11:20 "Faithful Love in the Church"

(Jonathan Burns, Pulaski, Tennessee)

11:30-12:30 Lunch

12:30-12:45 Singing

12:45-1:20 "Jesus Christ: Our Example of Faithful Love"

(Josh McCrary, Ripley, Mississippi)

1:20-1:30 Closing Remarks

1:30-5:00 Fun & Games

His faithful love endures forever. Psalm 106:1

PRSRT STD
AUTO
US POSTAGE PAID
PULASKI TN
PERMIT NO. 955

YOKEFELLOW
Forest Hill Church of Christ
3950 Forest Hill-Irene Road
Memphis, TN 38125