

# Defender

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

Vol. LV

2026



January

April

July

October

February

May

August

November

March

June

September

# Defender

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

Vol. LV

January 2026

Number 1

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

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



## Hints to Readers

*Alexander Campbell*

[Editorial Note: This material is found in the preface to the translation Alexander Campbell edited titled, *The Sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ, Commonly Styled the New Testament*. It was commonly known as *The Living Oracles New Testament*. This is from the sixteenth edition published in 1914 but originally published in 1826. The section I am going to publish will cover several issues and goes through the New Testament to aid one in reading and understanding the Scriptures. I will not be changing any content but will make some stylistic changes.]

It has been often noticed that the grand laws of the natural world—the fundamental principles of the philosophy of nature, are few and simple; that all sciences, predicated upon God’s works, are reducible to a few leading or general principles. The same may be said of the grandest of all systems, of the noblest of all sciences—God’s own system of virtue, and His own science of happiness.

All the law and all the prophets were founded upon *two* general principles, according to the reasoning of the Author of the Christian re-

ligion. In the estimation of the same person, the whole Christian religion is based upon *one* fact. But this fact is of such an astonishing nature, that it affects both heaven and earth. Its meaning is everything that regulates, or it is the very principle upon which is founded the moral government of the world. It affects the government of God over all men, and the cheerful and acceptable allegiance of any part of them. It is to the moral system, and to the moral empire, everything that the sun is to the solar system and to the globe which we inhabit. It is the center around which all pure and gracious affections in human hearts revolve, and it is the source of light and life to a benighted and dying world. It attracts to itself every happy eye in the universe and draws to itself every pious emotion in every human breast. The eyes of all saints in all lands are gladdened by its light, and the hearts of all are cheered and warmed by its vivifying powers. That the Christian religion should be based upon such a fact is every way worthy of its Author, and exhibits it, to the rational mind, as altogether glorious and divine.

When one question of fact is answered in the affirmative, the way to happiness is laid open and all doubts on the nature of true piety and humanity are dissipated. The question is one which the following histories alone can answer. The fact is a historic one, and this question is of the same nature. It is this—**Was Jesus the Nazarene, the Son and Apostle of God?** This question is capable of being converted into various forms, such as: Are the subsequent narratives true? Did Jesus actually and literally rise from the dead, after being crucified and interred? Did he ascend into heaven, in the presence of his disciples? Is he constituted the Judge of the living and the dead? Or, was he an impostor, and a deceiver of men? It may be proposed in many a form, but it is still a unit and amounts to this: **Is Jesus the Nazarene, the Son of God, the Apostle of the Father, the Savior of men?** When this question is answered in the affirmative, our duty, our salvation, and our happiness are ascertained and determined.

Although the subsequent writings of the Apostles, add an immense weight of evidence to that afforded by these histories; still, the fact on

*Continued on Page 4*



## Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

### David's Army

Another tribe who came to David to be a part of his army was the tribe of Issachar. The text says of them: "And of the children of Issachar, *which were men* that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them *were* two hundred; and all their brethren *were* at their commandment" (1 Chr. 12:32).

What a fascinating comment that these men had "understanding of the times." This is a rather broad statement which can be applied to many things. However, we would not liken it to what Esther 1:13 has as that relates to those who had astrological skill. What does it mean then? It has been variously expressed as men of sagacity or wisdom, men of experience who have a knowledge of the world. These are men who could discern the meaning of current political events by shrewd observation and discern God's will for their day. However, in context, it suggests they were seasoned warriors who knew battle stratagem and tactics better than others and knew those strategies which would work and which would not.

While these children of Issachar had an understanding of the times; likewise, the Lord's army, the church, need men who have an un-

derstanding of the world and are able to battle the intelligentsia of our age and society. Our world is dominated by atheism, agnosticism, and skepticism. We need soldiers in the Lord's army who know the arguments of these godless groups, know the weaknesses (and strengths, if you can call them such), know how to answer them, defeat them, and present the truth and do so in a way that prayerfully will convert the hearers to God and His Word.

The results of atheism, agnosticism, and skepticism is godless philosophies that dominate our world. Possibly the most widespread is secular **humanism** (although most of these intertwine with each other). As an aside, all humanism is secular by its nature. While there is a "religious humanism," humanism by its nature is contradictory to God and His existence. With humanism, man is the measure or standard of everything with the elimination of God.

The underpinning of most godless philosophy is **naturalism**. This is the philosophy that reality only consists of natural entities and processes; there is no supernatural elements. In this view, nature is the "whole show." The soul or spirit, the afterlife, the supernatural simply does not exist. Everything can and is ultimately explained in light of physics, chemistry, biology, etc. This is the position of modern science (so-called).

Another closely associated with the previous is **existentialism**. This again presupposes there is no God, thus men are the measure of everything and free to create their own meaning mainly based on personal experience. There is also the philosophy of **nihilism**. This belief is

that life is without any objective meaning, purpose, or intrinsic value. Humans are a tiny insignificant speck in the vast universe. We mean nothing and are worth nothing; life has no meaning. Dostoevsky aptly states of it, "If God does not exist, everything is permitted." Thus, there is no objective moral standards to live by, no right or wrong.

I will only mention one other (of the hundreds) which, it seems, so many live by: **hedonism**. This is the theory that pleasure is the highest goal or aim in life. It is one of the oldest and most enduring philosophical systems in existence. It has gone through various refinements through the centuries it has been argued.

In this limited space, we cannot even mention all the various philosophical systems (hundreds) that exists or have existed. We Christians, from the beginning of the Lord's church being the army of God, expected as they battled philosophers of their day such as Paul in Athens in Acts 17. Then, through the years of the Restoration Movement, we have had men who were able to fight the intelligentsia and supposed giants of the day. Alexander Cambell's debate with the famed skeptic, Robert Owens. Others down through time learned the tactics of these men

**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

and were willing to take up the sword throwing the scabbard away and enter the battle. We need and always will need men who have an understanding of our times and are willing to battle and defeat those agents of Satan and bring people to the Truth of God's Word. We also need to teach those in the Lord's church so they will not be ruined by this wickedness: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments

of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

There are also religious ones we must fight against and just as we need soldiers who have an understanding in dealing with the world and its philosophies, have soldiers who understand denominationalism, cults, and world religions. We need faithful soldiers who have knowledge of these world religions. Brethren generally know of two and have heard but have very limited knowledge of some others and some we probably have never heard of. The two we have knowledge about would be Judaism and Christianity (including all those claiming to be Christian even though we know they are not). The other ten major religions of the world would include: Baha'i, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism. The fastest growing religion worldwide is Islam. We need well trained and qualified men who know how to meet and defeat the arguments of each one of these religions. Also, what might be alarming is the fact that the religiously unaffiliated make up the third largest group (consider the previously discussed philosophies).

Our brethren are more knowledgeable of those proclaiming themselves to be *Christian* (the denominations). While there are over 45,000 *Christian* denominations today (according to most reports), those are mainly subdivisions of a few Protestant denominations and Catholic rites. Our brethren are mainly familiar with those major denominational groups and have through the years met many of them in debates and exposed their errors in a multitude of sermons.

However, many of the doctrines and practices of denominationalism have made their way into the church of our Lord. When it comes to man's part of the salvation process, we hear those who teach the denominational doctrine of grace only. In worship, we have seen the false practice of instrumental music being added to what God taught. We are faced with those advocating directing our prayers to someone other than the Father, partaking of the Lord's Supper on days other than the first day of the week (some have even changed the elements).

In considering the work of the church, it should be recognized by all that the work of the church is that of saving souls even as Christ came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:20). That work is seen in the preaching, edifying, and benevolence. Yet, the church is being seen engaging more in a social gospel instead the Gospel of Christ, pleasing and entertaining the world instead of saving them by the true Gospel. In the preaching of the doctrine of Christ, there are many who have succumbed to the pernicious doctrine of Premillennialism and sadly realized eschatology has made its inroads as well. With the prevalence of divorce in our society, many have tried to accommodate the divorcees by teaching error regarding divorce and remarriage.

Few today uphold the moral standard upheld in the Scriptures. They find it easier to lay down their sword and surrender to the desires of society. However, we also need to defend the Scriptures itself. There is the proliferation of Bibles in our society with many of them simply writing false doctrine in the

## 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.

Scriptures to make error a part of the Bible. This has been taking place for decades now resulting in many unable to know truth from error. Yes, we need to have soldiers who have an understanding of the issues and trends the church is faced with today. As these soldiers from the tribe of Issachar, we need soldiers today who have an understanding of the times and know what needs to be done.

While one can have an understanding of the times, it is often another matter as to know what to do. It is easy to simply say to go defeat the enemy and another matter altogether to devise the plans which can be carried out to accomplish the defeat. We had a powerful adversary (1 Pet. 5:8). He and his supporters are wily (Eph. 6:11) and out to destroy us. We should never be ignorant of his devices (2 Cor.

2:11). We can and should keep an advantage over Satan because we do know his devices (the Greek word means thought, mind, purpose, etc.).

We need leaders who know what to do regarding the future. They can “look into the future” and see what is going to happen, make plans and preparations for it so we can defeat Satan and his forces. To illustrate this, several decades back I met a preacher who had been converted out of the Baptist denomination. As we talked one day, he let me know that he had been among the “higher ups” in the Baptist organization. He was one of the men involved in the organization that eventually planned the Billy Graham crusades. He told me they had lengthy discussions as to the best way to accomplish their goals finally settling on having one cen-

tral figure doing all the crusades: Billy Graham. We can look back on their decision and see how successful it was for the Baptist denomination. What if they had made some other decision? It might not have been nearly as successful. While the decisions this group made for Satan and his forces (the Baptist denomination), we need to have men who can look into the future and made decisions that will be best for congregations of the Lord’s church. Another aspect of success is timing. When is the right time to *strike*. If things are done too early or too late, then it is possible to turn success into failure. These children of Issachar had an understanding of the times and knew what needed to be done. How we need such soldiers in the army of the Lord.

MH

---

*Continued from Page 1*

which the whole system is built, is exhibited, and attested in the following narratives, and from these, primarily, if not exclusively, its truth and certainty must be decided.

Any hints, therefore, which may arrest the attention of the youthful reader and direct his inquiries in a fair and impartial examination of these witnesses, appear to us of primary importance. For if these histories are not understood and believed, there is no enjoyment of the glad tidings which they announce—Philanthropy cannot exhibit itself to so much advantage, on the theater of this life, as in calling the attention, and in directing the pursuits of the young and the thoughtless, in the acquisition of what may be emphatically called *the true knowledge*.

In addition to the remarks on this subject, found in our preface to the four following narratives, we will subjoin a few important hints, derived from various sources, which we cannot, at this time, enumerate. These are designed to aid the youth, who are desirous of understanding the following testimonies, in their minute and diligent researches into these mines of salvation.

**I. Not one of these four historians wrote with any design of improving upon the others, of detailing the things omitted by them, or of supplying any defects which he observed in their statements.**

From this it would follow that none of these writers had any concern or thought when writing how his testimony would correspond with any other or how it might be

viewed as an improvement upon it. We know that this is not generally noticed and that many “Harmonies” and “Sketches of the Life of Jesus” taken from these narratives are founded upon the supposition that each subsequent history was written with some design to supply the defects of the preceding. But, amongst the arguments which support the above position one is chief, and, in our judgment, alone sufficient to make it manifest to all. For example, let it be supposed that Luke or John wrote with a design to supply certain omissions in Matthew, to make some improvement upon his testimony; how will such a supposition affect the character of Matthew, as an Apostle or the *Spirit* by which he wrote? The *Evangelists*, Mark and Luke, on this hypothesis appear as correctors or improvers upon an

**Apostle!** But John avows his *own design* in writing, and this settles the point with regard to him. Nor can it be inferred from Luke's own preface, that he had ever seen the writings of Matthew or Mark. He speaks of many attempts that had been made to write these memoirs, but there is not the least ground to imagine that he ever alludes to any of those that we now have.

The above hint is of much importance on many accounts, but we must leave it unaccompanied with any illustration or application to the use and appropriation of the reader.

**II. Not one of these historians relates all that he knew of Jesus, nor do they all relate as much as any one of them could have related concerning him.** In proof of this, see John 21. This was not their object. They do, indeed, give a fair specimen of his doctrine and of the evidence and authority which accompanied it.

In order to explain some facts which are partially related by one, more fully by another, differently by another, and not at all by some of them, it will be necessary to remember that they all omit some things to which some of them refer, and that allusions are found in one to facts which he omits to record but which are recorded in another. As before said, it cannot be proved that any one of them had seen the testimony of any other at the time he wrote his own. An instance or two must suffice. Three of the historians mention that Chorazin is addressed by the Savior as having been the theater on which many and stupendous miracles were wrought such as would have converted Tyre and Sidon; and yet, not one of the four witnesses so much as says that Jesus was ever there, much less exhibits one of these miracles. Again, we find allusions to

a form of prayer which John taught his disciples, yet none of these writers record it. None of them tells us that John the Immerser's father was struck *deaf* as well as *dumb*, and yet the fact is alluded to and gathered from these words: "They made *signs* to Zacharias how he would have his son named."

In other parts of the New Testament, certain facts and occurrences in the life of Jesus are related and alluded to which are not found in any of these narratives. Such as his being seen of five hundred brethren at one time assembled after his resurrection, his discourse concerning his reign previous to his ascension, and even one saying of his quoted by Paul, which with the circumstances that gave rise to it is omitted by them all, viz., "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

But some things are alluded to by one which happen to be recorded by another. For example: John tells us that the disciple that was known to the High Priest's family went into the palace with Jesus, but he never tells us that Jesus was carried to Caiaphas. This the others record. Luke tells us that the women who first visited the empty sepulcher "found the stone rolled away," but never tells us that the stone was sealed or fixed at the entrance of the sepulcher.

This fact not only teaches us that the writers willingly omitted to record many things which they knew as well as those which they have narrated because it was unnecessary to the completion of their design, but that apparent incongruities in their narratives **might be easily reconciled** by a knowledge of those things which either some, or all of them, found no occasion to record. This second fact exhibits the weakness of those puny critics who reject

the testimony of these witnesses because they did not record everything which they knew or in a way that suits their peculiar notions of what is fitting, and it also shows us how little sense there is in all that talk about "contradictions and incongruities" and the attempts made to "reconcile" them, which we so often hear.

**III. These historians do not always aim at giving the precise words of those they quote, not even of the Savior himself, but only the full and precise sense of what was uttered or written.** This applies to their quotations of the Jewish prophets, the words of angels, and even of the Father himself.

It is true that where they aim at giving the words of the Savior they do, in some respects, vary from one another. In this way, however, we may account for it; the Savior's mother tongue was the *Syro-Chaldaic* then spoken in Judea. In translating His words into Greek, they sometimes differ from each other, as other translators differ, in selecting words which equally convey the same sense, and in writing to different people they would naturally select such words as would most correctly communicate to their understanding the sense of his expressions. But, as was said, they do not always aim at giving the precise words. For example, the testimony which the Father gave to Jesus at his immersion is differently given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke: "*This* is my beloved Son, in whom I delight"; "*Thou* art my beloved Son, in whom I delight"; "*Thou* art my beloved Son, in *thee* I delight." In **words**, these attestations differ but as respects the testimony in favor of Jesus, or as respects the **sense** they are the same. But these writers do not, in this instance, differ more from one another,

than one of them might differ from himself. The heavenly messenger says to Cornelius, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." Yet, Peter, in quoting these words, says, "Thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God." Many such instances may be found in these narratives which, instead of detracting from greatly add to the credibility of the whole. But the use and application of these hints are beyond our limits and left to the judicious reader.

**IV. The Savior often delivered the same maxims, parables, and discourses, during his public labors, and many of his miracles were accompanied with many of the same circumstances, though exhibited in times and places far remote.**

A very superficial observer must see this. In the commission which Jesus gave both to the twelve and the seventy whom he employed during his lifetime, he authorizes and commands them to announce the same truths, to publish the same facts in every village and city, and to perform the same cures for a confirmation of the truths they declared. Indeed, it would be difficult to conceive how any public teacher, daily employed in communicating instructions on a few glorious topics could avoid delivering the same discourses, answering the same questions, and exhibiting the same evidences in unfolding the same kingdom, and in enforcing the same reformation on all persons, as did the Savior, and yet avoid repeating many of the same things. This remark will solve some difficulties which have appeared to some persons respecting fragments of the "Sermon on the Mount" and other

discourses found in different narratives and in different places of the same narrative as well as some other imaginary difficulties of another kind.

V. A fifth hint of some consequence, is—**That the order of narration in these histories is similar to the Jewish and other ancient histories, and is not conducted according to the modern plan of historic writings;** consequently, not so lucid to us who are accustomed to a greater degree of precision in affixing dates to events and transactions as also in describing the theaters on which they happen as histories conducted on our plan.

We are liable to err in supposing that events following each other in close succession in the thread of narration immediately followed each other in time and place in actual occurrence. But often events which appear to be immediately connected in the narrative happened at times and places considerably remote. One would think on reading the close of Luke's testimony that Jesus ascended to heaven the evening of the same day on which he arose from the grave, but the same historian tells us elsewhere that he did not ascend till nearly six weeks afterward. We shall leave these hints with the reader and conclude with a few remarks on the **whole plan** of these historians.

Their plan and its execution are alike simple, beautiful, and supernatural. Viewing their narratives as a whole, and taking them together, they furnish a combination of evidence, sublime and majestic as the heavens and as irrefragable as that which assigns to the Almighty the mechanism of the universe. The shafts of the conceited skeptic, aimed at these impregnable bul-

warks of our faith, fall at his own feet, harmless as the schoolboy's arrows aimed at the extinction of the sun.

With what skill, simplicity, and beauty, is the nativity of this long-expected child introduced. His birth appears, for a time, to engross the undivided attention of all the pure and high intelligences in heaven and earth. God's heavenly messengers are ever on the wing with some important errand relative to the care, safety, and management of this well-beloved Son. The eastern magi and the shepherds of Bethlehem alike, admonished from the skies, are found hastening to the cottage; alike importunate in their inquiries and equally devout in presenting their acknowledgments at the feet of this wonderful stranger. Both Herod and his nobles are troubled at the tidings of his birth, and alike apprehensive of a revolution in Judea, fatal to their ambitious expectations. The wakeful thoughts and the night visions of those honored females, the relatives, and acquaintances of the favorite virgin are all engrossed in scenes in which this high-born infant is exhibited as full of grace and truth. The prophets and prophetesses in Jerusalem and Judea in all their interviews think and speak of nothing else. Some oracle concerning him, or some expression from his infant lips are the only subjects that fill their hearts to the exclusion of all and every thing besides.

Thus, they introduce him. Through all the meanderings of the seed of Abraham for forty-two generations, they trace his ancestry to the exact accomplishment of every syllable announced to the father of the faithful or repeated to any of his illustrious descendants. Next, they present the last of Israel's prophets

who came to consummate the Jewish line as so much on grossed in preparing his way as to neglect ordinary attention to food and raiment the chief concern of almost all the human race. They open the heaven of all the ancient prophets and pour upon his head a continued stream of prophetic light, illuminating, by its reflection, every step of his journey from the cradle to the cross; from the manger to the sepulcher of a rich nobleman a senator of the commonwealth of Israel.

But here they do not stop. They narrate other attestations given of him still more illustrious. While John the Immerser, the favor of God to Israel, is loudly proclaiming to the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem, Jesus as the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world and putting an end to sin-offerings, soon as Jesus emerges from the Jordan, soon as he is born of water, the voice of his Father is heard. He bows the heavens. He declares aloud from the excellent glory, "This is my Son, the beloved, in whom I delight," and to identify the person of whom he thus spoke, the Spirit of God as a dove, cowers down, descends upon his head and there abides until it disappears in him.

Having thus introduced him with these high recommendations, with these credentials from earth and heaven, his own deeds are permitted to speak for him. All nature then feels and owns him universal Lord. His hand is never stretched out, but its benign and beneficent power is displayed and felt. His lips are ever teeming with grace and truth. Not only does the race of living men, amongst whom he is reckoned, feel and attest his omnipotence, not only do the air, the earth, and the sea, lay their respective tributes at his feet,

but even the dead, and the spirits of the dead, of times past and present, both good and evil, come and own him as the Lord of all. Strange assemblage of evidence! Unparalleled concurrence of things human and divine, of things animate and inanimate, of things above, and things beneath, of all ranks and orders of intelligences, both good and evil, of the whole universe in confirmation of his pretensions! Nothing like this was ever seen or thought of before. The only occurrence the least analogous to it, and that will not bear a comparison with it, which the annals of the world exhibited, was the universal assemblage of the inhabitants of the earth and air to Noah, when entering the ark. Moved by Heaven, they forgot all their antipathies and their discords, and all concurred in avouching Noah as their savior, and the founder of a new world. This is but a feeble type; yet, it is the only one all history affords of this universal suffrage in acknowledging Jesus of Nazareth as God's own Son and our only Savior.

These sacred historians, then, had no model which they could imitate, no lesson nor instructions in their plan from all that had gone before them. Moses himself failed to instruct them. No age, no history, no people set them an example. Their success in this cannot be attributed to any other cause than to the supernatural qualifications which they possessed, than to the all-creating energies of that Spirit which brought all things to their remembrance, and to that unparalleled character which is the subject of their memoirs.

Touching their own character, too, it may be observed that they exhibit themselves to be the most artless, the least accomplished, and the

most faithful historians that ever wrote. They are the least indebted to human accomplishments of all writers whose works survived one century, and yet they have excelled all others in the essential attributes of a historian. Their honesty and fidelity constitute the most prominent trait which arrests the reader's attention whether he thinks of them as men or as biographers. They seem always so completely absent to themselves and each other, so regardless of their own reputation, so entirely absorbed in their Master's praise, that they tell their own faults and expose each other's weaknesses without ever seeming to think or to care what opinion the reader would form of them or of anything they record. They seem to have no feelings in common with other writers. They are so full of facts; so, enamored with the words and deeds of their Master that to record these was all they aimed at, it was all they deemed necessary. To conclude, in the words of Doctor Macknight:

Through the whole of their histories, they have not pronounced one encomium upon Jesus, or upon any of his friends; nor thrown out one reflection upon any of his enemies, although much of both kinds might have been, and, no doubt, would have been done by them, had they been governed either by a spirit of imposture or enthusiasm. Christ's life is not praised by them, his death is not lamented, his friends are not commended, his enemies are not reproached; but everything is told naked and unadorned, just as it happened; and all who read, are left to judge, and make reflections, for themselves. So deeply are they impressed with the dignity and importance of their subject.

*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 \$4.75 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. LV

February 2026

Number 2

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

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



## Introduction to the Acts of Apostles

*Alexander Campbell*

This book has been sometimes titled *“The Gospel of the Holy Spirit;”* because it is the only book which gives us an account of his descent, and splendid operations in the confirmation of the mission of the Apostles. It has also been styled *“The Gospel of the Gentiles;”* because it is the only source of information on their calling, and fellowship with the Jews, in the blessings of the reign of Messiah, the Great King. In most of the Greek copies of the New Testament, it is called *“The Acts or Transactions of the Apostles;”* because it exhibits their labors in planting Christianity in the world. This name, however, does not fully comport with the contents of the book. It is not *The Acts of the Apostles*, but *Acts of Apostles*; because only a few transactions of a few Apostles are mentioned in it. By Chrysostom, one of the Greek Fathers, it is named *“The Book, the Demonstration of the Resurrection.”*

It does not appear that Luke designed to write what might be called an ecclesiastical history of his own times, nor an account of the labors of all the Apostles, nor even of all the labors of any one of

them, during the time embraced in his narrative. If he had designed such a thing, he fell far short of it; for, of the Apostles, except Peter and Paul, he says but little; and even of the last mentioned, though more minute in his history, he narrates, comparatively, but a few great transactions. Though somewhat particular in detailing his journeys by land, and voyages by sea, yet he omits several of his voyages, and is altogether silent on the incidents of his journey into Arabia. Nor does he appear to have designed to write a history of the foundation of the Christian communities, in the different countries of the world, in which he labored during the thirty years embraced in his history: for he says nothing of the foundation of the Christian community in the city of Rome, in Babylon, in Egypt, and in many other places of note, alluded to in the Epistles. Nor can it be gathered from his narrative, that he intended merely to relate such things as he was an eye-witness of, or a party concerned in; for he is not full in recording even these, and tells of many other things, of which he was not an eye-

witness. What, then, was his design?

There are *two* things on which he fixes the attention of his reader, with more than ordinary care. The *first* of these is, the opening of the Reign of Heaven amongst the Jews on Pentecost, and the wonderful displays of heavenly influences attendant on that glorious event. He narrates no more of the history of the first congregation in Jerusalem, than is necessary to give a correct view of the commencement of Messiah’s reign, over the literal descendants of Abraham. This occupies about one-fourth of his whole narrative.

While he follows the order of the commission, beginning at Jerusalem, proceeding to Samaria, and thence to the uttermost parts of the earth, in giving a brief account of the establishment of Christianity; the *second* object—which seems pre-eminently to engross his attention—is the commencement of the reign of Messiah over the Gentiles. Hence we find the calling of the Gentiles, and all the events connected with it, more fully and circumstantially related, than anything else. Of the occur-

*Continued on Page 3*



## Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

### David's Army

The last tribe we will consider is the tribe of Zebulun. The text says, "Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which could keep rank: *they were not of double heart*" (1 Chr. 12:33). We immediately notice these men could and did keep rank. They did not go each at his own rate (speed) or road (way), but they would march shoulder to shoulder. They knew they were soldiers and, in the army, but they also realized they were not the whole army; they were only a part of a whole.

Likewise, the church needs Christian soldiers who can keep rank; they can stay in order. As Paul writes to the Thessalonian brethren, he expected them to be good soldiers who keep rank. However, Paul knew that not all soldiers are what they are supposed to be. He addresses the faithful soldiers and instructs them, "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. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you" (2 The. 3:6-7). Paul uses *disorderly* twice (one a verb and the other an adverb). Gerhard

Delling in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* stated concerning these words that "in both it characterises a man as one who sets himself outside the necessary and given order." Rick Brannan made the observation in *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* that it is "without order—in a manner not submitting to disciple and order."

The command is to "withdraw yourselves" from every soldier who is no longer submitting to the Lord's disciple and order. They are outside the necessary and given order, and we are commanded to have no part or association with their disorderly ways. God knows the principle, "Be not deceived: Evil companions corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33—ASV). Those who are out of step with the given order will cause others to get out of step so they must be separated from those who are walking orderly. Paul knew those who were walking disorderly must be marked and avoided. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18). Mark is "to fix one's eyes upon, direct one's attention to" (Thayer). Those who are out of ranks and no longer submitting to the Lord's orders are to have everyone's eyes fixed on them to make sure they are avoided by all. They were to be avoided because, as we have noted, "Evil companions corrupt good morals."

However, Paul, Silas, and Timothy kept rank while in Thessa-

lonica. They acted according to the given order (what God authorizes for a Christian today) and should be mimicked or imitated by others. They made themselves "an ensample unto you to follow us" (2 The. 3:9), They could encourage brethren to follow them because they did walk orderly. Nevertheless, with Paul it was always, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). How we need soldiers today who can keep rank; do only those actions God has authorized.

The soldiers of the tribe of Zebulun knew they were each a part of the army but not the entire army. Each one knew he must keep rank with the other soldiers; they must work with other soldiers in the army. In writing his first letter to Corinth, Paul knew the brethren were being divisive. He begins by teaching them Christ is not divided like they are: "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?" (1:12-13). While Paul deals with this issue specifically in the first four chapters with a beautiful solution to the problem as he begins by saying, "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*

*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**

ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1:10).

These divisions were easily seen in the miraculous powers given to them by the Spirit as the apostles laid hands on them to impart various gifts to them. Certain ones considered themselves more important than others because of the spiritual gift given to them. Paul uses the figure of a body to show the importance of each one of them, and each one was a part of the army but not the entire army.

For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him (12:14-18).

Each individual makes up a part of the body, the army. Yet, it takes all individual members to make the body, the army. Each of those individual members must be pulling their part, doing their work for the body, the army, to be successful. Paul spoke of this type of relationship with Apollos earlier in the book when he wrote:

Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to

every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one (3:5-8).

Both Paul and Apollos were one. They were each a soldier in the Lord’s army, both keeping rank, both doing the part he needed to do. They also allowed God to do His part. As Paul would point out later, “We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor. 6:1). They were workers together with God.

Another great characteristic of these men from the tribe of Zebulun is they were not of double heart. James gives the description of someone with a double heart: “A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways” (Jam. 1:8). These soldiers (as well as all the others) had one purpose, they “came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel” (1 Chr. 12:38).

Christians are to have one purpose. The apostle Paul put it this way regarding his life: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phi. 3:13-14). He recog-

nized there was one thing that was important. Jesus told Martha, “One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42). Paul had also chosen the good part and put all his energies and efforts to that which would not be taken away.

Jesus taught, “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light” (Mat. 6:22). He was teaching this singleness of purpose or as these men from Zebulun who were not of double heart. All Christians need to learn that we are in a battle with Satan and his forces and we need singularity of purpose to be successful. Think of all the great things Paul was able to do because of that “one thing I do.” God recognized what man could do with that singularity of purpose when man decided to build a tower to reach unto heaven. God said of these men, “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” (Gen. 11:6). God recognized with unity and the singleness of purpose, they would be able to do anything they imagined. Think of what great things we can do for the Lord if we, as Christians, will remain united with singularity of purpose and not with a double heart.

MH

---

*Continued from Page 1*  
rences in Jerusalem, at the time of the meeting of the Apostles, and of the labors of Paul in all his journeys, those things are particularly told, which concerned this event.

These considerations suggest to us that, while Luke designed to give a brief account how the Apostles executed their commission in general, in Judea and Samaria, his grand design in writing was, to es-

tablish in the minds of all Christians of that age, with a reference also to future times, the just claims, and inalienable rights of the Gentiles, to be considered and treated as God’s people; to become mem-

bers of the Christian communities, on the same footing with the Jews. Doubtless, this was his grand or chief design, in writing this history. The plan he pursued, was not to settle the controversy by argument, as Paul does in some of his epistles; but by recording what God had done for this people, by simply showing, that he had done everything for them, which he had done for the Jews, and had made no difference between Jews and Gentiles, under the reign of his Son.

Admitting this to have been his chief design in writing his narrative, how suitably does it account for his minuteness in describing the conversion of Saul, and his call to preach to the Gentiles; the story of Cornelius and Peter; the debates at Jerusalem; the separating Paul and Barnabas to their mission; the decrees of the Apostles and elders: together with his frequent accounts of Paul's speeches to, and interviews with, the Gentiles; and of the success attendant on the labors of Paul and Barnabas among them. This view of his design in writing this book, also accounts for his having omitted to inform us of the travels and labors of the other Apostles, and of the congregations which they planted in different places, with many other things which could not be accounted for upon the supposition of his intending to write a history of the acts of the Apostles, during the period from the ascension of the Messiah, till Paul arrives a prisoner at Rome.

It is nevertheless true, that, in accomplishing his design, he is obliged to give us a very general and comprehensive view of the introduction of Christianity, throughout the whole world. So that still his history is, in a certain

sense, an ecclesiastic one, the oldest and most authentic in the world. As the four preceding histories constitute rather memoirs than biography, so this is rather a mere sketch of what happened, during the labors of the Apostles, than a history of the transactions of any one of them.

Of the New Testament historians, Luke is the most eminent. He gives us one continued history, from the commencement of the Christian era, down to A. D. 63 or 64. He records, in his testimony concerning Jesus, and in his Acts of Apostles, all the grand and important events and transactions connected with the establishment of the Christian religion in Asia, Africa, and Europe. This book is the grand link, which connects the previous histories with the apostolic epistles, and constitutes a key to the right interpretation of them; without which they would have been, in a great measure, unintelligible. An accurate acquaintance with the history of the people which composed most of the congregations, to which the Apostles addressed letters, with the time and circumstances of their conversion, and with their customs and questions, found in this book, greatly facilitates our proficiency in the knowledge of those letters, which explain the meaning and bearings of that one glorious fact, on which the Christian superstructure is reared.

From it alone we learn, by what means that great moral and religious revolution was accomplished, which eventuated in the destruction of polytheism and idolatry, in the best portions of the world; which desolated so many Pagan temples, and caused millions of al-

tars to moulder down to dust, notwithstanding the wisdom and learning of philosophers, the sword of the civil magistrate, and the superstition of the common people, were allied in maintaining them, and in suppressing this "wicked and odious heresy," as the Romans called it.

From it we also learn, what true Christianity is, and how far the modern exhibitions of it, have degenerated from the ancient and apostolic order of things; we discover what was the spirit and temper of the first Christians, and the character and design of their religious meetings. In a word, as Dr. Adam Clarke observes, "in the book of Acts we see how the church of Christ was formed and settled. The Apostles simply proclaim the truth of God relative to the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; and God accompanies their testimony with the demonstration of the Spirit. What was the consequence? Thousands acknowledge the truth, embrace Christianity, and openly profess it, at the most imminent risk of their lives. The change is not a change of merely one religious sentiment or mode of worship for another; but a change of *tempers, passions, prospects, and moral conduct*. All, before, was *earthly, or animal, or devilish*, or all these together: but now, all is *holy, spiritual, and divine*—the heavenly influence becomes extended, and *nations* are born unto God. And how was all this brought about? Not by might nor power; not by the sword, nor by secular authority; not through worldly motives and prospects; not by pious frauds or cunning craftiness, not by the force of persuasive eloquence: in a word,

by nothing but the sole influence of truth itself, attested to the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. Whenever religious frauds and secular influence have been used to found or support a church, professing itself to be *Christian, there*, we may rest assured, is the fullest evidence that that church is wholly *Anti-Christian*: and where such a church possessing *secular* power, has endeavored to support itself by *persecution*, and persecution unto privation of *goods*, of *liberty*, and of

*life*, it not only shows itself to be *Anti-Christian*, but also *diabolic*. The religion of Christ stands in no need either of human cunning or power. It is the religion of God, and is to be propagated by *his* power: this the book of the Acts fully shows; and in it we find the true model, after which every church should be builded. As far as any church can show that it has followed this model, so far it is holy and apostolic. And when *all* churches or congregations of peo-

ple, professing Christianity, shall be founded and regulated according to the *doctrine* and *discipline* laid down in the book of the Acts of Apostles, then the *aggregate body* may be justly called, "*The Holy, Apostolic, and Catholic Church.*"

"You diff'rent sects, who all declare,

Lo! CHRIST is here, and CHRIST is there;

Your stronger proofs divinely give,  
And show me where the Christians live."

*Deceased*

## An Intelligent Faith

*Paul Vaughn*

It is the responsibility of every elder, Gospel preacher, Bible teacher, and Christian to fill their hearts with the Word of God so they can have an intelligent faith! An intelligent faith will enable Christians to see the power of God in the Scriptures and rejoice at the wonderful words of life. "I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure" (Psa. 119:162). For "Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him" (Pro. 30:5). Christians must have an intelligent faith in our lives before we can fill others with the knowledge of God's Word.

To develop an intelligent faith, **doctrinal preaching** is a must. Emotionalism and long-winded, empty words will leave people dying of spiritual hunger for truth. An intelligent faith is to know what you believe and why you believe it. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Evidence anchors one in the Scriptures and enables all to develop an intelligent faith.

An intelligent faith helps Christians to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (Mat. 5:13-16). It helps Christians to stand against evil and oppose our archenemy, Satan. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:10-11). An intelligent faith helps Christians develop enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful forces of success. Nothing important is ever achieved without enthusiasm. Yet to be pleasing to God, an intelligent faith must check our enthusiasm.

### **An Intelligent Faith Is Not:**

An intelligent faith is not an **inherited faith**. Many good things can be inherited, but faith is not one of them. During the past forty-plus years of preaching, I have seen very faithful parents whose children turn from God as soon as they leave home. There are many reasons this can happen, and one is following their parents' teaching

blindly and never developing an intelligent faith of their own. Children who obey the Gospel because their parents are Christians cannot stand against the torrents of life when they blow in.

Parents must develop an intelligent faith in their children. Under the Law of Moses, it was commanded. "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 'And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up'" (Deu. 6:5-7). When the Israelites failed in teaching their children, they turned from God. Paul, by inspiration, commanded that parents in the Christian Age have the same responsibility to their children. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. '*Honor your father and mother;*' which is the first commandment with promise: *that*

*it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.*' And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:1-4). When parents teach their children God's Word, they lay a foundation that will help them through life, and they will be grounded in truth and not in the wisdom of man. Paul said, "that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:5). An intelligent faith is not blind faith. Scriptures plainly teach that evidence is in the foundation of faith. John encouraged testing others' teaching. "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

Blind faith is an unscriptural faith that leaves people abandoned in times of trouble. Therefore, "Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil" (1 The. 5:21).

### **Intelligent Faith Is Established on Truth**

If truth does not bring people to Christ, they will prove to be a curse on the church. Error is brought in many times by unconverted "Christians." The doctrines of men carry about those who do not have an intelligent faith. Paul said, "that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting" (Eph. 4:14).

**Truth** is the only avenue that leads to an intelligent faith. It enables one to walk in God's way and is most valuable to the soul. There-

fore, "Buy the truth, and do not sell it, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding" (Pro. 23:23). All who proclaim truth bring a blessing of righteousness to the hearer of truth. "He *who* speaks truth declares righteousness" (12:17).

Not teaching and respecting truth is one of the most dangerous activities anyone can engage in. Paul warns of the dangers of rejecting truth. His inspired writing speaks of a strong delusion sent by God to all who seek falsehood rather than truth. "And with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 The. 2:10-12).

John understood the power of truth in the life of Christians. "For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 3-4). Yet there are multitudes who sabotage truth; they just do not want the truth! They exchange an intelligent faith for personal emotions and lies.

### **An Intelligent Faith Is Anchored in Jesus**

Jesus must never be ignored or neglected! He is the only way to Heaven (John 14:6)! The Gospel record teaches that His friends loved Him and His enemies hated Him. But all must acknowledge the fact that He lived and died. It is a fact that all human accumulated

knowledge could not have conceived God's plan of salvation through His Son dying on the cross.

All one must do is compare Jesus with the whole of mankind who lived since the creation of Adam and Eve. Jesus is the great Physician, the very essence of purity, and the sinless example for all to imitate. Therefore, we must be anchored in Jesus. We must be anchored in His love because He loved us. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13). A study of the magnitude and importance of the love of Jesus will develop an intelligent faith.

Jesus came to save people because of His desire to do the Father's will and His love for mankind. He knew that people were lost in sin and needed an avenue of salvation. "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). In the absence of a strong faith in Jesus, man is lost without hope and without God. Developing a secure faith in His sacrifice will lead to a life of blessings.

We can have an intelligent faith by trusting in the resurrection of the Lord and being anchored in that fact. The evidence of the resurrection of Jesus is powerful and helps Christians "put on the whole armor of God" (Eph. 6:11). It builds trust in God and the Scriptures. Paul gives the evidence in his letter to the Corinthians.

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the

twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time (1 Cor. 15:3-8).

### **Developing an Intelligent Faith Will Require Diligent Work**

The lazy man who relies on the study of others will never attain a high degree of faith that will help him “stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11). Christians must study and be diligent in learning about God’s will to be pleasing to

the Lord and develop the tools necessary for victorious life in Christ (2 Tim. 2:15). How much time do Christians give in developing an intelligent faith? Sadly, the world and the passing pleasures it offers rob many, if not most, Christians of the knowledge required in living for the Lord. “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace” (Rom. 8:5-6). Developing an

intelligent faith will bring peace to the soul!

### **Conclusion**

All who refuse to develop an intelligent faith are doomed to failure. They are like the passing clouds, here one day and gone the next, never attaining the spiritual growth required for victory over sin. “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious” (1 Pet. 2:1-3).

*Hopkinsville, KY*

## **The Smell of Dead Fish**

*Ralph Williams*

The title is not for the sake of novelty. It is the Bible’s own definition of the keyword *abomination*. This word is variously translated; “detestable, abhorred, loathsome, odious, and stink.” Thirteen times the Hebrew word for *abomination* is rendered in terms of “stink” in the Old Testament (e.g., Exo. 7:17; 8:14). The Egyptians must have found the dead fish in the river of blood and the heaps of dead flies piled high on the land more than their sensitive noses could bear. The scene of these plagues turn the stomach; but helps to understand the extreme offensiveness of this word.

God considers the following as **abomination** to Him:

1. The way and the thoughts of the wicked (Pro. 15:9, 26). Wickedness is synonymous with sinfulness. The man who thinks

and lives contrary to God’s Word is repulsive before heaven.

2. “A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren” (6:16-19). Guilty of any?

3. The worship of the wicked (15:8). Men believe they can live for self and sin throughout the year just so long as they are careful to go through some form of worship at Easter or other special holy day. Perhaps some Christians who never miss a service just as hypocritically are wedded to some secret sin. If these could “smell” their worship as God does, the aroma would shock and nauseate.

4. “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his

prayer shall be abomination” (28:9). How many retreat to prayer in sickness, fear, calamity, yet just never seem to find the time to study God’s Word when things were going well for them?

By way of contrast, note how the Bible uses the expression: “an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell” (Eph. 5:2—ASV). This describes the one who humbly and faithfully submits to God’s will.

In our modern age of the aerosol can, which comes in a family size or matching his and hers, no one would dare venture into a crowd without having first sprayed on a good protective coat of deodorant, lest he or she offend. But how many are so concerned about offending God? What is the fragrance of your life to heaven?

## 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 \$4.75 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