

Defender

“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Vol. LV

June 2026

Number 6

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Prefatory Hints: To the Other Epistles

Alexander Campbell

Titus

Titus being left by Paul in Crete, for the same purpose that Timothy was left in Ephesus, we might naturally expect, that the design of this epistle is similar to that of those to Timothy; and that the contents of this letter would much resemble those of the former two. The character of Titus and that of the Cretans, with the circumstances of both, would, on this principle, constitute the whole or chief difference between them; and such, in fact, is the letter to Titus. When we take into view the distinguishing features of the character of Timothy and Titus, the Ephesians and Cretans, we have in one view the whole difference between the letters. It is remarkable, from all these epistles, how busy the Judaizers were in preaching the law of Moses, and how similar their course of procedure; and how constant this Apostle was in opposing them, and giving directions to others, in what manner to oppose them most successfully.

Philemon

The letter to Philemon was evidently designed as a letter of introduction for Onesimus to his

master, and as a means of reconciliation between them. It is a beautiful specimen of the familiarity which exists among Christians, without in the least impairing the relations which exist in civil society.

Hebrews

This epistle, next to that to the Romans, has been considered difficult and abstruse. It is one unbroken chain of reasoning, from the first sentence to the close of the eleventh chapter.

To find out the special design of this invaluable letter, it is necessary to note down a few facts gathered from itself.

1. It was addressed to believing Jews or Hebrews, irrespective of any particular place.

2. At the time it was written, these Jews were the objects of *persecution* from the infidel, or unbelieving Jews. This is evident from several hints in the letter, particularly chapter 12:4, where the Apostle, after having, in a previous part of this epistle, reminded them of their former persecutions, tells them they had not yet resisted unto blood, striving against the sin which easily beset them. In the

same chapter he exhorts them to patience under chastisements, and to follow Christ with cheerfulness and resignation.

3. The intention of these persecutions, on the part of those who inflicted them, was to cause the believing Jews to renounce the Christian profession, and return to Judaism. The Jews themselves being the persecutors, they could have no other object in view.

From these facts, the design of this latter is apparent. It was *designed* to prevent that apostasy from the Christian faith which those persecutors had in view. The infidel Jews designed by their persecutions to cause their brethren, who believed in Jesus, to renounce their profession, or confession of him as the Christ: and Paul designed, by this letter, to disappoint them. To understand this letter, it is necessary that this be always kept in mind. No person can be said fully to understand *what* is written in it, unless he knows *why* it is written.

To be more particular in illustrating this point, it must be noticed, that the infidel Jews attacked their brethren who confessed Jesus,

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Notes From The Editor

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Worship

Another part of God's nature that makes God worthy of our worship is love. The apostle of love, John, stated, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:8). Then a few verses later, he again states, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (4:16). Let us notice six different ways this love is expressed.

First, God's love is **universal**. In speaking to Nicodemus (John 3), Jesus reveals to him many great principles. He reveals to him how to enter into the kingdom (the church) of God and the Spirit's work in that process. He informs him of His incarnation, His death, and exaltation to give life to the world. Jesus lets Nicodemus know of His deity; He is God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16), He was God Who was made flesh (John 1:1, 14). Jesus then makes the famous and most quoted statement, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (3:16). When Jesus says God loved the world, He meant the entire mass of humanity. It cannot be limited to only the Jews of Jesus' day, or Americans of our day. It

transcends nationalistic, social, and racial boundaries. Ultimately, Calvin's view is that God only loves those whom He determined to save before the world began. Those who God predestined to damnation, God did not love them. Just as there is a limited atonement, there is also a limited love. They affirm God's love is without distinction but not without exception. However, there are no exceptions to the love of God. It is truly a universal love.

Second, God's love is **altruistic**. *Altruism* is defined by Webster as "unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others." Wikipedia goes a little bit farther by saying, "the unselfish concern for the welfare of others, characterized by voluntary, selfless actions performed without the expectation of personal reward." *Altruism* is putting another's interest above one's own interest. It is a love that is not influenced by others and their attitudes or actions. When John states, "God is love" (1 John 4:8), he was making a comment about the nature of God. God loves because His nature is to love and His love is not influenced by anything man can do. God is desirous of giving love, He must give love (because of His nature), He does not give it on the basis of someone *deserving* it (doing something for it), and He does not give love to receive something in return.

The apostle Paul shows us the altruistic nature of God's love when he writes, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). For *commendeth* the NKJV has "demonstrates" and the ESV has "shows." Among BDAG's definitions of this word is

"to provide evidence of a personal characteristic or claim through action." The evidence of God's love (His personal characteristic) is that even though we were sinners (thus enemies of God; 5:10), Christ died for us.

A third expression of God's love is that of **sacrificial giving**. Returning to the golden text of the Bible: John not only shows the universal nature of God's love, he shows the sacrificial giving of His love. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Paul stated God demonstrated His love for sinful man in giving His Son: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

John, after telling us "God is love" states, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10). John again uses the term "only begotten" in relation to His Son showing the cost of God's great love. God's love was *manifest*, meaning it was revealed, or to show openly. We would never

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. **Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.** All contributions shall be used for operational expenses. All correspondence permissible for publication.

Michael Hatcher, Editor

know the depth of God's love without Him sending His only begotten into the world to die for the sins of sinful mankind. No greater act could show His sacrificial giving.

Jesus stated, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Few parents/fathers could imagine giving their son to die for a friend. Yet, the Heavenly Father gave His only begotten Son to die for sinful mankind. His love was certainly a sacrificial love.

God's love is also a **personal** love. There is no doubt that God loves the entire world as a whole. Yet, He also loves each individual person in the world. God takes a personal interest in me. Paul would speak of Christ in this personal way regarding both His love and giving Himself: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Even though speaking specifically concerning the Son, it would equally apply to the Divine Three.

God takes a personal interest in each one of us. In speaking of a good man, David expresses God's personal interest by saying, "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD up-

holdeth *him with his hand*" (Psa. 37:24). Peter experienced that personal aspect when Jesus told him that Satan desired to have all the apostles (notice it is plural *you*) to shift them as wheat. Jesus then said specifically to Peter, "I have prayed for thee [singular—Peter], that thy [Peter's] faith fail not: and when thou [Peter] art converted, strengthen thy [singular] brethren" (Luke 22:31-32). There are numerous times through the Scriptures where we observe God's love having a personal aspect to it.

Another aspect of God's love is that it is a **special** love. While God loves the entire world, and He has a personal love, we also need to realize that He has a special love. He has a special love for His children as opposed to those who are not His children. Consider what John writes, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (1 John 3:1). Even as any parent has a special love for their children over other parent's children, so God has a special love for His children, those who are "called the sons of God." Those who are sons of God sustain a special relationship with Him, a spiritual relationship or fellowship where He "blessed us with all spiri-

tual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). The world does not sustain that relationship with Him, and they do not enjoy those spiritual blessings He gives to His children.

The last quality of God's love is that it is **unending**. Man's love might come and go, but God's love remains constant. Jeremiah says of Israel, "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3). Hosea's words are closely tied to this when he writes, "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them" (Hos. 11:4). The figure is that of a father leading his son by a cord to lead them in the right way. Yahweh leads us by His continued love.

David, after speaking of man's wickedness, contrasts God's goodness. He then states, "O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart" (Psa. 36:10). God's love continues no matter what man might do. The wonderful love of God that continues throughout the ages makes God one who is worthy of our worship.

MH

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in two ways—first by argument, and then by force. If they failed to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor, or that the Jews' religion was to be of perpetual standing, their next effort was to inflict upon them corporal

sufferings, for what was called *obstinacy*. To understand every branch of the argument of this epistle, it is therefore necessary that we should know what the infidel Jews had to say, by way of argument, in support of their views of the excellency and perpetuity of

the Jews' religion; for Paul meets their objections or arguments in this letter.

His method was first to demonstrate, that their arguments were inconclusive and false: and, having done this, to show that the terrors with which they clothed them-

selves, to induce to apostasy, were not worthy to be compared to the terrors of falling into the hands of the living God, should any be induced, through fear, to renounce the Christian profession.

He thus opposes argument to argument, and terror to terror; and his arguments were just as far superior to theirs in weight and importance, as the terrors of the living God are to the terrors of men.

This is the grand key to the whole epistle. When, then, we know what arguments the Jews had to offer, in support of their darling hypothesis, we understand *why* the Apostle says what he says, and we understand the true import of *what* he advances.

We shall, therefore, in the first place, glance at the topics from which the infidel Jews argued:

1. That their constitution and laws were superior to the Christian, was argued from the fact, that both were introduced by the ministry of heavenly messengers.

2. That their laws were faithfully represented by the writings of Moses, was argued from the fact, that Moses was a lawgiver of the utmost dignity and fidelity.

3. That their religious rites and instituted worship were most sacred, sublime, and unalterable, was argued from the divine call and consecration of Aaron to be high Priest.

4. That the covenant at Sinai embraced the Jews only as God's people; that it was established on the most excellent promises, and was to be everlasting.

5. That their temple and sacrifices were of divine appointment, and superior to anything of the kind ever exhibited on earth.

These items embrace all the capital points, which were advanced in the controversy, between the believing and unbelieving Jews. Now the Apostle Paul, well versed in all these questions, fully meets them, one by one, and carries his cause triumphantly in every instance. Let us now, for example, take the first and observe how he manages it.

He admits the fact, that the constitution and laws of Israel were introduced by heavenly messengers; but at the same time declares, that the God who, in times past, spoke to the fathers of the nation, had, in these last days spoken by a *Son*, of incomparable dignity—as far superior to the heavenly messengers, as his name was superior to theirs. He, then, from their own Prophets, shows that this *name*, son, had never been conferred on any creature, however exalted; but that the *name* messenger had been bestowed on the winds and lightnings, David being witness. They were stranded here. They could give no instance of such an humble appropriation of the term *son*, as he had given of the word *angel* or *messenger*. Again, he argues from the dignity of place bestowed on the Son, his incomparable superiority: “To which of the heavenly messengers did he say, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool?” They were silenced again. Nay, with all their dignity of *name* and *office*, they were the ministers or servants of this very Jesus, sent by him on errands to the humblest of his followers. Thus he carries the first point. After having shown the superior dignity of the Christian institution, from the very fact on which the Jews gloried so much; (and especially from this consideration, that, dignified as the

heavenly messengers were, God had not employed or intrusted them in introducing the Christian institution, but had shown in the contrast, that the Christian institution was just as far superior to the Jewish, as the dignity of God's own Son was to the dignity of God's mere servants, though of heavenly origin and standing)—the Apostle next delivers to the Hebrews, that believed him, certain exhortations, arising from his own conclusions in the first branch of the argument. Thus we see *why* the Apostle introduced those topics, and we understand *what* he said upon them.

In the same masterly manner he takes up Moses, Aaron, the tabernacle, covenant, sacrifices, and even their altars; and not only rebuts all conclusions, but gains many proofs of the superior and incomparable luster and dignity of the Christian system.

Moses, as a servant in another's house; Christ, as a son over his own house; Aaron, a high priest, made without an oath, by a law which expressed weaknesses and defects, and limited the times of service; Jesus, of the order of Melehisedee, made by an oath, since the Levitical order was introduced, and consecrated a priest for ever, by virtue of the power of an endless life; the tabernacle but a shadow, and the sacrifices but a type of one real sacrifice, which puts an end to all sin offerings; a covenant established on better promises, and of unalterable provisions, and an altar to which those who officiated according to the law, had not access; and a rest in heaven superior to that in Canaan, etc., etc. These are the points on which the Apostle argues, and by which he silences the infidel Jews, and from which he en-

courages, cheers, and enlivens the persecuted Christians.

On the *terrors* of apostasy, he is equally triumphant. Confiscation, or loss of goods, imprisonment, bodily tortures, and a cruel death, were the strong arguments of the infidel Jews, when their sophistry failed. But Paul is before them here, as much as he is in argument. He lays before the Jews the most tremendous instance of apostasy which their history afforded—the people who fell in the wilderness, to whom God swore that they should not enter in, because of unbelief. God had caused glad tidings of a rest in Canaan to be proclaimed to this people. They commenced their pilgrimage thitherward. They were immersed into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; they eat the manna, and drank the water which prefigured Christ, and yet cast away their confidence in God's promise; and, although he had done so much for them, in his wrath he swore that into Canaan they should not go.

Again, he shows, that it is impossible to renew again by a reformation, those who apostatized from the Christian profession, by any arguments which the religion had to offer: for if, after having heard them all, and partaken of

them, they should, from cowardice, deny and renounce their confidence in the promises of God, when thus *fallen away*, there was no new topic which could be presented to take hold of their minds—that if they willfully apostatized, after they had received the knowledge of the Christian faith, there was no sacrifice by which to expiate their guilt. In vain the Jewish sin offerings—in vain all oblations, if the sacrifice of Christ were renounced. The sin of apostasy was a sin, inducements to which were presented both to the hopes and fears of Christians. The virtue of constancy in the Christian profession of holding fast the begun confidence, unshaken to the end of life, was presented to the Hebrews with stronger, inexpressibly stronger appeals than the Judaizers had to offer. That God had no pleasure in them that apostatized: that it was a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; that the God of Christians was a consuming fire; that vengeance belongs to him—were the awful terrors by which the Apostle guarded these Christians against this sin.

He very pertinently concludes his argument, by laying before them a cloud of witnesses to the virtue of perseverance. He shows

the reputation which the ancient worthies obtained, by holding fast their persuasion and confidence in the promises of God; and reminds the Hebrews of their sorrows and sufferings, of their conflicts and triumphs in this cause; and concludes the whole argument with an appeal to the author and perfecter of the Christian faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and who thus ascended to a throne. Lest they should faint in their minds amidst persecutions, he reminds them of him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself; and tells them, that although they had suffered much, they had not suffered so much as others, who had resisted to blood rather than cast away their confidence, which had great recompense of reward. Such is the design and scope of the letter to the Hebrews. Neither it, nor the letter to the Romans, was written as a treatise of divinity, or as an abstract of the Christian system. They are both practical letters of instruction, and contain the most sublime views of God's benevolence toward sinners, and exhibit the strongest inducements to a willing and unreserved obedience.

Deceased

The Man of the House

J. Noel Merideth

David told his son Solomon, be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man" (1 Kin. 2:1-2). Paul says that when he was a child he spoke, felt, and thought as a child; but, when he became a man, he put

away childish things. A man should mature in mind as well as body and so Scripture declares "in mind be men" (1 Cor. 14:20). The true man has God as his Father, Christ as his Saviour, the saints as his brethren,

and all that need him, his friends. He is a man of integrity, courage, knowledge, self-control, patience, piety, and love. A good man is strong enough to be kind. "That which maketh a man to be desired

a blessing to his life, he has nothing to conceal. He is young enough to laugh with little children, sympathetic so as to be considerate of old age, and when he lies down at night, he does so with a clear conscience.

When God created the heavens and the earth and then man, there was still one thing that was lacking. God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). So, the woman was made to be his suitable mate. Woman is the companion of man to understand him, to multiply his joys, divide his sorrows, take away loneliness, and add to his effectiveness.

The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23; 1 Cor. 11:3). Paul compares the relationship between the husband and wife to the relationship between Christ and His church (Eph. 5:25-32). The husband is to love his wife "even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it." This is the tap root of God's order for the husband in the family. This love is **sacrificial** in its nature. The husband must be willing to sacrifice for his wife even as Christ loved the church and sacrificed for it.

The husband's love must be a **purifying** love. Christ cleansed and consecrated the church by the washing of water, on the day when each member was baptized into Christ. Any love which drags a person down into sin is a false love. Any love which coarsens instead of refining the character is not true love. The husband who loves his wife does not weaken her moral fiber nor corrupt her spirituality. Real love is the great cleanser and purifier of all life and the wife is a better person from hav-

ing married and lived with a good husband.

The husband is to love his wife with a **caring** love. Husbands are to love their own wives as their own bodies. "He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church" (5:28). Peter writes, "Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with *your wives* according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7). There is something wrong when a man regards his wife merely as a person to cook his meals and wash his clothes and clean his house and rear his children. He should really care for his wife and show her he loves her. He cares for the feminine needs of his wife, as he cares for his own body's needs. An old Norwegian farmer had been married twenty-five years. One morning after he had done his chores he came in to discover that his wife had not prepared breakfast. When he went to question his wife about the matter, he found her crying. "What is the matter with you?" "Oh, I just got to thinking, Hans, you never tell me that you love me!" He responded, "Look woman, I married you twenty-five years ago, and I told you then that I loved you, and if anything changes I will let you know!" That may have been enough for him, but it was not enough for his wife—she needed to be told that he loved her.

The love of the husband for his wife is to be a **uniting** love. When a man marries a wife he leaves father and mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh. He is as

united to her as the members of the church are united to Christ. It is bad for a husband to remain tied to his mother's apron strings, being dominated by her every whim. It is equally bad for a young wife to continue to lean upon her mother, to the point that her husband feels that he is an outsider. Many homes are troubled by in-law problems. In such a climate neither the wife nor the husband can be happy and the home cannot really be the kind that God describes in His Word, with the husband the head of the family and the wife his willing and cheerful companion. God's words are for the good of the family: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?" (Mat. 19:5).

Every able bodied man will **provide** for his family and see that they have the basic necessities of life. "But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:9). Many families today have money problems. Though our standard of living is higher than that of any other generation and any other nation; still, there are financial pressures and these can have a devastating effect upon a family. A spendthrift husband or an uneconomical wife can have a hurtful effect upon the happiness and success of a family. The whining, never-satisfied wife has a discouraging effect upon her husband. Such women as "Ever Demanding Dora" and "Mrs. I. Will Takeover" have hurt many a home. Both husband and wife need to learn that "godliness with contentment is great gain" (6:6-8) and both need to learn to live within their income. Someone

ness with contentment is great gain” (6:6-8) and both need to learn to live within their income. Someone has said that when your outgo exceeds your income then your upkeep is your downfall.

The husband is to provide religious instruction and spiritual leadership for his family. Abraham was a great father in the days of the Old Testament. The Lord said:

For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him (Gen. 18:19).

Children are “a heritage of Jehovah” (Psa. 127:3) and fathers are to “nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). The successful father will discipline

his children in love. “He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes” (Pro. 13:24). Eli was a miserable failure as a father; he failed to discipline his children. God said, “I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not” (1 Sam. 3:13). Some fathers take up for their children in spite of valid warnings from neighbors, teachers, policemen, and preachers. When the child does get into serious trouble these fathers often apologize for themselves saying, “I never could do anything with him.” Such fathers might as well prepare for a life of grief; they will be apt to have plenty of it.

When a father is primarily concerned about making money and when a wife is primarily concerned

that her children have social standing, it is inevitable that deep and serious problems will come. Sometimes the problems do not show up until later but they will come. Some parents have come into their later years to realize the fact that their children are no longer interested in the Lord’s church and are on the road to eternal destruction. In our worldly and materialistic society, we must place the spiritual above the material in our homes. “But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33). “If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth” (Col. 3:1-2).

Deceased

Cold Feet

Mike Demory

“Truly God is good to Israel, *Even* to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; My steps had well nigh slipped” (Psa. 73:1-2). Years ago my six-year-old son decided to run away because I would not allow him to get something he wanted. As I was sitting on the couch watching the news, he came down the hallway, suitcase in hand. I asked him where he was going, and his response was, “I’m running away.” I told him to be careful and that I loved him. He slowly made his way to the backdoor and ventured into the cold, wearing only a pair of blue jeans and a tee-shirt (no socks or shoes).

I watched him carefully, even though I knew he would not go far.

He stepped off the porch and into the snow but quickly got back on the porch. He stood there for several minutes, undoubtedly thinking of what he would do next. By this time, he was shivering but still too upset to come inside and admit he was wrong. I wanted desperately to go out and get him, but I knew that the only way he would learn that he cannot always get what he wants was by allowing him a few moments to come to his senses. He finally did! He made his way to his room, and after allowing him some time to think about what he had done, I went in and covered him up in a warm blanket. I told him that I loved him and was glad that he decided to

stay. When asked why he did not go, he responded, “I got cold feet!”

I must admit, my heart was broken, and my stomach turned as I watched my son exit through the back door. I thought about the parable of the prodigal son and how his father must have felt (Luke 15:11). I am thankful that my son got “cold feet” and came back before venturing out into the “far country.” I pray that he will always have “cold feet” when doing those things he will later regret! God loves His children and wants what is best for them, but He is not going to force them into unwilling servitude. I pray that we get “cold feet” before wandering off into a cold, sin-stained world!

Mexico, MO

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