

Mistakes Some Scholars Have Made

by Rico Brown
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Within the realm of Christianity, there are men who rise above their peers in their accumulation of knowledge and the ability to teach or to put it into written form. In common terms, we call such men scholars. Within our brotherhood, the word currently has two levels of meaning. There are men who, by a lifetime of disciplined study, have accumulated an extraordinary amount of biblical and practical knowledge. At the same time, they have devoted themselves to preaching the Gospel and building up the Lord's church. These men may or may not have attained advanced educational degrees, but their knowledge and skills cannot be denied by honest men. Then there are men who have pursued their education to the attaining of a terminal degree, a doctor's degree. Such men are usually specialized in their studies; they may be highly trained in a particular language such as Greek or Hebrew. Their specialization may be in Old or New Testament, archeology, theology, etc. Many of this class of scholars have been so busy pursuing their degree that they have had little or no time to work with a congregation as a preacher. The majority of them have gained their degrees in theological schools unaffiliated with the Church of Christ. The best of these schools are denominational. The most prestigious of them, and the most desirable from the world's point of view, are liberal to the core. Hence, if they graduate as conservative, bible-believing and bible-honoring scholars, it will be in spite of their education and not because of it. We have had some good men in this category. It is not of them that this is written. Unfortunately, the graduates of liberal schools of theology tend to reflect those liberal views in their interpretation and teaching of scripture. This latter class of scholars is found in our Christian schools, especially our larger universities. Observation reveals that many of these scholars operate under some serious mistaken assumptions:

- Their scholarly attainments make them a superior type of Christian.
- To be a scholar they must believe and act as their scholarly peers, most of whom are theological liberals.
- Their educational attainments qualify them to question, reject or rewrite parts of Scripture they do find to be palatable.
- They can be a doubting skeptic regarding the inspiration and authority of the Bible and still be pleasing and acceptable to God.
- They are no longer duty bound to stand by, protect and assist the Lord's church.
- Those with lesser educational credentials have no right to question or criticize their teaching or actions. After all, they are scholars.
- They bear no responsibility for the destructive effects of their views on the faith of God's children who sit in their classes. They seem to forget that Jesus said the person "who shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that great millstone should be handed about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).
- The church needs them and that she could not get along without them. The fact of the matter is that the church's history with this kind of scholar has not been rewarding. Despite their scholarship, they too often ended up promoting error rather than biblical truth.

Looking at our history, it was not the scholars who took the gospel to new fields, gathered a harvest of souls, and planted churches. It was not scholars who met, refuted and defeated the enemies of the church and the teaching of Christ. These things were done by godly men whose main qualifications were their love for the Master and their simple faith in the Scripture.