SMUGNESS
Donald R. Fox

A personal encounter can hold a lot of memories, good and bad, and they become life-long lessons. It has been over 40 years ago, but I still remember a single occurrence that illustrated a smug attitude. Several of us men were passing out “flyers” in the neighborhood inviting people to our gospel meeting. This is usually a simple and congenial task, especially when we meet a neighbor and have an agreeable brief conversation with someone we never met before. As I was ready to leave a flyer, a gentleman approached me from his driveway. He took the flyer, looked at me in an unsociable manner and said, “You folks do not believe in the Holy Ghost. You never had the Holy Ghost talk to you, right?” I do not remember exactly how I responded, but I know I returned with a friendly comment and asked if he wanted a home Bible study to discuss such an issue. His attitude was being completely self-pleasing as he rejected my invitation to a Bible study.

His manner of smugness toward me was very apparent. I departed not being upset by him but with sadness because of his self-satisfying disposition. His prejudice toward the faith I have and where I worshiped was very apparent. The word smugness is defined in part as, “Exhibiting or feeling great or offensive satisfaction with oneself or with one’s situation; self-righteously complacent. A further definition is “An often unjustified feeling of being pleased with oneself or with one’s situation or achievements the sense of smugness that can come with too many easy victories.”

If I had a chance to discuss his question concerning the Holy Spirit talking and guiding him or any other person, I would have asked, “Why are there so many contradictions in the religious world by folks who claim to be Holy Spirit guided?” Why cling to the abundance of man made creeds that also contradict each other? Common sense should kick in at all the doctrinal disagreements. The following few scriptures should help us in our study:

“We ought to obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29 KJV)
“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1 KJV)
“Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollo for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other.” (I Corinthians 4:6 ASV)
“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”(Galatians 1:6-9 KJV)

End Note: An essay is defined in part as “A short literary composition on a single subject, usually presenting from the personal view to the author.” An older dictionary stated an essay was “without need for subject completeness.” As a foxy fellow, I like this further definition. Pun intended! I do not apologize for a constant use of the same scriptures and similar subjects. The misuse of scriptures by some and the compelling need to exalt man-made creeds for the individual’s belief system is very worrisome for me. I know that many folks are honestly sincere in their beliefs. I further recognize many
believe they are following the truth of God Almighty. With this understanding, I try to use scriptures that describe the contradictions of what God says and what man teaches. I always pray that my readers will not think of me as a "smart aleck." I am just a very common man writing simple essays.

NOTE: For further study on similar subject see “CREEDS OF CHRISTENDOM”, “CHRISTIANITY AND EXALTING MAN” and “EXALTATION OF MEN”