



BEACON

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4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

The Bible and its Critics

N. B. Hardeman

The Bible is either the Word of God or the work of man. If the latter, it must be reduced to a common level and put on equal terms with books produced by human minds. More than that, it must sink to a place below the level of man-made books because, from beginning to end, it claims to be the Word of God given by inspiration. It is the only book known to the world that makes such a claim, and that has thus far withstood the attacks of all classes of opposition. Books and men are judged by their fruits. The Bible has done nothing but good wherever its influence has been exerted.

The Influence Exerted

It values life, liberty, and property as things to be protected and enjoyed. It opposes avarice, greed, and oppression in all forms. It teaches honor and fidelity in every relation of life. There is not a precept or a line in it that countenances vice and crime, but everywhere and always it sustains the laws and calls for honorable conduct. It commands children to honor and obey their parents; it sanctions marriage and protects the home. It cares for the poor in distress; it honors womanhood and glorifies a good wife and mother. Within the lids of the Bible are found light and instruction for men in their single capacities and likewise for governments in their collective undertakings. A general acceptance of the Word of God would usher in a state of personal and social happiness, and strength such as the world

has never known. Murder, arson, rape, robbery, perjury, and every other mortal sin would vanish from the earth if its teachings were followed. It is indeed a monument of truth and wisdom.

It is strange that a book whose influence upon all classes and conditions of men has been good and only good throughout the passing centuries should encounter those who have put forth every effort to destroy its influence and to banish it from the face of the earth. This hatred may be because the Bible does not give a glowing picture of the human family and does not suggest that man came into his present condemned estate through no fault of his own, but rather the reverse. It declares that men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. It, furthermore, holds men accountable for every act done in this body, whether good or bad, and pictures a judgment when all secrets will be revealed and the final rendition of our eternal state delivered.

The Enemies Classed

The enemies of the Bible are numerous. First: the Agnostic—the one who says he does not know whether there is a God. It is rather hard to exercise patience toward a full-grown man who has never been able to form an opinion on a matter of this kind. Those who can reach definite conclusions on other matters seem wholly unable to reach a decision on this subject despite overwhelming evidence. They can dig into the old mounds supposedly built by Indians, there

find a relic, and from it estimate the civilization of centuries gone by, and yet they are totally blind to all the handiwork of a Creator. Just how anyone can find pleasure in taking from a human heart a living faith and a hope founded upon it, and in its place putting a cold and cheerless doctrine of "I do not know," is more than I can understand.

Second: the Atheist, who denies the existence of God and leaves all things as if they were the result of chance. He lives a negative life, denying all evidence that points to the existence of a supreme being. He goes out into a starless night without God and without hope of a life beyond the grave. But this class does little harm because sober-minded men give it but little attention.

Third: The Higher Destructive Critic, who seeks to remove the light of eternal Truth a little at a time until finally the world is left in total darkness. They are ever looking for some evidence or apparent contradiction that will rob the world of its faith and hope. These men are usually found in our universities and sometimes in our professed religious colleges. They deny the Sonship of Christ, and they really believe that He was a bastard. They set aside all the miraculous and whatsoever does not harmonize with their process of reasoning.

The Fundamentals Denied

This kind of a Higher Critic is a close ally of the Evolutionist, which is today, possibly, the greatest menace to the church of our Lord. While many of them claim to have some regard for the Bible and are not brazen enough to deny it in

full, they do not hesitate to reject the very foundation of all our hallowed hopes and holiest desires. Those who teach in our schools supported by taxes imposed upon Christian parents will claim to believe the Bible, but they deny first: The inspiration of God's Book; second: The creation of men in the moral likeness of God; third: That man sinned and was lost; fourth: That Jesus was born of a virgin; fifth: That His blood atoned for sin; sixth: That He was raised from the dead; seventh: That He will come again and raise all the dead; eighth: That there will be a general judgment when the faithful will be rewarded and the wicked punished. This type of man would love to destroy the idea of appearing at the judgment seat of Christ.

The Bible, with these fundamentals rejected, is unworthy of serious consideration and offers no hope for a lost, ruined, and recreant race. Let men say that the Bible is not true, if they will; that it is not inspired of God; that scholarship has proved it to be only a human, faulty, product made up of fable, legend, and untrustworthy history; nevertheless, the Bible still stands as it will ever stand, the one great Book of God for all time, the book that is its own best defense, that can prove to any honest soul its own inspiration, that will not cease to speak for God, that cannot be taken away, that can ever protect the weak, direct the strong, bring joy and sunshine to the sorrowing, true happiness to the living, peace to the dying, and light up the grave with the rainbow of hope.

Deceased

"Did God foreordain that Adam and Eve should sin? If so, why did He tell them not to sin? Did God have a secret will that Adam and Eve should sin and a revealed will that he should not sin? God told Adam plainly that he should not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If God had foreordained that Adam and Eve should sin, then Adam sinned that God's eternal purpose should be carried out. Why did God tell Adam not to sin if He intended that he should? God gave Adam and Eve the choice to obey and live or to disobey and die. If God intended that Adam and Eve should sin, why was He grieved because he did sin?"

E. M. Borden, Deceased

The Great Commission (Part 1)

Doug Post

Before His ascension (Luke 24:36-52; Acts 1:1-11), Jesus gave His apostles the Great Commission.

Matthew's account:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age*" (Mat. 28:19-20).

Luke's account:

Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47).

Mark's account:

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with

new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen (Mark 16:15-20).

John's account:

So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained" (John 20:21-23).

Those who would follow Christ were to be instructed to observe all that the Lord commanded. But how critical was this? Could they deviate from these instructions if they deemed it necessary due to changes in opinions, cultural norms, or preferred religious practices? No. The basis for the commission was this: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mat. 28:18). Because Jesus has "**all authority**," His followers must take care to do His will in **all** things. No one has the authority to alter, amend, or annul any of His instructions.

When it comes to our service to God, we need to look to what He has authorized in His Word. Rather than modeling our efforts after the world, or even after other religious groups, we are to strive. Faithfully, to follow the pattern found in His Word.

Jesus has all authority. Everything we do must be done in His name. If we want to be His disciples, let us follow Him, not our opinions or the ideas of anyone else.

Irving, TX

The Rock and the Sand

On what are you building, my brother,
Your hopes of an eternal home?
Is it loose, shifting sand, or the firm, solid
rock,
You are trusting for ages to come?
Hearing and doing, we build on the rock;
Hearing alone, we build on the sand.
Both will be tried by the storm and the
flood;
Only the Rock the trial will stand.

Author Unknown

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Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Linda Parks

Pete Maldonado

Please Remember

July 19

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

July 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

Weekly Services

Sunday

Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley
Michael Hatcher

Minister: Bill Busch
Tim Cozad