

# Defender

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

*Vol. LII*

*2023*



January

April

July

October

February

May

August

November

March

June

September

# Defender

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Vol. LII

January 2023

Number 1

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## Recommended Reading: *When the Prodigal Is Your Prodigal* Gary W. Summers

This must have been one of the most difficult of books to write, and it is painful to read, but it blends together the elements of truth and compassion in a Scriptural manner. What would it be like to have a once-faithful child turn away from the truth, from Jesus, and the parents who have loved him his entire life? The reader gets to find out vicariously by seeing firsthand descriptions of what happened to Steve and Kim Higginbotham, this book's authors.

The Preface discusses the disclosure of the problem for the first time in public in September, 2016. That admission led eventually to the publishing of this book in 2020. That it needed to be written could be seen that very night by the responses of the audience. Steve writes, "Dozens of people told me that my pain was their pain, and my heartache was their heartache" (7). Most of them had likewise never revealed what had happened to them in public, which is a great burden to bear.

Their son's problem, which

would be difficult for Christian parents to admit, began to surface five years earlier when evidence came to light that he was struggling with what is now called SSA (Same Sex Attraction). All Christian parents would undoubtedly be absolutely mortified by such a possibility. Steve was devastated, and Kim writes: "Our hearts were not broken; they were shattered!" (13). At the time, their son sought help to overcome the attraction, but eventually, he quit trying.

Reading of what happened is gripping; the details are best left to be found by the reader in this book of 160 pages. As with any Christian parents in this position, the Higginbothams could not understand how such a thing had occurred. They analyzed and re-analyzed how they had parented and what mistakes they might have made, but second-guessing themselves did not provide any solutions to the situation. Included on page 15 is a sermon that describes the way sin works relentlessly on human beings.

### **Being Pushed Over the Edge**

The authors credit a "Gay Christians Network Conference" as the final nudge in the wrong direction. One thousand three hundred souls met in Portland, Oregon to twist the Scriptures in their favor (16). The speakers insisted that the Bible described several loving, homosexual relationships, included David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, and even Jesus and John. That anyone would so despicably allege that Jesus was guilty of such a sin shows how desperate some are to justify their sin. Someday these false religious teachers will find out firsthand about the wrath of the Lamb, Whom they have defiled. Like all of the rest of us, the authors stated: "We could not believe what we were hearing" (17). (The speeches are available online.)

### **Ministries and Challenges**

We have only covered the first 25 pages, which deserves to be read thoughtfully. Subheadings under the next chapter include:

*Continued on Page 5*



## Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

### Hebrews 10:25

When brother Bill Cline introduced an article in *Defender* regarding the day on which Christ died, he correctly pointed out that some material is “presented as ‘food for further thought.’” He also recognized there are matters that are “not of any ‘soul-saving significance.’” He also stated one of the problems when he wrote:

There are times that one (especially an editor) is almost fearful of suggesting anything that might be out of step with what is “traditionally believed” in the brotherhood. Almost invariably someone picks such things up as a **new cause to champion**, and through some means in various times and places, some form of division seems to be created. However, we feel that we should not allow the mishandling of knowledge by a few to discourage study and examination of God’s Word.

I also know by experience, that when presenting certain material that is not “traditionally believed” that there will invariably be someone who misrepresents what one has said to attack them. In spite of that, I would like to “suggest” a view regarding Hebrews 10:25 that is not “traditionally believed.” When we come to this verse, however, there are several views that are “traditionally believed.” The

passage reads:

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

The one common view regarding this passage is that it deals with the worship services. Some initially limit it to the services on Sunday. Others point to the idea of *assembling* and argue that it has reference to any service of the church (Sunday, Wednesday, Gospel meetings, lectureships, etc.). Sometimes, someone will ask about a person missing one of the assemblies, so then it is pointed out the idea of forsaking is complete abandonment. So, brethren waver between missing any of the services to the total abandonment of those services.

Allow me to suggest that it has nothing to do with those times we come together to worship God and study His Word. First, let me add that this has nothing to do with our God-given obligation to come together to worship God and to study the Bible. We are given that obligation in passages such as Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-20; 14:23, 26. Thus, this has nothing to do with some attempt to escape this mandate by God. The question is whether or not this specific passage teaches such. It is my conviction that one must read into the passage the idea of the times we come together. It simply is not in the context of the book or the passage. Brethren often wish it was there, but it simply is not.

Let us consider the context of the book. The writer (I believe the human author to be the apostle Paul) was writing to Jews who had been converted to Christ but were

now in danger of leaving Christ to return to the bondage of Judaism. The author presents how Christ is superior to anything and everything under the Mosaic system. He shows that Christ and the Christian system is better than the messengers of the Old Testament system in that Christ is better than the angels, He is greater than Moses, and greater than Joshua. He also proves that Christ is superior to Aaron and the high priests of the Old Testament.

One point he repeatedly makes is that under the Mosaic system there is no longer any avenue for forgiveness, thus their need to go on to perfection. The only avenue for forgiveness is by the blood of Christ and the sacrifice He made for us. We see this taught, for example, in the first part of Hebrews 6 (a passage often misunderstood). There is the encouragement to leave “the principles of the doctrine of Christ” (6:1). Those principles of the doctrine of Christ as set forth in verses 1 and 2 would be Old Testament principles and based upon the previous chapter, that Jesus was the only one qualified to be our Savior and High Priest. We are to leave these Old Testament principles and go on to perfection (New Testament Christianity). As Gary Workman wrote: “the readers are not being urged to leave the basics

*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**

for the deeper things of Christianity but rather to leave Judaism behind in order to really go on fully into Christianity as the finality or 'perfection' of God's redemptive plan" (201).

Under those Old Testament principles, it would be impossible to "renew them again unto repentance" (6:6). The reason it would be impossible to renew them is because under that Old system, there was no forgiveness under that system to which they were returning.

## Policy Statement

All correspondence written to Defender, myself (Michael Hatcher), or to the elders at Bellevue concerning anything in Defender is viewed as intended for publication unless previously agreed to otherwise. While it is not the practice of *Defender* to publish our correspondence, we reserve the right to publish such **without further permission being necessary** should the need or desire arise.

\*\*\*\*\*

Occasionally we receive requests to reprint articles from *Defender*. It is our desire to get sound material into the hands of brethren. Thus, it is our policy to allow reproduction of any articles that should appear in this publication. However, honesty should demand that you give proper credit when reprinting an article. You should give the author credit for his work and we would appreciate your including that you got the article from this paper.

The once for all sacrifice of Jesus had replaced the Jewish sacrificial system, thus when a Christian returned to that Jewish system, there was no avenue of repentance. This is "not just against falling away in general but specifically against falling back to Judaism!" (207).

The writer goes on to show that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchisedec who had a superior priesthood to that of Aaron's. Because of the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, the First Testament could not make anything complete (perfect). Only Christ's priesthood could bring in a better system and He officiates in a better tabernacle and has a better covenant. Also, the blood that sealed the New system was better blood than the First. The First was sealed by the blood of animals (which could never take away sin) while the New was sealed with the blood of the sinless sacrifice of the Son of God.

As the writer is discussing the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ, he shows the impossibility of the Old to take away sin (10:1-4) while the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice (10:5-18) and within this the full and absolute forgiveness under Christ's sacrifice (10:11-18). He then gives exhortations and warnings (10:19-37) which is where our text is located. Because of that great high priest, Christ, we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the sacrifice of His blood.

Let us notice some of the words found in the text. *Forsaking* is from a Greek word meaning "to abandon, desert, leave." It simply does not correspond to the idea of missing worship services. *Manner* is from a word meaning "habit, custom, or usual practice." *Assembling*

is from a Greek word meaning, "gathering together, assembling, meeting." It is made up of the root word meaning "to gather or bring together" and the prefix meaning "to."

The question does not center upon the meaning of the word, but to what it has reference. As stated previously, almost all hold that it has reference to our worship services. However, that is not in the context of the passage (either remote—the whole book of Hebrews, or immediate—chapter). It is something which must be read into the section. The context (both remote and immediate) is the Jewish Christians leaving New Testament Christianity and returning to Judaism with the writer saying you need to come back and hold to Christianity. Thus, the gathering together is with the system of New Testament Christianity and its lifestyle.

*The forsaking the assembling of yourself* is parallel with several other statements in this section of the book. In verse 23 ("Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)" it is the wavering of our faith. In verse 26 ("For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins") it is the abandoning the only sacrifice for sin. Then in verse 35 ("Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward") it is the casting away of their confidence. In both verse 38 and 39 ("Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the

saving of the soul”) it is the drawing back. Thus, contextually the *forsaking the assembling of yourself* is the same as the wavering of our faith, the abandoning of the only sacrifice for sin, the casting away of their confidence, and the drawing back.

The Hebrews’ writer also encourages them with the statement, *exhorting one another*. There are three specific “let us” exhortations given in this section. The first is to draw near to God: “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (10:22). The second is to hold fast the profession of our faith: “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)” (10:23). The third is to consider one another: “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (10:24). All three of these “let us” statements deal with encouraging these Jewish Christians to remain faithful and not return to Judaism. Notice especially the second of these three, to “hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.” That is an exhortation to be true to New Testament Christianity, and do not disassemble yourself from it. Another way of saying it is “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.”

Notice the parallels regarding this encouragement:

1. Draw near (10:22)
2. Hold fast the profession of our faith (10:23)
3. Provoke unto love and good works (10:24)
4. Exhorting one another (10:25)

5. Call to remembrance the former days (10:32)

6. Ye have in heaven a better and enduring substance (10:34)

7. Your confidence (10:35)

8. Ye might receive the promise (10:36)

9. Saving of the soul (10:39).

All these statements are encouraging the same thing—remain faithful to God. Just as the Hebrews’ writer gave parallel statements of encouragement, he also gave parallel statements from a negative standpoint:

1. Without wavering (10:23)

2. Not forsaking (10:25)

3. Sin willfully (10:26)

4. Trodden under foot (10:29)

5. Counted the blood an unholy thing (10:29)

6. Done despite unto the Spirit of grace (10:29)

7. Cast not away (10:35)

8. Draw back (10:38)

9. No pleasure (10:38)

10. Draw back (10:39).

The entire context of Hebrews 10:25 is not when we gather together to worship God but is an encouragement to remain faithful to New Testament Christianity and not to disassemble yourself from that by returning to that Old Testament system. Under that Old Testament system, there can be no forgiveness and no salvation. Thus, remain faithful to Christ and hold fast to Him to receive the promise, the saving of your soul.

This study would not be complete without a comment on the last phrase: “as ye see the day approaching.” What *day* is the writer contemplating. Primarily there are three ideas that are set forth.

(1) The first day of the week. However, contextually there is no support for such an idea. Only as one

reads into the passage the gathering together to worship God is it possible to consider that the first day of the week is under consideration. (2) The destruction of Jerusalem. This certainly is a real possibility as the warning not to leave New Testament Christianity for Judaism because that Old System is about to be destroyed by Titus and the Roman armies. (3) The other option generally given consideration is the last day and final Judgment. Considering all that has been said about leaving Christ to return to the Mosaic system, do not forsake Christ because of the final Judgment. There will be no sacrifice for your sins, there will only be a fiery indignation in looking for judgment, etc.

Allow me to offer one other possibility also from the context of the passage. (4) The day of entering into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus (10:19). As we see that day of our entering into Heaven drawing near having had “our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (10:22), we do not disassemble from Christianity, but we exhort one another to continued obedience. Any of these options except for the first day of the week are certainly possibilities as to the meaning of the author. It is also a possibility that the author might have had in mind all three of those possibilities.

With this understanding of “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,” does that mean we do not have to come together in worship to God? Clearly, God has mandated that we as Christians come together on the first day of the week to worship Him (Acts 20:7). In 1 Corinthians 11:18, 20;

14:23, Paul teaches we are to come together into one place (one location). It is sad that so many congregations decided they did not need to obey this obligation and decided they did not need to come together into one place and instead encouraged members to stay where they were and sign on to a broadcast on the internet. When brethren choose not to come together to worship God, they sin in

so doing. This understanding of Hebrews 10:25 gives no comfort to those who choose not to come together. It is simply a recognition of the context of the passage (many have correctly stated that context is king in interpreting God's Word).

No doubt there will be many reactions to this material. Some will immediately ignore it while some might not even read all of it. I would ask though that brethren not

misrepresent the view I have presented (as has been done in years past). Give it an honest hearing whether you end up agreeing with what has been presented here or not.

### Endnote

Workman, Gary. "Difficult Passages in Hebrews—No. 3." *Studies In Hebrews*. Ed. Dub McClish. Valid Publications. Denton, TX 1983. 201-09.

MH

*Continued from Page 1*

"Suffering Can Be a Ministry," "Kintsugi—Beauty out of Brokenness," "Between the Devil and the Deep Red Sea," and "God's Gift that Nobody Likes But Everyone Wants." The first of these includes an invaluable illustration of the value of suffering (26-27). Kintsugi involves "golden glue" repair lines (30). Why is it the Red Sea instead of the Deep Blue Sea? There is a reason. And what is the gift nobody likes? The authors hold the attention of the reader as this serious problem is analyzed.

The section on "challenges" begins with "Guilt and Misapplied Passages," and, yes, Proverbs 22:6 is discussed. "Keeping God First and Family Second" contains 30 pages. Passages relating to the withdrawal of fellowship are listed and commented upon. What are the motives for withdrawal of fellowship? And are there any exceptions? Pages 63-66 are invaluable. "Discouragement" rounds out this section.

### The Second Half

The writers include seven "Lessons We Learned," the last of which is "How to Respond to Persecution." Kim posted an article on her blog; it was titled, "Giving Your Child to the Devil."

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us (2 The. 3:6).

It is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix A (153-57). She lamented the pain involved in having to withdraw fellowship from one's own child. She did not mention what sin her son was guilty of. Nevertheless, the wrath of the homosexuality community rained down on her like fire and brimstone.

Brethren have frequently pointed out, "You have never been loved until you have been loved by a liberal." The same is true in this instance: You have never been loved until you have been the target of the tolerant

and inclusive crowd. Some called for Kim's death, prayed that she rotted in hell, cursed at her with vile profanities, blasphemed God—and, oh, yes, accused her of hate speech (160)! Really? Nothing on her blog merited this kind of vicious response. The way these assaults were handled is important to note (118).

The last section of the book concerns, "Blessings We Received," which might have been overlooked in the face of such a trial. Also included is a letter that Steve wrote to the elders and their response (145-48), which should be encouraging to all.

Situations like the one described in this book are not going to go away. Many are undergoing the same or similar situations. What is the best way to deal with these problems? This book should be of inestimable help. The reader may know others who could benefit.

Contact Higginbotham.  
Steve@gmail.com.

Winter Park, FL

# “Ye Have Heard”

Gayle Oler

In the great sermon on the mount Jesus said, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time...But I say unto you” (Mat. 5:21-22). It was there that He was showing the distinction between the new law of the Gospel of Christ, and the old law of Moses. This is a distinction that many people have never gained.

Those people had not gone to the source of their information to find out with what authority their informant had spoken. Oftentimes people make the same mistake today, but it is a wise thing to “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). Paul warns us to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 The. 5:21).

Ye have heard that it was said, **“One church is as good as another.”** But what does Jesus say about that? He said exactly the contrary is true. He said, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Mat. 15:13). Did you ever ask a person for his information when he told you that one church is as good as another, and that it didn’t make any difference which church you were in? The next time you hear a fellow make a statement like that, ask him for his source of information, and watch him get embarrassed.

Ye have heard that it was said, **“Baptism is not essential to salvation, and it has no connection with the remission of one’s sins.”** But Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say

unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5). Ananias, an inspired minister of the Gospel said, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). So while you have heard to the contrary, the Lord and His disciples states that baptism does have a connection with salvation, and that it is essential.

You have heard it said, **“The church was established with John in the wilderness, or during the personal ministry of Jesus.”** But after John was already dead and buried, Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, “upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” He gave rules and regulations for the government of the church, but Paul said in Hebrews 9:17 that these did not go into effect while Jesus lived—that there had to be a death on Christ’s part before they were effective. If the church had been established during the personal ministry of Christ, it could not have been governed by the Word of Christ.

Ye have heard it said, **“A sinner can pray for salvation and get it.”** And it is a common thing for sectarian preachers to tell sinners to pray for salvation. But the Bible says in John 9:31, “Now we know that God heareth not sinners.” And Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” But if a man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Instead of a sinner being told to pray for salvation, the Bible tells him: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). It matters not how much a sinner may pray for salvation, until he is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. In this law or rule there is no change, and beyond it there is no appeal.

Ye have heard it said, **“Men can go to heaven outside the church.”** But the Bible says in Acts 2:47, “the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

Ye have heard it said, **“God has more than one church, and more than one flock today.”** But Jesus said in John 10:16, “other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” It is not a common thing at all to hear sectarian preachers say that God today has one flock and one shepherd. But when Jesus said His people would be one flock, He did not mean two. So there is only one church in the world by divine authority.

In Ephesians 1:22-23, Paul said the church is the body of Christ. And in 1 Corinthians 12:20, he said, “But now are they many members, yet but one body.” Since this is true, certainly it is true that there can be no two acceptable churches in the world. Only one can be right.

When you hear people say anything about religion, and so much is said, remember the divine admonition: “Believe not ev-

ery spirit.” It is a wise thing to “prove the spirits, whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1). The majority of religious teachers are wrong. The fields are white unto the harvest, and the laborers are

few, but many false prophets have gone out into the world to contrast to the few laboring in the Lord’s vineyard. You had better be careful lest you follow in the wrong way. You will be lost unless

you “stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer. 6:16).

*Deceased*

## Reverend and Pastor Luther G. Roberts

In the New Testament, we read of “the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). We read: “What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed” (1 Cor. 3:5). We read of “a good minister of Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 4:6). We read: “Whereof I was made a minister” (Eph. 3:7). Again, we read of “Philip the evangelist” (Acts 21:8), of “evangelists” (Eph. 4:11). In Paul’s instruction to Timothy, we read: “Whereunto I am ordained a preacher,” and “Whereunto I was appointed a preacher” (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11). We read of John, Peter, Timothy, Paul, yes, even of brother Paul (2 Pet. 3:15).

We do not read in the new covenant of Rev. Paul, Dr. John, Father Jude, nor of St. Peter. We do not read of Rev. Titus, pastor. This is the language of Ashdod. There were two mottoes in the Restoration Movement, the movement to restore primitive Christianity in all of its phases, that state truths clearly in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament—first, “Where the Bible speaks, we speak; and where the Bible is silent, we are silent”; second, “Call Bible things by Bible names.” Churches of Christ adhere to these principles because they are true to the Word of God.

*Reverence* is from the Hebrew language, and in the original, it means “to fear, be afraid.” Reverend

means “to be feared, revered.” We do not believe that this term should be applied to preachers of the Gospel for obvious reasons. *Reverend* is found one time in the English translation and is applied to God’s name (Psa. 111:9).

*Pastor* is applied in the New Testament to men who possessed certain qualifications, and who were appointed for a particular work in the church locally. As used, it designated the same men who were called *bishops* or *overseers*, *elders*, or *presbyters*. *Pastor* means “shepherd” or “feeder.” It is from the Greek word *poimeen*, and it is translated one time in the New Testament by *pastor* in the plural (Eph. 4:11). The term was not applied to the preacher, as such, by the inspired writers. The apostle Peter was an elder as well as an apostle; he was a shepherd of the flock (1 Pet. 5:1-4). This is true not because he was a preacher of the Gospel, but because he was one of the *elders*, *shepherds*, or *bishops* of the church. For this reason, he could be scripturally designated as one of the pastors of the church.

Preachers of the Gospel do not object to these designations to themselves as preachers of congregations on the ground of being solely odd or peculiar, but on the ground that the titles as commonly applied to preachers are not in accord with the simple teaching of the

Word of God. There are Scriptures that directly forbid the practice, such as Matthew 23:1-12. Here, Jesus in talking to His disciples about the practices of the scribes and Pharisees, says:

But all their works they do to be seen of men: for they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of *their garments*, and love the chief place at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called of men, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, *even* he who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, *even* the Christ (23:5-10).

Again, the beloved apostle John says:

Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).

Even though it may be the intention of those who use these titles in addressing preachers to honor them, the preacher who is cognizant of the teaching of the New Testament on these matters cannot accept the titles. It is not speaking “as the oracles of God.” It is deplored by those who believe in “calling Bible things by Bible names” and who speak according to sound doctrine.

*Deceased*

## DEFENDER

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526-1798

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Pensacola, FL  
Permit No. 395

## Bellview Lectures Books

### Hard-Cover:

Refuting Realized Eschatology (2015)	\$25.00
Preaching From The Major Prophets (2008)	\$5.00
A Time To Build (2007)	\$5.00
The Blight Of Liberalism (2005)	\$5.00
Great New Testament Questions (2004)	\$5.00
Great Old Testament Questions (2003)	\$5.00
Beatitudes (2002)	\$5.00
Encouraging Statements Of The Bible (2001)	\$5.00
Sad Statements Of The Bible (2000)	\$5.00
Preaching God Demands (1996)	\$5.00

### Soft-Cover:

Understanding The Will Of The Lord (2014)	\$11.00
What The Bible Says About: (2012)	\$11.00
Back To The Bible (2010)	\$4.00

### Spiral-Bound:

The Church (2018)	\$5.00
Set Ye Up A Standard In The Land (2017)	\$5.00
Typology (2016)	\$5.00
Innovations (2013)	\$5.00
Worldliness (1999)	\$5.00
Christian Fellowship (1998)	\$5.00
Leadership (1997)	\$5.00

**Plus \$3.75 Postage and Handling Per Book**

To receive your copy of the lectureship book(s) send your check or money order to:

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

# Defender

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Vol. LII

February 2023

Number 2

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## “To Save the Church”

*Lester Kamp*

In the middle of nineteenth century the church was growing rapidly. Converts were being made, but those converts were not being adequately taught following their baptism. These new Christians did not have the Biblical conception of the church nor its organization. During this time there were strong efforts being made to replace the role of the local congregation in its God-given role of evangelism with a man-made organization called a missionary society. There were some already publicly questioning the absence of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of God in the church. Many throughout the brotherhood did not properly understand the authority of Scripture so deviations from the pattern were undetected and unopposed. When God's people are ignorant of God's Will, manifold problems will arise. The great commission of the Lord Jesus requires teaching to baptize and subsequent teaching of the baptized. It is always true that God's people “are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6). In 1846, Benjamin Franklin chose the pages of the *Eccelesiastical Reformer* to make this

appeal:

Let us, then, brethren, make one mighty effort to save the church from corruption, lukewarmness, speculation, and sin of every kind, that it finally may be presented to the Lord a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

The saved are added to the church by God (Acts 2:47). Salvation is only in the church that belongs to Christ (Eph. 5:23). For the church to be saved it must remain without “spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (5:27). To keep the church pure requires knowledge of God's Word and constant vigilance. Neither individual purity nor the purity of the church occurs automatically or without effort.

Today, the brotherhood is in a similar predicament. The knowledge of God's Word is minimal to nonexistent for many members of the church. In fact, there are many who are trying to diminish the value of such knowledge. Why would we need to be so familiar with a *love letter* that tells us only of the “first century expression of the church” but does not give us an unchanging pattern of New Testa-

ment Christianity as many are now advocating? What real importance would there be, if this were the case, in putting these words into our memory if all we have is a first century expression of the church without real relevance to our situation or culture? Because of the lack of knowledge of God's Word in the church, many have believed this lie of the new hermeneutic. Few today spend even an hour a day in studying the Bible! An embarrassingly large portion of most congregations choose each week not to even attend the Bible classes which are available. Is there any wonder then that the church today is being led into apostasy in various ways?

With such Bible ignorance running rampant among us, is there any wonder that someone could suggest in a given congregation that “if we vote that it is okay, then it is right”—and such be the prevailing view? With such a view of right and wrong (i.e., majority determines what is right), all kinds of error will be accepted. Bible ignorance causes people to be violently disturbed over anyone with the audacity to raise the question,

“Where is the authority for that in

*Continued on Page 5*



## Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

# Obedience and Bible Baptism

The Scriptures teach we must obey God to be saved. Paul would write, “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17-18). We must obey to be made free from sin. Without obedience, we cannot be free from our sins. Also, the Hebrews’ writer says, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:8-9). Christ will only save those who obey Him, and if we do not obey Him, we will not be saved.

The Scriptures also reveal what will happen if we do not obey. Paul writes, “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 The. 1:7-8). Those who obey will be made free from sin and receive eternal salvation while those who

do not obey will suffer God’s vengeance.

Part of that obedience in becoming a Christian is the command to be baptized. The question often asked is if someone who is baptized to obey God is a Christian. The real key to answering this question is how one understands obey. Generally, those who ask this question do not embrace the full meaning of the word. It is their desire to incorporate those who were not baptized **for the remission of their sins** or **salvation** as being Christians. Their desire is to embrace denominational baptism as obeying God and thus they are saved (whether they realize when salvation took place or not).

With a full understanding of what all obedience involves, their question would be answered in a proper way. Obedience involves four things, and we will seek to make application of each of these four to the subject of baptism. The first is doing **what** is said. Doing something other than what has been said is simply a failure to obey.

The second aspect of obedience is doing what is said **when** it is to be done. When applied to the subject of baptism, this is something which is very important and often overlooked, at least by some. The Bible teaches that one must have **faith** to please God as the Hebrews’ writer states, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). Thus, for salvation one must have faith. This is why Jesus would state, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”

(Mark 16:16). Therefore, before one is baptized, he must have faith (believe). This specifically comes into view when one considers infant baptism. Infants (small children) do not have the capacity to believe. Since “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). One must be able to reason correctly regarding what they hear and by that evidence conclude God exists and that Jesus is God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16) and He died for our sins (believe the Gospel; Mark 16:15-16; 1 Cor. 15:1-4). Infants, babies, and small children simply have not developed the mental capability to reason in such manner and thus cannot be Scripturally baptized.

Jesus also taught, “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5). Paul would state, “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). The need and command to repent implies there is sin of which to repent. Yet, there are no sins for which an infant, baby, or small child to repent since they are born innocent or without sin. Solomon wrote, “Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions” (Ecc. 7:29). When speaking about the king of Tyre, Ezekiel writes, “Thou wast

*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

perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee” (Eze. 28:15). In speaking of the children of the Israelites, the Psalmist writes, “Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood” (Psa. 106:37-38). Jesus would say that one must become as a child to enter the kingdom (Mat. 18:3) and the kingdom consists of such little children (19:13-15).

Since children are *innocent, upright*, they do not have sin and not having sin they cannot repent. However, one must believe before he has the ability to repent. *Repentance* is a turning away from sin and turning to God in the way God has instructed. Yet, to turn to God, one must believe God exists.

In the account of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, was asked by Philip (the one doing the teaching) if he believed “with all thine heart” (Acts 8:37). Philip had been preaching Jesus to him (8:35) bringing the Ethiopian to ask, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (8:36). Philip’s response was that he could if he believed, to which he then made the good confession that he believed “that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (8:37). This is in harmony with what Paul wrote, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom 10:9-

10). Thus, one must believe, repent, and make that confession of his faith before baptism takes place. That is **when** one is to be baptized to be obedient.

After considering when one is baptized, there must also be a consideration of **how** in regard to obedience. Failing to do what God says in the way He says to do it is a failure to obey God. This also has an application when discussing obedience and baptism. However, we generally refer to this question under the term *mode* of baptism. Today, baptism is executed in three ways: immersion, sprinkling, or pouring. Actually, this is a misnomer as baptism is immersion. *Baptism* is a transliteration of the Greek term which has the meaning of “dip in or under water, immerse, plunge.” It has never meant to sprinkle or to pour. The Greek language had different words used to express those ideas. Thus, the only action that qualifies for how God said to be baptized, is immersion. One who has only had water sprinkled or poured on him has never obeyed God as they have never been baptized.

There is another aspect which must be considered in light of how one is baptized to obey God. It would be the element into which one is baptized. At one time this did not have to even be considered but with the proliferation of the Pentecostal Movement, it now must be discussed. At one time everyone knew and agreed the element into which one is baptized is water. The element is not inherent in *baptize*. Thus, we must look at what element into which we are to be baptized. What we find is that water is the element into which we are baptized. Pentecostals and a few

others have attempted to change the element to the Holy Spirit. The discussion of Holy Spirit baptism has been in the pages of *Defender* many times through the past few years so I will not spend a great deal of space on this subject. Suffice it to say, Holy Spirit baptism was a promise given to the apostles (it was never a command for them or anyone else to obey). Additionally, we observe water to be the element when John was baptizing in Aenon “because there was much water there” (John 3:23). As noticed previously in Acts 8 when Philip was preaching Jesus to the Ethiopian, he asked Philip, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:36). Then to baptize the Ethiopian, both of them go down into the water and then come up out of the water (8:38-39). The while in the water Philip baptized him. Thus, water is clearly seen to be the element of baptism.

The last aspect of obedience is **why**. The **why** or the **reason** for it is not always stated, but when it is stated, then we must do it for the reason that is stated for us to obey. When discussing baptism, this is where denominations fail in their obedience to God. Christ gave us the reason or the why of baptism. Mark’s account of the Great Commission clearly states the reason for baptism, and it is the same as the reason for belief. Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Both belief and baptism are for the purpose of being saved. The “shall be saved” is the reason why one believes, and it is the reason why one is baptized. If one is baptized for some other reason, then they are not saved.

On Pentecost, Luke records the events in Acts 2. When Peter with

the eleven responded to the mocking of some of the Israelites, he, by inspiration of God, told them this was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32). The last part of Joel's prophecy regarded being saved (Acts 2:21). He then goes on to show that Jesus is that one who God chose through whom salvation would come. While they by wicked hands had crucified Him, God raised Him up and He now sits at the right hand of God and is "both Lord and Christ" (2:36). They now believed so they asked Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?" (2:37). Peter's response is for them to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (2:38). "For the remission of sins" is the purpose statement and is another way of saying "shall be saved" in Mark. If they want the remission of their sins, since they already believed (Acts 2:37), they still needed to repent and be baptized. The omission of either repentance or baptism for the stated purpose does not yield the remission of sins or salvation.

There are other ways of saying the same thing such as in Acts 22:16: "be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Another way would be to be "baptized into Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:3) or "baptized into Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Baptism places us where salvation (and all spiritual blessings) is found according to 2 Timothy 2:10. It places us into that relationship with Deity which is how Matthew's account of the Great Commission puts it, "baptizing them in [literally into and not in] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Mat. 28:19). Then Peter states

specifically that "baptism doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21).

When someone is baptized for some other reason than salvation (however one wishes to express it), then they are not saved and are still lost in their sins. They have not obeyed God because they were not baptized for the reason (the **why** or **purpose**) God said.

Allow me to illustrate this with the Lord's Supper. **What** we are to do is to engage in the Lord's Supper. God gives us the **when** by an example (a pattern we **must** follow) in Acts 20:7: "And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." Thus, the **when** of engaging in that Supper is "the first day of the week." To partake of it any other day is a failure to obey God and is thus sinful (it is to act without God's authority). When we discuss the **how** of engaging in the communion, we find out when Jesus instituted it. Consider Paul's record of it when he writes to the Corinthians:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me (1 Cor. 11:23-25).

From the totality of teaching, we learn we must pray, then eat the unleavened bread, then there is another prayer and the partaking of the fruit of the vine (the Scriptures

never refer to it as wine). This is **how** it is to be done and to use other elements (than unleavened bread and fruit of the vine) is a failure to obey God and thus sinful.

The **why** is likewise essential in engaging in the communion. We can learn the why by looking at the previous passage. The bread which represents Christ's body is to be done in remembrance of Him. The cup (which is metonymy for the fruit of the vine) represents the blood which He shed on calvary's tree is also to be done in remembrance of Him. Thus, the **why** or the **purpose** is to remember Christ's death on the cross (not as so many say the death, burial, and resurrection). What if on a first day of the week, I partook of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine in the manner Jesus instituted (the what, when, and how), but instead of remembering the death of Christ, I was partaking it in remembrance of my earthly parents who passed away several years ago? I do not believe anyone would argue that I have obeyed God in partaking the Lord's Supper in memory of my parents. Why? Because Jesus gave us the **purpose** in partaking it and I was doing it for another or a different reason.

Yet, there are many brethren who now argue that one can be immersed in water without understanding the **why** or the **purpose** of the baptism, and that baptism still be acceptable to God. They state that as long as one is being baptized to *obey* God (in their incorrect or limited concept of obedience) then they are acceptable to God. It makes me wonder, who is baptized to **not obey** (to disobey) God? Or is there anyone who has been baptized that would be

excluded from being acceptable to God, in their view?

If one has a proper view of obedience, then it would be the case that one who is baptized to *obey* God would be saved. However, that obedience **must** include all four as-

pects of obedience. By far, the majority of people who claim baptism today, have never truly obeyed God because at least one of these four criteria of baptism were not met in their baptism. Thus, they are not Christians, and we should not pre-

tend as if they are. We need to teach them the what, when, how, and why of baptism so they can obey God and receive the remission of their sins and blessing of becoming a child of God.

MH

*Continued from Page 1*  
the Bible?” Bible ignorance causes others to be more concerned about peace than what is right according to the absolute standard of God’s Word. Ignorance of the Word of God is the reason for the popularity of most error.

Many congregations today are not being properly fed so they can grow spiritually into mature men and women (2 Pet. 3:18 Acts 20:32). Preachers in many places fail to preach the Word of God (2 Tim. 4:1-4)! Many sermons would be better described as “after-dinner” speeches rather than Gospel preaching; other sermons, which may contain some references to Scripture, are so generic that these messages could be preached in a denomination for a prolonged period of time without conflict or question. Some preachers deliberately refrain from Bible subjects that might upset any of those who hear—particularly those with money and influence. The Biblical imperative is to preach “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Some preachers spend more time reading denominationalists like Lucado than they do reading the Scriptures “which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15). The result of this

type of preaching is a famine of God’s Word among God’s people. As in the days of Amos, there is “a famine in the land, Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD” (Amos 8:11).

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

During the early days of the restoration of the New Testament church in this country, it was said of at least one preacher, “His preaching set off an epidemic of Bible reading.” Oh, for the day in which that could be said accurately of every preacher! God’s people must know His Book. Instead of elders feeding the church and overseeing this task (Acts 20:28), in many places they are hiring preachers who will entertain, who have charming personalities, but who know very little about God’s Word. Many elders do know the difference between a wolf and a sheep; they invite the wolves to come into their midst to devour the flock (20:29-30;

Mat. 7:15). They seemingly do not care for the spiritual well-being or the soul salvation of the sheep. They are more interested in large numbers who are momentarily happy than faithfulness to Almighty God.

In spite of all this, brethren, I be-

lieve that there are still many faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who know from God’s Word that they are soldiers of Christ engaged in a life-or-death struggle of eternal consequences, who are willing to give their lives for the kingdom in the service of God. There are yet many who have not yet bowed their knee to the corruptive influ-

ences of Satan and are determined with every ounce of their strength to be faithful to God by obeying His Word and contending earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

This is not the time to give up or give in to the forces of evil; now is the time to “make one mighty effort to save the church from corruption, lukewarmness, speculation, and sin of every kind.” Soldiers of Christ arise! The battle rages! There is victory in Christ, and only through Him! Do not be ashamed of the Gospel! Souls need to be saved! The church **must** be pure! Fight the good fight of faith!

Aurora, CO

# God's Second Law of Pardon

*Paul Vaughn*

One of the most important rules to understanding the Bible is to know to whom the writer is speaking. One cannot simply open the Bible, read a verse, and apply the teachings in that verse to himself. For example, God told Noah to build an ark to be saved (Gen. 6:13-14). Man cannot build an ark today and expect to be saved. It is paramount that men interpret God's Word correctly. Paul teaches that one must rightly divide the Word of Truth. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). In the New Testament, God has given man the information he needs to be saved from sin. There are five steps a person must take to be saved. First, one must have heard and learned about Jesus, the Son of God. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Second, belief in Jesus as the Son of God is required. "Therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Third, repentance is the next step to be saved. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Fourth, confession of Christ is required for one to be saved. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). In the religious world, most people stop at this point, but there is one more step that must be taken if one is to receive forgiveness from sin. The fifth step is immersion in water for the remission of sins.

Baptism is required before a person is saved. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). These five steps make up God's First Law of Pardon.

After one becomes a Christian, it is possible for him to sin and fall from grace. The Scriptures clearly and directly teach that one can fall from grace. Demas "loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10). He fell from grace. Those who try to justify themselves by the Law of Moses have fallen from grace. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). Christians must be very careful "lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). When Christians sin, there is hope. This is why God's Second Law of Pardon was established.

What is God's Second Law of Pardon? It is the way that one can receive forgiveness of sin after he becomes a Christian. When a Christian sins, he must confess his sins to God to receive pardon for those sins. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). An example of one that fell from grace is Simon, the sorcerer. He obeyed the first law of pardon (Acts 8:13). Simon sinned when he tried to buy the power to pass on to others spiritual (miraculous) gifts from Peter and John (8:18-21). Peter told him to "repent" (8:22). When a Christian

falls from grace, he can be restored by obedience to God's Second Law of Pardon.

In the beginning of this study, it was brought out that one of the most important rules to remember to achieve proper understanding of the Scripture, is to know to whom the writer is speaking. In Acts 2, Peter, inspired of God, was speaking to Jews who had not obeyed God's First Law of Pardon. Thus, he told them to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sin. He did not need to tell them to believe, because they were already at that point. In John's letter (1 John 1:9), he was speaking to Christians who had obeyed the Gospel. This is why he told them to confess their sins to receive forgiveness. Both men were teaching the truth. Both men were inspired by God to speak the message of salvation, but they were speaking to two different classes of sinners. Peter speaking to men who were never Christians and John speaking to those who were Christians.

Because men have not honored the basic rule of Bible interpretation, "know to whom the writer is speaking," many believe salvation comes at the point of repenting and asking God for forgiveness of sin. Only the erring Christian may receive forgiveness by repenting and confessing sin to God. If a person has not obeyed the First Law of Pardon, it does not do any good to ask God for forgiveness. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 7:21).

*Hopkinsville, KY*

# Is Restitution Necessary?

Mike Demory

The very act of repentance is one that most able Bible students understand as a necessity to salvation. However, there are those in some religious circles that believe repentance is synonymous with faith which God gives to those He pre-elected. Yet, Jesus commanded the verb *repent* on everyone when He said, “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30). The Bible informs us that **sin** is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). Because of the lawless acts of men, God wishes that we would all repent of those acts (2 Pet. 3:9). Many have failed to understand what is entailed in repentance. Others have never been taught the truth about it. When asked what repentance means, most will answer, “being sorrow for our sins.” While sorrow for our sins is a necessary step, one may shed a million tears and never really repent (2 Cor. 7:10)

Godly sorrow is not repentance, but that which *works* repentance brings repentance to its proper conclusion. John the immerser preached a baptism of repentance. When the people asked him what they must do, John replied, “Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8-11). What are those “fruits?” Faith, first and foremost, comes from hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Faith is not just putting our trust in God for what He has done for us, but it is the type of faith that causes us to obey God. Upon our hearing God’s Word, and thus His promises for us, our faith must cause us to repent, confess Christ, be immersed for the remission of sins, and then live a faithful life to the end (Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts

22:16; Rev. 2:10). The first step of repentance is developing godly sorrow for how we have lived our lives, that will motivate us to repent of our sins through reforming of our lives. We learn that Paul preached to “them of Damascus first and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judaea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance” (Acts 26:20). *Turning* refers to reforming our way of life.

To the Romans, Paul said, “be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2). The Greek word for *transformed* is where we get our English word *metamorphosis*. Our reformation or turning is to be a metamorphosis, from a person of the world to a person of God, and our new life must exhibit that change, which requires restitution. Most have never heard or considered the need for restitution as part of repentance. In his book, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, T.W. Brents wrote:

No man should expect mercy at the hand of God, who, having wronged his neighbor, refuses, when he has it in his power, to make restitution. Were he to weep tears of blood, both the justice and mercy of God would shut out his prayers if he make not his neighbor amends for the injury he has done him.

The attitude that restitution is not necessary or required by God is evident among the false teaching today concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Several erring brethren have argued that non-Christians are not accountable to the Law of Christ; therefore, they are not required to make restitution to the spouse they

fornicated with. This, of course, carried out to its logical conclusion would mean they are not responsible for returning stolen goods or clearing up a matter of slander or gossip either. However, that is a clear violation of Scripture as it says:

Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the LORD, and that person be guilty; Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth *part* thereof, and give *it* unto *him* against whom he hath trespassed (Num. 5:6-7).

In the New Testament, Zacchaeus, a rich publican, came to see Jesus as He passed by. We notice that this man repented, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold” (Luke 19:2-9). The subject of restitution is not only Biblical but also necessary to demonstrate to others that an active, obedient faith has instituted genuine and sincere repentance. A repentance that changed the individual’s life enough to cause them to restore whatever had been taken. Whether it be a spouse, material goods, a good name, reputation, etc., restitution is necessary, as far as is humanly possible. No one can restore the life of another, but one can do what is necessary to make it right. It may mean spending time in prison or even giving our life for the life taken. Restitution is a serious matter, for, without it, there is no repentance.

Mexico, MO

## DEFENDER

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526-1798

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Pensacola, FL  
Permit No. 395

## Bellview Lectures Books

### Hard-Cover:

Refuting Realized Eschatology (2015)	\$25.00
Preaching From The Major Prophets (2008)	\$5.00
A Time To Build (2007)	\$5.00
The Blight Of Liberalism (2005)	\$5.00
Great New Testament Questions (2004)	\$5.00
Great Old Testament Questions (2003)	\$5.00
Beatitudes (2002)	\$5.00
Encouraging Statements Of The Bible (2001)	\$5.00
Sad Statements Of The Bible (2000)	\$5.00
Preaching God Demands (1996)	\$5.00

### Soft-Cover:

Understanding The Will Of The Lord (2014)	\$11.00
What The Bible Says About: (2012)	\$11.00
Back To The Bible (2010)	\$4.00

### Spiral-Bound:

The Church (2018)	\$5.00
Set Ye Up A Standard In The Land (2017)	\$5.00
Typology (2016)	\$5.00
Innovations (2013)	\$5.00
Worldliness (1999)	\$5.00
Christian Fellowship (1998)	\$5.00
Leadership (1997)	\$5.00

**Plus \$3.75 Postage and Handling Per Book**

To receive your copy of the lectureship book(s) send your check or money order to:

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

# Defender

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Vol. LII

March 2023

Number 3

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## Reasons for Discipline

*William S. Cline*

Church discipline has long been a misunderstood and neglected practice in the Lord's church. Many churches have never studied the subject, and some are so ignorant to the teaching of the New Testament to think that discipline is not to be practiced by the church today. It is this writer's conviction that for the church of Christ to be the New Testament church, it must practice the doctrine of the New Testament: How long will the church persist in disobedience to one of the plainest doctrines of the New Testament? This becomes a question of eternal magnitude; for no church can disobey Jehovah and remain in His favor!

Discipline is vital in the **home** for parents must train their children to obey proper authority (Pro. 22:6). If children do not obey, it is God's plan that they be corrected. "The nod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Pro. 29:15). If a child has not been trained to respect authority at home, he will not respect it elsewhere.

Discipline is vital in the **society** of our community for the strong arm of the law is a most powerful restraint in favor of decency and order. "For he is

a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil" (Rom. 13:4).

Discipline is vital in the Lord's **church** for there is a standard of behavior for all children of God (1 Tim. 3:15), and those who do not behave properly are to be externally corrected by: teaching (Acts 18:26), warning (1 The. 4:6), rebuking (1 Tim. 5:20), and withdrawing fellowship (2 The. 3:6).

This writer has worked with a congregation for nearly six years that follows the Lord's way in disciplining the disorderly. It is a blessing to work under elders who believe in following the Word of God. Yet, he has heard many discussions with regard to discipline and whether it should be practiced or not. Brethren discuss this subject as if they have a choice! They may as well discuss "baptism for the remission of sins" and whether to practice such as to discuss whether they are going to practice discipline. Generally, there were more "agin" withdrawal than there were for it in the discussions which this writer listened to. There were those who were

afraid others in the family might quit the church. Some feared that there were those in the church who were so "dead set" against withdrawal that they would quit in protest. Others were certain that attendance and contribution would go down and usually that was the argument that won, for many in the church feel the whole duty of the leadership is to **count heads and dollars**. But one argument that was always produced with much vigor was the one which brought up those who had been withdrawn from who never came back to the church. If nothing else put the lid on the subject this one did! The consensus was, "We withdraw to save the person but if it doesn't work why withdraw?" Thus, withdrawal was not practiced and the persistent in sin were allowed to continue to enjoy the fellowship of the church. Brethren, **God's way is right**, and it works! If the person withdrawn from does not repent it is not the fault of God's way!

It is felt that if brethren properly understood the reasons for discipline, then discipline would be more prevalent among the church that is seeking to do Bible things in Bible ways and to be nothing more or less than the New Testament church.

*Continued on Page 3*



## Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

# Withdrawal

Through the years there have been many controversies that arise between brethren. Some of these controversies will cause souls to be lost because of what is being taught. However, not all controversies that have arisen over the years will cause souls to be lost except for the divisiveness of those involved (that divisiveness might be on both sides of the issue). A controversy arose a couple of years ago that, in my opinion, should never have caused a problem between brethren. Yet, it has! It divided brethren who once stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the fight for truth. This subject had to do with the withdrawal of fellowship and family. While this was a recent controversy, the position of the eldership here is the same as it was before the controversy became such. We have not changed our position. I wrote a small amount regarding this in the 1998 Bellview Lectureship book on *Christian Fellowship*. The chapter was titled "How to Treat the Withdrawn" (295-309). I wrote:

It is especially difficult when a congregation must withdraw fellowship from a family member. It is especially difficult to know and understand how we are to treat this family member. One the one hand, we have family responsibilities (see below); on the other hand, we must realize the purpose of withdrawing fellowship—saving the soul. Family members may have the greatest effect in restoring the withdrawn; they must determine in what ways their "fellowship" should be restricted.

In this type of relationship, we must remember that God gives us certain family responsibilities. Faithfulness to God demands that we fulfill those obligations to

our families. Husband and wife are still married. The husband must still fulfill his role within the home even if the church has withdrawn from his wife. The wife still must fulfill her role within the home, including being in submission to her husband, even if the church has withdrawn from her husband. Parents have the same responsibilities to their children and children to their parents even when one has been withdrawn from. However, realizing we must fulfill these responsibilities, we must still make it clear to the withdrawn that we do not approve of what he has done nor have spiritual fellowship with him (308).

Our position has not changed from this statement. The eldership here is united regarding this statement and our belief regarding it. A few years later, Danny Douglas wrote on the same subject in the Spring lectureship book much the same idea as what I stated. His chapter is from their book in 2014 titled *What Must a Christian do to Remain Faithful to Christ?* His chapter was titled, "Withdraw Fellowship from Disorderly Church Members, Including Family Members" (104-18). Under the section with the heading "2 Thessalonians 3:6," he wrote:

According to the scriptures, God commands Christians to withdraw from every brother that is not walking (living) according to the will of God. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 The. 3:6).

On the other hand, what becomes of family responsibilities and obligations, which are also God-given, if a family member should be out of harmony with the doctrine of Christ, and thus, be worthy of withdrawal?

For example, in the husband-wife relationship God demands both to render to one another "due benevolence" (cf. 1 Cor. 7:1-5). Indeed, this commandment may be fulfilled while at the same time communicating to the fallen brother or sister: "I am not in spiritual fellowship with you." There are actions that may be taken toward the fallen so as to bring shame upon them for their unfaithfulness to Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-13).

Another example would be the obligation of children toward their aging parents. The child never outgrows the obligation, even in later life, to: "Honour thy father and mother ..." (cf. Eph. 6:2). Suppose that one or both parents have been withdrawn from scripturally by the Lord's church, but in later years become infirmed and are in need of the children's care? The children may indeed fulfill the command to honor their parents by caring for their needs, while at the same time not extending fellowship to them. There are other examples that could be given.

God-given obligations to family, however, does not mean that the faithful are obligated to carry on in ways that would indicate fellowship. We must indeed withdraw from them social interaction and activities that would imply endorsement (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-13).

Does this mean that all communication is severed? This could hardly be the case if we are to continue to admonish them. While our actions are to convey our disapproval of their disobedience to God, we still are to warn them, as Paul instructed: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 The. 3:14-15).

There are occasions when heartbroken parents, whose children have departed from the faith, will ask: "May I never talk to my children again?" Of course, they may. Yet, the withdrawal must continued to be felt. They indeed may communicate their love and concern for them, with the underlying motive to win them back to Christ. Yet, they must be careful not to drift into the realm of approval and endorsement. Whenever we are striving to win the fallen back, we may communicate our love for them, but at the same time

**D**efender 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

warn them of the condition of their eternal souls! "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37).

We must truly love Jesus Christ more than anyone, including our families. If we do so love Him, then we will keep His commandments, and that means whatsoever

He commands us! (John 14:15; 15:13-14; Mat. 28:20; Acts 20:27). If we refuse to follow the Lord's command to withdraw from the disorderly in the case of our families, then we do not truly love them properly or our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who said: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter

more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Mat. 10:37-38). (115-17).

These two sections of the two lecture-ship books well explain the position of the Bellview elders.

MH

*Continued from Page 1*

### **To Obey God**

Should one live to be as old as Methuselah and as wise as Solomon he would never find a better reason for practicing discipline than "**God said do it.**" In 2 Thessalonians 3:6 Paul wrote:

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us.

Romans 16:17 reads:

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them.

In 1 Corinthians 5:11 Paul wrote:

but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat.

It becomes rather inconsistent for one to quote Acts 2:38 and demand upon the authority of that passage that one seeking remission of sins repent and be baptized and at the same time observe the *passover* when he comes to such passages as quoted above! Our **inconsistency becomes appalling** and a **stumbling block** to those we seek to teach and convince that "we go by the Bible—nothing more, nothing less." Brethren have turned their **rebellious nose** up at God's teaching on discipline but one

day they will learn that God cannot be treated that way for He cannot be mocked (Gal. 6: 7). One would just as well stand before God in the judgment as one that had shook his fist in God's face and refused to be baptized as to stand before Him as one who had refused to obey His teaching about discipline.

### **To Save the World**

The church has the responsibility to take the Gospel to the world, but the world is not going to listen if those who carry that message do not practice discipline among themselves. Never let us underestimate the power of our **influence** over the world. The world will not listen to a church that tolerates habitual sinners who will not repent of their wrong deeds. Christians are the light of the world. The world is to see our good works and glorify God (Mat. 5:14-16). Paul wrote:

Do all things without murmurings and questionings: that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world (Phi. 2:14-15).

He wrote to Titus that Christians were to properly conduct themselves "that the word of God be not blasphemed" and that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us" (Tit. 2:1-8). Peter plainly said, "having your behavior seemly among the

Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2:12). Brethren, it is high time for the church of Christ to conduct herself as the New Testament church! We need to let our light shine in this perverse world. It is understandable that the world says, "I can't hear what you say, for what you do sounds too loudly in my ears."

### **To Keep the Church Pure**

Sin is the worst disease that has ever blighted mankind. It is more contagious and deadly than any physical disease known to man. If a man gets typhoid fever, he is isolated. If a finger gets blood poison or gangrene that can not be controlled by our modern drugs, the doctor will remove the finger for the purpose of saving the life of the person. If a bushel of apples gets a rotten one in it, the rotten one will be removed because it will affect the entire bushel. And so, it is with the church. After all, the spiritual know how it is applied to a diseased member of the body and it can be seen that this has been to no avail; the only thing that can be done is to remove it from the fellowship. Certainly, it is better to sever one soul that is lost than to endanger the souls of others and the entire church. Paul said, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven" (1 Cor. 5:6-7). Sin attracts sin,

and the unrighteous are not satisfied until they have partners in their unrighteousness; therefore, it is imperative that we are careful not to let sin run *foot-loose* in the church of our Lord.

### **To Deter Wrongdoing**

God has always used discipline (punishment) to deter wrongdoing. Reflect for a moment on some of the Old Testament examples such as: the sin of Achan (Jos. 7), Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10), the young prophet (1 Kin. 13), Uzzah (2 Sam. 6), and a host of others. That they might learn to do right, God's face has always been set against those who did evil. In the Christian Dispensation we see God's discipline and the end results as recorded in Acts 5. A husband and wife lied about their giving and God struck both of them dead. The closing comment in verse 11 reads, "And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things." In 1 Timothy 5:20 we read, "Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear." When a rational person sees one being punished for some wrongdoing, he will strive to not be guilty of that wrong. God knows this and uses punishment to deter wrongdoing. Throughout the pages of Sacred History, Romans 11:22 is demonstrated time and again. "Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou

also shalt be cut off." If the church would do things God's way and punish the sinner (withdrawal is called punishment, "Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was *inflicted* by the many" 2 Cor. 2:6) there would be less sin in the church.

### **To Save the Soul of the Sinner**

In speaking of the sinner in the Corinthian church who had his father's wife, Paul said, "to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5). The purpose of delivering him to Satan is to save his soul in the day of the Lord. When people learned who he really served (the devil and not the Lord) he would be ashamed and repent. Nothing will bring a person to his knees quicker than to cast him out of the fellowship of the church and let the world know he is a hypocrite. If there is any good left in the man that can be touched, this should bring him back. However, if withdrawal is not fully effected and fellowship continues to be offered by some in the church, the proper results will not be realized. But when Christians will have nothing to do with the sinner and if he has any good left in him, it will cause him to be ashamed and repent (2 The. 3:14).

### **Conclusion**

Thus, we can see that there are at least five reasons for practicing discipline. When the brother argues that the church should not withdraw be-

cause he knows of some who were disciplined and did not repent, he should be reminded that salvation of the sinner is only one of the many reasons for withdrawal. When discipline is practiced properly and the sinner does not repent, then the church has still done right! Victory has been achieved in four out of five areas. Let us never be guilty of refusing to do what God has said because in the church there are some so faithless as to try to reason around the teachings of the Bible.

### **Food for Thought**

In 1 Timothy 4:2, Paul speaks of those who have a conscience seared with a hot iron. In Ephesians 4:17-19, he speaks of those who were past feeling. And in Hebrews 6:4-6, we read of the impossibility of restoring some. Could it be that the reason for some of the disciplined failing to be restored falls upon the ones who administered the discipline? Perhaps in many cases we are so **slow** in doing what God has said that the sinner becomes hardened. His conscience becomes seared, his emotions become past feeling, and thus it is impossible to renew him to repentance.

Brethren, discipline is a serious matter! It is a doctrine of the New Testament, and if the church of Christ is going to be the true New Testament church, and if you and I are going to save our souls, we best practice what the New Testament teaches with regard to this matter of eternal importance.

## **Church Discipline**

*William S. Cline*

In the article title "Reasons for Discipline," we emphasized: "church discipline has long been a misunderstood and neglected practice in the

Lord's church." If a congregation is going to be a New Testament congregation, it must exercise discipline on all who persist in walking in dishar-

mony with the marching orders of King Immanuel. In that treatise, we noted that discipline should be practiced: (1) to obey God, (2) to save the

world, (3) to keep the church pure, (4) to deter wrongdoing, and (5) to save the soul of the sinner. In a continuing interest for understanding of New Testament truths with regard to discipline, we here address ourselves to questions such as: (1) What action should congregations take toward one who has been disciplined by a sister congregation, (2) Is discipline limited only to those within the local congregation, and (3) Is discipline limited only to the individual?

### **Discipline as Respects Sister Congregations**

It is with divine precedence that congregations discipline those who refuse to walk according to the teachings of the New Testament. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 reads, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us." It is by authority of the Christ that persistent sinners be treated as a "Gentile and the publican" (Mat. 18:17). When a brother fails to conduct his life in accordance with New Testament teaching, Christians are to "note that man, that ye have no company with him" (2 The. 3:14). Christians are to "have no company with" an erring brother (1 Cor. 5:9). They are not to "receive" him nor are they to "give greeting" to him (2 John 10). A disciplined brother is marked and is to be turned away from (Rom. 16:17) and having been thus marked he is to be refused or avoided (Titus 3:10).

The above Scriptures plainly and powerfully teach that when a congregation of God's people disciplines one who is disorderly, all Christians are under obligation to honor that discipline. No Christian or congrega-

tion of Christians can extend fellowship to one who has been disciplined and still be pleasing to the Father who is in heaven. The church of Christ is made up of many congregations, each of which is made up of many members. When one of those congregations disciplines one of its members, it is necessary and right that the entire body of Christ honor that discipline.

In commenting on this subject, Alexander Campbell wrote:

In order to the purity of the Christian profession and the harmony of churches, when a member is excluded from one church by a solemn vote of the brethren, no other church can consistently receive him, while living under censure. He can only be restored on repentance by and with the consent of the congregation that excluded him; for should a sister church receive an excluded member, it would, in fact, be assuming an authority over other churches, and reversing the decision of the church that excluded him, and that, too, on ex parte testimony. It would also be offering a gross indignity to the excluding church, which she could not brook, but by the sacrifice of her own reputation for good sense and good manners (*Millennial Harbinger* 6:519).

Campbell went on to say that he felt it wise counsel to not allow a brother from another congregation to participate in any of the leadership of the worship unless he was known to be of sound Christian character.

In spite of the plainness of the Scriptures on this point, there are those who believe that individuals or congregations have the right to sit in judgment with regard to a sister congregation's discipline. It is a fact that the New Testament nowhere authorizes a *supreme court* or *tribunal to sit in judgment* upon such matters.

First Corinthians 6:5 provides for an *arbitrator* to settle matters **between brethren**, but this is a far cry from a group of brethren sitting in judgment over the matters of another congregation. With regard to such matters Alexander Campbell wrote:

I cannot give my voice in favor of **appeals** to any tribunal, but to the congregation of which the offended is a member; neither to a council of churches specially called, nor to an association. The old book, written by the Apostles, has compelled me to hold this dogma **fast**. And I can, I know, show that it is superior to every other course. I will grant, however, that this plan will not suit a denomination or a sect, but it will suit the kingdom over which Immanuel reigns (*Christian Baptist* 6:200).

This writer, along with others, has participated in such a meeting with respect to a sister congregation's withdrawal from an erring brother. Such actions were in conflict with Scripture, and we shall never participate in such again. There is one **sound, safe pattern** to follow and that is to respect and uphold the discipline administered by a faithful, sister congregation until such is corrected by the offending party and the congregation which administered the discipline!

### **Discipline as Respects the Local Congregation**

There is misunderstanding with regard to the limitations of discipline. Some hold to the belief that a congregation is limited to disciplining or withdrawing only from a brother who is a member of the local congregation. We have heard it said that a congregation could not withdraw from a brother who had already moved his membership. Such doctrine causes members to continually move from one congregation to

another to avoid discipline. Just here it would be good to again quote from brother Campbell, not as an authority but as an esteemed commentator. He wrote:

that a majority of the disputes in religion have originated from not defining the terms or using the same words as representatives of different ideas (*Christian Baptist* 5:240).

Thus, it would be in order that various terms and words be noted which are used to describe discipline.

1. "Punishment" (discipline)

2 Corinthians 2:6. A public reproof is a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well. This is why God's people are commanded to discipline or punish the persistent in sin.

2. "Withdraw yourselves" 2 Thessalonians 3:6. When a child of God ceases to walk as Christ has directed, he is no longer to enjoy the fellowship of Christians. By withdrawal of such fellowship he is shown that his actions are not approved of by those who seek to follow the Lord.

3. "Have no company with"

1 Corinthians 5:9. This is expressive of the idea of "withdraw yourselves" in that the offender is not to be in communion with faithful children of God.

4. "Refuse" (avoid) Titus 3:10.

Again we have the teaching that God's people are not to keep company (1 Cor. 5:13; 2 The. 3:14) with the sinner in the church.

5. "Mark" Romans 16:17. Here Christians are enjoined to mark the false teacher and to be careful to "turn away from" him.

6. "Receive not...give no greeting" 2 John 10. John states in language too simple to misunderstand that anyone who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ is to be marked to the extent that he not be

received when he seeks fellowship, and that this marking is to be to such an extent that no greeting or words of well-wishing be extended to such a brother.

There are other words and phrases to which we could refer but these should be sufficient. We must be careful to not base a doctrine which is false upon the wrong usage of words or the usage of words to the exclusion of others which are plainly used in the New Testament. It is true that in a sense a congregation cannot "withdraw fellowship" from a brother unless he is first of all in that congregation's fellowship, however, a congregation can **refuse to extend fellowship** to a brother who is in error and it matters not how one looks at it—**refusal to extend fellowship** is just as much New Testament church discipline as is **withdrawal of fellowship**. It is high time brethren stop making laws to suit their own whims and desires. R.C.H. Lenski has written:

The preacher is not to utter his own eloquent wisdom but is to confine himself to the foolishness and the skandalon of the gospel.... Preaching, in the Biblical sense, is merely to announce clearly and distinctly, exactly what God orders us to announce in his word. We dare not change by alteration, by omission, or by addition (28).

When a brother emphasizes "Put away...from among yourselves" (1 Cor. 5:13), and thereby deduces that a congregation can only *discipline, refuse, avoid, receive not, give no greeting, or mark* one within its immediate oversight, that brother's deductions are not within the Biblical doctrine of the New Testament. A Christian or a congregation can mark anyone of whom there is knowledge that that brother is disor-

derly, and having thus marked him, fellowship can be *withdrawn* in that **no fellowship will be extended** to that false brother or to any others who side with him and thereby become partakers of his evil deeds (2 John 10). Have not all faithful brethren *marked* Pat Boone, Ben Franklin, and others who have gone out from us and are heretics of the first order? At the congregation where this writer preaches, Pat Boone is marked as a false teacher. He has never been a member of this congregation, but **he was a member of the church of Christ** of which this congregation is a part, and should he come here to worship, he would be treated and admonished as a **disciplined brother** just as surely as if this congregation had been the one that administered the discipline. And if he had not been disciplined by a congregation in California, it would not bear upon the case, for he is still a false teacher and no faithful congregation will fellowship him.

In 1839 Alexander Campbell used the pages of the *Millennial Harbinger* to mark a false teacher. That man was not a member of the congregation where Campbell worshipped, but he was a heretic and needed to be recognized. By divine authority found in Romans 16:17 Campbell wrote:

All the whitewashers in Ohio can never give to the hero of that tale a fair reputation now. Unhappy man! He is a disgrace to the Christian profession. For particulars inquire of... (10:479)

(Campbell here gave the name and address to where brethren could write.)

Earlier in the article he had said: he left his own county and the brethren to whom he formerly ministered, with a bankrupt reputation for

moral character if he has any recommendations with him of good standing, he obtained them in a dishonorable way (10:479).

We need to learn that a false brother cannot hide behind the **cloak of congregational limitation in regard to discipline**. Under such false teaching a brother could run from congregation to congregation as soon as he was learned to be a heretic and could never be marked. The application of the doctrine shows it to be foreign to Bible teaching and as ridiculous as any ever propounded by the Prince of this world.

### **Discipline as Respects the Individual**

There are those who hold to the false belief that discipline is limited to the individual and that it is unscriptural for one congregation to mark or refuse to fellowship another congregation. This argument is so insidious that it hardly seems worthy of mention, for to mention it seems to give it more credence that it deserves. If an individual can be marked or withdrawn from, then a congregation which is nothing more than a collection (congregation) of individuals can be marked or withdrawn from (Woods). In Revelation 3:16, Jesus withdrew His fellowship from the church at Laodicea. Are we to understand that all other congregations in the world at that time had to fellowship a congregation which was not worthy of the fellowship of Christ?

The church of Christ has always practiced congregational disfellowship: When the Missionary Society was added and the instrument of music was brought in, faithful congregations everywhere marked the congregations that added such and refused to fellowship them. To this

day the church of our Lord does not extend fellowship to the Christian Church, the Disciples of Christ, and others who departed from the faith. Are we going to allow false teachers to now tell us that we were and are wrong in refusing to fellowship those false congregations? In the fifties, the anti-cooperation movement reared its ugly head in the brotherhood. Brethren went off after that false doctrine and faithful brethren everywhere marked them and refused to fellowship them. We are ready for brethren to try to show us the error of that action. When a congregation disfellowships a brother or another congregation this in no way violates New Testament teaching with regard to congregational autonomy. For the withdrawal of fellowship is not an act of legislation over the individual or the congregation but is instead an exercising of its own independent power with regard to its members and their refusal to fellowship said individual or congregation. Any congregation that goes into error, whatever error it may be, can and should be marked and refused fellowship by faithful congregations that love the Lord and want to do what is right. When the body of Christ is harmed, either through life or doctrine, by one, ten, or a million, then that person or persons (this may well be congregations) must be marked as one that would do damage to the church that Jesus died for (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:6; Tit. 3:10; 2 John 10). In 2 John 9-11 we read,

Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into *your*

house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.

Congregations and/or individuals who fellowship congregations and/or individuals who are in error stand condemned by the Word of God.

### **Conclusion**

Brethren, if a congregation is to be a church of the New Testament, it must practice New Testament discipline. Congregations must respect the discipline administered by sister congregations. To fail to do so is not within the area of sound doctrine. Congregations can mark and refuse to fellowship those who are not in their local oversight and congregations can and should mark and refuse to fellowship other congregations who are in error. May the time come when brethren everywhere strive with all their ability to uphold the sacred principles of the Christ who shed his precious blood to purchase the church.

### **Works Cited:**

- Campbell, Alexander. The Christian Baptist. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate. 1829 (1956).  
---. Millennial Harbinger. Bethany, VA. Alexander Campbell. 1839.  
Lenski, R. C. H. The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel. Minneapolis, MN. Augsburg, 1961.  
Woods, Guy N. Freed-Hardeman College Lectures Open Forum. 1973.

*Deceased*

[Editor's Note: While not in the purview of these two articles by brother Cline (written for *Defender* in 1974), there does arise the situation where a congregation and/or eldership withdraws fellowship from someone that has done nothing worthy of being marked and withdrawn from. No brethren or congregation should honor a withdrawal under such circumstances.]

## DEFENDER

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526-1798

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Pensacola, FL  
Permit No. 395

## Bellview Lectures Books

### Hard-Cover:

Refuting Realized Eschatology (2015)	\$25.00
Preaching From The Major Prophets (2008)	\$5.00
A Time To Build (2007)	\$5.00
The Blight Of Liberalism (2005)	\$5.00
Great New Testament Questions (2004)	\$5.00
Great Old Testament Questions (2003)	\$5.00
Beatitudes (2002)	\$5.00
Encouraging Statements Of The Bible (2001)	\$5.00
Sad Statements Of The Bible (2000)	\$5.00
Preaching God Demands (1996)	\$5.00

### Soft-Cover:

Understanding The Will Of The Lord (2014)	\$11.00
What The Bible Says About: (2012)	\$11.00
Back To The Bible (2010)	\$4.00

### Spiral-Bound:

The Church (2018)	\$5.00
Set Ye Up A Standard In The Land (2017)	\$5.00
Typology (2016)	\$5.00
Innovations (2013)	\$5.00
Worldliness (1999)	\$5.00
Christian Fellowship (1998)	\$5.00
Leadership (1997)	\$5.00

**Plus \$3.75 Postage and Handling Per Book**

To receive your copy of the lectureship book(s) send your check or money order to:

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

# Defender

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Vol. LII

April 2023

Number 4

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## Study to Show Thyself Approved

*Mike Demory*

Exhorting Timothy to stay on the straight path of righteousness, Paul instructed him to “Study [give diligence] to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing [handling aright] the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Many contend that this applies only to “M”*inisters* (Preachers). However, the Holy Spirit tells us that **all** Christians are ministers of the Lord (Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:7; 1 The. 3:2).

The context of this passage finds Paul exhorting Timothy to be strong “in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” **and** the things Timothy heard Paul preach (2 Tim. 2:1-2). This means that as soldiers of Christ, **if** we serve Him faithfully with all our might, we **will** suffer hardships that must be endured to the end. For this reason, we must give diligence to present ourselves approved unto God. As ministers of Christ our service is unto the Lord, not men, doing the will of God from the heart, not as men-pleasers (Eph. 6:6-7). Denominational Christianity is so popular because it pleases the desires of men and women rather than pleasing God. Entertainment has be-

come the new gospel among denominations (and now some congregations of the Lord’s church) because that is what the *seekers* want, so that is what the men-pleasers offer.

Paul instructed Timothy to “give diligence”; from the Greek word *spoudazo*, which means to “exert oneself, or hasten to do a thing.” As the Jews before, who gloried in their wisdom, saying, “Peace, peace; when *there is no peace*” (Jer. 6:14), congregations of the Lord’s church find themselves following the ways of the world (Denominationalism); instead of being diligent in finding themselves approved of God, having chosen to be men-pleasers, adding instruments of music and praise teams to their worship, allowing women to be deaconesses, preachers, song leaders, even to the point of adding alcohol to the mix. The context of 2 Timothy 2 finds Timothy being instructed by Paul that there will always be hardships for anyone standing firm in the faith. Paul said he was considered an “evil doer” for rightly dividing the Word of truth (2:9). Yet, he was willing to **endure** all things for the

sake of the elect (2:10). How many members of the church are willing to “endure” all things not only for Christ but for their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? Unfortunately, those numbers are growing less and less. Paul reminds them, “**if** we deny *him*, he also will deny us” (2:12). The “Politically Correct” attitude has invaded the church, which advocates that we should worry more about drawing men in with the *honey* of compromise than save their souls with the *vinegar* of truth. However, the truth of God’s Word is only *vinegar* when it reveals sins a person is unwilling to repent of or turn away from. When the purveyor of God’s truth unveils the un-repent sin, the messenger is labeled an “evil doer” (1 Kin. 18:17).

In 2 Timothy 2:14, Paul commands Timothy to charge “*them* before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.” The idea behind the Greek word for “charge them” is that Timothy was to make every earnest effort to cause his hearers to believe that it was wrong to strive about words that profit no one. There will always be those

*Continued on Page 4*



## Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

### God Is One

One of the great statements of the Old Testament is found in Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.” It has been called the *Shema* (from the Hebrew word translated *hear*) along with the next verse and is the basic confession of faith in Judaism and was considered the most important passage of all Scripture. When Jesus was asked what the greatest command was, He appealed to these two verses (Mat. 22:36-38). In Mark’s account the scribe who asked Him this question admitted that it was correct (Mark 12:32). It was something all Jewish children memorized, and they opened the synagogue services with the quoting of it.

However, it has led some today to conclude there is only one being who is God. Those who hold such would also point out some other passages. They would point out what is recorded earlier in Deuteronomy: “Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him” (4:35). They would point out what Isaiah wrote, “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me” (Isa. 46:9). They argue that one is only one and not three. However, there is the obsta-

cle of the three terms: Father, Son, Holy Spirit. To explain these, they claim they are simply three offices, manifestations, or functions of the one being. Some have explained it as merely different masks God wears according to particular times or functions. They would explain it as the same person might be a son to his father, a father to his son, and a husband to his wife; thus, the same person being a father, a son, and a husband. What shall we say to these things?

First, allow us to respond to the idea of one being of necessity a numerical one. There are numerous times where the word translated *one* (*ehad* or *echad*) refers to a numerical one. The oneness believers would call upon many of these (Jos. 12:9-24; 1 Kin. 22:8; Eze. 33:24; 48:31-34; Dan. 10:13; etc.). However, they then jump to the conclusion that God means a numerical one in speaking of His Being. The question is if this conclusion they jump to warranted by the evidence? The answer is a clear, no! One of the first uses of the word makes a numerical one ludicrous. After the creation of woman, God says, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). Jesus also confirms the same thing in Matthew 19:5. Here we have two human beings: a man and his wife. Yet, God says they are one flesh. There are, no doubt, several aspects to this “one flesh,” yet there are two distinct beings. The only way one can understand this can be that it is a unified one that contains more than a numerical one.

Later we have a case where *one* is used in both a unified one and a numerical one. At the tower of Ba-

bel, God said, “And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do” (11:6). Obviously, *people* is more than one being, yet God says the people is **one**. What all the oneness includes, there are a multitude of beings that are spoken of as *one*. Thus, it is a unified one. There are others like, “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of *them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common” (Acts 4:32) where all believers are one. Paul and Apollos were one: “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.... Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one” (1 Cor. 3:6, 8). Therefore, we cannot make a definitive statement or conclusion based upon *one*.

Are there other clues to help us understand this? The answer is, yes. In fact, in the very first verse of the Bible, Moses writes, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). The word translated God is the Hebrew *elo-him*. What makes this interesting regarding this study is that the word is a plural noun and not singular (the singular is *eloah*). Yet, when we come to *created* Moses

**D**efender 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**

uses a singular verb. So we observe a plural noun being used with a singular verb which would indicate to us a unified one of Deuteronomy 6:4. We observe the same thing in English a few verses later when “God said, Let us make man in our image” (1:26). The plural *us* and *our* is used again showing the plural nature of God. Yet, God is one, so we start learning there is a plurality of beings all of Who are God.

Through a continued study of the Scriptures (and especially the New Testament), we learn there are three Beings who all possess the nature of the one God. These three Beings (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) interact with one another and with us in ways that it could not be one Being manifest in three ways. Consider how ludicrous some of the prayers of Jesus to the Father would be if both Jesus and the Father are the same Being only manifested in different ways. Just a couple of examples will suffice. Matthew records Jesus as praying:

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him* (Mat. 11:25-27).

If these are various manifestations of the same Being, notice how ludicrous it becomes. “I thank myself, O Myself, Lord of heaven and earth, because I have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and I have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Myself: for so it seemed good in my sight. All things are delivered unto me of

myself: and no man knoweth me, but me; neither knoweth any man me, save me, and *me* to whomsoever I will reveal *myself*.”

Or consider Jesus’ high priestly prayer (what would have the right to be called the Lord’s prayer) as recorded in John 17. Space forbids noticing the entire recorded prayer but notice a few statements and how they would have to change it for their understanding. “Me, the hour is come, glorify myself, that I may glorify myself.... And this is life eternal, that they might know me the only true God, and myself, whom I hast sent. I have glorified myself on the earth: I have finished the work which I gavest myself to do. And now, O Me, glorify thou myself with thine myself with the glory which I had with me before the world was.... Holy Me, keep through my own name those whom I hast given me, that they may be one being, as *I am*.... As I hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.... That they all may be one being; as me, Myself, *art* in me, and I in myself, that they also may be one in me: that the world may believe that I hast sent me.” It becomes obvious that Jesus’ prayers to the Father are nonsensical if the Father, Jesus, and the Spirit are one being. Numerous other passages would also be as absurd.

There are also passages where all three Divine Beings are spoken of in the same context. At Jesus’ baptism, all three appear. “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved

Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mat. 3:16-17). Jesus is being baptized, the Spirit coming and lighting upon Him (is He lighting upon Himself?), and the Father with a voice out of heaven making a statement about Jesus, His beloved Son. The presentation of this event does not lend itself to one Being manifesting Himself in three ways. It can only properly be understood as three distinct Beings.

When Jesus gives His apostles the Great Commission as recorded by Matthew, He states, “Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world.” The construction is interesting here as “in [literally into] the name of” is singular and not plural which is going to show the unity of the three Divine Beings. We also have the definite article, *the*, before each Being (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). Using the definite article before each one shows there are three distinct *Persons* under consideration and not simply three qualities or manifestations of one Being. With the singular “into the name of” we learn there is the one God (not three Gods) with three Divine Beings who possess the nature of the one God.

As John begins his account of Christ’s life, he writes, “IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2). Concentrate for a minute on *with* found in the second phrase of verse 1

and again in verse 2. It is translated from the Greek *πρός* (*pros*) and is of great importance to this particular study. A. T. Robertson in his *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* in discussing this word in this text states, “The idea seems to be ‘facing’...the literal idea comes out well, ‘face to face with God’” (623). Later in still discussing this word, states that it is “employed for living relationship, intimate converse” (625). Lenski summarizes it

well by saying, “The idea is that of presence and communion with a strong note of reciprocity,” so the Word (Christ) is “a person in the presence of God and turned in loving, inseparable communion toward God, and God turned equally toward him” (*The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel*, 32-33). John could not use this phrase if there was only one Being manifest in more than one way. It can only be used if there are two Beings, each possessing the nature of God and facing

each other in intimate conversation with each other.

The ideas of the Oneness Holiness groups simply cannot be sustained. While we might not be able to totally comprehend the nature of God, we know “The LORD our God is one LORD” (Deu. 6:4). We also know that while God is one, it is a unified one that consists of three Beings or Persons who are separate yet unified. Each one (Father, Son, Spirit) possesses the nature of God and is God.

MH

*Continued from Page 1*

who refuse to heed the truth and just blow a teaching moment off as, “Oh, that’s just his opinion!” However, disregard for the truth by not searching it out (Acts 17:11) is tantamount to denying the Lord! Jesus warned that we are to “take heed,” both **how** and **what** we hear (Mark 4:24; Luke 8:18). Particularly when we are commanded to be likeminded when it comes to doctrine (1 Cor. 1:10; Phi. 2:2; Rom. 15:5; John 17:20-21; Amos 3:3).

This brings us to 2 Timothy 2:15 and the point Paul is trying to make for those of the first century and us today. Rather than listening to words that can profit us nothing, we should be giving **all** diligence to present ourselves approved unto God! How many Christians can honestly say they apply this command every day of their lives? Certainly not as many who *think* they are, for **if** it were being done, the Lord’s church would not be facing the amount of unfaithfulness we see today. Paul follows with an example of those not following the pattern—Hy-

menaeus and Philetus. Unfortunately, the doctrine of these individuals is still being perpetrated upon weak minds today (AD 70 and New Earth doctrine).

Others err from the truth, believing that God allows societies and cultures to determine what is right or wrong. Where, in all the Bible, do we find one case where God allowed such a thing? Nowhere! Yet, many advocate this to be the case without one passage of Scripture supporting them. In this same context, Paul warns, “**flee** youthful lusts!” (2:22). It was also Paul who instructed the men and women of Corinth that if they could not contain themselves, then they should get married (1 Cor. 7:1-3). Why? Because marriage is the only place where sexual relations between a man and woman are allowed by God. Now stop and think about that. Paul told men and women in Corinth, in a society full of free sex, that such was not allowed just because society accepted it.

The only way we can protect ourselves from being subverted or from denying the Lord, Paul says,

is by “rightly dividing the Word of truth.” The Greek word for *rightly dividing* means to “cut straight.” This is only possible through proper Bible Hermeneutics (interpretation). It is being rational with the text, keeping the context, determining whether a text is literal or figurative, and only drawing conclusions warranted by the evidence. Most people look at a text with preconceived ideas and then force their interpretation on it rather than drawing out of it what the author intended to teach. This is why there are over 4,000 denominations and other religions worldwide. Paul encourages us to “Hold fast to sound words” (2 Tim. 1:13), teach nothing contrary to sound doctrine (1 Tim. 1:10), teach no other doctrine (1:3), to be nourished upon in the words of faith **and** of good doctrine (4:6), and watch out for those who “consent not to wholesome words” (6:3).

Brethren, if we truly desire a heavenly home, then let us cease being men-pleasers (Eph. 6:6) but desire not only the sincere milk of the Word but God’s approbation.

Mexico, MO

# The Inconsistencies of Subjectivism

Tom L. Bright

There is in the religious world today a doctrine being advocated that has received the name *Subjectivism*. Without going into a long and boring definition of this doctrine, we will just say briefly that Subjectivism teaches that the truth of any proposition is not determined by any absolute, clearly defined standard of judgment but by the feelings or temperament of the person that is doing the thinking. Akin to this is the doctrine of *Relativism* which teaches that the truth of any proposition depends upon how the person looks upon and reacts to the proposition. The surprising thing about the doctrine of subjectivism and relativism is that two people can look upon any given proposition and whatsoever they might decide about that proposition is considered as *truth*, even though they might be diametrically opposed in their estimation of *truth*.

Let us turn to the Bible and apply the doctrine of Subjectivism and Relativism to various inspired accounts and draw some conclusions that are demanded by this irresponsible doctrine.

In Genesis 6:14, God commanded Noah to “make thee an ark of gopher wood.” There was no way that Noah could have misunderstood this plain and simple command. An ark was to be built, the material to be used was gopher wood, and God presented to Noah the blueprint to be used. According to the doctrine that we have in mind, the reasoning of Noah would have been something like this, “God, I know that you told me to use gopher wood, but since I have

the right to interpret your commands according to the way that I look upon and react to them, I will use pine instead of gopher wood and I am still in obedience to your commands.” Naturally the age-old question will arise, “What if Noah had used some type of wood other than gopher wood, would the ark have floated?” This is a spurious attempt to dodge the real issue. The real issue is this, what type of wood would Noah have had to use to fulfill God’s command and did Noah have the right to assume that God did not mean what He said? I challenge the subjectivist to answer truthfully this question.

In Numbers 15:32-26, we read the account of a man that was put to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. We know that this was a direct violation of the fourth commandment (Exo. 20:8), yet by applying the doctrine of Subjectivism, God **commanded** an **innocent** man to be **put to death!** God gave a direct command, yet according to Subjectivism, the truth of any proposition depends on how one looks and reacts. This man could be justified with the reasoning that his reaction to the Fourth Commandment was that God really did not mean for the Israelites to keep the Sabbath holy and do no work thereon. If subjectivism is correct, this man would be correct in his reasoning, thus an innocent man was put to death. Do you believe it? I deny it emphatically! If Subjectivism be true, then the subjectivist must admit that he is worshipping a murderer. Will they do it? I dare say that they will not, because they can-

not. Let us go further with this doctrine. If subjectivism be true, then innocent blood was shed by the command of God. Yet Solomon wrote that “There are six things which Jehovah hateth; Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him;... And hands that **shed innocent blood**” (Pro. 6:16-17). Did God hate the Israelites for fulfilling His command to put the man to death? Furthermore, God would not be innocent in this matter, because He commanded it! Did He hate Himself? Absurd? Behold the inconsistencies of Subjectivism.

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:3, “As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine.” By applying the doctrine of Subjectivism, some questions cannot be answered about this passage. How would Timothy decide what is a “different doctrine”? How could Timothy *charge* some not to teach something different, when everyone must determine within himself what is the truth about any certain proposition, and everyone is correct?

Again, let us apply this theory. In 2 Timothy 4:1-4, Timothy is admonished to “preach the word...For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine.” Just what was Timothy to understand as “the Word”? What Timothy might consider as “the Word” another might look upon as counterfeit. Furthermore, exactly what did Paul mean by those who would not endure sound doctrine? Subjectivism **must** define this that Paul referred to as *sound doctrine*. They cannot!

What might be *sound doctrine* to one person might not necessarily be *sound doctrine* to another if their doctrine is correct. Paul states in verse 4 that some “will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables.” We call upon these Subjectivist to answer these questions: What is *the truth* that some would turn from? When has one ceased to follow *sound doctrine*? Just how far away must one be before this statement applies to him and what is to determine when he has reached that point? What are the *fables* and what was Timothy to use to determine when one has turned aside to these *fables*? If Subjectivism is correct, then Paul gave Timothy commands that he could not keep.

Not only this, but consider Titus trying to speak “the things which befit the sound doctrine” (Tit. 2:1),

or to “shun foolish questionings, and genealogies, and strifes, and fightings about the law” (3:9), or in the next verse trying to decide who is a “heretic” (KJV). Just imagine Titus and Timothy trying to comply with Paul’s commandments according to the doctrine of Subjectivism.

Subjectivism asks us to follow a line of reasoning that we would not even think of following in any other sphere of life, yea, the consequences would be disastrous. Consider officials giving one football team 6 points for a touchdown and another team 12 points for a touchdown, and the only explanation given is their right to interpret the rules of football as they desire.

Just suppose that your life depended upon the success of a very delicate brain surgery. Only Dr. Butcher has ever successfully per-

formed this particular surgery but has since died. Nevertheless, he has left written instructions giving the most minute details of this surgery. As you are being wheeled into surgery, you hear one of your doctors say, “I don’t care what Dr. Butcher wrote, I have the right to interpret his instructions any way that I choose, and we are going to do this my way and change these particular points in the surgical procedure.” Indeed, Subjectivism applied to physical life is very frightening, but many would have us to apply this doctrine to our spiritual life and to eternity. Behold, the inconsistencies of Subjectivism. It is a doctrine of the devil (1 Tim. 4:1) and those that follow it are on the “broad way...that leads to destruction” (Mat. 7:13).

**Think!**

*Deceased*

## Does Anyone Blush Any More?

*Jerry C. Brewer*

In denouncing of Judah’s abominations, God spoke these pointed words through His prophet Jeremiah:

Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time *that* I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD (Jer. 6:15).

It is the nature of those who revel in wickedness and immoral conduct to have no thoughts of shame or to even blush. Their arrogance permits them to engage in whatever abominations they desire with no concern for what God or men think about their conduct.

Now consider these words from Ezra, who confessed Israel’s sins when he came to Jerusalem to restore

the Law of Moses:

And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God, And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over *our* head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens (Ezra 9:5-6).

What a contrast between Judah in Jeremiah’s day, and the godly Ezra following the Babylonian captivity!

I submit that American society today stands in the shoes of an arrogant, wicked, rebellious Judah of Jeremiah’s day. Those of us who grew up in the 1940s and 1950s were no different from today’s youngsters. We occasionally spat out a foul word we had heard

on the playground at school, or from unsavory friends. However, unlike so-called *adults* today, just before some sort of punishment was administered, that word elicited this phrase from parents and grandparents: “You ought to be ashamed of yourself!” As children, we learned *shame* and learned that when we did or said something shameful, we should manifest that shame in a blush, as Ezra. That is no longer true in society.

### **Foul Language**

Words that were spoken in dens like pool halls and beer joints in previous generations, were never uttered in the company of women and children. To be sure, they were repeated, but not in polite company. Today’s rampant wickedness of the tongue may in-

dicate there is very little *polite company* any more. On the other hand, it probably indicates that those who voice foul language have no respect for such company. They are arrogant and unashamed and aptly described by Paul in his letter to Rome:

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents (Rom. 1:29-30).

Verbal sewage which previous generations rarely—or never—heard is commonplace in today’s world. It oozes from fermentedly wicked minds into homes via television and films. It is standard verbal fare in places of business, in homes, and on public streets. It is epidemic, if not pandemic, in every hamlet, city, and state in our nation today. It was even uttered by then Presidential Candidate Donald Trump—something no previous candidate or sitting president would have done in previous generations. That is not to say that none of them used that kind of language, but they did not put it on public display to corrupt young minds and offend sensibilities of godly people.

### Sexual Sins

Fornication and adultery (including sodomy) is displayed and openly celebrated, as though this is *natural* for mankind. Soap Operas, Hollywood films, stage plays, and other mediums of the arts arrogantly publish these sinful lifestyles for all to see—and no one blushes.

Even in some places within the church, there is no blushing when *Christians* divorce without a Scriptural cause, then remarry and live in a state of adultery. Such immoral sexual con-

duct is often brushed aside with the flip quip that, “Times have changed.” Yes, *times* change, but God does not (Mal. 3:6). What was contrary to God’s moral standard 5,000 years ago is **still evil** in His sight.

In previous generations, young women who became with child were often shuttled off away from the eyes of others to have the child, and parents blushed. Not any more. Even on television game shows, you will find couples who *proudly* announce fiancés and their children. Shacking up and fornicating without the benefit of marriage is today’s *norm* and it has even become so among “senior citizens” to protect their Social Security or pension incomes. Young single women today openly and arrogantly announce on Facebook and other social media that they are “going to have a baby” without a scintilla of shame and certainly no **blush**.

If my parents could return to the world today, they would be aghast at the prevalence of sodomy in the world. They would also blush at the public acceptance of that abomination. It was inconceivable in their generation—and in my earlier years—that the sin which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah would not only be accepted in this country but **legalized** as well. Not only is it legalized, but it is celebrated, promoted, and accepted in the highest echelons of government.

There is a sad consequence to this abomination that brings others into fellowship with it. Many who would previously never accepted this sinful lifestyle now fall silent before it because their own children and grandchildren have embraced it. They may protest (in quiet corners) that they would not do it, but they lend their influence to its continued propagation by their silence and acceptance of their

sodomite offspring—and they do not even blush.

Doubtless, there are many who do blush at the widespread and rampant wickedness of our society, but they have become a remnant. Behavior that society once frowned upon has overrun us since the 1960s “free love” generation (who, incidentally, now run the country). Like frogs in slowly boiling water, we have become conditioned to accept wickedness because “times have changed” and the 1960s song, “The Times They Are A Changin’” has become the anthem of the depraved. Allan Bloom best summed up society’s failure.

Attending church or synagogue, praying at the table, were a way of life, inseparable from the moral education that was supposed to be the family’s special responsibility in this democracy. Actually, the moral teaching was the religious teaching. There was no abstract doctrine. The things one was supposed to do, the sense that the world supported them and punished disobedience, were all incarnated in the Biblical stories. The loss of the gripping inner life vouchsafed those who were nurtured by the Bible must be primarily attributed not to our schools or political life, but to the family, which, with all its rights to privacy, has proved unable to maintain any content of its own. The dreariness of the family’s spiritual landscape passes belief.... The delicate fabric of the civilization into which successive generations are woven has unraveled, and children are raised, not educated (*The Closing of The American Mind*, 1987, Simon & Schuster, NY, 56-57).

Until parents, like Ezra, feel shame and learn to blush at the wickedness that engulfs society, its tide will continue to consume and destroy the last vestiges of decency in a once moral society. How long will God’s judgment tarry?

*Elk City, OK*

## DEFENDER

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526-1798

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Pensacola, FL  
Permit No. 395

## Bellview Lectures Books

### Hard-Cover:

Refuting Realized Eschatology (2015)	\$25.00
Preaching From The Major Prophets (2008)	\$5.00
A Time To Build (2007)	\$5.00
The Blight Of Liberalism (2005)	\$5.00
Great New Testament Questions (2004)	\$5.00
Great Old Testament Questions (2003)	\$5.00
Beatitudes (2002)	\$5.00
Encouraging Statements Of The Bible (2001)	\$5.00
Sad Statements Of The Bible (2000)	\$5.00
Preaching God Demands (1996)	\$5.00

### Soft-Cover:

Understanding The Will Of The Lord (2014)	\$11.00
What The Bible Says About: (2012)	\$11.00
Back To The Bible (2010)	\$4.00

### Spiral-Bound:

The Church (2018)	\$5.00
Set Ye Up A Standard In The Land (2017)	\$5.00
Typology (2016)	\$5.00
Innovations (2013)	\$5.00
Worldliness (1999)	\$5.00
Christian Fellowship (1998)	\$5.00
Leadership (1997)	\$5.00

**Plus \$3.75 Postage and Handling Per Book**

To receive your copy of the lectureship book(s) send your check or money order to:

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

# Defender

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Vol. LII

May 2023

Number 5

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## The Jews and the Land of Canaan

*Guy N. Woods*

The future condition of the Jewish people is a matter of no small interest to all Bible students. It will not be denied that the matter is worthy of attention. It is worthy of attention for its own sake. However, more important still, it derives additional importance from its relation to other themes. One's views on this subject determine, in a large measure, one's views on many of the most vital and fundamental questions associated with the scheme of redemption and the kingdom of God. To be in error on this question leads to hopeless confusion in matters involving the destiny of us all.

The Jews have been a people greatly distinguished. They were great in their origin, great in their history, great in their former exaltation, and now great in their utter degradation. If, from this latter state, they are to be delivered and again brought into the land of their fathers, there to reestablish their national polity and system of worship and again enjoy a superiority over the nations of the earth, it will be at once felt that these are matters to which Bible students cannot remain indifferent.

Do the Scriptures teach a literal restoration and future earthly glory of the Jewish people in the land of their fathers? It will not be denied that many Jews, in the progress of events, will return to Jerusalem. This they have done, and after the war will likely continue to do. More, it is possible that under the mistaken notion now so prevalent regarding their future destiny, they may attempt to establish their national polity and system of worship. The question is whether the Scriptures, rightly interpreted, do in fact teach anything as to their literal restoration and reestablishment of their institutions, and whether this literalism is to be taken as a part of Christianity and Christianity made responsible for the development and consummation of the scheme it contemplates. Two arguments are offered in support of the literal future restoration described above:

1. It is urged that the covenant by which God conveyed the land of Palestine to Abraham and his posterity is declared to be an “everlasting” covenant, and the land conveyed as an “everlasting” possession. This promise was

originally made to Abraham, then to Isaac, later to Jacob, and then to the patriarchs. The leading passages are: Genesis 17:7-8, 26:3-4, and Psalm 105:8-11. It is urged that since the covenant giving to Israel the land of Canaan is an “everlasting covenant,” and the land promised an “everlasting possession,” the people must eventually return and dwell there—else the promise of God fails.

This argument involves two important considerations. Its validity turns on the meaning of the word *everlasting* as here used—whether it means a full and absolute eternity, or whether it is modified by the subject to which it relates, and is to be interpreted as a long, yet limited, duration; second, whether if there be in the covenant a deeper relation rendering it eternal, whether this element does not relate to something of which the earthly Canaan was but a figure and type. *Everlasting covenant* and *everlasting possession* are susceptible of either of these meanings. There are numerous instances in which *everlasting* (especially in the Old Testament) has the meaning of a long, yet

*Continued on Page 3*



## Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

# Speaking in Tongues

There are many who now advocate for “tongue speaking.” Some have gone so far as to make it the final step in being saved. They would teach to be saved one must hear God’s Word, believe in Jesus as the Savior of the world, repent of one’s sins, confess their faith in Jesus as the Christ the Son of God, be immersed in water for the remission of one’s sins, and then receive the Holy Spirit (some would call this Holy Spirit baptism) which is evidenced by speaking in tongues. They have added to God’s plan of salvation and need to obey God’s plan. These are no more our brethren as those who remove something (such as baptism) from God’s plan.

### What is Tongue Speaking?

First, consider what we find in the New Testament regarding this subject. In Acts 2, on the great day of Pentecost and the beginning of the church, the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (2:1-4). As evidence of this baptism the apostles (and only the apostles received), they “began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (2:4). The record shows there were Jews from all over the known world at the

time (2:5-11). Luke shows that the “other tongues” of verse 4 are languages of man as he writes, “every man heard them speak in his own language... how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?... we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God” (2:6, 8, 11). The apostles were speaking in tongues, but the tongues were languages of man. Even though the apostles were Galilaeans (2:7), they were speaking in different languages of men. It was miraculous because they had never studied, never learned those different languages, yet they were able to speak them, so they understood what the apostles were speaking.

In 1 Corinthians 12-14 there is an extended discussion of spiritual gifts (i.e., miraculous gifts given by the Holy Spirit). One of the nine spiritual gifts is that of “kinds of tongues” (12:10) which is the same kind of tongues we find in Acts 2. However, some skip to what it states in the KJV later on in the context, “For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries” (14:2) along with *unknown* being used by the translators throughout the chapter. It must be noted *unknown* in the KJV is italicized indicating it was a word supplied by the translators but not in the text to attempt to help us in our understanding; they could not foresee the misuse of the term in the future. It was being used for a tongue (language) of man that was not known by the speaker; the same as it was being used in Acts 2. However, can we be sure the usage

in 1 Corinthians 14 are languages of man? The answer is a clear, yes. When we come down a little, we find, “In the law it is written, With *men* of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord” (14:21). This is a quote from Isaiah 28:11-12. The context of the quote is the Israelites had rejected Isaiah’s warnings treating them childish. God’s response to this is that He would one day teach them by speaking to them in another language, a foreign language spoken by the Assyrians. Thus, when Paul quotes it, the “other tongues and other lips” is the Assyrian language that God would use to teach the Israelites and Paul uses it to show the tongues under discussion are languages of man. It was a spiritual gift (miraculous) in that they would be able to speak a language they had never known or spoken.

### What Tongue Speaking is Not

What is spoken of as tongue speaking by those today is nonsensical gibberish. Those today know they cannot do what was done in the first century (what is Bible based) so they simply make unintelligible sounds and call it tongue speaking. Since it is not what the Bible shows tongue speaking is (a language spoken by people), they will claim it is their

*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

own private, personal language, and it does not matter what it sounds like. Their experience means more than words to them. The practice is emotion based and not Bible based. It is an experience that is not specifically godly or Biblical as it is done by pagan cults (and was done by them before the Lord established the church) and even atheist can do it. It is a learned experience that is based upon the power of suggestion and submission to an authority figure.

There are no verified claims of being able to speak in a language of man that is not known to the speaker. In Bible times, there was also a need for translation (interpretation) for those who might not know that language. With Bible tongues, there was a way to verify what had been said. However, there is no way to verify the gibberish of today. The *translation (interpretation)* can be anything, and there is no way to be assured of that supposed *translation (interpretation)*.

## The Cessation of Tongue Speaking

In this midst of the long discussion of spiritual (miraculous) gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul writes, “whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease” (13:8). The question one might ask is: when will they cease? It states specifically they shall cease, but when? Paul lays the foundation for the answer by saying that we “know in part, and we prophesy in part” (13:9) He then contrasts this with what will be: “when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (13:10). During the time in which they had tongues (along with the other miraculous gifts) was the time of being “in part.” *Perfect*, as seen in the contrast with “part,” means complete. It has to do with the written revelation of God’s Word. During the time of “in part” they did not have the totality of the written revelation as it was in the process of being given. Thus, during that “in part” time, there

was the need for the continuation of miracles including tongue speaking. However, when they had the complete or totality of that written revelation, then the “in part” (the miracles including tongue speaking) would be “done away” or “tongues, they shall cease.”

## Conclusion

God says tongues would end when “the perfect is come.” Thus, when people claim to speak in tongues today, it is impossible for them to do what they did in tongue speaking during the first century—speak fluently in a language of man the speaker does not know. As such, they must invent something else, making nonsensical sounds or gibberish, and steal the Bible tongue speaking to call what they do tongue speaking. Let us not be fooled by these nonsense speakers. What they do is not Biblical, godly, or spiritual in any way and leads to emotionalism instead of obedience to God and His Word.

MH

*Continued from Page 1*  
limited, period. The reader can find these easily with a concordance. We offer the following as illustrations: Of the Passover it was said: “Ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever” (Exo. 12:14). All concede that the Passover feast has long since ceased to be applicable. Quite obviously, then, the words “for ever” in this passage do not signify an absolute eternity, but a period equal in duration to the institution of which the Passover was a part. The priesthood of Aaron was called “an everlasting priesthood” (40:15), yet

the priesthood has ceased, both the law and the priesthood having been changed. Of the great annual atonement among the Jews it was said, “This shall be an everlasting statute unto you” (Lev. 16:34), yet the Jewish atonement is no more; and, finally, God said to Abraham respecting circumcision, “And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant” (Gen. 17:13), yet circumcision is no longer obligatory, and is not, and will never be, an ordinance in the church of our Lord. It seems clear, therefore, that *everlasting*, when applied to matters known to be

temporary, signifies only the duration of that period, but no more.

If it be asked how we shall determine in different cases whether the expressions *everlasting*, *eternal*, *forever*, and others of similar import, are to be understood of a long period or of absolutely unlimited duration, the answer is: The subject matter of the discourse and the connections of the passage must furnish the rule of judgment. Words have different meanings, and a particular meaning in any given case can be determined only by the

connections in which the words stand. The whole spirit and genius of language rests on this principle. We conclude, then, that *everlasting* bears a limited meaning in the passages above alluded to. As a matter of fact, it can have there no other meaning. Peter expressly declares that the earth shall be destroyed, and the elements thereof shall melt with fervent heat (2 Pet. 3:10). Canaan could be enjoyed only so long as the earth stands. If in reply to this it be urged that the enjoyment of the land of promise will follow the destruction of the earth, the argument is still invalid, for in that event it will not be the land originally promised.

There is, indeed, a sense in which the promise of God to Abraham prefigured and overshadowed a later promise of which that was but a shadow and type. We speak of the "heavenly Canaan," a "better *country*, that is, an heavenly" (Heb. 11:16). The earthly Canaan was a shadow and type of richer blessings seen through it. Now, to permit the spiritual promises inherent in the former to recede from view and to seize upon the earthly Canaan as the fulfillment and embodiment of our aspirations and longings today is to rob the promise of its chief grandeur and glory. It is going back to things exploded, a coming down from heaven to earth. The city "which hath the foundations" is truly the substance of which the earthly Canaan was but shadow and type. Let us, with Abraham, seek the "better country."

2. The second argument alleges that Israel has never possessed the whole of the land mentioned in the promise. Advocates of a literal restoration of the Jews to Palestine

put no little confidence in this argument. It is said that the land promised to the fathers has never yet, the whole of it, been possessed by their descendants; and as the promise of God cannot fail, the people must, on this account also, return, that the whole of what is promised them may be put into their possession. The borders of that land are frequently described in the Scriptures. God said to Abraham: "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18). Its borders are more particularly described by Moses in Numbers 34:3-12. The substance of the description there given is as follows: The territory was bounded on the south by the wilderness of Zin. On the west, "ye shall even have the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border." On the north, "from the great sea ye shall point out for you mount Hor...unto the entrance of Hamath." On the east, "the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth...shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea." It will be observed that the country east of the Jordan was not included. The two and a half tribes had already taken possession of this country, and it was not necessary to include it in assigning the boundaries for the other tribes. Collecting these boundaries, we learn that the land of promise extended from the wilderness of Zin and Edom on the south to Lebanon and the entrance of Hamath on the north, and from the Euphrates on the east to the Mediterranean on the west.

Now, is it a fact that the children of Israel never really entered upon this territory and wholly possessed it? This is, it must be conceded, a matter of no small moment. Even if the people never did possess the whole of the land, it might be urged that God was not obligated to give it to them. They broke their covenant with Him, thus morally and legally releasing Him from the performance of His part of the obligation (See Jud. 2:20-23). He would have been entirely within His rights in withholding the land from the Israelites on this account alone. But not to rest the matter on this ground, as God is always better to man than he deserves, let us inquire whether, in fact, there was any such failure to possess the promised land in its entirety. In 2 Samuel 8:3 it is said that "David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates." Or, as elsewhere expressed, "David smote Hadarezer king of Zobah unto Hamath, as he went to stablish his dominion by the river Euphrates" (1 Chr. 18:3). It will be remembered that the territory of the promised land was bounded by the Euphrates on the south and Hamath on the north. In these directions it is clear that the dominion of David embraced the whole of that land thus described. Similar statements touching the extent of the land of Israel may be found in 1 Kings 4:21; 8:65, 2 Chronicles 9:26, and 2 Kings 14:25. Nothing is more natural in setting forth the boundaries of a given territory than to announce the northern and southernmost boundaries. This the sacred writers have repeatedly done in giving the territory of the Israelites. We are

not saying that they entered upon the whole of the land promised them at once, or that their possession thereof was peaceful and uninterrupted. It is enough for our purpose to show that the children of Israel did, in fact, enjoy possession of the land God promised to Abraham.

Yet, to set the matter entirely at rest it will surely suffice to show that the Scriptures expressly declare that the promise was fulfilled.

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.... There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass (Jos. 21:43-45).

In his farewell address to Israel the aged Joshua said:

Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof (23:14).

There must, indeed, have been a general and glorious fulfillment thereof, or it could not have been spoken of in the manner here set forth. If any doubt remains, it is surely dispelled by the following declaration of Nehemiah:

Thou *art* the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram,...And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give *it, I say*, to his seed, and **hast performed thy words**; for thou *art* righteous (Neh. 9:7-8).

It follows, therefore, that the Israelites actually and literally entered upon the land promised their fathers and possessed it. Let us do our utmost to turn them from the contemplation of a land now desolate and bare to that richer blessing, the heavenly Canaan. Let us point them to a higher good, a good which is substantially and literally eternal, and which can still be theirs if they will acknowledge Him as their King whom they crucified. And may we all allow the earthly Canaan, with its barren fields and squalid, filthy hovels, to recede from our view and joyously journey onward to that “better country,” over which no desolating scourge can ever sweep, a land whose skies are always bright.

*Deceased*

## All Authority

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations” (Mat. 28:18-19).

The great commission, as recorded by Matthew, is the proclamation of all power or authority of Jesus Christ. The claim of all power, or all authority, “in heaven and in earth,” is a high claim accompanied by the tone of finality. Yet, it is a rightful claim. He had fought and conquered the powers of the Hadean world, thus “through death” destroying “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14).

Therefore, all power in heaven and in earth—power seen and unseen, power unlimited and unbounded by geographical or

ethereal lines—was given unto Him.

### Christ Has All Power—Now

There are three branches of power in our earthly government—legislative, executive, and judicial—vested, respectively, in our Congress, President, and Supreme Court. The divine government of heaven likewise has these three branches of power—all vested in Jesus Christ, our Lawgiver, King, and Judge.

God announced His Son as the new Lawgiver on the mount of transfiguration in the presence of Moses and Elijah, the pioneers of law and prophecy, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Mat.

17:5). The regime of Moses and the prophets was passing. The law was about to be abrogated. Christ was soon to assume the reins of government. Judah’s Shiloh had come, and “unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be” (Gen. 49:10—ASV).

Christ has all power. He is not only Lawgiver with legislative power; He is King with executive power. His kingly power is strikingly set forth in the first chapter of Hebrews. He has been appointed heir to God’s throne. He is seated in majesty at God’s right hand. He is above the angels. On the throne of God in the heavens, He sways the scepter of His righteousness and His kingdom and will rule until all enemies

become His footstool. Such an exalted position is proof of His Kingship, and we may join in the glad refrain of the coronation psalm:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; And the King of glory shall come in. Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.... Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he *is* the King of glory (Psa. 24:7).

When Jesus ascended in the clouds, the gates of heaven received Him, and the King of glory entered. Amid the shouts of a myriad of angels, He was escorted to the throne of God. The inaugural ceremonies of heaven were held. The King was seated on His throne and began His reign, which will continue until every foe is vanquished and death is destroyed. Then the kingdom in which He now rules by appointment from God will be surrendered to the Father, Christ will then take His place with us in heaven, and “the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

### **Christ Exercises All Power Now**

Some mistakenly assume that since all evil has not been banished and Satan bound, and all the world has not converted, Christ does not now exercise all power. This is a misconception of the nature of Christ’s power and how it is exercised. It requires as much power to save one soul as it would to save every soul. It is through the Gospel that all power is exercised. Hence, upon His announcement of all power, Jesus said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations” (Mat. 28:19) or, as worded by Mark, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel” (Mark 16:15). The power of Christ is moral, not physical. It is planted in the heart through the Gospel. And every time a soul is saved in obedience to the Gospel, “all power in heaven and the earth” has been exercised in the salvation of that soul.

### **Acting by Divine Authority**

In the salvation of souls, Christ’s power is exercised in the Gospel and applied to the heart in faith and obedience. Thus, the Gospel is “the power of God unto salvation

to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16). In the church, Christ exercises power in the rules of government. Hence, the second charge of the commission reads: “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mat. 28:20). Christ is not only head of the church but also “head over all *things* to the church” (Eph. 1:22). All that pertains to the church must come by His authority, observing only the “all things commanded,” Paul re-enforces this principle in the charge: “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of [by the authority of] the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17).

Thus, when the New Testament commands a thing to be done, it authorizes the doing of that thing only—nothing else, nothing more, nothing less. Space will not allow the citation of numerous examples to illustrate the truth of this principle. But it seems so evident as not to require argument that we can act by divine authority only in the doing of the “all things commanded.”

*Deceased*

## **Children in Adulthood**

*Charles Pogue*

After the death of Solomon, and the kingdom was to fall to Rehoboam, Rehoboam consulted with the older men, who counseled him to lighten the burden on the people. Instead of doing as they advised, he went to the younger men who counseled him to do just the opposite; make their burdens greater. Consequently, the kingdom was divided, and there

was continual war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam who took away ten of the tribes and formed the northern kingdom. Rehoboam took the advice of a child, and thus proceeded as a child. In 1 Corinthians 13, when Paul stated that when he was a child he spoke, understood, and thought as a child, he was using that as an illustration to show that

when the perfect revelation came, the out of part system of revealing the Word by the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, would be done away. Still, he followed expressing what he did as a child, with the point that when he became a man, he put away childish things. There is a lesson much needed in that very thing today. There are many people who are grown in years either

physically or spiritually, but in so many ways still cling to childish things.

Although it is certainly important, we are not speaking here only about the spiritual growth of newborns, of whom Peter said need the sincere milk of the Word (1 Pet. 2:2). Rather, we are also referring to a more diverse problem with so many. We are referring to those who still talk, understand, and think about the things children do instead of what grownups should.

When I was a child, I could barely wait for Saturday and the Saturday morning cartoons to come around. When I was a child, I loved to read juvenile stories about a young man and his adventures with his dog. When I became a man, if I continued to have interest in those stories at all, it was rarely and not very much. When I became a mature adult, I no longer had very much interest in those cartoons anymore as I did not watch them since they are childish.

We are not saying that there is anything wrong with a grownup watching a cartoon. What we are saying is that some adults (and the reference here is for illustration purposes) still live stuck in childish things, and they fail to grow up to the point spiritually where reality and consideration of eternity takes the place of childish things. They still speak, understand, and think as children. There are many people who are 50, 60 years of age, and even older, who give more attention to the fantasies of childhood, and the things of this world, than they do to the reality of Christian living and adulthood. Consequently, to

carry on a conversation with such people, it will be a pretty much one-sided thing when the topic turns to the Scripture, spiritual matters, and the coming judgment. Like children, they still live in a world of make believe instead of one of reality. They are content not to grow in faith and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (Phi. 3:8; Col. 1:9-10; 3:10; 2 Pet. 1:2, 5) Because the preceding things are true, many people do not think seriously about what is important in this life, being right with God, and what is important about the next life, being prepared for it. They do not leave behind the childish things and grow up. They are children in adulthood.

Why don't some people leave behind childhood and grow up? Job 8:11 states: "Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water?" The obvious answer is no, they cannot. A person cannot grow to maturity in a physical way without feeding on the things they must learn as they grow toward adulthood. Even so, the Christian cannot grow to spiritual maturity by simply leaving behind the things of the world. It takes daily delving into the divine dictates to do that.

There are those who are children of God, and the fundamental word in this context is, children, who stay children. These are those who may devour storybooks of fiction, but you will never see them open their Bibles. They may put much emphasis on knowledge of things of this world, but little if any on knowledge of God, and what pleases Him. They may cry when their football team loses, but not when brethren

fellowship false teachers or those who have departed from the faith. In fact, they sinfully continue to fellowship them, themselves. They may be worried about making a living in this life, but not worried about where they will spend the next one.

Those who remain spiritual newborns, or children, do not just make life difficult for themselves alone: they make life difficult for those close to them, who are giving their effort to growing to maturity in Christ. How so? Instead of working with those who are trying to grow in Christ, their ignorance, disregard, or distaste for spiritual things, leads them to being out of sorts toward those close to them who are concerned with spiritual matters. They express their sorrow, discontent, even anger toward the person or persons by words or actions or both, thereby discouraging them. It is a grievous thing for the child of God to not come to spiritual adulthood, and to hold on closer to the things of this world, rather than to the things of the next one.

Let us keep in mind the words of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:14-15:

That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ.

The newborn in Christ must go through a period of growth to reach maturity, but woe is unto them who never leave being children in adulthood.

*Deceased*

## DEFENDER

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526-1798

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Pensacola, FL  
Permit No. 395

## Bellview Lectures Books

### Hard-Cover:

Refuting Realized Eschatology (2015)	\$25.00
Preaching From The Major Prophets (2008)	\$5.00
A Time To Build (2007)	\$5.00
The Blight Of Liberalism (2005)	\$5.00
Great New Testament Questions (2004)	\$5.00
Great Old Testament Questions (2003)	\$5.00
Beatitudes (2002)	\$5.00
Encouraging Statements Of The Bible (2001)	\$5.00
Sad Statements Of The Bible (2000)	\$5.00
Preaching God Demands (1996)	\$5.00

### Soft-Cover:

Understanding The Will Of The Lord (2014)	\$11.00
What The Bible Says About: (2012)	\$11.00
Back To The Bible (2010)	\$4.00

### Spiral-Bound:

The Church (2018)	\$5.00
Set Ye Up A Standard In The Land (2017)	\$5.00
Typology (2016)	\$5.00
Innovations (2013)	\$5.00
Worldliness (1999)	\$5.00
Christian Fellowship (1998)	\$5.00
Leadership (1997)	\$5.00

**Plus \$3.75 Postage and Handling Per Book**

To receive your copy of the lectureship book(s) send your check or money order to:

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

# Defender

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Vol. LII

June 2023

Number 6

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## Nadab and Abihu

*Gary W. Summers*

Those not very familiar with the Scriptures may not recognize these names. The event associated with them has never been made into a movie (so far as the author knows). But the significance of what they did and God's response to it has made quite an impact on students of the Word. For a few, it has become a matter of controversy.

Nadab and Abihu were two of Aaron's four sons, the other two being Eleazar and Ithamar. Since God chose Aaron to be the high priest, and his sons would follow in his footsteps, they were being prepared for the task even as their father was. In Exodus 28:1, God tells Moses:

Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

The apparel for the high priest is described in Exodus 28, along with the ephod, the breastplate that fit over it, the Urim and Thummim that were placed in it, and the turban with the plate on it that said: "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." The sons are mentioned again in Exodus 28:40-41, as God tells Moses:

For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics, and you shall make sashes for them. And you shall make hats for them, for glory and beauty. So you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him. You shall anoint them, consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister to Me as priests.

This brief history is provided to make it clear that God had ordained these four sons to be priests and to minister to Him, which is what two of them were doing in Leviticus 10:1a: "Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it." Before finishing the sentence, notice the important facts leading up to this point again.

First, Nadab and Abihu were authorized to minister to God as priests. They were not without qualifications (since they were the sons of Aaron) nor without preparation (proper instruction). As far as is known, they were wearing the proper garments while engaged in their priestly duties. None of these things is called into question.

Second, there is no hint that they were the least bit rebellious or unhappy with the work they had been given to perform. They seem

to be the oldest or most prominent of the four brothers since their names always come first. In Exodus 24:1, God issued a special invitation to Moses: "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar." Why Eleazar and Ithamar were not included in this gathering would be a guess.

### God's Judgment

The second part of Leviticus 10:1, along with verse 2, proves to be quite unexpected (the first time the reader sees it)—and astonishing; Nadab and Abihu "offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD."

From a man's perspective, it does not look like they did anything worthy of death. The reader must ask the questions. "What was the reason for the outpouring of the wrath of God? Why was the fire profane?" We know that God had given particular and detailed instructions about everything related to the worship He had instituted.

*Continued on Page 4*



## Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:

mhatcher@gmail.com

# Age of Accountability

We hear a great deal of an age of accountability but does the Bible actually teach such? Not everyone believes in such a view. I know of one who tried to make a distinction between an age of accountability and instead called it an age of discernment. This was done to try to avoid accountability, as one simply could not discern right from wrong. However, since they were not accountable, they were still accountable even though they could not discern sin. One might ask, though, if one cannot discern right from wrong how can they be accountable for it?

The first thing we must recognize, is God's Word is for those who can reason, draw conclusions, and understand. For example, God, in speaking to Israel, says, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD" (Isa. 1:18). The idea of *reason* as used here is "to dispute with any one" (Gesenius) with "the literal meaning of this verb is 'to argue'" (*Lexham Theological Wordbook*), or "argue out together (in legal dispute)" (*Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*). It seems obvious for

a person to be able to *reason together* he must be of sufficient mental capacity to accomplish such.

Paul instructed the Thessalonians to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 The. 5:21). *Prove* is defined, "to make a critical examination of something to determine genuineness, *put to the test, examine*" (BDAG). To make a critical examination takes mental awareness. One must be able to gather facts and draw proper conclusions regarding those facts to "prove all things" or to prove anything.

When one considers *faith*, and the *faith* that saves, it again is addressed to those who have sufficient mental capacity. There should be no need to list all the many passages showing the necessity of faith; so, I am assuming that everyone agrees on its necessity. Paul informs us as to its origin when he writes, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The Hebrews' writer points out, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). The idea is God's Word is the foundation of our faith as it gives us the evidence that supports our faith which, in turn, supports our hope. So, faith is based upon tangible evidence. Thus, to have faith (which is necessary to our salvation) one must be able to consider that evidence and come to a proper conclusion of it. When one who does not have the mental capacity to consider the evidence and come to that conclusion of it, he is incapable of having saving faith (or any other

type of faith). This type of individual cannot be held accountable for **failing** to have what it is **impossible** for him to have.

Additionally, every command God gives is based upon the fact of man's ability to understand it and then obey it. No one can be held accountable for something they have no ability to understand and no ability to obey. When one comes of age (or as we call it an age of accountability), then he can understand and obey God's commands and becomes accountable for understanding and obey them.

There are at least three passages which show this principle. When Moses begins to give the Law a second time, he rehearses what brought them to this point. He reminds them of the spies sent into the land and the evil report of those spies leading to the rebellion of the people. While that generation had died out, Moses states that now Joshua would take them into the promised land. He then states, "Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it" (Deu. 1:39). The previous generation had

*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

murmured against Moses, Aaron, and ultimately God, partly saying, “that our wives and our children should be a prey” (Num. 14:3). That generation was not allowed to enter the land but wandered in the wilderness till they died off. However, the children who were not of age and had “no knowledge between good and evil” were not held accountable for the actions which took place. They were innocent and now they would be entering the land God was giving them.

One of the great prophecies of the Old Testament is found in Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” This sign (indicating a miraculous conception and birth) was given to the “house of David” (7:13 not to Ahaz) to show the continuance of Judah till the promised Son was born and Syria along with Ephraim (the Northern kingdom of Israel) would not continue to exist. There is a timeframe as to when these two nations who opposed Judah would cease to exist. That timeframe is found in the next couple of verses: “Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings” (7:15-16). While the child here could refer to either the Messiah or Isaiah’s son that God instructed him to take, Shearjashub (7:3). The point is, however, there is a time in which a child does not “know to refuse the evil, and

choose the good.” During that time, the child could not be accountable for good or evil. The child simply does not know better and, thus, is not accountable for his actions.

The third passage one needs to consider is in Jonah. You will recall Jonah was sent to Nineveh to preach God’s message that He was going to destroy them because of their wickedness. Of course, Jonah decides to flee the opposite way to Tarshish. God corrects him through the belly of affliction whereupon Jonah prays to God for salvation. God has the great fish “vomit” Jonah out on dry land whereupon God repeats the message for him to go to Nineveh and preach God’s message. Jonah obeys this time and preaches his simple, clear message: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” (Jon. 3:4). Since Assyria was the bitter enemy of Israel, Jonah desired Nineveh’s overthrow. Because Nineveh repented at Jonah’s preaching, “And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not” (3:10). God failing to destroy Nineveh displeased Jonah. So, he went out to the side of the city to “see what would become of the city” (4:5) and built him a booth. God prepared a gourd (a plant possibly castor-oil or cucumber) giving him some shade but then God prepared a worm to cause it to wither. The sun comes up along with a scorching east wind causing Jonah to faint and then thinking it was better for him to die than

to live. God then makes the point:

Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle? (4:10-11).

The fact there were 120,000 who could not “discern between their right hand and their left hand” shows a level of immaturity on the part of those 120,000 where they could not discern between their hands. *Discern* means, “to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to know, to be acquainted” (Gesenius). If these 120,000 could not even know or perceive between their hands, there is no way they could be accountable for their actions. They certainly would not be able to tell the difference between right and wrong and thus the innocence of those 120,000.

Thus, we see there is a time in which children are not accountable for their actions as they cannot discern moral values and cannot understand or do God’s instructions. As they grow and develop (something that varies between individuals), they come to understand and can obey God’s Will thus becoming accountable for their actions. We can also take solace in the fact that God does not hold one accountable when they are in that infant state. They are born innocent of sin and will remain that way till they become accountable beings.

*Continued from Page 1*

The altars and the furniture for the tabernacle of meeting were to meet precise, Divine specifications. The correct garments were to be worn. What had Nadab and Abihu done wrong?

God had given the Israelites instructions about building the altar of incense—one of the items of furniture kept inside the holy place. It was to be a square table—one cubit by one cubit; it stood two cubits high (about three feet) (Exo. 30:2). Aaron was to put incense on it each morning and evening (30:7-8). It was only to be used for incense. No grain offering, drink offering, or burnt offering was to be made upon it. Furthermore, no strange incense was to be used upon it (30:9). The incense was to be made of certain ingredients, which are listed in Exodus 30:34-38.

However, the incense does not appear to have been the problem for the sons of Aaron. Their error was in the fire that they used. Later, in Leviticus 16:12, the fire to be used on the Day of Atonement was to come from the altar of burnt offering. A previous record of that fact is not to be found, but if God found fault with what Nadab and Abihu did, He must have specified which fire was to be used in connection with the incense.

However, Nada and Abihu used a different fire. Why? One commentary suggests that perhaps they were overawed by what had just occurred, which is described in Leviticus 9:23-24. Moses and Aaron came out of the tent of meeting “blessed the people.... And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar.

When all the people saw *it*, they shouted and fell on their faces.”

Were Nadab and Abihu shy about getting fire from an altar that had just blazed so hotly? The theory makes sense when looking at the reaction of the rest of the congregation. But then where else would they have obtained fire to put in their censers? The *Pulpit Commentary* suggests that there were various fires near that altar “for boiling the sacrificial flesh” (2:1:149). Speculation aside, what are the facts we know?

1. The priests, up to this point, were compliant. “So Aaron and his sons did all the things that the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses” (Lev. 8:36).
2. They used the correct incense since nothing indicates otherwise (it would surely have been mentioned, under the circumstances, if they had done two wrong things).
3. They obtained the fire they intended to use from some other source than the one God had designated.
4. In so doing, they did not regard God as holy (10:3).
5. They did not glorify God (10:3).
6. Thus, “fire went out from the Lord and devoured them” (10:2), which means God regarded their actions as extremely serious. Whether or not they intended to dishonor Him, the fact is they did, and it cost them their lives.

### **Can This Passage Be Used?**

Preachers have often used this occurrence as a warning that we do not participate in false worship. Some have objected to that practice. However, it was obviously a

sin, and it did involve worship. So, hmm! Below are a few pertinent translations of the sin from various versions. These two men offered strange fire:

KJV: “which he commanded them not.”

NKJ and NAS: “which He had not commanded them.”

ASV and ESV: “which he had not commanded them.”

RSV: “such as he had not commanded them.”

NIV: “contrary to his command.”

Interestingly, the NIV and the ESV call it “unauthorized” fire instead of “strange” fire. Unauthorized may not be an accurate translation in place of strange, but it is the idea being presented in the text. Nadab and Abihu used fire which God had not specified. They did not take the fire from the altar of burnt offering: they obtained it from another source. Can this principle, however, be used against the use of adding instruments of music to our worship?

All right, let us see. First, for the priests, God specified the fire from the altar of burnt offering be used. God specified that the Christian is to sing. Second, God did not forbid the priests to use any other fire for the burning of incense (any other incense was forbidden). God did not forbid instruments of music, vocal sounds, yodeling, or whistling to be used in worship. Third, when Nadab and Abihu used an unauthorized source of fire, God consumed them with fire. Is it a stretch to say God would be equally displeased if Christs used unauthorized music in worship today? If so, what would the reason be? We are doing what God commanded when we sing.

It is reported that, after the Joplin Unity Summit in 1984 (nearly 40 years ago), some members of the church said, “I will never again use Nadab and Abihu against the Christian Church,” the rest of us said, “Why not?” Nothing happened there that changed either the Scriptures or our interpretation of them. Recently, someone wrote (in connection with his podcast) the following opinion:

Comparing the sin of Nada and Abihu with the use of instrumental music is a false equivalency. Nadab and Abihu disobeyed the explicit instructions of God by offering something other than what was explicitly commanded. However, those who sing with instruments are still singing and presumably doing so with and from their heart.

Wait a minute! Why is the comparison a false equivalency? What is not parallel? What the author of the statement says is true about Nadab and Abihu. They disobeyed God by not using the fire He told them to use. However, He did not

forbid the use of any other fire. Similarly, People who sing with the use of instruments have added what God did not authorize. The Lord did not forbid instruments any more than He forbade other sources of fire. The two situations are precisely comparable.

Those who use instruments are still singing. No, they are singing with accompaniment. Is it not still the case that adding to the Word of God and taking away from it is still wrong (Deu. 4:2). Yes, we live under a different covenant than the Law of Moses, but altering the Word of God is still wrong. Paul told the Galatians they had turned to another gospel (Gal. 1:6). What? Hadn't they repented of their sins? Weren't they still baptized for the forgiveness of their sins? Oh, then, it is all right. No, it is not. The Gospel is no longer the gospel. It had been mixed with the doctrines of the Judaizing teachers.

Well, they “are still singing.” No, they are singing, **and** they have added instruments. Just as the

Gospel is no more the gospel when Judaizing teachings are added, singing is no more singing when instruments of music are added. If not, why not? No one gets to add to God's Word with impunity.

### **What Does the Text Say?**

Suppose some refuse to be impressed with the argument presented above. It might help to return to the text of Leviticus 10:1-3 once more. The important piece of information about this event is: “How does the passage define what the sin is?” They do not appear to have transgressed in ten different ways in what they did wrong. Only one thing is named.

They used the wrong fire; God had specified using the fire from the altar of burnt offering, but they used something else. It does not matter where they found it; it was not the right fire. They used what God had not authorized. God does not authorize instruments of music for New Testament worship. Add them at your own risk.

*Winter Haven, FL*

## Predestination

*J. D. Borden*

Are you a Christian? If not, do you want to be? If so, I will try to assist you in coming to the knowledge of the truth. Can an alien do anything toward his salvation? If so, what is to be done? It is believed by good men that man's destiny is foreordained and that he can do nothing to save himself. To show you that this doctrine is believed, by your permission, I will quote from the *Presbyterian Confession of Faith*, Chapter 3, Section 1: “God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own

will, truly and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.” But let us read on: “God's decrees are wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of His own will. Whereby from all eternity He hath, for His own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, especially concerning angels and men.”

Now, if the doctrine here set forth is true, we think it impossible for man to err, and whatever he does, whether good or bad, is in keeping with and brought about by God's foreordination or decree, and

therefore cannot be wrong. It follows then that if man is lost, it is no fault of his, but it is God's decree. It comes to pass that man steals, but it is not his fault if this doctrine be true. A man cannot avoid his acts if the doctrine be true. Go with me to the Garden of Eden. God made man and gave him a law. In it He said that man should not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and that if he did, he should die. Adam did eat, which proves that God foreordained that he should, if the doctrine be true. Adam was in

a dilemma. If he kept the law, he would go against God's decree, and if he transgressed, he would go against God's law. God told him not to eat but decreed that he should. Is that it? eh?

You can see from the above that the doctrine is unreasonable but let me go on. God said: "Thou shalt not kill" (Exo. 20:13). It comes to pass that man does kill, if the doctrine be true, God foreordained that he should. Again, God's commands and decree do not agree. God said that man should not kill, but decreed that he should, did He? God put a curse on Cain because he killed his brother, and yet, according to the doctrine, Cain acted according to God's decree. How could a merciful God punish a man for doing according to His decree? Can you believe that He does? I think not. How can God unchangeably foreordain anything, and then make a law contradicting it? "The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works" (Psa. 145:9).

God said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jon. 3:4). Here was the positive decree of God that did not come to pass, for He saw by their works that they turned from their evil ways, and God repented of the evil that He had said He would do unto them and did it not (3:19). Surely this decree was changeable, according to man's actions.

God said to Hezekiah: "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live" (2 Kin. 20:1). Here was a positive decree of God that did not come to pass, for the King prayed and cried, and God heard his prayers and saw his tears and added to him fifteen years (20:5-6). Here was a decree, concerning the

king's death, that was changed. He lived another fifteen years longer, and the change was brought about by his prayers and tears.

We next invite you to 1 Samuel 23:11-13. When King Saul was trying to kill David, David went down to a place called Keilah to get out of Saul's way and to save his life. Word came to David that Saul was coming to that place after him, so he asked the Lord if Saul would come down to Keilah, and also if the men of Keilah would deliver him into the hands of Saul. The Lord told him that Saul would come to Keilah and that the men of Keilah would deliver him into the hands of Saul. So, David took his men and left Keilah. Saul heard that David had left Keilah and did not go to that place but went in the direction that David went. Now, if God had unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, then God ordained that Saul would not go to Keilah at all, but David would leave, and Saul would follow after him. It seems to me that if that had been true, and that all things were unchangeably foreordained, that God would have said: "No David, for I have unchangeably foreordained that you shall leave that place and Saul will follow after you." However, God had not foreordained anything about that, and knowing what was in Saul's mind, told David what Saul intended to do.

We now call attention to a statement in Jeremiah 18:7-10.

At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to pluck it up and to pull down and destroy it, if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do

unto them: and at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.

Here we see that God's purposes are to overcome on certain conditions. He speaks of nations, but the same can apply to us. If we do good in His sight, He will always bless us, and if we do evil, He will curse us. Jesus said in Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." We often meet people who do not believe, and it is often because they have not heard, but when they do hear, they are believers. Now, will anyone say that the man who believes is still under condemnation? I think not. You can see this from the way God decrees. They are conditional. God is not willing that any should be lost, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). Now see from what has been said that God does not foreordain any to be lost, neither does He foreordain whatever comes to pass, for it does come to pass that some men do not come to repentance and are lost, and it is not the Lord's will that any should be lost, which shows us clearly that God has not unchangeably foreordained everything that comes to pass.

I wish to call attention to one or more passages of Scripture, which shows that man is his own free moral agent, and can obey God and be saved, or disobey and be lost.

Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse, a blessing if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I com-

mand you this day: And a curse if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day (Deu. 11:26-28).

Now in view of the great day of the Lord, will you sinner friend, turn from your evil way and obey

the commandments of the Lord before it is too late? I am your brother and friend in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Deceased*

[Editor's note: This came from a book *Life & Sermons of J. D. Borden*. It is the first of sixteen ser-

mons contained in the book and is used by permission of the copyright holder, Bill Clayton. If you would like to obtain a copy of the

book contact him: 3816 Oxford Ct; Bedford, TX 76021

email: billclayton6512@att.net.]

## Jesus Must Be Your Lord to Be Your Savior

*Douglas Hoff*

Eternal life is an exciting prospect. Who has not wondered what heaven will be like? Most Americans believe Jesus is the way to eternal life. God sent His only begotten Son into the world not to condemn but rather to save lost souls. The fact Jesus came to seek and save the lost means each person needs Him as his Savior. The Scriptures teach all have sinned and that the wages of sin is death. However, God is not willing that anyone should perish. He is pictured as a loving Father in heaven. He knew man would rebel against His law but instead of consigning mankind to a justly deserved punishment, He chose to send Jesus as the Savior of the world.

Since God gave the world its Savior, does this mean that everyone will be saved from the ravages, guilt, and punishment of sin? Jesus taught, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 7:21). How many will be saved? The Savior Himself said many will choose to take the easy and popular way through life, but it is the way that leads to hell.

Only a few will choose the narrow, difficult, and often unpopular way which leads to eternal life (Mat. 7:13-14).

On the Judgment Day there will be a lot of surprised people. Vast numbers of humanity think they are on good terms with God. They even profess Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Yet, Jesus will tell them to depart because they were, in reality, workers of iniquity (Mat. 7:23-24). Some will protest by pointing out all the good things they did in their lifetime, but the Judge's sentence of exile will stand. The Judge of all the earth makes no mistakes (Gen. 18:25).

Professing Jesus is one's Lord rings hollow if there is no obedience to prove it. Jesus illustrated this in the parable of the two sons (Mat. 21:28-31). After the father told his first son to go work in the vineyard he refused. Later, he repented and went to work. The other son gave lip service to the father by saying, "I go sir," yet never went to work. Which son did the will of his father? Clearly, the second son did not even though he used a term of respect in addressing his father. This is no different than a

person calling Jesus Lord then refusing (or failing) to obey Him.

Most people can appreciate why God would exclude from heaven those who stubbornly disobey. The second son hypocritically feigned obedience. In reality, he was more hard-hearted than his brother. Both sons were stubborn, but the first son repented of his disobedience.

Has a person truly rendered obedience to the Lord if he does only those things which he wants? Sometimes, when people learn what God commands, they resist doing it. Initially, the first son wanted to follow his own will, not his father's. However, until he did what he was told, he did not please the father.

Will good intentions excuse a failure to comply with God's commands? No. Remember, Jesus said only those who do the will of the Father will be allowed into the heavenly kingdom. The Bible reveals it is impossible for God to lie (Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18). God will not go back on His Word. Therefore, you must obey your Lord if you expect Him to be your Savior.

*Rockwood, MI*

## DEFENDER

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526-1798

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Pensacola, FL  
Permit No. 395

## Bellview Lectures Books

### Hard-Cover:

Refuting Realized Eschatology (2015)	\$25.00
Preaching From The Major Prophets (2008)	\$5.00
A Time To Build (2007)	\$5.00
The Blight Of Liberalism (2005)	\$5.00
Great New Testament Questions (2004)	\$5.00
Great Old Testament Questions (2003)	\$5.00
Beatitudes (2002)	\$5.00
Encouraging Statements Of The Bible (2001)	\$5.00
Sad Statements Of The Bible (2000)	\$5.00
Preaching God Demands (1996)	\$5.00

### Soft-Cover:

Understanding The Will Of The Lord (2014)	\$11.00
What The Bible Says About: (2012)	\$11.00
Back To The Bible (2010)	\$4.00

### Spiral-Bound:

The Church (2018)	\$5.00
Set Ye Up A Standard In The Land (2017)	\$5.00
Typology (2016)	\$5.00
Innovations (2013)	\$5.00
Worldliness (1999)	\$5.00
Christian Fellowship (1998)	\$5.00
Leadership (1997)	\$5.00

**Plus \$3.75 Postage and Handling Per Book**

To receive your copy of the lectureship book(s) send your check or money order to:

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

# Defender

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Vol. LII

July 2023

Number 7

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## Who is the Troubler?

*Gary W. Summers*

Some actually are troublemakers, and the prime example involves the man who cost Israel a victory at Ai. Achan violated the command of God to abstain from taking any of the spoils from Jericho. Those were the first-fruits of the conquest of Canaan, and God reserved them for Himself—for the treasury of the Lord (Jos. 6:18-19). God cautioned the nation not to take these spoils for themselves lest they (1) personally become accursed, (2) make the camp of Israel a curse, and (3) trouble it.

Despite the warning, Achan took some of the spoils and hid them under his tent, thus troubling the Israelites—and bringing trouble on himself (7:25). First Chronicles 2:7 later also mentions that this same man was “the troubler of Israel” (although he is called Achar there instead of Achan).

As best as this writer can discern, this one incident involves the use of the word *trouble* (Strong’s—5916) four out of the ten times it is used in the Old Testament (other Hebrew words are also translated *trouble*, however). The student of the Word finds the first usage of this word in Genesis 34:30. After

Simeon and Levi unlawfully slaughtered Hamor, Shechem, and their kinsmen, Jacob told them: “You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land.”

A sixth usage of the word related to Jephthah’s daughter as she greeted her father on his return from battle. He told her: “You are among them who trouble me!” (Jud. 11:35). Jonathan said of his father’s prohibition against eating food on the day of battle: “My father has troubled the land. Look how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey” (1 Sam. 14:29).

Although David used other words for *trouble*, he did not use the word under consideration. Solomon, however, did in one verse: “In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble” (Pro. 15:6).

### **The Accusation**

Now we come to the main point, which is found in 1 Kings 18:17, and that is a person can wrongly be accused of being a problem: “Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to

him. Is that you, O troubler of Israel?” In the eight previous examples, the troubler was correctly identified, but here Ahab is accusing the wrong individual for Israel’s problems.

But wasn’t Elijah the cause of the drought? He had told Ahab: “As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years except at my word” (1 Kin. 17:1). James wrote: “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain on the land three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit” (Jam. 5:17-18).

It looks like Ahab has a point, but one additional verse sheds more light on the situation. It appears that Elijah was acting in harmony with God’s purpose since He tells the prophet: “Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth” (1 Kin. 18:1). So, was the drought God’s idea and Elijah went along with it, or the other way around? Or was it a mutual decision? Regardless, the point of the dire circumstance was punishment upon Israel for its devo-

*Continued on Page 4*



## Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

### Should?

Recently we came across a *new* doctrine regarding *should*. This novel doctrine affirms that *should* “in the Scriptures (as found in both the KJV and NKJV) is used **only** when speaking of matters of obligation (that is, the Christian ‘should’ do something, or ‘should not’ do something is only used in matters of obligation).... The word ‘**should**’ is synonymous with a **command of God**.” In connection with this, it was written, “To preach a matter of option as something a Christian ‘should’ do, or ‘should not’ do is to preach the false doctrine of legalism/anti-ism. It is binding where God has not bound, and it is ‘teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ (Matt. 15:9).”

To say the least, this is a viewpoint and doctrine I have never heard of before. I do not know of anyone who has ever made such a bold statement as is seen here. It seems to me to be obvious that the advocate of such a doctrine did not study the over 600 times *should* is found in the Scriptures (whether the KJV or NKJV). He might have *cherry-picked* a few verses and come to this conclusion, but when you do such, you normally come away with error. Many of the “faith only” advocates

have done the same thing regarding salvation. They go to a few *cherry-picked* passages and then conclude we are saved by faith only. Or as one person (no doubt representing many others) put it after referencing John 3:16, that it completes the picture. Thus, salvation by faith only to the elimination specifically of water baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

It is, however, interesting to go to the original language and consider the word from that standpoint. Yet, when one does, he will find there is no Greek word for *should*. While I do not generally advocate using Strong’s or Young’s (especially to argue a point of doctrine), I looked up the word to find the Strong’s number, but there was no Strong’s numbers except for a few and when looking at those very few occasions, none of them actually mean *should*. As I looked at Young’s, it did have an entry for *should*. The three Greek terms that it lists (the same as Strong’s) are *dei* which means must or necessary, *mello* which means about to or going to, and *opheilo* which means to owe or be obligated. None of them actually mean *should*. Having failed with these, I went to the *English-Greek Dictionary* by S. C. Woodhouse and tried it the reverse way (going from the English to the Greek). Again, I was thwarted in my effort as it goes from *Shot* to *Shoulder* (p. 769). So again, there is simply no Greek word for *should*. Yet, here is an individual who is willing to condemn any soul to torment for using a word that has no basis in the Greek.

The question would naturally arise that if there is no Greek

word for *should*, why is it found so many times in the KJV and NKJV (*Young’s Literal Translation* seems to shy away from *should* as it is only found 20 times total)? The simple answer is that it is derived from the verb. To illustrate, the future tense in Greek is expressed by the tense of the verb; however, the English adds the word *shall* or *will* to the verb. Thus, the Greek simply changes the word (for example *luo* to *luso*) while the English adds a word (*luo* meaning I loose to *luso* to I shall loose). This is what has happened with *should*. Primarily it is derived from the mood of the verb and mainly the subjunctive mood which is the mood of a “doubtful statement, of hesitating affirmation, of contingency” (William Davis, *Beginning Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 74). Or, as Michael Heiser wrote, “The mood that normally presents the verbal action as being probable or intentional. The subjunctive can also express verbal action in terms of mere possibility” (*Glossary of Morpho-Syntactic Database Terminology*). Quotes such as these could be multiplied many times over as the subjunctive being the mood of potentiality and not reality. It also is often used to translate an infinitive (the same in English as in Greek) which is often expressed with a *to*

**D**efender 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

statement. Michael Heiser puts it, “An infinitive is a verbal noun. That is, it is a word that has characteristics of both a noun (*To read is fun*) and a verb or adverb (*I want to read*).” Twice it is used to translate the Greek word *dei* which means must or it is necessary (Mat. 26:35; Mark 14:31), once *shouldest* (Mat. 18:33), and once *behooved* (Luke 24:46).

With this basis, let us consider the very limited passages this new law was based upon. The first passage is Mark 6:12: “And they went out, and preached that men should repent.” He then ties to it Acts 17:30: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.” Since repentance is a command of God in Acts 17:30, *should* must be “synonymous with a command of God.” However, even a cursory reading of Mark 6:12 does not demand the conclusion of *should* being “synonymous with a command of God,” in fact, it is stretching the language to conclude such. In this case, Lenski explains this passage well by saying, “This ἵνα [translated *that*] is subfinal and states *what* the apostles preached.” Mark’s statement is what the apostles preached and the statement in Acts is why they were to preach it—it is a command of God.

The second passage used is Luke 24:47: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” It is then affirmed that *should* is being “used as a **command** of our Lord, and was fulfilled in Acts 2.” Here *should* is attached to *preached* which is an infinitive. As noted previously, an infinitive is

basically a *to* statement. In this phrase, it would be that repentance and remission of sins is to be preached. In fact, *Young’s Literal Translation* has, “and reformation and remission of sins to be proclaimed.” Will he also make the phrase *to be* “synonymous with a command of God”? Obviously **not!** This passage does not sustain his view.

He then appeals to John 5:23: “That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” It is then stated, “All men are to honor the Son—a **command** of our Lord. A matter of obligation in order to be pleasing to God. And Jesus uses the word ‘**should**’.” The context starts in verse 18 that the Jews were seeking to kill Jesus because He made “himself equal with God.” Starting in verse 19 Jesus explains that He can only do those things which the Father did and does nothing of Himself. The Father loves the Son and desires all men (including the Jews) to do so also and to honor Him. To this end, “he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel” (5:20), the Son will quicken (make alive) whom He will (5:21), and the Father commits “all judgment unto the Son” (5:22). Then there is the Greek ἵνα [translated *that*] to “It indicates that the Father’s purpose for giving authority to judge to the Son is in order that the Son may receive the same honor as the Father” (Ronald Trail, *An Exegetical Summary of John 1-9*). Thus, the Jews, as all men, needed to be honoring the Son, but they were not doing so (which is the use of the subjunctive here), so the Father was giving these things to the Son so they would. This passage gives no

support to the idea that *should* is always “synonymous with a command of God.”

The next passage in the attempt to prove this doctrine is 1 Thessalonians 4:3: “For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.” This is much the same as Luke 24:47. *Should* is attached to *abstain* which is an infinitive. Most everyone takes that the infinitive here (along with the other four in 4:3-6) is explaining the sanctification found in this verse. As with other infinitives, it can be translated with *to*: to abstain, to know, to possess, to not go beyond, to not defraud. This passage does not support the view that *should* is “synonymous with a command of God.” Since *should* is not even a word in the original, and the original actually uses an infinitive which is *to* (do something or not do it), it becomes foolish to build a doctrine around such a passage as this regarding a word that does not exist in the original.

The last passage considered by this advocate is 1 John 3:11: “For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” Here John uses *love* in the subjunctive mood (mood of possibility or potentiality and not reality). This also has ἵνα [translated *that*] preceding the subjunctive mood of “should love” (from ἀγαπάω—*agapao*). This is the same construction as Mark 6:12 with it being, as Lenski put it, “subfinal and states *what* the apostles preached.” In 1 John 3:11, A. T. Roberson states this is a “sub-final clause” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*). The difference between them is in

Mark 6:12 it is what the apostles preached, while in this passage it is the message preached. Marvin Vincent states, “**That** (iva). *The purport and aim of the message*” (*Word Studies in the New Testament*). Thus, instead of *should* being “synonymous with a command of God,” it is saying that the aim of the message they heard would produce a love one for another.

The Greek has a very easy way to indicate a command when they so desired. It is by using the imperative. Yet, since there is no word for *should* but it is instead derived by the mood of the verb, it is impossible to conclude, as this advocate, that *should* is “synonymous with a command of God” and “only used in matters of obligation.” Yet, this advocate would condemn anyone who uses *should*

“to indicate what is probable,” “to indicate what is probable...to express obligation, propriety, or expediency.” Yet, if someone uses it to express expediency, this advocate says you are a false teacher who is going to end up in torment. In our editorial next month, I plan to look at several passages that will result in grave problems if this view is accepted.

MH

*Continued from Page 1*  
tion to idolatry, which King Ahab permitted.

Therefore, Elijah refused to be mischaracterized as the troubler of Israel; he set the record straight immediately to Ahab’s face: “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals” (18:18). It was at that point that Elijah suggested the contest between himself and the false prophets.

Later, Jehu would agree with Elijah’s assessment concerning the house of Ahab. The time drew near for Jezebel to be punished for her wickedness. As Jehu raced toward Jezreel, King Joram of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah came out to meet him (2 Kin. 9:21). Joram asked him, “Is it peace, Jehu?” The future king of the northern kingdom responded severely: “What peace, as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft are so many?” (9:22). Whereas Ahab occasionally experienced a moment of humility, Jezebel never did; she was evil to the end.

These are the ten instances from the Old Testament of someone be-

ing described as a troubler. In nine of the verses, the description proved to be accurate, but one was not accurate. Elijah was not the troubler of Israel.

### The New Testament

As with the Old Testament, various words are defined as *trouble* in the New Testament, but there are four we are interested in. The main word is *tarasso* (Strong’s—5015). This word is paired with the preposition *ek* on one occasion—the one in which Paul and Silas were “dragged before the authorities” in Philippi (Acts 16:19). These authorities made an accusation against them: “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe” (16:20-21).

The evangelists were beaten without being allowed a defense, bound, and imprisoned. This was totally unfair, but it led to one of the great conversions in the New Testament.

The turmoil began after Paul cast a demon out of a slave girl (16:16-19). Those who were making money from the predictions caused the *Trouble* (Strong’s—1613) since they lost a profitable

commodity. They seized Paul and Silas, causing the turmoil. It is doubtful that the evangelists were teaching anything that violated Roman law. That charge was only alleged—not proven.

Before getting to the verb, we note two nouns associated with it. *Tarachos* (Strong’s—5017), in its two New Testament appearances, is translated *stir*. The first event refers to Peter’s disappearance when he was chained between two soldiers. The apostle’s unexplained departure occasioned “no small stir” among the soldiers (12:18). The other event took place in Ephesus where there arose “no small stir” about the Way (19:23—KJV). That situation almost developed into a riot.

The other noun, *tarachee* (Strong’s—5016), also appears twice. Mark records Jesus using the word to describe the events preceding the destruction of Jerusalem. Among other things, there would be “famines and troubles” (Mark 13:8). An angel would go down into the pool and trouble (Strong’s—5015) the water: after the *troubling* (Strong’s—5016), whoever stepped into the water would be healed (John 5:4). (The

New King James uses stirred and stirring.)

About 13 additional times this verb is used in the New Testament. Zechariah was troubled when an angel of the Lord appeared to him beside the altar of incense (Luke 1:11-12). Herod was troubled that one called the king of the Jews had been born in his dominion (Mat. 2:3). Jesus made a sudden appearance in the midst of His disciples after His resurrection, and He asked them, “Why are you troubled?” (Luke 24:36-38). In John 14:1 and 27, Jesus encouraged His disciples not to let their hearts be troubled.

### Another Accusation

Most of the time, when individuals are termed troublemakers, there is evidence to support the charge, as was the case with the Judaizing teachers. They were teaching that Gentiles needed to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses (Acts 15:1, 5). In making these demands, they were requiring actions that God had not bound upon Christians. Thus, they had *troubled* the church. The apostles and elders in Jerusalem sent them a letter explaining the truth of the matter (15:24).

The Judaizing teachers, however, continued in their insistence of keeping the Jewish traditions. Paul wrote to the Galatians that these individuals perverted the Gospel of Christ and did trouble the brethren. Paul says that they preached another gospel and were accursed—twice (Gal. 1:6-9)! Later in the letter, Paul expressed confidence that the one who troubled them would bear his judgment (5:10). The Jews constantly opposed Paul and those with him,

but in actuality they were the ones who “troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city” (Acts 17:8).

Although a different word is used in Acts 24:5, the NIV (which is often not reliable) and the NET both have Tertullus calling Paul a troublemaker. (The NKJV has “a creator of dissension.”) But as with Elijah, Paul was not the one creating the problem. As he himself says, “And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city” (24:12). The actual troublemakers are those who stirred up the crowd.

Mentioned in the “Pro-Life Students Forced to Leave the Smithsonian” article (4-23-23) was Riley Gaines who recently spoke at San Francisco State University. She and many other female athletes object to men competing in women’s sports. Apparently, these *men* only need to say they are transgender, and they can compete as women. Most sane individuals can see the unfairness of this ploy as men begin to break all the records held by actual women. However, in a woke society, one is not allowed to disagree. And anyone disagreeing can be harassed and punched by other *women*.

San Francisco State University is upholding the *peaceful* protest against Gaines and has publicly praised those who assaulted her. Now who caused the problem—the person making a case for male athletes not competing as females—or those who do not want her to exercise freedom of speech—speech with which most Americans agree?

Of course, this incident is troubling, it involves a secular matter—

one that is crucial to the maintaining of our basic freedoms. However, in the church, leading brethren have been accused of being troublemakers, as Elijah and Paul were; these modern-day charges are as bogus as they were in the Scriptures.

When, for example, elders began to bring instrumental music into the worship, several members rightfully opposed it. They were accused of being troublers. It did not matter that the actual troublers were those who introduced that which neither Jesus, the apostles, nor any church in the first century used—instruments of music to accompany singing. No authority existed for it (Col 3:17), but the majority desired to have it and did not care if others could not conscientiously worship with them. They could like it or lump it. Most of them felt compelled to leave and start a new congregation.

The same scenario can be used to describe all the various innovations that some *progressives* want to add or change. Today, brethren claim to have studied and prayed before allowing women to serve as elders, deacons, or preachers. When brethren protest, they are likewise accused of being troublemakers and are invited to leave. The innovators’ efforts will all fall back upon them in the judgment because God knows who created the division and is not fooled by slanted verbiage.

True Christians clothe themselves with love and peace (Col. 3:14-15). Love tries to solve problems—not create them. Neither does love accuse others of that which the accusers stand guilty.

Winter Park, FL

# But the Bible Doesn't Say Not to....

Lee Moses

“But the Bible doesn't say **not** to!” This is the defense many make when asked why they engage in the religious practices they do.

“Why do you have mammoth theatrical productions in worship?” “The Bible doesn't say **not** to!”

“Why do you worship God with mechanical instruments of music?” “The Bible doesn't say **not** to!”

“Why do you have a birthday celebration for Jesus?” “The Bible doesn't say **not** to!”

“Why do you sprinkle babies and call it baptism?” “The Bible doesn't say **not** to!”

Since God does not specifically say **not** to do something, the reasoning goes, it must be permitted. However, is this reasoning reasonable? Does the Bible permit that which it does not expressly forbid?

## A Universal Principle?

The reason many feel that **Bible** silence permits is because they believe that **all** silence permits. “The court system will not imprison someone for breaking a law that isn't on the books—how could God condemn a practice He has never directly addressed?” Certainly, there are times in our society when silence permits—but is this universally true? Can one always do what is not specifically forbidden?

If an employer sends an employee to purchase paper towels for the restroom, what will the employer's response be if the employee returns with paper towels **and** new paper towel dispensers?

The employee might respond, “You didn't tell me **not** to get paper towel dispensers.” However, this would be immaterial—the employer said nothing about getting paper towel dispensers; therefore, the employee was not authorized at that time to purchase them.

Picture a mother telling her children, “You may go outside to play in the yard.” What if those children proceed to play in the yard for a few minutes, and then go across the street to play at the park? One can imagine the ensuing conversation:

“I said you could play in the **yard**.”

“We **did** play in the yard!”

“But I **only** said you could play in the yard—not in the yard **and** at the park.”

Clearly, the children were not allowed to play at the park, but why? The mother never specifically stated that the children could **not** play at the park. The mother was silent about the park, and thus permission was not granted to play at the park.

If a teacher sends a disorderly student to the principal's office, is it acceptable if that student makes a quick detour over to the Coke machine? “But you didn't say **not** to!”

Can anyone in any situation really say that authorization has been **granted** if no one in authority has said anything on the matter one way or the other? Evidently, silence cannot always be equated with permission; it quite often equates to prohibition. So

why would so many make the leap to say that the silence of the Scriptures permits?

## God Tells Us How to View His Silence

Obviously, the Bible does not **directly** address every issue that mankind faces today; yet we are assured, “[God's] divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3). Sometimes the Bible teaches by implication—for example, the Bible does not directly address drug use; but because of its exhortation to “be sober” while it condemns drunkenness (cf. 1 The. 5:6-8; 1 Cor. 6:10; Gal. 5:23), one must infer that recreational intoxication of any type is displeasing to God. Nevertheless, even when the Bible is completely silent on an issue, the Bible somehow teaches how we should respond to that issue. There are only two possibilities with regard to the silence of the Scriptures: (1) The silence of the Scriptures permits, or (2) The silence of the Scriptures forbids.

The Holy Spirit instructs us that we are to have authority for all we do: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all **in the name of** the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17 *emph. LM*). If one were to hear banging at his door accompanied by a gruff, “Open up **in the name of the law**”; he would know exactly what his visitor meant—the law gave the police officer **authority** to compel the homeowner to

open his door. The officer could not compel anyone to open his door **in the name of the law** until he first obtained **authority** of the law. Before we can do anything “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” we must obtain authority of the Lord Jesus (see also Acts 4:7), which authority can only be found in His testament (the New Testament), in the Bible. The Bible gives us everything we need for Christian doctrine and practice, completely furnishing the Christian for “ever good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17; compare with 2 Pet 1:3). If there is a good work, the Bible instructs us in it. If the Bible does not instruct us in it, it is not a good work. Since we are commanded to “Prove [‘Test’ New King James Version] all things; hold fast that which is good” while we must “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 The. 5:21-22; compare with Psalm 119:104), anything the Bible does not authorize explicitly or implicitly must be rejected.

The Israelites were given a general principle “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Deu. 4:2). For one to “add” to God’s Word, one would have to foray into areas where He is silent. The principle of “not adding” to God’s Word continues throughout the Scriptures:

Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar (Pro. 30:6).

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God

shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

God has given us boundaries within which we must remain. **These boundaries are defined by His Word.** Paul wrote several things to the Corinthians “that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written” (1 Cor. 4:6—ASV). The apostle John wrote, “Whosoever transgresseth [goeth onward—ASV], and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). One must remain within the confines of Christ’s doctrine, the New Testament, or that person has fellowship with neither God nor Christ. When one acts where the New Testament is silent, he has gone onward from the doctrine of Christ.

The Bible teaches us how to view its silence—and emphatically declares that its silence prohibits. Of Jesus Christ the inspired writer penned, “For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law” (Heb. 8:4). Notice that it does not say He could not be a priest on earth because the law said **He could not**—it says He could not be a priest on earth because the law only authorized certain others (descendants of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi) to serve as priests. “For *it is* evident

that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses **spake nothing** concerning priesthood” (7:14, emph. LM). Moses’ **silence** concerning the tribe of Judah serving as priests **forbade** those of the tribe of Judah serving as priests—even Jesus. Friend, if even our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was constrained from acting where the Word of God was silent, how much more should we be constrained by the silence of the Scriptures?

God will not condemn anyone for breaking a law that “isn’t on the books.” However, God has given us a general law regarding His silence which is “on the books.” There may be numerous religious practices the world can conjure which are neither authorized nor expressly forbidden in the Bible. However, when the Bible teaches us that we are not to add (religious practices or otherwise) to God’s Word, we are forbidden from practicing them, and condemned when we do.

### Conclusion

Probably no one who would profess to be a Christian would say that **anything** not specifically forbidden would be an acceptable religious practice. However, no doubt many will continue to defend their desired religious practices with the excuse, “But the Bible doesn’t say **not** to!” However, the idea that silence permits is neither universal nor Biblical. As we consider what religious practices to continue, let us not make the excuse, “The Bible doesn’t say not to”—let us each rather say, “I will just do what the Bible says to do.”

Union City, TN

## DEFENDER

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526-1798

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Pensacola, FL  
Permit No. 395

## Bellview Lectures Books

### Hard-Cover:

Refuting Realized Eschatology (2015)	\$25.00
Preaching From The Major Prophets (2008)	\$5.00
A Time To Build (2007)	\$5.00
The Blight Of Liberalism (2005)	\$5.00
Great New Testament Questions (2004)	\$5.00
Great Old Testament Questions (2003)	\$5.00
Beatitudes (2002)	\$5.00
Encouraging Statements Of The Bible (2001)	\$5.00
Sad Statements Of The Bible (2000)	\$5.00
Preaching God Demands (1996)	\$5.00

### Soft-Cover:

Understanding The Will Of The Lord (2014)	\$11.00
What The Bible Says About: (2012)	\$11.00
Back To The Bible (2010)	\$4.00

### Spiral-Bound:

The Church (2018)	\$5.00
Set Ye Up A Standard In The Land (2017)	\$5.00
Typology (2016)	\$5.00
Innovations (2013)	\$5.00
Worldliness (1999)	\$5.00
Christian Fellowship (1998)	\$5.00
Leadership (1997)	\$5.00

**Plus \$3.75 Postage and Handling Per Book**

To receive your copy of the lectureship book(s) send your check or money order to:

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

# Defender

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Vol. LII

August 2023

Number 8

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## Paying the Price for Pleasure

*Don Tarbet*

A *trilogy* is something that involves a series of three's, that relate to each other, yet can be independent in thought—such as three connected movies that tell separate stories individually, but collectively tell one greater story. It is used a lot in some of the movies shown on television. It can describe a three-act play. This study can be called a *trilogy*, in that it involves a series of threes, and all begin with the letter “P.” Each major point has its three sub-points—making it somewhat of a trilogy of trilogies. We shall be studying them in reverse, as we look at the last three first, and work backward. The title of this material is “Paying the Price for Pleasure.” So, we begin with an analysis of *Pleasure*.

**First**, consider the word *pleasure*. *Pleasure* is described as something delightful, that brings satisfaction, or great enjoyment. There are three kinds of pleasure that come under consideration at this point (1) There is **innocent** pleasure, referring to things that are **not** forbidden in the Word of God—hence, they are “authorized” by the Lord, or have His approval. They are not forbidden by any law. This would

include the enjoyment of sports activities, table games, or enjoying good company with friends or relatives. It can also be the enjoyment of dining out at a restaurant, watching decent movies (if such can be found), birthday parties and celebrations, or going on dates with the opposite sex. It can include marriage, and the sexual privileges enjoyed in that relationship. It includes good music of various kinds. Most adults prefer the type music that was popular when they were young, while younger folks do not enjoy music that was popular before their time but prefer the type music that is played in their lifetime (2) Then, there is **obedient** pleasure, which involves the **doing** of that which is commanded by the Lord. Doing God's will should and does bring great pleasure. When Philip taught the eunuch, he wanted to be baptized, he was told he could be if he believed. He then acknowledged his faith, and was baptized, and then went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:35-39). He was happy to now be saved from his sins, and to become a child of God. Undoubtedly, Philip was also pleased, as it always brings

pleasure to teach the Word of God and see people respond to it in obedience (3 John 4). Christ is the author of salvation to all that **obey** Him (Heb. 5:8-9). Then, as Christians, there are many things we can do to have pleasure—such as worshiping God in the way **He** has directed (John 4:23-24), helping the needy (Gal. 2:10), and doing good to others (Gal. 6:10). Even physical work is satisfying to those who are able to fulfill their responsibilities in life in providing the necessities of life for their families. (3) Then there is **sinful** pleasure, the doing of things that God **forbids**. Eve saw how the food from the tree of knowledge of good and evil was “pleasant” to the eyes. God had forbidden it, but she desired it, not knowing the displeasure it would ultimately bring her and all the people of the earth who would ever live until the end of time (Gen. 3:1-6). Paul speaks of Moses who chose to suffer, rather than to enjoy the “pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb. 11:24-26). He, by faith, kept his eye on God and the ultimate reward he would receive by doing right. He truly realized that the pleasures of sin were only for a season,

*Continued on Page 5*



## Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

# Should?

In last month's editorial, I introduced a new and novel doctrine regarding *should*. It is being affirmed that "in the Scriptures (as found in both the KJV and NKJV) it is used **only** when speaking of matters of obligation (that is, the Christian 'should' do something, or 'should not' do something is only used in matters of obligation)... The word '**should**' is synonymous with a **command of God.**" This brother also affirmed, "To preach a matter of option as something a Christian 'should' do, or 'should not' do is to preach the false doctrine of legalism/anti-ism. It is binding where God has not bound, and it is 'teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' (Matt. 15:9)." At that time, we noticed every passage called upon to establish this viewpoint and showed where the advocate misunderstood every passage and none of them taught what was being proposed.

Having said that, there are numerous passages which have been ignored that cause tremendous problems for such a doctrine. Let us begin by noticing the very first time *should* is used in the Bible (both KJV and NKJV). It is a statement by God as He viewed

His creation: "And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man **should** be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). If this doctrine is true, then it is a command of God for man not to be alone; it would be sinful for a man not to have a wife. Someone who lived as a bachelor his entire life could not go to heaven. If a man did not get married and live in that married state, he would be violating a command of God, something that is mandatory on man. If one attempted to argue that this was Old Testament and does not apply to us, it would be good to remember that Jesus goes back to this context for His teaching when questioned by the Pharisees (Mat. 19:3-9). Nevertheless, we do have some difficulty with the apostle Paul. Most take his statement, "For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I" (1 Cor. 7:7-8), as meaning that Paul was never married. Yet, if Paul was never married, or even if he was (as some hold) married and widowed prior to his becoming a Christian, then our Lord made him an apostle when he was living in direct violation of something God had mandated and thus was obligatory upon all men. This certainly would be inconsistent with being an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Turning to the New Testament, one of the false doctrines we face in the religious world is salvation by faith only. One of the many objections to the NIV when it came out was its mistranslation of John

3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Brethren correctly pointed out the last phrase teaches salvation by faith only. If one has faith, then he "shall not perish." The use of *shall* takes any conditions away and while future it means this is going to take place and no possibility of it failing to take place. *Should*, on the other hand, is a conditional statement and thus takes it out of the realm of certainty. For example, John later writes, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (12:42-43). According to this novel doctrine, those Pharisees who refused to confess Christ because they loved the praises of man more than God will be saved. The reason being that if *should* is mandatory, then all that is necessary is to have faith (which also brings in the false doctrine of once saved always saved). Yet, Jesus taught that those who deny Him before men will be denied before the Father (Mat. 10:32-33) and we must love Christ above even family relations (10:36-37). Yet, if this doctrine is true, then these

*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

Pharisees will be saved. Who can believe it?

Another troubling passage is the statement written by John, “He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son of Simon*: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve” (John 6:71). *Should* is in both the KJV and the ASV but the NKJV has *would* instead. If *should*, as is found in the KJV, is a mandatory action that is commanded by God, then Judas was obeying God’s command by betraying our Lord. If Judas had failed to betray Jesus, then he would have been disobeying God’s mandate for him. However, that puts us in a quandary. Acts 1:18 shows Judas’ act was iniquity (sin). Then, in Acts 1:25, it says regarding Judas that he “by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” Since Judas’ act was iniquity and he transgressed, then when it states he went “to his own place,” we must understand that he went to torment. Now we have an individual who was commanded by God (a mandate he **must** obey) to commit sin. Yet, according to this doctrine, Judas was obeying God’s mandate and still went to torment. Does that mean if we obey God’s commands, we can end up in torment like Judas? What a paradox if this doctrine of *should* was accurate. We **should** all be thankful that this position is not true.

In John 9, Jesus has miraculously healed the blind man. There arose a controversy between the healed man and the Pharisees. During this controversy it states that the Jews did not believe that he had been blind (John 9:18). As a result, they asked his parents if he was their son, if he was born blind,

and how he now sees. They respond that he is their son, and he was born blind. Nevertheless, when it came to that final question as to how he now sees, they claimed ignorance. John gives the reason for their answer, “These *words* spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should [would—NKJV] be put out of the synagogue” (9:22). Since the KJV uses *should* is John saying that it was the obligation of the Jews because it was the command of God that anyone who confessed Jesus as Christ be put out of the synagogue? This again seems highly inconsistent with what Jesus had taught His disciples in sending them out on the limited commission: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 10:32-33). Since the blind man’s parents are refusing to confess Jesus as Christ, (according to this view) God has commanded the Pharisees to put them out of the synagogue, but by their refusal they are also going to be denied before God the Father. What a conflict we end up with if we accept this unique view of *should*.

Paul and Barnabas went on a successful mission trip recorded by the beloved physician, Luke, in Acts 13-14. While on this trip, John Mark began the work with them but for some unknown reason departed from them and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). After they returned to Antioch and gave their report, Luke records, “And

certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (15:1). After going to Judaea (Jerusalem) and discussing the matter, Paul approached Barnabas with this suggestion, “Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do” (15:36). Obviously, Barnabas thought it was a good idea so he “determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark” (15:37). However, the NKJV states Paul’s response: “But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work” (15:38). This disagreement was so sharp, they departed from one another with Barnabas taking Mark and going to Cyprus while Paul taking Silas and returning to those congregations he had established. This certainly leads to some questions. When Paul insisted they not take Mark, since *should not* is used, was that a command of God that was mandatory on Paul and Barnabas? The KJV seems more akin to the Greek in using “thought not good” instead of “insisted.” It comes from the Greek *axioo* and regarding this verse BDAG states, “deem, hold an opinion,” while Louw-Nida states, “to desire something on the basis of its evident worth or value,” and Thayer states, “to think meet, fit, right...to judge worthy, deem deserving.” The idea expressed by the Greek stands in contradiction to the idea proposed by *should* according to this advocate. If *should* is a command of God and something

mandatory for man, then it is demanded that Barnabas violated God's command and thus sinned in taking Mark and sailing to Cyprus. Who can believe such nonsense as this? Yet, we are being asked to believe such by this new doctrine.

Another interesting problem is found when Paul is arrested. Paul had been paying for four men who had taken a vow and was purifying himself with them (Acts 21). Some Jews saw Paul entering into the temple and they falsely assumed that he was bringing a Gentile into the temple. As a result, they caused a riot and were planning on killing Paul. He was rescued by the chief captain, Claudius Lysias. As the soldiers were carrying Paul up the stairs into the castle, he asked the chief captain if he could speak to the people and is given permission to do so. As he spoke to the people, when he mentioned *Gentiles* it caused another riot to start saying that Paul was not worthy to live. So Claudius Lysias "commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him" (22:24). We again find *should* and it is in both the KJV and NKJV (the ASV also). The chief captain had ordered Paul to be examined by scourging. Although, in that statement, we also have *should* used. If *should* is a command of God that is mandated, then in addition to Claudius Lysias command we also have God commanding the soldiers to examine Paul by scourging! Paul, though, let them know he was a Roman citizen. It was not lawful for them to scourge him and they could be put to death for doing so. Upon learning such, they refrain from their plans to scourge him. Did the

chief captain and soldiers' sin (violating God's command and what was mandated for them) in failing to scourge Paul? The idea of such a command from God is ludicrous through and through.

There are so many more examples that could be called upon. There are far too many to even list all of them, so allow me to simply list a few.

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Mat. 13:15).

Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee (17:27).

And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt (18:30).

And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David (20:31).

Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples (26:35).

But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus (27:20).

Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned (Acts 5:26).

And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain (13:28).

And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and *there* abode (12:19)

And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band... Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven (27:1, 17).

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26).

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation is *come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy (11:11).

It is reported commonly *that there* is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife (1 Cor. 5:1).

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you (Gal. 3:1).

For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes (Jam. 2:2—NKJV).

Many others, obviously, could be called upon, but these more than suffice to show this novel doctrine is not only false but absurd. It is our desire that no one should be caught up in such a doctrine as this.

MH

*Continued from Page 1*  
momentarily, and he chose not to follow such a course of action. Paul also speaks of those who have “pleasure in unrighteousness,” who believed a lie, and will ultimately be damned (2 The. 2:7-12). The apostle John admonishes us **not** to love the things of the world that appeal to the desires of the eyes and flesh and the pride of life, for they are **not** of God, and will ultimately pass away (1 John 2:15-17).

**Second**, let us examine the word *price* in connection with pleasures. There are three areas in which the price will be paid for sin (1) One price paid for the enjoyment of sinful pleasure, is that of being **separated** from God. Adam and Eve were separated from the special fellowship with God in Eden, as they were removed from Eden. Isaiah tells us that sin separates one from God in this life (Isa. 59:1-2). Being separated from God, one is dead spiritually, is condemned, without God, and without hope in this world (Eph. 2:12). (2) Another price to pay for sin is the **consequence** of sinful actions. For instance, when one imbibes in the use of alcoholic beverages, he not only brings great harm to his physical body, addiction, and ultimately physical death (that may come as a result of auto and other accidents that may occur). In 1 Kings 13, we have the account of a prophet of God who was to denounce sin. This he did, but disobeyed God in not eating and drinking while there. As a result, he lost his life and was buried. These physical consequences should not be considered as **God’s punishment**, but the result of one’s own choice and actions. (3) A final and ultimate price for sin is **eternal**

**death**, or the loss of the soul in hell. The end of sin is death (Pro. 14:12). The wages paid for sin is also death (Rom. 6:23).

**Third**, let us consider the first “P” of our study, the *paying* of the price for pleasure. This involves three areas, *heaven, others*, and the *sinner*. (1) **Heaven** has indeed paid the price **for** man if he will accept it. **God** paid the price by giving up His Son on the cross because of His love for us as sinners (John 3:16). Jesus **also** paid the price in providing His blood for the remission of our sins (Mat. 26:28), which also purchased the church (Acts 20:28). He bore our sins in His death (1 Pet. 2:24). He died for us (1 Cor. 15:3). As a song says, “He paid the debt I could not pay.” (2) Then, there are **others** who may have to pay a price for the pleasures of sin that are enjoyed by the sinner. Think of the grief sin brings to loving parents and other family members because of the practice of sin by one individual. Others may directly have to suffer because of one’s sinful conduct. Think of the suffering in the world that has come about because of the sin of Adam and Eve. Their choice to do what **they** wanted to do has had its ultimate effect in the world throughout the generations. (3) Then, there is the price paid by the **sinner**—one who **commits** the sin. There is a price to be paid in this life as a result of sin. Think of the prodigal son who wasted his inheritance in riotous living, and then had to feed hogs for a living, but was perishing with hunger, until he finally came to himself, repented, and went home (Luke 15:11-17). Think of the harm that comes to the one who drinks alcohol, and the user of drugs. At this writing, we are made aware of the great state of

Colorado, that has legalized the use of marijuana—even to the point of allowing it to be sold in the state. The first two days of the sale found literally thousands of people lined up to purchase the drug for their *pleasure* and were paying the price of \$400 to \$500 per ounce for the stuff. Many today are so involved in doing things they love, that they have no time or room for God in their lives. Some are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (2 Tim. 4:3). Some fall away because of the “pleasures of this life” (Luke 8:14). Then, there is the practice of easy divorce, which nearly always opens the door to a remarriage, and then the sin of adultery. Jesus plainly taught that if one puts away a mate and married another (except for the cause of fornication), that adultery is the **result**. Once started, such adultery is seldom stopped in repentance; they are captured in sin. When one commits fornication (a sin), it usually ends up in divorce and adultery. No matter how regretful one may be who falls into such sin, and how he or she may plead for forgiveness, the damage is usually permanent. That is the **price** paid for sin. Then, the fornicator searches for the Scriptural right and privilege of another marriage, but there is none. He desires this privilege, and most often believes he has it. As someone once said, “What one desires, he easily believes.” The fornicator forfeits the right for another marriage—that is the **price** he pays for sin. However, the ultimate price paid for sin is **not** in “this life,” but in the “next life”—the ultimate loss of the soul in hell, which is eternal death. Paul declared that such (among other sinners than adulterers), simply cannot inherit eternal life (1 Cor. 6:9-11). The

apostle Peter speaks of adultery in connection with the pleasures of sin, that result in eternal death. He states that some will perish in their own corruption, and receive the reward of unrighteousness, who had counted it a *pleasure* to riot in the day time and had eyes full of adultery and could not cease from sin and have gone astray (2 Pet. 2:12-15). We knew of one man, once

a song director in the church, who ultimately found ways to have a different woman for adultery almost every night, and sometimes in the day time. He was put away by his wife, then *remarried*, and died in the practice of sin, without repentance.

Why go on living in sin and paying the ultimate price of death? Adequate price has already been paid by heaven, so sins can be forgiven.

The lost sinners need to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, confess that faith, and then in repentance be buried in the watery grave of baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), so as to become children of God (Gal. 3:26-27). If one has gone astray after having become a saved individual, he needs to repent and seek God's forgiveness in prayer.

*Deceased*

## Baptism

*H. Leo Boles*

There has been more controversy over faith and baptism than the other conditions of the remission of sins and possibly more controversy over baptism than over faith. The range or scope of the discussions on baptism has extended from the baptism of infants to that of adults, and from that of sprinkling a little water on one to that of a submersion, or burial, in water. The range has extended from that of baptism having nothing to do with salvation to that of its being essential to salvation, and from that of inducting one into a church to that of putting one into Christ. Very little has been gained by the discussions on this subject, except to keep the subject clear from errors. Perhaps some have been convinced by the controversies on the subject.

The teachings of the New Testament are clear, simple, and easily understood. The confusion has arisen when man has attempted to prove his opinions and theories by the Scriptures. No one ever held to an erroneous theory that did not pervert the Scriptures to sustain that theory. We need to let just the New Testament speak on this subject to understand it. Anyone who reads just the New Testament on the

subject of baptism and does not hear someone who is perverting the Word of God can understand what God wants one to do. There are about seventy verses of Scripture that mention baptism in the New Testament. These can be read within a short time, and one can then have all that God has said on this question, and that is enough.

### **Who Should Be Baptized?**

It is always in order to ask: Who should be baptized? A clear understanding of the answer to this question helps in the investigation of the subject. Surely the New Testament answers this question. If the New Testament does not answer it, no one would know who should be baptized. John the Baptist is the first one that we read about who baptized people. "John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). The record states further that "there went out unto him all the country of Judaea, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins" (1:5). Hence, those who were baptized by John heard his preaching and were able to confess

their sins. All who were baptized by John confessed themselves as being sinners. So, they were old enough to understand John's preaching and confess their sins. "And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:29-30). Jesus, in giving the commission, said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Here, Jesus commands His apostles to baptize those who believe; hence, believers were to be baptized. The commission, as stated by Matthew, commands the apostles to teach those who are baptized. Again, we see that those who are to be baptized are capable of being taught.

Moreover, the New Testament teaches that the preaching of the Gospel must be done to those who hear it. Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, and the multitude heard, and about three thousand believed, repented of their sins, and were baptized (Acts 2:38). Here we find that those who repent are to be baptized. Putting the two together, we learn that those who are

believing penitents are to be baptized. We also learn that “believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women” (5:14). Philip went down to Samaria; and “when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (8:12). Here those who believed were baptized. Philip also preached Jesus to the eunuch; and when the eunuch asked why he should not be baptized. Philip told him: “*If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest*” (8:37). So, in every case of conversion the Gospel was preached, people believed it, repented of their sins, before they were baptized. We now see clearly who were baptized by divine authority.

### **Why Be Baptized?**

Why should one be baptized? We should let the New Testament answer this question also. In fact, we should let the New Testament guide us in all that we believe and do. Jesus said to Nicodemus: “Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). To enter the kingdom of God is to enter the church; it is to enter Christ, where there is remission of sins. Therefore, one must be “born of water and the Spirit” before one can receive remission of sins. To be “born of water and the Spirit” is to be baptized under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When Ananias came to Saul and found him to be a believing penitent, he said to him: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16). Here Paul was to be baptized to have

his sins forgiven, or his sins “washed away.” We see in this the design, purpose, or **why** one should be baptized. On the day of Pentecost when they heard Peter’s preaching and believed it, they asked: “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit, said: “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins” (2:37-38). These people could understand why they were to be baptized; they did understand that if they did this, they would have the remission of sins; furthermore, they understood that if they were not baptized they would not receive the remission of sins. Peter, writing about the salvation of Noah and his family in the ark, says: “Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, *even* baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:20-21). “But according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Tit. 3:5). “The washing of regeneration” means the washing in baptism; hence, we are saved by “the washing of regeneration.”

### **How Baptized?**

This is equivalent to saying: “How are people baptized? In common parlance: “What is the mode of baptism?” The New Testament does not teach anything about a mode of baptism; it only teaches baptism. The New Testament answers the question as clearly as it does the other questions. There is absolutely no excuse for

anyone misunderstanding how one is to be baptized. John baptized in the river Jordan (Mat. 3:5-6). Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan (3:13). “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water” (3:16). “And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him” (Mark 1:9-10). When Philip baptized the eunuch, “they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip” (Acts 8:38-39). Here we read that both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and the baptism took place while they were down in the water, and they both came up out of the water. To complete the answer to the question, “How are we baptized?” we have the language of Paul to the church at Rome: “We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with *him* in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection” (Rom. 6:3-5). Paul further writes: “Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). These Scriptures are sufficient to answer the question: How are we baptized?

*Deceased*

## DEFENDER

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526-1798

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Pensacola, FL  
Permit No. 395

## Bellview Lectures Books

### Hard-Cover:

Refuting Realized Eschatology (2015)	\$25.00
Preaching From The Major Prophets (2008)	\$5.00
A Time To Build (2007)	\$5.00
The Blight Of Liberalism (2005)	\$5.00
Great New Testament Questions (2004)	\$5.00
Great Old Testament Questions (2003)	\$5.00
Beatitudes (2002)	\$5.00
Encouraging Statements Of The Bible (2001)	\$5.00
Sad Statements Of The Bible (2000)	\$5.00
Preaching God Demands (1996)	\$5.00

### Soft-Cover:

Understanding The Will Of The Lord (2014)	\$11.00
What The Bible Says About: (2012)	\$11.00
Back To The Bible (2010)	\$4.00

### Spiral-Bound:

The Church (2018)	\$5.00
Set Ye Up A Standard In The Land (2017)	\$5.00
Typology (2016)	\$5.00
Innovations (2013)	\$5.00
Worldliness (1999)	\$5.00
Christian Fellowship (1998)	\$5.00
Leadership (1997)	\$5.00

**Plus \$3.75 Postage and Handling Per Book**

To receive your copy of the lectureship book(s) send your check or money order to:

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

# Defender

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Vol. LII

September 2023

Number 9

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## How to be Productive in the Lord's Work

### Ephesians 5:1-17

*Kent Bailey*

When we address the topic of productivity, we are discussing that which is important in all aspects of life. The concept of *productivity* is properly defined as “the state or condition of being productive.” This speaks with reference to that of abundance with reference to what we accomplish for Christ.

From a secular perspective there have been many articles, books, lectures, and even websites dedicated to a discussion of this topic. Various business enterprises have expended large sums of money to that of bringing in motivational speakers to enhance the work and productivity of their employees' work ethic and sharpen their performance skills. Business managers and owners understand that such can bring a greater success to the enterprises that employ these individuals. Being productive in the secular world is both acceptable as well as being noteworthy. When individuals do not recognize the importance of such creativity is lost to that of the wasting of time. While indeed in the business world such is important, we should be cognizant of the value of such for

Christians both individually as well as collectively in the local New Testament church.

*Productivity* is seen in Ephesians 5:1-17. Such is so very important that we are to become imitators of God to the best of our ability. Especially note in verse 1, *followers*. Such is translated from the term *mimetai*. This Koine Greek expression is the source of our word *mimic*. Literally it might be translated “impersonators.” With such a great model, our ideals are set high. God Himself is our divine incentive to reach the summit of personal righteousness (Ecc. 2:12). The New Testament of Christ sets forth the standard of divine imitation (Mat. 5:43-48; Luke 6:35; 1 John 4:10-11). In other passages we are admonished to imitate the incarnate person of Christ (John 13:34; 15:12; Rom. 15:2,3,7; 2 Cor. 8:7-9; Phi. 2:3-8; Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:21-24; 1 John 3:16).

An additional concept that inheres in the aspect of acceptable *imitation* (ASV) is the aspect of becoming a *copy*. When we view Christ through the Word of God, we note a divine reflection (John

14:9; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). Certainly, we cannot be like God with reference to His divine attributes that makes Him Deity. Such are beyond the scope of both our ability and nature. When we note the power, divinity, and the omniscience of God all of these are far beyond both our abilities and even comprehension. However, His divine essence as it relates to righteousness, holiness, goodness, mercy, and forgiveness, needs to be duplicated in so far as our human ability.

No acts of affection, loyalty, and/or genuine admiration surpass one's attempt in trying to follow or imitate the one he loves in addition to having a willingness to die, if necessary, as evidence of such love. The love of Christ caused Him to imitate us in His incarnation (John 1:14; Phi. 2:5-8). Such also led Him to his vicarious death on the cross (Mark 10:45; John 15:13). In view of such reality, we are given such an exalted opportunity to become imitators of God, the Father as well as to walk in the love of Christ, the Son (Eph. 5:1-2).

*Continued on Page 4*



## Notes From The Editor

**Michael  
Hatcher**

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

# Love My Children

When God created man, He knew it was not good for man to be alone and he needed a “help meet” or one suitable for him. After making woman for the man, He brought her to the man and thus created the home. Yet, this wonderful institution begun by God is in trouble today. Divorce and remarriage is commonplace in our society, and living together with someone else has become a substitute for marriage. The traditional home (father, mother, and children) has become almost non-existent in our society. One report says the typical family is less than 17% of all families while another says it is less than 3%. Yet, the home is the bedrock of society. With the breakdown of the home, we observe crime on the increase, lawlessness and riots of all kinds, disrespect in the home, schools, and of government, suicide on the increase, to name just a few. With the disintegration of the home, children are greatly affected. Paul, in writing to his son in the common faith, stated that older women were to “teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Tit. 2:4-5). The admoni-

tion to “love their children” while stated to women equally applies to men. What does it mean to “love their children”?

First and foremost, to love my children, I must put God first in my life. The wise man, Solomon, stated that the whole of one’s life is summed up in “Fear God, and keep his commandments” (Ecc. 12:13). He knew that all of the things of this life are simply vanity (empty, meaningless, futility) as he began the book by saying, “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is* vanity” (1:2). Yet, how many times do we let the things of this life take priority in our lives? In connection with this, Jesus taught, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33). The “these things” in the context are the necessities of life. Jesus then adds, “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof” (6:34). We should not be overly concerned with even the necessities of life. Yet, in the parable of the sower, Jesus stated that some would fall away because of the thorns in their life. “He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful” (13:22). Luke adds the “pleasures of *this* life” to this list (Luke 8:14). Far too many parents are so concerned with the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this life that they no longer have time for spiritual matters and God.

Parents will speak about Jesus’ response to the lawyer that “Thou

shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment” (22:37-38) and how much they love God and love the church, yet the children can see in the life of their parents that God does not come first, and the church is always an afterthought in their minds. During worship services children hear their parents sing songs such as “O how I love Jesus” and “I love thy kingdom, Lord” (even though many simply mumble through the words), but then never give Jesus or the kingdom/church another thought through the week. We might deceive ourselves, but we do not deceive our children. They know that God, the church, righteousness, etc., is not really all that important.

So many parents (and Christians in general) need the admonition which Jesus gave to the church at Ephesus: “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Rev. 2:5). If parents really want to love their children, they must decide to put God first in their lives. However, it is difficult to put God first in one’s life if they are not Christians themselves. How can one teach

**D**efender 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**

their children to love God, to become Christians, and live the Christian life if they have never become a Christian and are not living according to the principles of the Bible? Children see right through such actions and if parents do not do it, then why should they?

When we put God first in our lives, we will love our spouse. God, through the pen of Paul, said, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church” (Eph. 5:25, 28-29). Likewise, in writing to Titus, he instructed the older women to “teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children” (Tit. 2:4). When love is not demonstrated between husband and wife, then the entirety of the home breaks down. When husband and wife love God first and foremost in their life, then they will be demonstrating the love to each other that promotes positive results in the children. When there is a lack of love being demonstrated by the parents toward each other, the negative feelings in the home carry over to the children. You cannot really love your children without loving God and loving God means you will love your spouse.

Loving God first and foremost in your life, also means you will embrace the roles God has established for each one in the home. God has placed the man (husband) to be the head of the home. Paul wrote, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the

church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23). In doing so, God has given to man a role in the home that promotes his manliness. The emasculation of man today is contrary to the will of God and will not be found in the home that is obeying God’s will. In taking that leadership role, he realizes it is his responsibility to provide for the family. One has stated that the husband is to make a living and the wife it to make the living worthwhile. Some men fail in their responsibility as they squander their living rather than providing for the family’s necessities. He is also to be the protector of the family. As Nehemiah was arming the men who were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, he told them, “Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, *which is* great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses” (Neh. 4:14). The men were given that obligation to protect their families. However, possibly the most important part of the leadership role God has given the man is leading his family in the way of God. We see this lesson as he challenges Israel, “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Jos. 24:15). Joshua was making sure he led his family in serving Yahweh as all men should. To properly love their children, men must take this role God has given them.

God also gave the woman (wife) a role within the family unit. After

Adam and Eve sinned, God, in speaking to Eve stated, “in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16). So, from the beginning, God has given the woman a role of subservience to her husband. Paul reiterated this principle in the home when he wrote, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (Eph. 5:22). God has also placed the wife as one who is to be domestically oriented. In Paul’s statement to Titus regarding older women teaching the younger women, he states, “*To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Tit. 2:5). As Paul writes to Timothy, he states, “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully” (1 Tim. 5:14). This also points out a part of that being domestically oriented is bearing children and guiding the house. She is to be a good mother to her children. When a wife loves God first and foremost in her life, then she will embrace the role God has established for her.

As both the father and mother in a home love God and accept God’s role for each, will we really love our children. The most important thing we can do in loving our children is to love God first. Without parents loving God, they cannot teach their children to love God which is the most important thing they could possibly teach them. Next month we will consider some additional principles of what it means to love my children.

MH

*Continued from Page 1*

In consideration of the price that Christ paid for our salvation, we must never forget that in being granted remission of sins upon our obedience to the Gospel (Acts 2:38); we did not receive such exclusively to have remission of sins and that of initial fellowship with God (2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13). God saved us to strive to accomplish, to the very best of our ability, to become the very best servants of Christ that we possibly can become. When, in Ephesians 5:1, Paul refers to Christians as *dear children*, we attempt to copy the Lord to the best of our abilities, to follow Him. Without this attitude, we can never become as productive in our work for the Lord as the pattern set forth in the divine record.

Indeed, we must set forth the truth of God as revealed within His Word in calling for that of sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:1-5). Militantly defending God's Truth against any and all error is one of God's divine musts (Phi. 1:15-17; Jude 3; Eph. 6:10-17). Such demands that the Lord's fighting soldiers must also be loving servants. We are to truly love God the Father, Christ the Son, the Word of God, the New Testament church of the Lord, and the souls of lost individuals that we are attempting to reach with the Truth of God. Straight forward Gospel preaching, debating, and proper living must be used as soul winning to see alien sinners obey the Gospel, lost fallen children of God restored to Christ, and faithful brethren brought to greater service for Christ. Such is not demonstrative of a lack of compassion; such is the essence of Biblical love.

In noting Ephesians 5:2, we must be motivated to walk in love,

as Christ has also loved us, and has given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God as a sweet-smelling savor. Paul uses the term translated walk (*peripateite*) as to order one's behavior (2:10; 4:1,17). The present indicative imperative tense used here indicates a continual walk. Such argues for that of individuals keeping on walking with the right type of attitude emanating from a true love of Christ and His Word. This type of love does not suggest a compromise with sin and error. Such exists upon the basis of that of loving deity and the revealed Word of Truth.

The specific model of love is that of Christ Himself. God's love was demonstrated in the love of Christ that brought personal sacrifice. Christ loves us (1 John 4:19) just as the Father loves us (John 3:16). His love is active in that He has given (*paredoken*) Himself for us. All other types of love in no way compares to this voluntary sacrifice of himself. *Love*, as it applies to the love of both the Father and Christ is *agape*, the highest expression of love that is addressed in the New Testament. Such is not an emotion; it is a deliberate act that one chooses to give in the highest order and of necessity implies that of sacrifice. This truly is a picture of what Christ accomplished for us.

Ephesians 5:3-17 identifies sinful activity characteristic of worldly activity that demonstrates that one cannot partake of such sin and offer acceptable service unto the Lord. These are crucial passages to properly understand what Biblical productivity is all about. Such is essential in accomplishing the work of Christ. We must be very much aware of **how** we live as well as what God's divine revelation man-

dates regarding that of acceptable living.

Sins of fornication, all uncleanness, that which may not be classified as physical fornication, but would promote such in addition to greedy desires should not be even desired among Christians. *Greediness* is nothing more than over-reaching selfishness wherein an individual forgets his own soul in favor of his uncontrolled desires. This type of individual gratifies himself at the expense of others.

Filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting is inclusive of all that is related to shameful speech. Jestings is not simple joking. Such is not related to good-natured humor at all. *Jesting* is joking (*eutrapelia*) that turns easily into immoral language which identifies one as base and/or sin-filled individuals.

Immorality has its consequences according to verses 5 and 6. Those engaging in the sins mentioned within the context of this passage may have in the past history of their lives obeyed the Gospel of Christ, and thus have become Christians. However, the practice of such sins without true repentance will cause one to fall from the condition of faithfulness where they fall from the fellowship of God (1 John 1:6). Fallen Christians need to wake up and return to proper scriptural conduct and living. Christians must never extend fellowship, or joint participation in the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

While withdrawal of fellowship from these sins is indeed crucial, such is not sufficient. We must also engage in spiritual warfare by exposing and opposing such. We must never compromise ourselves by ignoring them. We must reprove

(*elegchete*) or expose them in our words and lives. Our lives must be a standing rebuke and correction to all sin, disgracing it, and putting those who practice such to shame. May we strive to develop the ability in the Word of Truth to convince sinners and bring scriptural conviction of their error where we can silence those who offend in this area of life.

We must develop the wisdom in our lives to redeem the time because the days are evil (Eph. 5:16). To *redeem* (*exagorazomenoi*) is to buy for one's use or benefit. Paul is not advocating buying back time that we have already used wherein we have wasted such in the past. He is discussing paying the price in effort and sacrifice to use the opportunity that we presently have (Gal. 3:13; 6:10). By making the most of our present opportunities, we save the value of our time as it passes. Such is credited to our spiritual accounts with God (Phi. 4:17; Col. 4:5).

### **Productivity is not just Being Busy**

As we look at various areas of secular employment, production management informs us that while many hours are spent in a work week there are many times where time is wasted and absolutely nothing is accomplished in the comple-

tion of essential tasks. The same is true in the work of the Lord. In local churches, as well as personal lives, there can be much movement, but very little accomplished in so far as what God desires.

- One can be busy; however, this being busy can mean that one is busy with regards to one being involved in sin—Jeremiah 9:1-8.
- One can become so busy in home affairs that they forget God—Luke 10:38-42.
- One can become so involved in secular affairs that they find no time for Christ neglecting both service and worship—Matthew 22:1-10.

### **How to be Productive as a Christian**

There are three crucial areas in which we can engage as Christians that will make us more productive in the Lord's work: **Recognition, Focus, and Engagement:**

- We need to **recognize** what is the most important—Philippians 3:7-11; Matthew 16:26; 2 Corinthians 5:9.
- We need to **focus** on that which is important—Colossians 3:2-10, Hebrews 12:2; Luke 8:14.
- We need to **engage** in those activities which are important—Ephesians 5:16.

### **Productivity that God Requires**

We all do not have the same abilities or talents. It is obvious from the Scriptures, however, that God will hold us accountable for that which we **can** accomplish. We all can and must engage in:

- Bible study—2 Timothy 2:15; 3:15-17; Acts 20:32.
- Prayer—Philippians 4:6-7; Hebrews 4:16.
- Worship—Hebrews 10:24-25.
- Evangelism—Acts 5:42
- Fellowship with other Christians—Hebrews 3:13.
- Restoring the fallen—Galatians 6:1-2.
- God given domestic responsibilities—1 Timothy 5:8; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; Ephesians 4:28.
- We must manage our energy so we can continue in the Lord's work—Galatians 6:9.
- We must recognize the need for proper rest—Mark 6:31.
- Let us remember that the Christian's life is a marathon which does indeed take effort—Hebrews 12:1-3.

God does care about us and desires our best productivity. May we make the proper application of the Scriptures to our lives and protect ourselves from that of spiritual burnout.

*Calhoun, GA*

## **Divisions in the Church in Corinth**

**1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:1-5**

*Noel Merideth*

### **Paul Appeals for Unity**

The first epistle of the Corinthians was written by the inspired apostle Paul in Ephesus on his third missionary journey, probably

in AD 56-58. The bad news about the church at Corinth came to Paul through the household of Chloe (1 Cor. 1:11). Also, the church at Corinth had written Paul asking

him some questions (7:1). The letter from Corinth was probably brought by three of their number, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaichus (16:17), who came to

visit Paul at Ephesus and undoubtedly told him about the condition of the church.

Paul, thus, wrote 1 Corinthians (1) to rebuke the party spirit and plead for unity (1:1-4); (2) to command the disciplining of the person guilty of incest (5:5); (3) to reprove the church for going to law before the heathen (6:6); (4) to answer their questions concerning the eating of food offered to idols (8:8-10); (6) to correct the disorders that had arisen in the behavior of the women and about the Lord's supper (11); (7) the exercise of spiritual gifts (14:12-14); (8) to refute those who denied the resurrection of the dead (15:15); (9) to urge their participation in the collection for the poor (16:1-4); (10) to inform them of his plans and commend certain fellow-workers (16:5-18).

When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, Grecian culture and philosophy widely prevailed. The people of the time were generally inflated with intellectual vanity. The various schools of philosophy were distinguished by leaders such as Aristotle, Plato, Zeno, Epicurus, and others. This procedure of designating an outstanding teacher to head a group came into the church. Various groups in the church would claim to be of some outstanding teacher or preacher. So, at Corinth, some said they were of Paul, others of Apollos, and still others of Peter. Paul forbade such, urging that the brethren speak the same things, avoid divisions, and be perfected together in the same mind and judgment. There are three things that Paul tells them to do:

- (1) "Speak the same thing," thus restoring the unity of speech;
- (2) eliminate the "divisions among

you," and thus have unity of organization; (3) "be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment," and so enjoy the unity of heart. To have this unity, people will have to speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11), learn not to go beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6), and abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). Men should speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where it is silent. In matters involving our soul's salvation, we must be united; in matters of opinion, we should have liberty; and in all matters, we should exercise love one to another.

Paul gave the source of his information concerning the divided condition of the church at Corinth as someone of the household of Chloe. *Chloe* is the name of a woman, and *household* might mean her children, kinsmen, or slaves of the woman. Paul did not suppress the source of his information, and he dealt with the matter frankly and forthrightly.

The disciples were divided into parties, and each faction distinguished itself from the others by calling itself after some prominent preacher. Some were after Paul, others were after Apollos, others were after Cephas (Peter), and some called themselves after Christ. Since Paul makes no distinction in his reference to condemning these parties, it would appear that the party that was using the name of Christ was doing so in a sectarian manner, just like the others were using the names of these three good men. They may have been Jews who had heard and seen Jesus and felt like they had a special claim to Him (cf. 2 Cor. 10:7). Since the groups were rebuked, it indicates that they were

using the names here given improperly.

### **The Party Spirit Shown to be Wrong**

The division in the church at Corinth was wrong. The church is the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 1:22-23), and Paul asks if they thought that body could be broken up into small bits, cut into pieces, and divided out to various leaders. The blood Jesus shed in His death was the purchase price of the church (Acts 20:28). So, Jesus bought and owned them. Paul was not crucified for them, his blood had not purchased them, so they did not belong to him. We may draw a conclusion from these statements: we are obligated to wear the name of Him who was crucified for us.

Crispus appeared to be the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth before Paul converted him (18:8). Gaius was a man of Corinth. One known for his hospitality, not only to Paul, but to the whole church (Rom. 16:23). These were not the only converts Paul made in Corinth, but these and the family of Stephanas (1 Cor. 16:15) were the only people Paul baptized with his own hands. He is grateful that he did not personally baptize anymore at Corinth, so no man should say that he baptized into his name. So, Paul was happy that in the providence of God, he had baptized so few by his hands and that some of his helpers had baptized all his other converts in the work.

Paul's works concerning his personal baptizing of converts were written to rebuke the factious condition in Corinth. They have often been twisted into a false argument against the necessity of baptism. It

is charged that Paul distinguishes between baptism and the Gospel since he was not sent to baptize but to preach the Gospel. False teachers argue Paul was not sent to baptize; Paul was sent to preach the Gospel; therefore, baptism is no part of the Gospel. However, this is not what the apostle said. Those who make this argument incorrectly change a verb into a noun. The argument correctly made would run: Paul was not sent to baptize; Paul was sent to preach the Gospel; therefore, to baptize (that is, the mere act of baptizing) is no part of preaching the Gospel. Paul preached, and others in his company usually performed the act of baptizing. Paul was glad that he baptized but few at Corinth since some were using his name improperly. Paul did baptize Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas. His words do not throw out the importance of baptism. Paul's preaching in Corinth was not in "wisdom of words" lest the effect of the cross should be minimized. Paul expressly avoided the philosophical method of presentation so the simple message of the cross might stand out and have its desired effect. Preachers and teachers today should not substitute the "theologies of denominational pseudo-scholars" for the writings of inspired men.

### Party Spirit Makes Men Carnal

Some appear to have criticized Paul for his teaching being so simple. He does not deny the charge but proceeds to explain why his teaching is simple and plain. The reason lay not in his inability to

teach profound things but in their incapacity to receive things more profound than he taught. These brethren at Corinth were not *spiritual*, governed by the teaching of the Holy Spirit; instead, they were *carnal*. They were under the dominion of the flesh. They were *babes* not having advanced as they should have been. Division in the church is carnality—fleshly living—produced by the same incli-

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment  
(1 Cor. 1:10)

nations as other modes of fleshly conduct. Moreover, those who engaged in the divisions were immature people—babes. They were babes because they were new converts and had not grown in the knowledge of the truth at the time Paul preached to them.

We are born into the family of God (John 3:5). Those thus born are babes in Christ and are expected to make the normal growth characteristic of babies born naturally; their first nourishment is milk, and as development occurs, the child advances to heavier food; inability to do so indicates serious organic disturbance. So also, of those in the church. He could not give them meat but had to continue to give them milk because they were yet babes and were not mature enough for meat (Heb. 5:11-14). Instead of growing into mature

Christians, they were conducting themselves as ordinary worldly people influenced and motivated by the same wicked dispositions and inclinations of those in the world. As proof, Paul cites their jealousy and strife, which are classed as works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). So, the conditions of the Corinth parties were most serious.

To show how absurd it was for the people in the church at Corinth to show an undue preference for preachers, Paul inquired: "What then is Apollos? and what is Paul?" The disciples were calling themselves after their favorite preachers. There was a Paul party, an Apollos party, and others. Who were these men, such as

Apollos and Paul, whom the Corinthians split over? His answer was they were mere "ministers [servants] through whom ye believed and each as the Lord gave to him." It has been observed that Paul begins his question with *what* rather than *who*, and this has been called the "neuter of disparagement." The men only brought the Gospel to the people. They were no more than instruments in the hand of God. Their relative unimportance is evidenced in Paul's next statement: "I planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase." It is God who makes the seed grow! Paul says neither is he that planteth anything nor that watered "but God that giveth the increase." The glory in the church should go to God and not the servants. This lesson should help bring unity.

*Deceased*

## DEFENDER

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526-1798

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Pensacola, FL  
Permit No. 395

## Bellview Lectures Books

### Hard-Cover:

Refuting Realized Eschatology (2015)	\$25.00
Preaching From The Major Prophets (2008)	\$5.00
A Time To Build (2007)	\$5.00
The Blight Of Liberalism (2005)	\$5.00
Great New Testament Questions (2004)	\$5.00
Great Old Testament Questions (2003)	\$5.00
Beatitudes (2002)	\$5.00
Encouraging Statements Of The Bible (2001)	\$5.00
Sad Statements Of The Bible (2000)	\$5.00
Preaching God Demands (1996)	\$5.00

### Soft-Cover:

Understanding The Will Of The Lord (2014)	\$11.00
What The Bible Says About: (2012)	\$11.00
Back To The Bible (2010)	\$4.00

### Spiral-Bound:

The Church (2018)	\$5.00
Set Ye Up A Standard In The Land (2017)	\$5.00
Typology (2016)	\$5.00
Innovations (2013)	\$5.00
Worldliness (1999)	\$5.00
Christian Fellowship (1998)	\$5.00
Leadership (1997)	\$5.00

**Plus \$3.75 Postage and Handling Per Book**

To receive your copy of the lectureship book(s) send your check or money order to:

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

# Defender

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Vol. LII

October 2023

Number 10

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## False Worship

*Gus Nichols*

There is such a thing as false worship, or we would not read about *true* worshipers. Jesus said, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). Our worship *must* be in “spirit and in truth,” or it is vain. Jesus said, “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:9). False worship is *vain* and rejected by God.

### **We Must Worship**

While no true teacher of the Word would put worship on the basis of a formal commandment, it is a truth that we must worship God. Those who do not worship are irreligious. It is natural for true Christians to worship. One’s heart is not right in the sight of God if he does not want to worship. Worship may be only on the basis that God wants us to worship and *seeketh* true worshipers (John 4:23). Jesus endorsed the Scripture, saying: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou

serve” (Mat. 4:10). A blind man who the Lord had healed defended the Master of the ugly charge of being a sinner by saying: “Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth” (John 9:31). This being true, no one need expect God to hear his prayers unless he is “a worshipper of God, and doeth his will.” All who do not want to worship God need to be converted. The songbird sings because it is a songbird—the right kind of a bird. It sings because it wants to sing and is so full of glee that it must release the pent-up happiness within. It must express the joy within. So, of all true Christians, they must worship; it comes from the overflow of their hearts. Those who have no desire to worship God are just the wrong kind of persons; they need changing—need conversion. They are not new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). There is a real and fundamental difference between the “children of God” and “the children of the devil” (1 John 3:10). No one can love God and not want to worship Him, and all who do not love God are in sin.

### **May Assemble in Vain**

It is possible for people to meet with the church at the hour of worship and go through a process of worship and be worse off than if they had not even assembled. Paul said of the Corinthians: “ye come together not for the better, but for the worse” (1 Cor. 11:17). They had perverted the Lord’s Supper and were eating a supper that was different from what the Lord instituted: it was their supper and not the Lord’s. Their assemblies were without decency and order. They sought to display their gifts rather than to edify the church. Perverted worship will, therefore, make us *worse* and not *better*.

### **May Sing in Vain**

When ancient Israel became corrupt in character and life, their worship, including their singing, was repulsive unto Almighty God. He said unto them:

I hate, I despise your feast days,  
And I will not smell in your solemn  
assemblies. Though ye offer me  
burnt offerings and your meat  
offerings, I will not accept *them*:  
Neither will I regard the peace  
offerings of your fat beasts. **Take  
thou away from me the noise of**

*Continued on Page 5*



## Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

# Love My Children

In our previous article, we noticed to really love my children, we must first love God with all our being. Without loving God first and foremost in my life, I cannot really love my children. Both father and mother must embrace putting God first and in doing so embrace God's design for both in the home. There are other aspects that need to be respected if we are really going to love our children.

A telling statement is what God said about Abraham that should teach us a lesson regarding loving our children. God says, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18:19). God had a personal, intimate knowledge of Abraham and his relation to his family. The Hebrews' writer told us that because of Abraham's faith when God called him out of the land of his fathers to go into a land He would show him, Abraham went (Heb. 11:8). However, even though Abraham did not

know where he was going, Sarah also went with him. He was commanding his family. *Command* also means direct or charge. Abraham was directing Sarah to go into that land God would show him. Thus, God knew Abraham would command his children and household. This would certainly include his parental authority but also his personal example. The result of his direction will be his children and household will be obedient to God's will.

Parents have a responsibility regarding their children's obedience. The Psalmist wrote:

For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know *them, even* the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments (Psa. 78:5-7).

As Paul spoke of family relations, he wrote, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). In the qualifications for elders, Paul adds, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity" (1 Tim. 3:4). Parents and in particular fathers in the home have the responsibility of training, commanding or directing, bringing them up, ruling the home in such a way the children are taught to keep God's way. (This also shows the importance of the father in the home for a healthy home, family, and country.)

This commanding involves **training** and **restraining**. There are two aspects of training that takes place. The first is by **word**. In reviewing the covenant God made with Israel, Moses reminds the Israelites, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons" (Deu. 4:9). They were to continue teaching the commands to their children. In Moses' second address to the people, he reiterates the law and again reminds them of their responsibilities among which is to teach their children.

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates (6:6-9).

They were to remind their children of their deliverance from Egypt and their receiving the Law of God. This teaching by word

**D**efender 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

would remind the children of their deliverance from Egypt and laws they were obligated to keep. Through this teaching they would learn to “fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name” and “diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. And thou shalt do *that which is* right and good in the sight of the LORD” (6:13, 17-18).

The mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois) of Timothy took this to heart as they instilled into Timothy a sincere faith in him. “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (2 Tim. 1:5). As a result of that teaching Paul would then write, “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (3:14-15).

The second aspect of that training is to teach by **example**. This teaching is much more powerful than teaching by word (as important as that is). We learn by watching or observing others. We are examples to others. Paul would state thus that “none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself” (Rom. 14:7). He told the Corinthians, “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men” (2 Cor. 3:2). People are watching us (whether we know it or not)

and reading us to see what we do and how we act. We are setting an example for them, but what kind of example? Paul told his son in the faith, Timothy, to “be thou an example of the believers” (1 Tim. 4:12). He did not tell him to simply be an example, but the type of example Timothy (and us) was to be. We have the adage, “I would rather see a sermon than hear one.” Another adage is: “Actions speak louder than words.” This is particularly true when it comes to parents with their children. Children, especially when young, are watching, reading their parents. They generally have a desire to be just like their father or mother.

Yet, many times parents become one of the biggest obstacles to their children’s obedience. They live in such a way that contradicts what they say. Training up children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4) is true love for our children. Yet, when we live in such a way that we, by our actions, bring up our children contrary to God and His Word, then we do not really love our children. If we go to worship but on the way home have “roast preacher” or song leader, or prayer leader, etc., then we, by our actions, have turned our children away from the church. Also, when we try to prohibit actions in our children when we have personal habits we engage in which are sinful. When a parent smokes and/or drinks alcoholic beverages, it is hypocritical of them to make attempts to teach their children that smoking marijuana, or taking *recreational* drugs is wrong. Their actions have influenced their child much more than any speaking they could do. Illustrations of

this type could abound (consider what was written in last month’s editorial also). Why? Because so many parents’ lives are inconsistent with Christianity and Christian living.

Not only must instruction by both word and example be done, but there must also be a **restraining** that takes place. When one is born into this world, there is a gradual learning process that must take place. Initially they do not know right from wrong. The Hebrews’ writer speaks of those who should have been able to determine right from wrong, but they had not grown to be of “full age”; they were still children. “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14). Because children do not know how “to discern both good and evil,” they must be taught and at times restrained. Parents must love their children enough to say, “No!” and really mean it. So many parents fail to “stick to it” and it teaches their children that the word of the parents mean nothing. Thus, the child acts up more to get attention from their parents (whether good or bad attention).

Years ago, Doctor Benjamin Spock became what some termed “the most trusted name in childcare.” One of his most notable views was his opposition to corporal punishment. His liberal views on child rearing earned him the title of the “Father of Permissiveness.” This permissiveness that Spock taught was embraced by many of the elites in American society and many of them went further than he did in their oppo-

sition to *spanking*. Some went so far as to accuse those who spanked their child of being “child sexual molesters.” These so-called experts had a “know-it-all attitude,” yet their views stood in direct contrast to the one true expert: God. The old adage, “Spare the rod and spoil the child” is not found in the Bible, it certainly presents the Biblical view which was contrary to Doctor Spock and his proteges. To be clear, we do not advocate abuse of any kind relating to children and especially not sexual abuse. However, corporal punishment is not abuse of any kind (if something could be called abusive it would be failing to provide such loving correction by means of corporal punishment). Simply because they want to call it abuse does not make it so (calling a dog’s tail a leg does not make it a leg).

Notice a few of the passages from the wise man, Solomon, and wiser still because he was writing by inspiration of God.

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes [promptly or diligently] (Pro. 13:24)

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him (22:15)

Withhold not correction from the child: for *if* thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell (23:13-14).

The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to *himself* bringeth his mother to shame (29:15).

The permissiveness of Spock (and others) has led us to the societal quagmire we now have in our society. God expects parents

to exercise corporal punishment. Notice some of the purposes of corrective discipline (this is not an exhaustive list):

1. To exert proper authority.
2. To teach respect.
3. To bring about obedience.
4. To prevent doing wrong.
5. It is not for the purpose of spite, retaliation, or revenge.

Each of these is essential in bring up children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). When spankings (corporal punishment) are not meted out, then these basic principles of the home, society, education, the church, etc., are not taught to the child. The lack of these principles will affect the child for his entire life and very possibly into eternity itself. If a parent’s lack of action in this area is one of the causes of their child being lost eternally, that parent does not really love his children.

Also notice some practical principles as to how and when it should be administered:

1. Must be done with calm, careful deliberation, not hasty spontaneous decisions and demands.
2. The child must understand.
3. It must be consistent.
4. It must be suited to the age of the child.
5. Should not be done to or with humiliation of the child.
6. Should be done by parents who respect authority themselves.

In the teaching and restraining, the social areas are certainly included for the parent to oversee. Do we as parents set the proper guidelines for our children, their friends, and companions? Parents should know that so many chil-

dren go astray because of friends. While they might not do something if they were by themselves, when they are with friends, they are often emboldened to do things they otherwise would not do. Paul states the principle that especially relates to children; “Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits’” (1 Cor. 15:33—NKJV). Today’s society calls it simply, “peer pressure.” Parents need to be constantly on guard who their children are with. But not only who they are with, but a time for them to be home. When it starts getting too late, there is nothing good going on. Years back the television stations would play a message stating, “Parents it’s ten o’clock. Do you know where your children are?” It was a reminder that parents should be attentive to where their children are but also have a curfew for them to be home. While these things are almost unheard of today, parents who really love their children will be involved with all these matters. They will always know where they are, who they are with, and when they will be home. Parents must also hold their children accountable.

Failure on the part of parents in training and restraining is a result of really loving our children. Parents are not “friends,” they are parents. We need to make sure it stays that way. Parents must *command* their children and not allow the children to “walk all over them.” Love your children enough to *command* them, and do not enable them to spend eternity in torment.

MH

Continued from Page 1

**thy songs; For I will not hear the melody of thy viols.** But let judgment run down as waters, And righteousness as a mighty stream (Amos 5:21-24).

One's life must harmonize with worship. The wicked and impenitent cannot worship God acceptably. Their worship is vain and an insult to God. Are we sure that we always "come together for the better, and not for the worse"?

### One May Pray in Vain

We read that "The LORD is far from the wicked: But he heareth the prayer of the righteous" (Pro. 15:29). Again, we read that "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer shall be abomination" (28:9). God will not hear anyone, even one of His children, if that one is willfully living in sin and has not repented of every sin he knows he is guilty. David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear me" (Psa. 66:18). To regard iniquity is to respect it or make allowance for it. It is to look upon sin with approval and tolerance. God will not hear the prayer of such people. Hence, our worship should be preceded by genuine repentance and deep resolutions to live as God directs in His Word. Repentance must come before prayer. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness,

and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22). Our prayers could be vain worship, even an "abomination."

### Supper May be Vain

Incidentally, we have already shown that the Corinthians ate the Supper in vain. It is even possible for one to eat it for one's destruction. Paul says, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.... For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:27-29). *Unworthily* here is not an adjective but an adverb of manner. Their manner of observing the Supper was not acceptable unto God. They did not eat in remembrance of Christ but to satisfy hunger (11:20-22).

### Vain Giving is False Worship

One may give, even liberally, and it all be in vain. While the amount may do much good in spreading the Gospel and helping the poor, it may not be of any value to the giver; hence, rejected by God. The prophet says of certain gifts:

Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; And ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The

table of the LORD is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor; Will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?...Who *is there* even among you that would shut the doors *for nought*? Neither do ye kindle *fire* on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, Neither will I accept an offering at your hand.... Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness *is it!* And ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; And ye brought *that which was torn*, and the lame, and the sick; Thus ye brought an offering: Should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD (Mal. 1:7-13).

Paul argues that one may give all his goods to feed the poor, even his body to be burned, and it profits nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-8). No item of worship, nor all items together, can be an acceptable substitute for a godly life. Worship is to be out of the overflow of a pure heart and is vain unless rendered sincerely and out of a desire to honor God and become more like Him. False worship is a curse and not a blessing. Let the items be Scriptural, but also make the rendering of each item be from the heart. Let us come together but let us not meet for the worse (11:17; Heb. 10:25).

*Deceased*

## Every Scripture is Profitable

*S. H. Hall*

Every sacred or holy Scripture was given by inspiration of God, and every such Scripture is profitable. Study 2 Timothy 3:14-17, in whatever translation you find it, and this you will see affirmed in

God's holy Book. As stated in a recent article, some of these Scriptures tell us how to be saved and stay saved, and it is not possible for any soul who is accountable before God to fail to learn how to be saved

and stay saved if only he will read what the New Testament says on this subject, hungering, as he reads, for the truth. This undoubtedly is what God had in mind when He declared in Isaiah 35:8: "the way-

faring men, yea fools, shall not err *therein*" (ASV).

However, for a while, we are studying another class of Scriptures—that is, *utility Scriptures* as we sometimes call them. They are the Scriptures put in the Bible primarily to shield us from winds of doctrine that come among us. Such doctrines the early disciples, along with us today, were forewarned that they would come. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," is the warning we have from our Lord in Matthew 7:15. Again He says: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it *were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (24:24). Also, that solemn and serious charge Paul gave to Timothy and based on the Scripture we are studying anticipated false teachers arising among us. Hear it:

I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

This charge should ever be read in connection with that which Paul makes a basis for it—that is 2 Timothy 3:14-17, the words just preceding the charge; along with Paul's statement both a warning and a command in Galatians 1:6-9,

which, when looked at for its face value, is terrific:

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 ye have received, let him be accursed.

Think of it! Here comes an angel from heaven with a gospel other than that the apostles preached—yes, and this angel comes showing "great signs and wonders," as our Lord said they would—and what must we do about it? **Let him be accursed; believe him not!** Can you think of anything stronger than this, declaring that the Gospel we have is complete, that it contains all the will of God, and that it contains all the reproof and correction we need to ever give, and will furnish God's children all the good works in which they should walk and point out to them clearly the holy and righteous life He wants us to live?

Begin with Ephesians 4:1 and study it carefully through verse 16, and what do you learn? You learn that apostles were placed in the church with other inspired helpers for the purpose of giving us a completed revelation, for the purpose of fully establishing the church with all of its parts "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (4:13), and all of this done for what? "That we *henceforth* [after this was done] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried

about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (4:14). Our Mormon friends would tell us that these inspired teachers must still be living among us today, because they were placed in the church to stay until "we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (4:13); but that we have not done this as yet, that we are divided, etc. But here they miss the mark the width of the heavens. The point is not so much that all who claim to believe in Christ will come to such unity, but they will have access to such **oneness of faith and knowledge**—that is, all the faith that I can have must come by hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17). We must have no other faith. All the knowledge I can possibly have of God's Son comes from the same source. Every child of God has access to the same amount of knowledge, to the same amount of faith. Some may have more knowledge and faith than others, but it is not because God has withheld anything from them. We now have a full and completed revelation of all God saw we needed to know, not only on how to be saved and stay saved, but to be shielded from every wind of doctrine that the *utility Scriptures* were put in the Bible to protect us or shield us from.

Again, I call your attention to the specific Scripture placed in the Bible to shield us from the doctrine that Christ is not now on David's throne, but will come into possession of this promise to David when He comes the second time. "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more" (2 Cor. 5:16).

God has made an oath to David that he would, from his own loins, raise up one to sit on his (David's) throne. Hence, when Christ came to do this very thing, we had to know Him after the flesh. Yet, here let Paul speak for himself: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:1-4). Also, Peter, who had the keys of the kingdom, in his first sermon after the Spirit came to guide him and the other apostles into **all** truth, says:

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the **fruit of his loins, according to the flesh**, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell [Hades], neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all

the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:29-36).

Tell me not that Christ is not now on David's throne! Tell me not that every promise God made to David about the Messiah, that he was to be related to Him from a fleshly standpoint, has not been fulfilled! Tell me one promise that has not been fulfilled! You say it is the one in which God said that of the fruit of David's loins He would raise up one to sit on His throne. Very well. When He comes to fulfill this promise, tell me how we can keep from knowing Him after the flesh. We have so known Him once, Paul says, but that we shall know Him so no more. Let someone tell us why 2 Corinthians 5:16 was put in the Bible if not to save us from this wind of doctrine. Every Scripture inspired of God is profitable. This one was, for Paul so declares (1 Cor. 2:13). What is the profit of this Scripture? I think I know, and so do you, kind reader.

However, there is one other Scripture we want to consider in the light of this one:

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name, saith Jehovah that doeth this (Amos 9:11-12—ASV).

All such Scriptures were called *mysteries* until understood in the light of their fulfillment. In Ephesians 3:1-6, Paul says, about the calling of the Gentiles, this was a mystery until God made it plain

through His apostles of the new covenant. Just so is Amos 9:11-12. In Acts 15:13-18, James quotes this prophecy and applies it:

And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. [Just here I want the reader to turn to Isaiah 62:1-2 and read that the new name should be given when the Gentiles were called. In Acts 11:1-18 you have a full account of God's first calling the Gentiles, and in verse 26 of the same chapter you have the new name given by the mouth of the Lord. Be certain to read this.] And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

Does not this Scripture say as plain as day that the tabernacle of David, which simply means the dynasty of David, was to be rebuilt or restored that the Gentiles might come in? Most certainly they have. Could anything be plainer than that the dynasty of David has been restored. And, of course, we have already learned this is what we have already said about our Lord's being made of the seed of David according to the flesh and was raised from the dead to sit on David's throne. So, this should settle it.

*Deceased*

## DEFENDER

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526-1798

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Pensacola, FL  
Permit No. 395

## Bellview Lectures Books

### Hard-Cover:

Refuting Realized Eschatology (2015)	\$25.00
Preaching From The Major Prophets (2008)	\$5.00
A Time To Build (2007)	\$5.00
The Blight Of Liberalism (2005)	\$5.00
Great New Testament Questions (2004)	\$5.00
Great Old Testament Questions (2003)	\$5.00
Beatitudes (2002)	\$5.00
Encouraging Statements Of The Bible (2001)	\$5.00
Sad Statements Of The Bible (2000)	\$5.00
Preaching God Demands (1996)	\$5.00

### Soft-Cover:

Understanding The Will Of The Lord (2014)	\$11.00
What The Bible Says About: (2012)	\$11.00
Back To The Bible (2010)	\$4.00

### Spiral-Bound:

The Church (2018)	\$5.00
Set Ye Up A Standard In The Land (2017)	\$5.00
Typology (2016)	\$5.00
Innovations (2013)	\$5.00
Worldliness (1999)	\$5.00
Christian Fellowship (1998)	\$5.00
Leadership (1997)	\$5.00

**Plus \$3.75 Postage and Handling Per Book**

To receive your copy of the lectureship book(s) send your check or money order to:

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

# Defender

*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Vol. LII

November 2023

Number 11

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## Hear the Invitation

*Lester Kamp*

Several years ago, while visiting with a congregation in another state, the preacher announced after Bible classes on a Wednesday night that a young lady with whom he had studied was going to be baptized. The baptism took place immediately after the announcement, and after the baptism the congregation was dismissed. This was the first time in my memory that I had been in an assembly of the church when no *invitation* was given to the assembled congregation and visitors who were present.

After returning home, I wrote to the preacher and inquired about the absence of an invitation. First, I thought since the preacher was young that perhaps he was so excited about the baptism of the young lady with whom he had studied that he had simply forgotten to say anything to encourage others to be obedient to the Gospel. However, the following Wednesday night this same preacher was in charge of the message after the Bible classes; the invitation was again absent. His reply to my question was:

On the evenings to which you referred I did not offer “an/the invitation” by conscious choice. On

neither occasion was the Gospel of Jesus presented. I did not encourage anyone else to repent and be baptized because the message of God’s grace in Jesus had not been presented. Based on Matthew 29:19 I believe it to be irresponsible to offer or urge people to be baptized when they have not been taught. I have seen too many people decide to be baptized in such a setting who have not been clearly taught the Gospel of Jesus. They are therefore unable to make the “pledge/appeal with a clear conscious” (1 Peter 3:21) and often fall away as a result. I do not want to play any part in such irresponsibility with the Gospel or with people’s souls. I did neglect to offer an opportunity for individuals to request the prayers of the church. This was only an oversight.

In a subsequent letter he added: We both know the invitation of Jesus is always open. What we call an “invitation” has more to do with our heritage and religious background than any example or mandate in the Scripture.... It is a part of the format of our worship that developed and began to be employed in the past 150-200 years.... My other objection is that the invitation is so purposeless and out of place most of the time.

Omitting the invitation in many congregations today is becoming the norm. Many are making the “conscious choice” not to remind people that the invitation of Jesus is always open and urge those present to accept His invitation and obey the Gospel. It should be observed that Peter on Pentecost exhorted those present “with many other words” to “Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40). Such is not being done in many congregations today. Further, it should be observed that in the New Testament many were converted in public assemblies through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. Why would one preach the Gospel and not urge those present to obey the Gospel? How could the Gospel be preached without including such an *invitation* to obey? The invitation is an essential part of preaching the Gospel which dates back to the New Testament. There are certainly a variety of ways that this invitation can be given (e.g. the singing of a song during which those who want to respond can come forward is not essential to the invitation, coming forward may not be necessary for there are other

*Continued on Page 3*



## Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:

mhatcher@gmail.com

# Love My Children (3)

In this our third and last installment of these articles, I believe it is important to notice a few other aspects of the question of do we really love our children (I would encourage each one to go back and consider the past two issues as those lay the foundation of these points).

There is the need to actually spend time with my children. Most children are starved emotionally for attention. One study said the average American father spends seven and one-half minutes each week alone with his teenage children. While from the time of that survey to now, it might have improved, children are still starving for attention. Often, children to receive attention, will act out or get into trouble. Attention even if it is negative is better than no or little attention.

Thus, do we love our children enough to actually spend time with them? Some use the excuse that they spend **quality** time with them. This is, however, just an excuse because they do not spend enough quantity time to have such a thing as quality time. To have quality time, there must first be enough quantity time and that quantity

time must continue. Yet, to have that time to spend with our children, a parent might have to spend less time at work, going out on the town, or other activities that take us away from our children. One person said, "A vital part of any home is living with our children, playing with them, working with them, studying with them, praying with them—actually being with them. Are you **too busy**—then you are **too busy**! You are just too busy to be a parent." There is the story told of a father who passed away. The community he lived in raved about how good a man he was. Yet, his own son said, "I do not know. I never knew him." You see, the *good* man was so involved with the community, he did not spend time with his own son, at least not enough time for his son to really know him. What would your children say? Do they really know you?

Another couple of major problems today are first, the broken homes where we have single parents (generally mothers) trying to both make a living and raise the children. The children (many times out of necessity but sometimes out of greed) shuffle the children off to the day care center or babysitter early in the morning then come get them in the late afternoon or evening. There were times when my wife was babysitting, the parents left their children overnight with us. In such cases, the parents end up not spending time with their children, and the reality is that the babysitter/daycare center spends more time with them. As those children grow up, it ends up being the values of the care givers that are instilled in the children as they are the ones who spend time with the children. Parents who re-

ally love their children will spend time with them as they grow up all the way through to adulthood.

Another area of concern is when parents try to do too much for their children. It seems as if every generation has the desire to give their children more than what they had. They try to give them all the things they did not have growing up. We want to give them the life we did not have. Parents have tried to give their children everything whether they need it or not. It ends up that parents give in to everything and never deny anything to their children. Yet, doing this has a detrimental effect both financially and emotionally upon our children and upon the parents. The children grow up having a sense of entitlement and become irresponsible for their actions. Parents begin making excuses for their children's bad behavior and all because the parent has refused to set the proper boundaries.

With a sense of entitlement, children begin to expect to receive everything they want because they feel entitled to it. They often struggle to cope with disappointment when they do not get everything. This leads to difficulty in life and in work. This sense of entitlement is exacerbated when children get into trouble and instead of allowing them to take the consequences of

*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

what they have done, the parents do everything in their power to exonerate their child (we all know that our little angel would never do anything wrong). This simply emboldens the child to go farther into more problems. Do we love our children enough to allow them to suffer the consequences of their actions?

Often, in connection with these matters, there is simply giving our children too much idle time. Paul would state, “if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 The. 3:10). When do they learn this principle of work? When they are growing up. However, parents, in their desire to give their children everything, fail to teach them the value of work. The old adage, “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop” is true. Without work, children lollygag around, and the devil entices them to engage in evil acts, and those children (generally) have not reached a state of spiritual maturity (Heb. 5:14) to overcome the temptation. This temptation is intensified by the gang activity in our society. Children, in their sense of and desire for association (social desire to be around others of the same age), and because they have so much spare time on their hands,

reach out for various gangs. The bond the gangs possess becomes stronger than the ties of family members (parents). Their identity is now the gang instead of the family. Parents need to love their children enough to give them work to do (chores) to keep them busy and learn the valuable principle of work.

The last thing I would like to notice regarding the question, “Do I really love my children?” is, if we love them enough to let them go? When a child is born, that child is totally dependent upon the parents for everything. As the baby grows, it begins doing things for himself. This process is a natural process as they learn and develop. However, as they develop, the parents have a desire to continue to do things for them. Parents, who have the desire to protect their precious child from mistakes and sometimes danger, want to continue to do everything for them. Yet, parents must let them grow and gradually make more and more decisions for themselves and allow them to suffer the consequences for wrong choices. Yet, allowing children to grow, develop, learn, and suffer consequences is to really love your children.

When children reach that age of marriage, God stated, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). Jesus reiterated this statement in Matthew 19:5. Yet, many times parents want to keep their child under their protective wing. Then when conflict arises within the marriage, they gladly welcome the child to run to them instead of staying out of it and allowing them to work things out. Parents and in-laws have caused untold damage to so many. They need to love their children enough to send them back to their spouse with the wise words to work it out between yourselves. Parents need to love their children enough to let them leave—to let them go.

So, the question for each parent remains: Do we really love our children? What would your answer be to that question? What would your children’s answer be? Only you and your children can answer that. However, there is one who knows the true answer and we ultimately be concerned with His answer. That one is, of course, God. What would His answer be?

MH

---

*Continued from Page 1*  
ways that those who respond can let that be known, there are a variety of Scriptures which can be employed to indicate to those present what must be done to be saved—the plan of salvation remains the same, etc.). Some way those present need to be told what they need to do to be saved, and they need to be encouraged to do those

things immediately (2 Cor. 6:2). There is urgency in the message of God’s grace in Christ! That is not human tradition! That is according to the New Testament!

If all the young preacher said was true, something is gravely wrong in that congregation. He stated that: “On neither occasion was the Gospel of Jesus presented...the message of God’s grace in

Jesus had not been presented.” Remember the occasions he is discussing occurred following Bible classes, the study of God’s Word. What he states may be a sad commentary on the content of those (and many others) Bible classes. Did he know that the Gospel had not been taught in any of those classes? If such was indeed the case in that place on those occasions,

then he had a prime opportunity to rectify the situation by teaching the Gospel to the assembly at that time. Could he accurately conclude that there was no one in that assembly (of course, other than himself) who had been studying the Gospel with another so now was a tremendous opportunity for some to be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins? I do not see how he could know such. Perhaps contrary to his understanding that in at least one of those classes someone had come to the conclusion that he/she needed to be baptized that very night! Certainly, it would be wrong to “urge people to be baptized

when they have not been taught.” But did he know that they had not been taught? **No!**

This young preacher had seen many who responded during an assembly who did not know what they were doing or why. I am sure that happens, but not all who respond in an assembly fall into that category. I suspect that he concluded this from the failure of some to remain faithful to the Lord following their baptism. Their unfaithfulness does not always indicate that they were not taught and/or did not know (see the parable of the sower in Luke 8). I have known some who had been pri-

vately taught the Gospel who have become unfaithful almost immediately. Would this young preacher conclude that teaching privately is *irresponsible* and that he will not “play any part in such”?

The invitation should not be abandoned; it is not “human tradition”; it is not “purposeless.” It has real purpose. It is about teaching the Gospel. It is about the saving of souls. The value of the soul is beyond measure. To omit the invitation is to allow souls to be lost, to fail to tell man about the power of God to save, and to postpone or deny the opportunity for some to be saved.

Aurora, CO

## The Firm Foundation

*J. W. Jackson*

While it is generally taught and believed by professed Christians that there is salvation in no other name given under heaven than that of Jesus, it is not so generally understood nor believed that Jesus in His official capacity is the Foundation upon which His church is built. All of the promises of God are in **Christ**; not in Jesus, but in Him as the Christ, the Son of God. The blessings and privileges thus designed for man are bestowed through Him officially. These official relations are expressed in this proposition: “Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ the son of the living God.” This is the foundational truth or creed of the church. No body of people can be built together, either religiously or politically, without a creed or foundation truth. This truth apprehended by faith gives spirit and vitality to each member, and the members thus animated by

this vitalizing and unifying principle are built together into one body upon the one foundation. It is important, then, that we understand the full import of this fundamental proposition.

Jesus is the Son of God. He was “God manifest in the flesh”; acknowledged by the Father and proven to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4). He is also the Christ of prophecy. The words *Messiah*, *Christ*, and *Anointed* are respectively Hebrew, Greek, and English equivalents expressive of official station or dignity. In ancient times prophets, priests, and kings were anointed with oil when about to enter upon the functions of their respective offices. Jesus, as the Anointed of God, unites in Himself personally and officially all three offices. He is Prophet, Priest, and King.

God has spoken in ancient times to men by prophets; now He speaks to us by the Prophet. The former were human and spoke only as moved by the Holy Spirit; Jesus is Divine— “in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” He is infallible and from His teachings there is no appeal. He knew the human heart hence could adapt His teachings to the humblest capacity. He entered the tomb, dwelt in its darkness, and coming back therefore has taught us lessons full of hope of “the sweet beyond.” Priests had been appointed to minister in holy things, but they were fallible and had to offer for themselves as well as for their fellowman, and they could not continue in office by reason of death. Jesus, our High Priest, is without sin and hath an unchangeable priesthood. Full of compassionate tenderness for poor sinful

man, having been tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin, He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Jesus, our King, will enact just such laws as are necessary to the well-being of man. He will protect and defend His people, punish His enemies, and finally reward all the faithful. All this is included in the foundation truth of our religion and more than this. This is the central truth which gives value to every other truth taught in the system.

Having discovered the import of the proposition, we proceed to the teachings of the Scriptures to ascertain where, when, and how this foundation was first laid.

Some proof, however, is demanded as to the proposition being the foundation. Paul says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus [the] Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). To "lay a foundation," in Paul's language, is to preach Jesus the Christ. He says that he "strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation" (Rom. 15:20) and "as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon" (1 Cor. 3:10). This he did when he went to Corinth and reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and "testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*" (Acts 18:1-5). This was the burden of apostolic preaching and writing, viz., that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that as such He is the foundation of His church. To this agrees the prophecy: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. 28:16).

Peter, addressing Christians, quotes this prophecy and applies it to Jesus (1 Pet. 2:6-7). Also, in his address before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:11), he declares concerning Jesus of Nazareth: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner." If further confirmation of this point is necessary, we turn to Matthew 16:13-20. Jesus asks:

Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?... And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell [literally hades] shall not prevail against it.

The foundation, then, is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God; and it was to be a sure foundation—one that could not be moved or conquered by the powers of the underworld. Why men should here say that the gates of hades should not prevail against the church, I cannot conceive, unless it be to prove a succession of Churches from the apostolic days to the present. Every item of faith and hope for an eternal life is centered in the Christ; hence, to be a *sure* foundation He must be tried and must prevail over the gates of hades. This He did and now is glorified in heaven.

Where was this foundation first laid? In Zion, Jerusalem (Isa. 28:16; Mat. 5:35; Psa. 48:2). Jerusalem was to be the place from whence the Word of the Lord should proceed (Isa. 2:3). Repentance and remission of sins was to be preached

among all nations in the name of Christ beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). This is sufficient as to the place of the beginning. It excludes all those preachers who go back to Ur of the Chaldees or to Canaan and preach the covenant of circumcision as the foundation of the church. Nor can our Baptist friends find any consolation in these Scriptures, for there is no proof that John the Baptist ever was in Jerusalem, and if he was, he could not have preached that of which he was ignorant—the Gospel of Christ. Christ in His lifetime was in Jerusalem, but instead of proclaiming His Messiahship, He "charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ" (Mat. 16:20).

This brings us to the question, when was this foundation laid in Jerusalem? It could not have been during His earthly mission for during this period He was *officially* inferior and subject to the Father. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made **perfect**, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9). Again, Jesus says, "The Son can do nothing of himself" (John 5:19), "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (6:38), "I am come in my Father's name" (5:43), "for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me" (5:36). A great many other Scriptures can be cited to show that Jesus, in taking upon Himself the form of a man, became a subject of the government under which He was born, that He lived and died in obedience to the will of

God. Paul teaches us that He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phi. 2:7-11).

Why was He exalted? Because of the life of humiliation and the works He had finished. When was the authority given to Him? Not until His exaltation to the right hand of God. Again, it was necessary for Him to be made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17). Hence, He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, and can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way (4:15). Jesus, being the High Priest of our confession, was **made** High Priest by the oath of God (7:21). Being Priest, it was necessary that He have something to offer (8:3). On earth He could not be a priest (8:4) because the law under which He lived and to which He was obedient, had a Divinely appointed priesthood. But God, having abolished that law in the death of Christ, changed the order of priesthood from the human to the Divine—from the transient to the unchanging. Jesus as “the lamb of God” suffered without the gate

(13:12); that is, on this earth. As High Priest, He entered into the truth holy place, heaven itself, by His own blood and offered Himself without spot to God. **After** He had made the offering, He “sat down on the right hand of God” (10:12). He was not *made* the Christ until after His resurrection and ascension.

So, Peter also declares in his sermon recorded in Acts 2. In preaching to the multitude who had assembled on the account of the wonderful occurrences of that day, he first explains that which they saw and heard as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel; hence, what he spoke was “by the Holy Spirit.” He then presents Jesus, His death and resurrection, attested by the prophecy of David and the testimony of the apostles, and, therefore, says he, “let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (2:36). This was the first announcement of this fact to the world. His Messiahship is for the benefit of man; hence, as “Lord of all,” He sends the “promise of the Father,” the Holy Spirit, to announce on earth His glorification in heaven. This He does through the apostles, and here, begins on earth, the administration of the kingdom of Heaven, of which Jesus is the King.

We have already seen that “to lay a foundation” is to preach Jesus the Christ. Hence, in Jerusalem on Pentecost after the death of Jesus, in the year AD 33, God, by the Holy Spirit, first preached this fact, and thus laid a firm foundation upon which to build the church of Christ. Another idea, however, is connected with this preaching. The developments of the purpose of

God were gradual and progressive, and I may say, also, that the things done and suffered on earth by Jesus were preparatory and necessary to His perfection *officially*. In nature and character, He was already perfect. Thus, it was with the apostles. Jesus had chosen them to be with Him. Through three and a half years He taught and prepared them for the great work to be entrusted to them, so when assembled together in Jerusalem, in obedience to His command, they were spiritually right—their sins forgiven but officially imperfect. True, Jesus had commanded them to preach the Gospel to all nations beginning at Jerusalem, but He told them to tarry in the city till endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49). When they received this power, it fully qualified them or fitted them to be foundation stones in the temple of God. They, as ambassadors for Christ, proclaim His sovereignty and make known His laws.

To return, however, to Peter’s announcement that “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36), notice the response. When the multitude heard this, they cried out, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” (2:37). Peter’s reply to this question should be seriously considered: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (2:38). Jesus had been proclaimed “both Lord and Christ” and upon the testimony produced, men believed it; hence, the question and answer.

Two things are commanded; the reason for doing them is found in the two promises immediately con-

nected with them, and the source of both commands and promises is the authority of Jesus Christ. This answer is doubly authoritative: It is given by Peter who was specially selected to open the administration of Christ's government on earth to both Jews and Gentiles (Mat. 16:19; Acts 15:7). **It is the first command ever given on earth by the authority of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.** This cannot be denied by anyone familiar with the New Testament, and this one fact alone should forever settle the questions of the time and place of the beginning of the church of Christ.

The force of the command, however, is destroyed by the false interpretation of *for the remission of sins*. Remember Eve! She was deceived by a false interpretation of God's Words. How appropriate to these interpreters the words of the old prophet addressed to Israel:

Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my

pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings (Jer. 23:1-2).

We also see the results of these commands, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

Were they built upon the one foundation? They were. How? By faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins.

A few thoughts more and for the present I will leave the subject with you. By your faith in Christ and obedience to His authority, you are built upon the foundation Jesus the Christ. The confession of your faith in Him imposes upon you the obligation to accept His teachings and not that of man; you must obey His commands and not

the rules of commands of any man or sent of men however wise or good they may be. You must be always abounding in the work of the Lord, and, finally, "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). In return you will have the happy assurance that your labor is not in vain; that His grace will be sufficient for you in every trial and every sorrow. Your hope, having a solid basis of faith in Christ, will grow brighter and stronger as you near the shores of the "Beautiful Land." Finally, when the summons comes to leave these scenes of trouble, sin, and sorrow death will have no sting but be to you the portal to that rest that remaineth for the people of God.

*Deceased*

[Editor's note: this article was in the first issue of Firm Foundation in 1884, yet the truths are timeless.]

## Narrow-minded

*Michael Hatcher*

Often, in an attempt to insult someone, the accusation is hurled that they are narrow-minded. This charge is a ruse because that usually means that you will not give in to me. Let us look at the charge anyway. Is it wrong to be narrow-minded?

If we look at Jesus, we will see someone whom many would classify as narrow-minded. Listen to Him: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Notice the definite article. He claims to be the one and only way, truth, and life. Jesus asserts to be the only way to the Father. This is rather narrow-minded.

The teachings of Christ are also narrow-minded. The world says there are many churches, and that we are all just going different directions to the same place. Notice the teachings of the Bible. Jesus says, "I will build my church" (Mat. 16:18). Notice there is only one. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4). Then Jesus is only going to save that one body (the church—1:22-23). "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body" (5:23). Again, this type of teaching is very narrow-minded.

It should be everyone's desire to be narrow-minded because of what Jesus said about the way to heaven.

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Mat. 7:13-14).

It should be everyone's desire to be narrow-minded because that way is narrow. We should be as narrow as the Father, Christ, and the Spirit are. Being accused of being narrow-minded is not an insult, rather it is a compliment.

## DEFENDER

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526-1798

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Pensacola, FL  
Permit No. 395

## Bellview Lectures Books

### Hard-Cover:

Refuting Realized Eschatology (2015)	\$25.00
Preaching From The Major Prophets (2008)	\$5.00
A Time To Build (2007)	\$5.00
The Blight Of Liberalism (2005)	\$5.00
Great New Testament Questions (2004)	\$5.00
Great Old Testament Questions (2003)	\$5.00
Beatitudes (2002)	\$5.00
Encouraging Statements Of The Bible (2001)	\$5.00
Sad Statements Of The Bible (2000)	\$5.00
Preaching God Demands (1996)	\$5.00

### Soft-Cover:

Understanding The Will Of The Lord (2014)	\$11.00
What The Bible Says About: (2012)	\$11.00
Back To The Bible (2010)	\$4.00

### Spiral-Bound:

The Church (2018)	\$5.00
Set Ye Up A Standard In The Land (2017)	\$5.00
Typology (2016)	\$5.00
Innovations (2013)	\$5.00
Worldliness (1999)	\$5.00
Christian Fellowship (1998)	\$5.00
Leadership (1997)	\$5.00

**Plus \$3.75 Postage and Handling Per Book**

To receive your copy of the lectureship book(s) send your check or money order to:

Bellview Church of Christ  
4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526