

ANOTHER LOOK AT MAC DEAVER'S DEBATES

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The Deaver-Fox Debate¹

Before considering Mac's debates I would like to make two brief points regarding matters where I made mistakes in my debate with Mac. First, I stated that the participle of Romans 6:18 was a present participle (page 83). In fact it is an aorist participle but the fact that it is aorist only strengthens my argument. Second, I answered Mac's fifth question on Thursday night (page 151) incorrectly. I should have answered it as "false." However Mac was so confused on his definition of literal (when he improperly equated it to real, actual, and in fact) that I answered it by writing "man literally has a spiritual heart." This was intended to be a play on words but was both ill-advised and improper. Mac improperly used the word "literally" in much the same way I did, on page 203. Mac's confusion on the definition of literal and figurative is evident in his failure to answer my question of Tuesday night (page 89). However, in the next paragraph (page 89) Mac had Jesus dwelling through the word. If Christ dwelling through the word is not a figurative dwelling, what is? In his debate with Bill Lockwood (January 1998), Mac admitted that the indwelling of Christ is a representative indwelling.

I predict that Mac Deaver will reject the conclusion of my chart # 49 (page 12).

Major Premise: All A are B (omitted)

Minor Premise: Conviction is a thing that both the Holy Spirit and the Word of God do.

Conclusion: Conviction is a thing that the Holy Spirit does only through the Word of God. (Mac Deaver, Biblical Notes, November/December 1993, page 1)

He is forced to reject this by his Calvinistic direct operation. Mac essentially made the same argument for conviction that he made for the indwelling (page 70). My first argument (the parsimony argument pages 7-11) was designed to force him to either accept Calvinism or the representative indwelling. Mac rejected the hibernation theory (pages 28-29) and accepted a direct operation (page 29). My second argument (pages 11-19) was designed to prove that Mac cannot oppose Calvinism (his whole system is in league with Calvinism). He never gave a middle term that demonstrated that he was rational to make the assertion of the conclusion (Chart 54 pages 16 and 44-45). Without a rational argument he will be forced to fellowship² those who teach a direct operation in conviction. Mac moved closer to teaching the direct operation in conviction and conversion in his debate with Bill Lockwood. In his second speech the second night of the debate he stated:

Even in the matter of conviction and conversion, it is not accurate to say that the Holy Spirit operates "only through the word" if one excludes providence and prayer (II Thess. 3:1,2). It is accurate in the matter of conviction and conversion to say that the Holy Spirit operates informationally only through the word, for only the Bible is the ultimate source material and it is inspired. (Chart 94C)³

The reader should be aware that both providence and prayer are the two major factors that Mac uses in his vain attempt to prove that a direct operation occurs upon the child of God.

¹Unless noted otherwise all page references are to the Deaver-Fox Debate.

² Mac cannot rationally withhold fellowship from them.

³ This chart number may be either chart 194 C or 294 C.

Denying the Antecedent

In logic a valid (properly constructed) conditional syllogism has the following basic structure: If p then q, p is true, therefore q is true. The letter “p” represents the antecedent, the letter “q” represents the consequent. One cannot just say “if so and so, then such and such” and have a sound argument. There must be a proper relationship between the antecedent and the consequent for the argument to be sound. The following conditional syllogism illustrates a proper relationship:

If John is a citizen of Iowa, then John is a citizen of the USA.

John is a citizen of Iowa.

John is a citizen of the USA.

This sound syllogism illustrates two basic points: (1) the antecedent must be a sufficient condition for the consequent to be true (the antecedent cannot be true without the consequent being true) and (2) the consequent must be a necessary condition for the antecedent to be true (the consequent must be true in order for the antecedent to be true).

The following argument contains the fallacy of “denying the antecedent”:

If John is a citizen of Iowa, then John is a citizen of the USA.

John is not a citizen of Iowa.

John is not a citizen of the USA.

The denial of the antecedent does not prove the consequent is not true. For example, John might be a citizen of Maine or some other state or territory. Mac committed this logical fallacy in his ninth argument (Chart F-9, page 55).

1. If the Holy Spirit indwells a person through the word, then either (1) a person is saved prior to baptism or (2) the Holy Spirit can indwell the heart of an alien sinner.
2. It is false that the Holy Spirit indwells a person through the word.
3. Therefore, it is false that either (1) a person is saved prior to baptism or (2) that the Holy Spirit can indwell the heart of an alien sinner.

He committed this fallacy again, on page 58, when he said: “If brother Fox has a way where he can support his contention that a man in sin can receive the word of God and its having its effect, and he comes to faith and he comes to repentance, and the Holy Spirit is working on him through the word, but you cannot call that an indwelling, I ask him to bring forth that material. It has not been done in all of these years.” Mac’s argument is:

First Premise: If Marion can prove that a man in sin can receive the word of God and it is not an indwelling, then he has established his case.

Second Premise: Marion has not proven that a man in sin can receive the word of God and it is not an indwelling.

Conclusion: He has not established his case.

Mac continued to commit this fallacy. On page 69 he stated: “all those who receive the word have the word dwelling in them. Well, I have not heard anything from brother Marion tonight that makes me disbelieve that.” His argument is:

First Premise: If Marion can disprove the major premise: “All those who receive the word have the word dwelling in them,” then the major premise is false.

Second Premise: Marion cannot disprove the major premise: “All those who receive the word have the word dwelling in them.”

Conclusion: The major premise is not false.

It was Mac’s duty to establish his major premise, not my duty to disprove it. All I had to say was “I do not believe your major premise is true” and he was duty bound to prove it was true.

Mac continued this fallacious reasoning: “But, there is not a passage from Genesis to Revelation that denies the possibility of God operating out here in the world providentially to get people who want the truth with the truth, to the truth, to a missionary, to a Bible, to a radio program, or whatever. And, he knows he cannot deny that.” (pages 70-71) Mac’s argument is:

First Premise: If there is a passage from Genesis to Revelation ... , then God works in conviction/sanctification only through the agency of the word of God.

Second Premise: There is no passage from Genesis to Revelation ...

Conclusion: God does not work in conviction/sanctification only through the agency of the word of God.

I pointed out that Mac was guilty of this fallacy in his argument on Acts 6. Mac stated: “And, as a matter of fact, you know from Acts 1 to Acts 6, nobody performs miracles. One of the problems (as far as this view of Acts 2:38) is this fact. Nobody is performing miracles except the apostles, which leaves you with the impression that after these people were baptized, the apostles did not lay hands on them-not yet ... For the first time in the book of Acts, somebody that is not an apostle performs a miracle!” (pages 295-296) I stated: “In Acts 6:5-6 his whole system begs the question on this passage.” (page 316) Mac replied: “He says, ‘Mac begs the question in Acts 6:5,6.’ I tell you it is passing strange to me that nobody performed a miracle except an apostle up to chapter 6.” (page 326) I replied: “Here is what he said: If the New Testament says that other than the apostles worked miracles, then other than the apostles worked miracles ... he says the New Testament did not say that other than the apostles worked miracles ... Then, he drew the conclusion, other than the apostles did not work miracles. Mac, that is called the fallacy of denying the antecedent.” (page 331)

Mac’s Misrepresentations

In our debate, Mac misrepresented what I teach in my book; (1) he claimed that I teach that Galatians 4:6 is miraculous [pages 170-ff.], (2) he claimed that I teach that the spirit of Romans 8:26-27 is a disposition [pages 90, 140, and 235], and (3) he claimed that I teach that the seal of the Spirit is the Word of God [page 100]. Mac was obviously not a careful reader of my book. If Mac had carefully read my book (Fox, page 297) he would not have been guilty of committing the fallacy of denying the antecedent in his interpretation of Acts 6:5-6.

The Deaver-Lockwood Debate

In the Deaver-Lockwood debate, Mac misrepresented what I believe, when he stated: “Marion Fox understood that in our 94 debate. He knew God could do something supernaturally that was non-miraculous. So do I.” I, Marion Fox, believe that all supernatural things are miraculous.

Mac’s main argument in the Deaver-Lockwood debate is set forth in the following hypothetical syllogism:

First Premise: If the Holy Spirit dwells personally, then the Holy Spirit influences by a direct operation.

Second Premise: The Holy Spirit dwells personally.

Conclusion: The Holy Spirit influences by a direct operation.

Mac interprets any denial of the direct operation (his consequent) to be a denial of his antecedent. He is correct that a denial of his consequent is a denial of his antecedent. He then interprets the unwillingness of many to fellowship one who teaches a direct operation to be an

unwillingness to fellowship those who teach that the Holy Spirit dwells personally. Mac is assuming that a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit is sufficient to prove a direct operation. Many who teach the personal indwelling deny this. Mac's problem is that he has continued to reason improperly. He assumed that Bill Lockwood needed to disprove his antecedent in order to disprove his consequent. (He continued the same error in reasoning which he committed in our debate. Terry Varner also committed this same error [Varner, pages 5-7].) If one claims that a personal indwelling is necessary for a direct operation this makes the argument to be:

First Premise: If the Holy Spirit influences by a direct operation, then the Holy Spirit dwells personally.

Second Premise: The Holy Spirit influences by a direct operation (Mac's assertion).

Conclusion: The Holy Spirit dwells personally (Mac's conclusion).

In the Deaver-Lockwood debate, Mac Deaver was demanding that Bill Lockwood deny his antecedent. This is the same fallacy that Mac committed in our debate. Mac has repeatedly used unsound reasoning in his debates. There are several other instances where Mac committed the fallacy of "denying the antecedent," in both the Deaver-Fox and Deaver-Lockwood debates, that are not noted in this brief article. It is amazing that one who has been touted as being an expert in logic would make such simple mistakes in reasoning.

References

Deaver, Mac; Fox, Marion. (1995). *The Deaver-Fox Debate*. Spring, TX: Bible Resource Pub.

Fox, Marion R. (1991). *The Work of the Holy Spirit, Vol. 1*. Oklahoma City, OK: Five F Pub. Co.

Varner, Terry. *Biblical Notes Quarterly*. Vol. 2 # 1, January-March 1998, pages 5-7.

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