

# *Defender*



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

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# DEFENDER

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## Denominational Baptism

*Jerri Manasco*

Recent years have seen a renewal of interest in the validity of denominational baptism. The questions regarding it are many. Does God recognize denominational baptism? Can New Testament Christians acknowledge denominational baptism as a valid means of entrance into the fellowship of saints? Is it possible for one to be baptized for remission of sins though baptized by a denominational preacher or into a denominational church? Is denominational baptism really Bible baptism? Such questions must be addressed directly.

Without controversy, I admit that neither I nor any other human being living or dead can sit as judge on anyone's eternal destiny. Only God can do that (Gen. 18:25; Acts 17:31; Rom. 12:14). Neither I nor any other person has any right to make laws pertaining to baptism or any other aspect of church life or scripture doctrine. Only God can do that (Jam. 4:12). However, if we can discover what God has said on the matter, then that is what we must declare plainly (2 Tim. 4:2-4; Gal. 4:16; etc.). We cannot insert into the inspired text what God has not placed there! However, one who reads his New Testament carefully will note that God has declared His will concerning baptism in clear and unmistakable terms. Anything less or more than this will be sin (Rev. 22:18-19; Pro. 30:6; Deu. 4:2; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Tim. 3:16). What people may believe is not the issue. What **is** at issue is what God has revealed.

It would be so easy to offer and comply with a compromise measure, but that would be wrong. Compromise generally puts the truth at a disadvantage! Wrong tends to gain the ascendancy when compromise is followed. Unless a matter of judgment is under consideration, a compromise is denial of truth! We must, then, turn to the Bible rather than mere human reasoning to establish what our "position" ought to be! Several pertinent observations must be made.

The **teaching** relative to denominational baptism in the religious world is wrong. Generally this "baptism" is not a submission to the Lord, for it is built on human interpretation rather than simple acceptance of the Lord's reason for baptism. The **Lord's** reason for baptism has been rejected. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Doing the "things" of the Lord includes more than merely the action; the motive and purposes must also be considered. Obeying from the heart "that form of doctrine" (Rom. 6:17) means more than a sincere acceptance of some sort of religious practice called baptism. One must be conscious of the Lord's emphasis on baptism. One cannot be taught wrong and practice right. One cannot believe wrong and obey right.

In some cases, the **practice** itself is wrong. Sprinkling or pouring water and calling it baptism, no matter how sincerely it is done, cannot substitute for Bible baptism. To contend that as long as the motive is right the mode is unimportant is not very sound reasoning. Saul of Tarsus had the best of motives while persecuting Christians, but he was totally wrong (Acts 26:9; Phi. 3:3-11). Sincerity alone is not sufficient grounds for any practice. One simply cannot sidestep Bible teaching on the subject and walk in the will of God at the same time. The Bible **defines** baptism to be immersion (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12) and **demonstrates** baptism to be immersion (Mat. 3:16-17; Acts 8:38). A legitimate question is this: If we compromise on denominational baptism **per se**, then how long before we accept sprinkling or pouring generally (or even accept **no baptism at all**)?

The acceptance of sprinkling and pouring will ultimately lead to the acceptance of those sprinkled in infancy. If the liberalist's viewpoint that every man's relationship with God is strictly personal and we cannot make any discriminations at all is valid, then we must logically accept those who come with infant baptism as their legacy. However, no stretch of reasoning can possibly make infant baptism valid, for the simple reason that such "baptism"

does not meet the New Testament criteria! Infants and young children who have not reached accountability are simply not candidates for baptism. The New Testament declares that baptism is for **the remission of sins** (Acts 2:38) and children have no sin! Baptism is for penitent believers who are capable of understanding the gospel message (Acts 2:37-38, 41; 18:8). If unscriptural baptism is accepted, then how long before infant membership will become acceptable?

The inconsistency of the emphasis in denominational baptism makes it suspect and demonstrates the general misunderstanding of Bible teaching concerning baptism. There are other religious groups besides the church of Christ which teach that baptism is only by immersion. The difference, however, is that these other religious groups deny the essentiality of baptism, though the Bible asserts the essentiality of it (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). Why make an **action** significant if the **act** itself is not essential? The arguments put forth recently that one must only recognize that he is “obeying God” are not necessarily valid. A child might do something because “I want to obey God,” without having any concept of what it means to really obey God! The consistent fact is that one must grasp the significance of the action as well as the act of baptism. It is not rational to insist on the doing of a non-essential thing in an essential way.

When wrong emphasis attends upon baptism, then a wrong sense of purpose is sure to result. The Lord’s reason for baptism is not simply “to get into the church” or “to enter the fellowship of believers.” True, those baptized in New Testament times were added by the Lord to his body (Acts 2:47; Rom. 6:3), but this is so emphatic of the change of spiritual status that occurs at the point of baptism. **Baptism is for the remission of sins!!!** This cannot be declared more plainly that Peter declared it on Pentecost (Acts 2:38). The scriptures repeatedly show that baptism precedes salvation, remission of sins, and the washing away of sins! To fail to understand this is to fail to see the Lord’s emphasis. It is failure to submit to the Lord’s will. If one is baptized with the **Lord’s** reason in mind, there can be no mistake about it.

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## Castaway

*Bobby Liddell*

“But I keep under my body, and bring [it] into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:27).

The word “castaway” (KJV) has been rendered as: “rejected” (ASV, TEV); “disqualified” (NKJV, NAS, RSV, NIV, JER); “fail shamefully” (Conybeare); “unapproved, rejected, reprobate” (Strong); “disapproved, and so rejected from present testimony, with loss of future reward” (Vine); “not standing the test, not approved” (Thayer); “not standing the test, then, unqualified, worthless” (Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich); and “rejected” (Gall, Berry).

“Castaway” is translated from the Greek word, *adokimos*. *Adokimos* occurs eight times in the New Testament. It is translated, in the KJV, “reprobate” six times (Rom. 1:28; 2 Cor. 13:5,6,7; 2 Tim. 3:8; Tit. 1:16), “rejected” one time (Heb. 6:8), and “castaway” one time (1 Cor. 9:27). *Adokimos* is a composition of “a” (a negative particle meaning not) and *dokimos* (meaning acceptable or approved); thus, its meaning is: “not approved.”

Paul sought to be approved of God. He expressed his desire by saying, “For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain” (Phi. 1:21); and, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

Paul knew the possibility of his becoming disapproved of God should he give himself to fulfilling the desires of the flesh. He knew that his being an apostle did not make him invulnerable to sin’s appeal. His having preached to others in cities around the then known world, and that at great personal cost, did not make him insusceptible to temptation to sin.

Surely, if any man ever was converted, Paul was. Even false teachers of denominational doctrines will agree. He had seen the Lord on the road to Damascus (Acts 9; 22; 26). The Lord instructed Paul to go to Damascus where it would be told him what he must do. He sent Ananias to Paul with the message, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Paul was baptized (Rom.

6:3-4). His sins were washed away and Christ made him an apostle (Gal. 1:1).

Paul was not “once saved, always saved.” He neither believed nor taught such a damnable and devilish doctrine. He was not saved by “faith only,” but by an obedient faith (Acts 26:19). His sins were not washed away **before** baptism, but they were washed away (by the blood of Christ) when he obeyed Christ by being baptized into the death of Christ (remember Jesus sent Ananias to Paul to tell him what he “must do”).

False teachers say if Paul had given in to the flesh, he would have lost his “service” but not his “salvation”; i.e., he would have been put on the shelf and not used as a preacher. “Paul’s fear was not that he might lose his salvation, but that he might lose his crown through failing to satisfy his Lord” (Tyndale).

Paul’s desire was that he might not be disapproved for he fought for a crown unlike the crown of the Isthmian boxer to which he alluded. Paul sought a crown “of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 5:4). He ran for the victory knowing that if he stopped short he would lose the race. Thus, near the end of his faithful race, he could say with all confidence, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

## The Figure of Him That Was to Come

*Larry D. Mathis*

Adam was the “first man” (1 Cor. 15:45), and served as “the figure of him [Jesus] that was to come” (Rom. 5:14). Note the astounding comparison of the “first” and “the last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45).

### Adam and Eve

1. Adam is called “the son of God” (Luke 3:38).
2. Adam was uniquely (miraculously) brought forth by God (Gen. 2:7).
3. Adam was the head of the physical race (Gen. 1:26-28; Psa. 8:3-8).
4. Adam was named by God (Gen. 5:2).
5. Adam was “alone”—no bride (Gen. 2:18). He had no bride until Eve was created (Gen. 2:22).
6. Adam went into a “deep sleep” (Gen. 2:21).
7. In his sleep, Adam’s side was opened (Gen. 2:21).
8. From Adam’s side the rib was taken (bone and flesh)—the price for his bride (Gen. 2:21-23).
9. Adam and Eve were “married” (Gen. 2:24; Mat. 19:4-6).
10. Adam’s bride was called woman. It is impossible to say “woman” without saying “man” (woman) (see Gen. 2:23).
11. Adam loved his bride (Gen. 2:23).
12. Adam was “head” over Eve (Gen. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:12-13).
13. All children were born into Adam’s physical family via “natural birth” (Gen. 4:1-2; 5:3-4).
14. Through Adam sin came into the world (Rom. 5:12).
15. Because of Adam, death reigned (Rom. 5:14).

### Christ and the Church

1. Jesus Christ is called “the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).
2. Jesus was uniquely (miraculously) brought forth by God (Mat. 1:23).
3. Christ is the head of the spiritual race (Eph. 1:20-23; 4:15).
4. Christ was named by God (Mat. 1:21).
5. Jesus was “alone”—no bride (church). He had no church until she was created (Eph. 2:10).
6. Christ went into a “deep sleep” (death) on the cross (Mark 15:37,39; Luke 23:46).
7. In His sleep (death), Jesus’ side was opened (John 19:34; 20:27).
8. From Jesus’ side was taken His blood, the purchase price for His bride, the church (Acts 20:28).
9. The church is “married” to Christ (Rom. 7:4).
10. The church is the Lord’s bride. It is impossible to say “Christian” without saying “Christ” (Christ-ian) (Acts 11:26).
11. Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25).
12. Christ is “head” of the church (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18).
13. All children are born into Christ’s spiritual family (the church) via the “new birth” (John 3:1-7; Acts 2:38).
14. Through Christ, salvation came into the world (Mat. 1:21; 1 John 2:2).
15. Because of Christ, righteousness and eternal life reign (John 5:24).

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# What Is the Church of Christ?

*S. Suba*

Today, we find there are so many denominations in the world. Many false teachers are scattered everywhere in the world. They teach many false doctrines. When we look at the Bible, we find only one doctrine and only one church—that is the church of Christ, so, I would like to explain something about the church of Christ. **What is the church of Christ?**

Christ said, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18). You can read about this church of Christ in the Bible: “The churches of Christ salute you” (Rom. 16:16) and, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

**I. Marks of Identity of the True Church of Christ.** (1) Christ is its builder. “Upon this rock I will build my church” (Mat. 16:18). (2) Christ paid the price that the church might be built (Acts 20:28).

**II. The Church of Christ Is Built upon the Solid Foundation.** (1) Peter made the good confession saying, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16). (2) Jesus said, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter [*petros*], and upon this rock [*petra*] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18).

**III. The True Church of Christ Began at Jerusalem.** (1) The prophecy was given (Isa. 2:2; Joel 2:28; Zec. 1:16; Luke 24:46). (2) The prophecy was fulfilled (John 16:7; Acts 1:9; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-4).

**IV. The Church of Christ Began on the First Pentecost after the Resurrection of Christ.** (1) The prophecy was given (Isa. 2:2; Dan. 2:44; Mat. 16:18; Mark 9:1; Mat. 18:3; Luke 22:18). (2) The prophecy was fulfilled (Acts 2:1-4, 41; 4:4; 6:1).

**V. the Bible Is the Only Creed.** (1) The Bible furnishes the man of God completely for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). (2) We are warned against adding to or taking from God’s Word (Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18). (3) The Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Pet. 1:21). (4) It cannot be destroyed (Mat. 24:35). (5) It has stood the test of time. (6) It is our light (Psa. 119:105). (7) It reveals the gospel plan of salvation (Rom. 1:16). (8) We will be judged by it (John 12:48). (9) The Bible must be rightly divided (2 Tim. 2:15). The Old Testament is divided into 5 books of law, 12 books of history, 6 of poetry and 16 of prophecy. In the New Testament, there are 4 accounts of the gospel, 1 history, 21 to Christians and 1 book of prophecy. There are three dispensations—Patriarchal (starlight age with the family system lasting 2,500 years); Jewish age (moonlight age with the national system lasting 1,500 years); and Christian (sunlight age with the international system).

**VI. The True Church of Christ Has Scriptural Organization.** (1) There are elders (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-ff). (2) There are deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

**VII. Other Facts about the Church.** (1) Christ built only one church—he called it “my church” (Mat. 16:18). (2) There is one body (Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:12-20). (3) The one body is the church (Eph. 1:22). (4) There is one fold and one shepherd (John 10:16). (5) There is one head and one family (1 Tim. 3:15).

**VIII. Man Is Saved by Faith.** (1) What is faith? (Heb. 11:1). (2) How does faith come? (Rom. 10:17; John 20:31). (3) What does faith do in conversion? The heart is cleansed (Acts 15:9). The one converted is justified (Rom. 5:1). Faith is necessary to salvation (Acts 16:31). We must walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). We must live the Christian life (Gal. 2:20).

**IX. Man Is Saved by the Blood of Christ.** (1) Blood is significant (Heb. 9:21-22). (2) Christ shed His blood for man’s redemption (Mat. 26:28; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 1:7; 2:13). (3) How and when are we cleansed by the blood? (Rom. 6:3; Acts 22:16).

**X. Baptism Is Essential to Salvation.** (1) Study these passages (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:26-27; Acts 10:48; 22:16). (2) Baptism is by immersion (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 8:38-39).

**XI. Salvation Is in the Church of Christ.** (1) Read these passages (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23; Acts 2:47; 1 Tim. 3:15; 2 Cor. 5:19; Eph. 5:17).

**Conclusion.** If one is outside of Christ, he cannot enter into Heaven. If we want to go to Heaven, we must be in

the Lord's church. Christ shed his blood for only one church—that is the church of Christ. I like to be in His church. Don't you want to be a member of the Lord's church, the church of Christ?

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## Let There Be No Strife

*Winfred Clark*

Some words are inviting. Take the word "home." Such brings to mind the security and comfort one feels when he or she is enclosed therein. Not all words are like this. The word "strife" has angry tones and sounds associated thereto. This is the word used by Abraham in Genesis 13:8. Strife had arisen between his herdsmen and those of Lot. To Abraham such became a matter of concern and needed to be corrected. We would do well to see how he approached the matter.

**I. He Saw the Problem.** Abraham did not try to act as if such did not exist. Turning his head would not make it go away. The strife was there (Gen. 13:7). All the hoping it was not present would not mean it was not a fact. This, Abraham saw and he wanted Lot to see the same thing.

He saw the seriousness of that problem. The herdsmen may not see it as such for they would not look at it as did Abraham. This good man knew this could very well spread. Solomon said, "The beginning of strife *is as* when one letteth out water" (Pro. 17:14). Anybody that has seen the erosion that can take place by a trickle of water knows the dangers to a dam or dike if something is not done to stop it. Obviously, it will not take long for such to cut a path large enough to empty a lake. So it is with strife in the beginning. Such will soon spread from individuals to families and whole churches.

The Hebrews writer speaks of such a danger when he speaks of a root of bitterness that begins to grow and by such most become defiled (Heb. 12:15). Such needs, therefore, to be seen as a serious matter.

Abraham also saw the source of the strife. In this case, one of the sources was the accumulation of cattle and herds. The land was not able to provide adequate pasture in one place.

Strife's source can be hatred (Pro. 10:12); pride (Pro. 28:25), carnality (1 Cor. 3:3), or envy (Jam. 3:13-16). So Abraham was able to see the seriousness and the source of the problem.

**II. He Sounded His Plea.** Here is a good man who would have his voice heard on the side of peace. He made an appeal for a cessation of strife and all of its attendant evils. This is equal to Paul's plea of Philippians 2:3: "Let nothing *be done* through strife."

His plea was a responsible plea. Abraham assumed personal responsibility for what his herdsmen did and said and he would have Lot do the same: He did not take the hands off attitude that says, "I am not responsible."

Paul wrote his brethren and asked them to act in a responsible fashion (Phi. 2:3; 1 Cor. 1:10). His plea was also set in reasonable terms. He would have Lot see who they were. "We be brethren," he said. So that is all the more reason that no strife be allowed to arise between them.

**III. He Set Forth a Plan.** Abraham saw a way to avoid strife if others wanted to do so. There was a way if men were willing. His plan was selfless in nature. You can see Abraham was not looking out for himself first when he said, "The whole land is before us, you go one way and I'll go the other." He would not take first choice, though he had the right to do so. In this, he walks in the spirit of love "seeketh not her own" (1 Cor. 13:5). Abraham was not thinking of self but rather of a solution for the strife.

His plan was suitable. It was workable and evidently did just that. You do not find that word "strife" again concerning those herdsmen. His attitude is good to have around

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"Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psa. 133:1).

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## Is This How to Treat a Brother?

*Jack Wilhelm*

In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a man showed up for Sunday morning services, identified himself as a “brother” and asked for money, saying his billfold had been stolen. He returned that night, got \$200 that the brethren gave him, and was taken back to a motel where he was staying. But some things did not add up and upon checking, the church decided to notify nearby congregations. A few weeks later, he showed up at another congregation with the same story and request. By then, the facts were convincing, that he was a con artist. Those brethren called the police.

As the man was being taken to jail, he began cursing and shouting, “Is this the way you treat a brother?” There is a network of con artists working churches who feel they would rather help than run the risk of being insensitive to a brother’s need.

Just how should we “treat a brother?”

I. Sometimes, physical brothers have not always treated each other well. There were Cain and Abel in Genesis 4. Esau and Jacob in Genesis 27 had a bad feeling that ran for years. In 2 Samuel 13, we read of Absalom and Ammon and the sad story of plotted revenge that led to Ammon’s death.

On one occasion, Jesus was asked to referee a dispute between two brothers, but He was reluctant to be an

arbitrator (Luke 12:13-1b). One wonders also how much sooner the younger prodigal son might have returned home, had his older brother been more compassionate and less condemning (Luke 15).

II. But our treatment of “brothers in the Lord” is often lacking, too. (Remember that the term “brethren” is often very broad, including all Christians and not just males, since in Christ, there is neither “male nor female” but all are one in Christ—Gal. 3).

In Acts 15, Jewish background brethren were not anxious to receive Gentile brethren. Some drew lines where God “gave no such commandment.” Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:36-41 had a sharp dissension. It seemed to work out but it also seemed disturbing. Paul and Peter later clashed in Galatians 2:11-13. The party spirit led to spiritual weakness at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:10-13). A contentious spirit, whether between preaching brethren (Phi. 1:14-19) or Christian women who serve (Phi. 4:2-3), detracts from the impact the gospel can have in the lives of those who observe it.

No one can countenance overt teaching of error, but neither can informed servants of God be a part of hacking, biting, devouring destruction of good brethren who may differ merely in matters of opinion and human judgment. Read Hebrews 12:14.

Once Confederate President Jefferson Davis asked Robert F. Lee’s opinion of a man. Lee spoke of the man in the highest terms. Later, an officer who had heard the exchange said, “General Lee, do you not know that the man you praised so highly is one of your bitterest enemies and never passes up a chance to malign you.” Lee replied, “Yes, I knew that, but the President did not ask for that man’s opinion of me but rather of my opinion of him.” Humanity says, “burn him. Pin him to the wall.” The Bible says, “Love as brethren” (1 Pet. 3:8).

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# DEFENDER

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## “Wherefore Then Serveth the Law?”

Daniel Denham

In his great discussion of the Abrahamic Seed Promise, the apostle Paul raises the query, “Wherefore then *serveth* the law?” (Gal. 3:19). In the immediate context of the question Paul has just shown that Christ is the promised Seed of Abraham. He had also stressed that the law did not disannul or invalidate that promise, especially the view of the fact that the latter was confirmed 430 years before the former existed. By this confirmation God had bound Himself to the fulfillment of the Seed Promise. The Hebrews writer tells us that God swore by Himself to this end: seeing that He could swear by none greater (cf. Heb. 6:13-18). The entire argument of Paul in Galatians 3 is calculated to demonstrate the transitory nature of the law by showing that God had a greater purpose in view by means of the promise.

The Christian system, predicated on the verity of the promise, is thereby contrasted with the law. Christianity is thus established by the inspired Apostle to be the superior arrangement in the Scheme of Redemption. This truth is utilized by Paul to call back into faithfulness to Christ and the Gospel those who were being “bewitched” (cf. Gal. 3:1) and subsequently led astray by Judaizing elements who sought to bind upon the Church the obligation to keep the law. The question of verse 19 anticipates an objection that might be raised by the Judaizers against the apostolic argument. Its force would be, “Why would God have given a body of law that He ultimately intended to abolish? In view of the certainty of the promise, then why was the law even given, if Paul’s argument is true? What purpose would it have served in God’s plan?” Paul, having raised the question and anticipated its implied objection, then turns his attention to setting forth a brief and precise answer. With this as an appropriate background, let us consider the question of Galatians 3:19 and Paul’s answer to it, as well as a number of other points of great importance to the subject matter with which it is concerned. A series of several articles dedicated to this end are planned.

First, we must properly ascertain the precise meaning of the crucial phrase “the law” Its definition will have considerable bearing upon our understanding of Paul’s teaching both here and elsewhere. Much false doctrine and many erroneous conclusions have been propounded from an improper exegesis of this phrase.

The word “*laud*” denotes in its most common usage, “a rule of action.” This basic idea is common to the English word as well as to its antecedent Hebrew and Greek equivalents. Hence the Scriptures know of the “law” given by parents of their offspring (Pro. 1:8; 4:1-2). In Proverbs 4:1-2 the term is equated with parental “instruction.” While the former contemplates the content of the parent’s will, the latter reflects the means by which it is made known to the child. The subsequent force is that instruction involves within itself the very essence of law. It is absurd to try to teach children they are obligated to obey the instructions of their parents, but in doing so they are not answerable to the law of the parents!

Any instruction that sets forth rules or principles governing one’s conduct necessarily **by definition** involves the existence of some body of law. Otherwise, instruction itself could not possibly exist as such.

This is precisely the case with the use of the term “law” as concerns God’s instructions for men. There is, basically speaking, a body of instruction that was given to the Hebrew nation at Mt. Sinai about 1490 B.C. by the hands of Moses. This body constitutes what is called in the words of the Apostles “the Old Testament.” It was peculiarly limited to the Israelites (Exo. 20:3). God has also given another body of law known as the New Testament of Jesus Christ, which is by nature universal in scope and authority. The former body of law is no longer in vogue, and has been superseded by the authority of the latter. The word “law” is used to describe each particular body.

Now the exact identity of the body of law under consideration in any given text is to be determined by a consideration of the immediate and remote contexts of the text. By remote we have reference to every passage bearing upon the general subject matter of the text, and by the immediate we refer to the verses immediately preceding and/or following the given text. By such a method one will be compelled to consider and observe the various epithets, descriptive phrases, qualifying clauses, and particular modifiers attached to the word “law” in the text. It is a common fallacy of the “grace only” folk to ignore the force and evident meaning of the sundry phrases, clauses, adjectives, and historic connections found within the context of the phrase “the law”

The ancient Hebrews frequently employed “the law” to distinguish the whole of revelation given to the Patriarchs and Prophets from the numerous traditions and teachings of the Rabbis and doctors of Judaism. Even the Psalms were called “law;” even as the example of Christ in John 10:34 shows. Referring to Psalm 82:6, He asks of the Jews, “Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?” Some of the Jews, alluding to Psalm 110:4, say in John 12:34, “We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever.” With the completion of the Old Testament text and its division according to content for use in the synagogues, the Hellenistic Jews began to refer to the Word of God, as it was then comprised, as “the law, the prophets, and the psalms.” Thus, Christ also says of Himself, “All things written in the law of Moses, in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning Me, must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44). His statement conforms to a common catalogue of the Mosaic revelation held in His day.

Most frequently, however, the Jews simply referred to the Old Testament as “the law” Though Moses himself never so designated that body of revelation without some more explicative or restrictive phrase being attached, in the time of his successor, Joshua, the son of Nun, the expression “the book of the laud” came into use. By the reign of Abijah shown in 2 Chronicles 14:4, the phrase as a comprehensive designation for the Mosaic law had come into prominence. Thereafter it appears about thirty times in the Old Testament text in this connection.

When the Resurrection and reign of Christ began to be preached upon the advent of the Gospel Age, and when the new economy thus founded was consequently contrasted with the former under the law of Moses, the phrase “the laud” became even more prominent. When it was used without any distinguishing or qualifying epithets or modifiers, it invariably contemplated that law given on Mt. Sinai over 1500 years before the dawn of Christianity!

Galatians 3 conforms beautifully to this arrangement of things in the Holy Spirit’s revelation concerning the differences betwixt the law of Moses and the New Testament law of Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:17 demonstrates explicitly that “the law” contemplated by Paul in our key text (v 19) is that law given 430 years after the promise was confirmed to Abraham. This obviously can only refer to that law given by Moses. It cannot possibly mean “law as law” or “all law,” as some expositors might have it read. It is self-apparent that the concept of law did not originate at Sinai: for natural law has existed since the Creation in Genesis 1, and because positive (knowable) divine law of a spiritual and moral nature was given to Adam and Eve to obey even before the Fall in Genesis 3 (cf. Gen. 2:15-17). Incidentally then, the idea of law and its restraint upon human behavior are not consequences of the Curse, but are antecedent to it as concerns age! Furthermore, it is patently false, as per, the Genesis record to contend that all law had its beginning at Sinai in the days of Moses! A particular body of law was indeed given then, but not “all law” nor even “all positive law”—should one seek to qualify the expression and quibble on the force of Genesis 2:15-17!

In our next installment, we shall examine more carefully the immediate context of Galatians 3:19 as it bears upon the phrase “the law,” and then set forth from verses 19 and 24 Paul’s answer pertaining to the purpose for which that law was given by the great God of Heaven to His servant Moses.

*P O. Box 582 Eagle Lake, FL 33839*

## The Whole Truth

*Bobby Liddell*

Paul said to the Ephesian elders: “Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:26-27—NKJV). Would that all who claim to be followers of the Son of God and proclaimers of His Word could say as Paul said.

The witness who will not tell: (1) the truth; (2) the whole truth; and , (3) nothing but the truth is not a trustworthy

witness. His failure to tell the whole truth is no less troubling than his failure to tell the truth or his telling of something other than the truth. A preacher or teacher who will not tell the whole truth is not trustworthy either.

It is indeed possible that one might tell the truth (e.g., “a” truth, “some” truth or even “much” truth) and yet choose not to tell the whole truth. Truth, to the great dismay of some, has both positive and negative aspects. To emphasize either one of these aspects of truth and de-emphasize the other induces a distorted, dangerous, even deadly perception. Some, swayed by the influential unrighteous who say the preaching of certain truths sounds offensive, unloving and inconsistent with the needs of the present day, take the penknife to their Bibles and refuse to preach the whole truth (Jer. 36:23).

The problem is not a new one, but is one that has been present throughout New Testament times. Those who have been most destructive to the cause are those who have veiled their deception by preaching some truth, perhaps even much truth, while either adding some error or omitting some other truth. The present trend among those who seek the praise of men more than the praise of God is to present a “love only” God and a “cost nothing” religion. This trend seems to be increasing in scope. People and churches falter and fall, lost to God and his cause, while men cry, “Peace, Peace.”

The paradox of the dilemma is that men who often boast of being the ones who are Christ’s true disciples and of having the greatest love are actually false disciples and lacking in love. The temptation to preach some truth but not all truth is great to men whose motivations are to seek to maintain their position and influence with certain factions. Failure to preach the whole truth lies not in one’s abounding in areas of spirituality where others lack, but in a lack of conviction, a lack of courage, and a lack of compassion.

None should ever find comfort and satisfaction in leaving any truth untaught. Only those more interested in serving self and Satan than the Savior can “justify” presenting to dying and trusting men and women a false impression of God and the gospel and a false hope of salvation. Souls hang in the balance. How dare any to withhold any part of God’s truth? Jesus showed the importance of every “jot” and “tittle” (Mat. 5:18). What man, whether he be a “gospel preacher” or other, has the right to determine what truth should be heard and what should be held back? Thank God for men who, in their preaching, follow the example of Paul (1 Cor. 11:1) in preaching “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

Paul preached the whole truth because he was convicted of the unity of the gospel, the inspiration of the Scripture and the need for all men to hear all the counsel of God. He preached the whole truth because he had courage to face the enemies of truth, to pay the price in his own life, and to stand with the Lord. He preached the whole truth because he loved the Lord, he loved the lost and he loved the Lord’s people.

Those who preach the whole truth are free from the blood of all men (Acts 20:26-27; Eze. 3:17-21). Those who shun to declare any part of the truth shall be lost and shall endanger the souls of those who might follow them (1 Tim. 4:16). None can be ashamed of any part of the truth and be pleasing to God or of profit to man.

## “Uster Be’s”

### *George Darling, Sr.*

(Defender, July 1975)

“I used to be a member of the church, but so and so happened and I quit.” I’m sure that most who read this have heard that statement at some time or other.

When I hear it, I am reminded of the Lord’s question when He asked the disciples, “Will ye also go away?” And Peter answered, “Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” (John 6:44ff).

Today we see so many who are turning their backs on the church. “Oh, we believe in Jesus alright, but we reject the church” Seemingly they do not understand that to reject the church is to reject Christ. The church is His body (Col. 1:18-24). Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23) and it is impossible to turn against the body and not the head. All this talk about the restructuring of the church is pure nonsense.

Another thing that needs to be impressed is, that one cannot accept the Lord and reject His Word and His law. The words spoken by the Lord—they are spirit and they are life. There is no hope of eternal life if one refuses to accept the words of the Lord. They make us free (John 8:32); they save (1 Pet. 1:18-25); and they sanctify (John

17:17). When we reject His Word we reject Him. Peter said, “Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

When church members are entangled with the things of the world, and neglect to study the Bible, and refuse to do their duty to God they should be reminded of the question: “To whom shall we go?” They cannot find salvation out in the world. Salvation is found only in Christ (Rom. 8:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:17).

Their friends might help them in times of need and they might go to them for comfort and advice, but to whom can they go for salvation? The only answer is to the Lord. Too many fail to appreciate Jesus when everything is going well—in times of good health and prosperity. But let hard times come, a few days of hardship, and they find that their friends forsake them, they go down into a depression of despair and begin to cry out, “Why did God let this happen to us?” Some will make the decision to return to the Lord, but why did they fail to realize before they left Him that he alone has the words of eternal life.

I hope that some who read this will give some consideration of their souls. If you are among the “uster be’s,” or if you are growing careless of your duty and are thinking about leaving the church, if anything stands between you and the Lord, will you ask yourself this question, “To whom shall I go?” (John 6:68)? Remember if you leave Him you leave every hope of salvation.

Many are dissatisfied with the church and are seeking the “more popular.” Especially is this true with many of our younger people of high school and college age. They go away to school and are enticed by the cohorts of Satan to join in the practice of things that are foreign to the teaching of God’s Word. Our young ladies are taught to pray in public. Our young men are taught to speak in tongues, and to “work miracles.” Both are being taught that God’s plan of church government is obsolete.

The church is a complete institution. We dare not organize any other to do its work. Those who do these things have departed from the Lord and need to consider the question, “To whom shall we go?” Yes, my friends, you may live and die outside the church if that is your desire, but remember well that you will spend an eternity away from the Lord.

The man who leaves the Lord doctrinally (so many are doing so today) or morally can come back and correct his mistakes. He has promised to forgive.

But he has not promised to forgive until the guilty one does his part. So, to you “uster be’s” your only hope is to humble yourselves and confess your sins, and return to the church. Ponder carefully Paul’s statement, “The wages of sin is death” and Peter’s statement: “Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

## New Hermeneutics

*Dub McClish*

“Hermeneutics” is a word created from the name of Hermes, a god of Greek mythology, who served as interpreter of the other gods, especially Jupiter. Thus, “hermeneutics” refers to the science of interpretation. Biblical hermeneutics are of ultimate importance—one’s understanding of the Bible can be no better than his hermeneutics. The restoration of the church of Christ was accomplished by applying correct biblical hermeneutics. The purity and identity of the church can be maintained only through continued application of correct hermeneutics.

We all habitually (and without having to think about it) use several correct principles of hermeneutics each time we read the Bible. When we recognize a passage to be figurative rather than literal, when we take note of who is writing or speaking and who is being addressed, and when we distinguish between Old Testament and New Testament law, we are using sound hermeneutics.

For several years there have been a few voices of radical liberalism among us which have steadily denied some of the most basic principles of correct biblical hermeneutics (e.g., Carl Ketcherside, Leroy Garrett, et al.). In more recent years a younger generation of brethren has arisen that has been influenced both by the spirit of hyper-tolerance which now dominates society and by the poisonous principles of the liberals of the past generation.

The younger liberals have especially developed a fixation on unity with the denominations, beginning with the Independent Christian Church. Since 1884 annual meetings between men in the two groups have been taking place. With but few exceptions, the participants from the churches of Christ have been those who have a history of doctrinal softness and compromise, if not outright apostasy.

Out of this background (and in order to hasten their union and fellowship agenda), these liberal brethren have adopted an entirely new approach to various words, passages, and principles of interpretation of Scripture. Hence, we refer to the “new hermeneutics.” (Actually, when analyzed, the “new hermeneutics” are hardly more than the “old hermeneutics” of a century ago that caused the Christian Church to apostatize from the Truth in the first place). By listening and briefly discussing some of the principal points of this hermeneutical perversion we shall be able to see clearly the direction of movement.

A significant element of the new hermeneutics is a novel view of fellowship. Ketcherside and Garrett have long advocated an erroneous distinction between “gospel” and “doctrine” (i.e., the “gospel” consists only of such basics as the death, burial, and resurrection, while “doctrine” consists of all other matters e.g., worship, the nature of the kingdom, morals, etc.). They then insist that only the “gospel” (not “doctrine” at all) is the basis of fellowship. This approach places such issues as worship with mechanical instruments and premillennialism in the realm of human preference. It also implies that we are in fellowship with practically all who claim to believe in Christ, regardless of how heretical their views are on a hundred subjects. This fatally erroneous hermeneutic has been aptly called (by Ketcherside himself) “unity in diversity”

The latest version of this view (fathered by Rubel Shelly) contends that there are two “levels” or “spheres” of fellowship. Shelly’s scheme (which he calls “fellowship without compromise”) distinguishes between “big F” fellowship and “little f” fellowship. According to him, one has only Fellowship (not fellowship) with all those who (in his view) have “obeyed the gospel.” However, he has both Fellowship and fellowship with those who have “obeyed the gospel” and who agree with him on doctrinal matters. Since the “big F” “level” of fellowship implies no endorsement of doctrine (according to Shelly), we can thus have Fellowship with those who use the instrument, advocate premillennialism, and such like, without endorsing of limited fellowship. Notice that Shelly’s “big F” is tantamount to the Ketcherside/Garrett “fellowship based on gospel,” and his “little f” equals their contention that doctrine does not determine fellowship.

The malignant consequences of this hermeneutic are many. It demands acceptance of almost every form of doctrinal error (from foot washing to counting beads) as mere matters of indifference. Ultimately, it demands acceptance of the “pious unimmersed,” as long as they “believe” in Christ. This monstrous concept was born of the need for some device to allow those enthralled with their error (particularly the Independent Christian Church) to be granted “fellowship” without having to give up their errors. Of course, the New Testament knows nothing of a distinction between “gospel” and “doctrine” nor of “levels” of fellowship. One is either in fellowship with God and His fellow man or he is not in fellowship with them (2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:11; 1 John 1:7; et al.).

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**Believe in Jesus.** “I said 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).

**Repent of past sins.** “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30-31).

“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

**Confess Jesus as the Christ.** “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10).

**Be baptized for the remission of sins.** “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).

When one takes these simple steps:

**He will be saved.** “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16).

**His sins will be washed away.** “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

**The Lord will add him to the Lord’s church.** “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

**Faithfulness is required.** “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).

### TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

MARCH 25-29, 1990

### MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

4400 Knight Arnold Road • Memphis, Tennessee 38118

### THEME: “*GREAT LESSONS FROM OLD TESTAMENT CHARACTERS*”

SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 1990

9:30-10:20 AM “Adam, Father of the Race” ..... Rex A. Turner, Sr.  
10:30-11:30 AM “Abel, Who Yet Speaks” ..... E. L. Whitaker  
6:00- 7:00 PM “Caleb, the Great, Faithful Optimist” ..... Thomas B. Warren

MONDAY, MARCH 26, 1990

9:00- 9:50 AM “Noah, Who Found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord” ..... Keith A. Masher, Sr.  
10:00-10:50 AM “Hermeneneutical Problems in the Contemporary World” ..... Thomas B. Warren  
10:00-10:50AM “Eve—Mother of All Living; Sarah—Mother of Nations”  
(Women’s Class) ..... Annette Cates  
11:00-11:50 AM “Achan, Who Brought Defeat to God’s People” ..... Eddie Whitten  
11:00-11:50 AM Class 1—*Great Leadership* ”Moses, Who Saw Him Who Is Invisible” ..... Gary White  
Class 2—*Major Prophets* “Isaiah, Gifted Reformer and Harbinger of Christ and His Kingdom” ..... Roy Cox

	Class 3— <i>Minor Prophets</i> “Hoses, Preacher with an Unequal Yoke and a Broken Hears”	Marc Lee
	Class 4— <i>Evil Leadership</i> “Rehoboam, Who Substituted Shields of Brass for Shields of Gold”	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	“Isaac, the Peaceable”	Joe Cox
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1— <i>Kings</i> “Saul, whose Envy Brought Moral Collapse”	Jack Openshaw
	Class 2— <i>Profiles of Rebellion</i> “Esau, Worldly Father of the Dukes of Edam”	James Burns
	Class 3—“Rebekuh—Mother of Favoritism; Jezebel—Wicked Wife” (Women’s Class)	Corrine Elkins
2:10- 3:00 PM	“Naaman, Whose Own Thoughts Nearly Cast Him His Cleansing”	Joe Gilmore
3:10- 4:00 PM	“Open Forum”	Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	“Abraham, Father of the Faithful and Friend of God”	Noel Merideth
TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 1990		
9:00-9:50 AM	“Jacob, Who Was Powerfully Transformed in Character”	Rod Rutherford
10:00-10:50 AM	“Hermeneutical Problems in the Contemporary World”	Thomas B. Warren
10:00-10:50 AM	“Jochebed—Mother Greatly Rewarded; Miriam—Blemished by Jealousy” (Women’s Class)	Barbara Curry
11:00-11:50 AM	“Absalom, whose Talents and Charm Brought Ruin”	M. L. Sexton
11:00-11:50 AM	Class 1— <i>Great Leadership</i> “Joshua, Loyal Spy, Soldier, Statesman, Family Man”	J. A. McNutt
	Class 2— <i>Major Prophets</i> “Jeremiah, Man of Compassion who Kept an Preaching When the Odds Were Against Him”	Waymon Swain
	Class 3— <i>Minor Prophets</i> “Amos, an Untrained Preacher in the ‘King’s Church’”	Gary Colley
	Class 4— <i>Evil Leadership</i> “Jereboam, Ambitious King Who Caused All Israel to Sin”	Fred House
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	“Elijah, Mighty Prophet Who Feared No Man Ye Became Discouraged”	Darrell Beard
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1— <i>Kings</i> “David, Compassionate and Multi-Talented”	Ed Allard
	Class 2— <i>Profiles of Rebellion</i> “Pharaoh, Who Acknowledged Not the Lord”	Brad Bromling
	Class 3—“Vashti—Modest Beauty; Gomer—Harlot” (Women’s Class)	Corrine Elkins
2:10- 3:00 PM	“Samson, A Study in Contrasts”	Eddy Gilpin
3:10- 3:00 PM	“Open Forum”	Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	“Joseph, the Optimist Whose Sorrow Was Turned into Joy”	Andrew Connally
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 1990		
9:00- 9:50 AM	“Job, Who Was Tried as Gold”	Curtis A. Cates
10:00-10:50 AM	“Hermeneutical Problems in the Contemporary World”	Thomas B. Warren
10:00-10:50 AM	“Deborah—Courageous Patriot; Delilah—Betrayed of Her Husband” (Women’s Class)	Dorothy Mosher
11:00-11:50 AM	“Lot, Who Chose the Best(?)”	John Shannon
11:00-11:50 AM	Class 1— <i>Great Leadership</i> “Gideon, the Humble, Who Learned There Is Strength in Small Numbers”	Joe Abbott
	Class 2— <i>Major Prophets</i> “Ezekiel, Old Testament Preacher Most Like Jesus”	Kenneth Gossett
	Class 3— <i>Minor Prophets</i> “Jonah, Who Was Angered by His Preaching’s Success”	Eugene Jenkins
	Class 4— <i>Evil Leadership</i> “Jehu, A King Governed by Policy, Not Principle”	Lindsey Warren
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	“Elisha, Kindred Spirit and Imitator of Elijah yet Strikingly Distinct”	Goebel Music
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1— <i>Kings</i> “Solomon, From Excellent Beginning to Almost Total Infamy”	Glenn Hitchcock
	Class 2— <i>Profiles of Rebellion</i> “Nadab, and Abihu, Who Did Not Honor the Principle of Silence”	William S. Cline
	Class 3—“Naomi—Great Mother-in-law; Ruth—Beautiful Gleaner” (Women’s Class)	Irene Taylor
2:10- 3:00 PM	“Josiah, a Royal Reformer”	Dub McClish
3:10- 4:00 PM	“Open Forum”	Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	“Samuel, Savior of the Nation of Israel”	Winfred Clark
THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 1990		
9:00- 9:50 AM	“Jonathan, A Man of Generosity and Humility”	Jim Dearman
10:00-10:50 AM	“Hermeneutical Problems in the Contemporary World”	Thomas B. Warren
10:00-10:50 AM	“Esther—Savior of Her Nation; Athaliah—Ruthless Killer” (Women’s Class)	Brenda Rutherford
11:00-11:50 AM	“Ezra, Ready Scribe Who Revered God’s Word”	Edwin Jones
11:00-11:50 AM	Class 1— <i>Great Leadership</i> “Nehemiah, Profile of Strength”	Richard Curry

	Class 2— <i>Major Prophets</i> “Daniel, Greatly Beloved Preacher, Who Was Courageous and Unservingly Loyal” . . . . .	Mike Vestal
	Class 3— <i>Minor Prophets</i> “Malachi, a Negative and Positive Preacher” . . . . .	Mac Denver
	Class 4— <i>Evil Leadership</i> “Jehoiakim, Who Showed Braun Disrespect for the Word of God” . . . . .	Thomas Eaves
11:50-1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10-2:00 PM	“Melchisedek, Who Prefigured the Kingship and Priesthood of Christ” . . . . .	Buster Dobbs
1:10.2:00 PM	Class 1— <i>Kings</i> “Hezekiah, Who Was Devout Albeit Not Perfect” . . . . .	Ray Peters
	Class 2— <i>Profiles of Rebellion</i> “Balsam, Who Was Rebuked by an Ass” . . . . .	Wayne Coats
	Class 3—“Hannah—Ideal Mother; Michal—Undermined Her Marriage” (Women’s Class) . . . . .	Irene Taylor
2:10-3:00 PM	“Joab, Who Loved Himself and Was Ruled by Ambition” . . . . .	B. C. Carr
3:10-4:00 PM	“Open Forum” . . . . .	Garland Elkins
4:00-7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00-7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30-8:30 PM	“Enoch, Early Picture of Immortality” . . . . .	Robert R. Taylor



# DEFENDER

Volume XIX

March 1990

Number 3

## “Have Peace One with Another”

(Mark 9:50)

*Allen Webster*

According to the story, a man tested the strength of a glass beaker by using it as a hammer to drive a nail into a wooden plank. This he successfully did. Next he took a pea-sized marble and dropped it through the neck of the bottle. Upon hitting the bottom, the marble shattered the container. Resistant to blows inflicted from the outside, the glass beaker fell victim to destruction from within. What an outstanding example of what can happen to the precious bride of Christ, His church. What atheists and enemies could never do from the outside, selfish and shallow church members accomplish from the inside.

While we must not seek peace and unity at the expense of truth, a priority of all purchased people should be to seek to live in peace with their brethren. Notice God’s words throughout time on this subject: “Seek peace, and pursue it” (Psa. 34:14); “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18); “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3); and, “Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it” (1 Pet. 3:11). There is no doubt that it is the responsibility of every child of God to do his best to keep peace in the body of Christ.

**Peace Makes Things Good and Pleasant.** “Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psa. 133:1). Unity is good because it promotes harmony and cooperation. It is pleasant because unity is lovely, charming and enjoyable.

**God Blesses the Peacemakers.** “Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Mat. 5:9).

**Peace Builds up the Church.** “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Rom. 14:19). This is true both individually and collectively.

**Those Who Cause Divisions Are to Be Marked.** “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17). One of the seven things listed in Proverbs 6:16-19 as those which God hates and which are an abomination to Him is: “he that soweth discord among brethren” (Pro. 6:19).

**Living in Peace Keeps Us in Fellowship with God.** “Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11).

**Following Peace Enables Us to See the Lord.** “Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

Abraham’s attitude must be ours, “Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee...for we *be* brethren” (Gen. 13:8). Ours is a kingdom of peace (Isa. 2:1-4), we follow the “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6) who left peace with His disciples: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” (John 14:27). We worship the God of peace (2 The. 3:16) and are told to follow (Heb. 12:14), to pursue (1 Pet. 3:11) and to live in peace (2 Cor. 13:11). “Be at peace among yourselves” (1 The. 5:13).

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# Love as Brethren

*Bobby Liddell*

Simon, the apostle named Peter by our Savior (Mat. 16:13-18), penned the inspired letter we know as First Peter. To troubled Christians facing trials and persecutions, he wrote of hope and love. Six times in this book, he encouraged them to love as brethren (1 Pet. 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8; 5:14).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*” (1 Pet. 1:22). Brotherly love is unfeigned (not hypocritical) and is fervent (warm and intense from the Greek word which means to stretch or to strain). Such love resides in and comes from a pure heart only. Interestingly, the first word translated love in this verse is the Greek combination of *philos* (dear or fond) and *adelphos* (brother) and means fondness or affection for brethren. The second is from *agapao* (love) which signifies the highest form of love (to show the deep regard and fervent love brethren should have for one another).

“Finally, *be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous*” (1 Pet. 3:8). Brotherly love is companion with unity (one mind), sympathy (compassion), tenderheartedness (pitiful) and humblemindedness (courteous). Where these characteristics are not found, brotherly love is lacking. Where brethren lack love for one another the church can never be the force for good that God commands but shall sink to a pale and distorted misrepresentation of the pure church for which Christ died (Eph. 5:27).

“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8). Peter declares the power and significance of brotherly love—“above all things.” That does not mean that such love negates the commands of our Lord nor man’s obligation to obey. Fervent love for our brothers and sisters includes an attitude of forgiveness and results in peace and unity. Disciples of Christ do not delight in the sinful and undone condition of brethren. Those who manifest such a wicked and malicious spirit have not the love for brethren which God commands and, thus, in disobedience, they do much harm to the cause of Christ and shall be lost in hell eternally unless they repent. Being recognized as a “good brother,” a “well-known brother” or a “dear friend” does not make evil actions and attitudes accepted of God.

The “badge of discipleship” is love: “By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). When we seek to destroy one another out of jealousy, self-will, malice, wrath, revenge or the desire of promoting ourselves by tearing down a brother we sin and further weaken a brotherhood already troubled by an ungodly lack of brotherly love. “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal. 5:15).

Christians must expose and oppose error, even in our brethren, for souls are in jeopardy. Brotherly love does not eliminate that need, but fulfills that responsibility and ensures the proper approach and attitude in so doing. “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (Jam. 5:19-20).

Those who follow Christ ought to be aware of the nature and consequences of sin and should put forth every effort to save all men from its soul condemning effects. Is one a Christian when he delights in a brother’s spiritual demise (whether real or imagined) and seeks to destroy him through malicious gossip? Love for God and the brotherhood demands an immediate change in the attitude of many brethren. Beloved brethren, let us have fervent love one for another.

## “Wherefore Then Serveth the Law?”

*Daniel Denham*

The historic context of the Galatian epistle is concerned with the problem posed by Judaizing teachers who were troubling the churches of Galatia with their insistence that the law of Moses in general and the rite of circumcision in particular be observed. Especially this was problematic for Gentile Christians who had never fallen under the auspices of Mosaic legislation for that law, as has been noted, was given solely to the Israelitish nation. The problem of the Judaizers also bewildered the Jewish Christians who had grown up on the teaching and obligations of the law.

There would be a sense of disloyalty to Moses and to God in the charges by the Judaizers against those Jewish converts who refused to be bound by the law any longer. Thus, their minds were “bewitched” or stirred up in confusion relative to the truth, because of the error perpetrated about the law—its scope, purpose, and obligations (cf., Gal. 3:1). The background of the epistle finds its roots in the events of Acts 15:1ff. The regions of Syria and Asia Minor were especially hard-hit by the Judaizers. In Galatians 2, Paul wrote of the hypocrisy of Peter on one occasion regarding Gentile Christians. Peter had formerly eaten with them, thus, showing his acceptance of the Gentile brethren. However, when certain Jewish brethren came from Jerusalem, he withdrew himself from his previous practice, and tacitly lent his support to the effort of those Judaizers to compel the Gentiles to live as they did respecting the law of Moses. Paul specifically says that Peter was to blame, and that he withstood Peter “to the face” because of his “dissimulation” (cf., Gal. 2:11-14).

The Jewish Christians were still observing at least certain aspects of the law, and those who came from Jerusalem evidently tried to bind that law as a means of justification even upon the Gentiles (vv. 15-16), but Paul forcefully shows by an appeal to his own condition that the Christian—including the Jewish Christian—is now dead to “the law” (v. 19). What “law”? Obviously, it is the same law that the Judaizers were trying to compel the Gentile converts to keep! It is the same law that Paul had at one time been alive to as pertains to amenability! That would unequivocally have to be the law of Moses. It is **that** law then that, Paul says in Galatians 2:21, could not bring righteousness or place man in a right standing with God! As one proceeds from that verse onward, he will observe a stark contrast in the third chapter drawn between “the faith” (or the Gospel of Christ), which is founded upon the Abrahamic Seed Promise, and “the law” which could not bring righteousness nor grant life. Chapter 4 then illustrates the superiority and superseding nature of “the faith” over “the law.” The former is an administration wherein freedom from the power and tyranny of sin is made possible and by such an escape from its dire eternal consequences as decreed by the law and demanded by justice. The latter is spoken of as “bondage.” A sense of hopelessness and despair attends it for it made no provision of itself to take away sin in an ultimate way. The Christian is not under the bondage of “the law,” but rather enjoys the precious liberty of “the faith.” In Galatians 5:4 Paul warns that those seeking justification by “the law” (the same law of 2:16) “are fallen from grace.” Salvation is possible by “faith that worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6). Had justification been possible by the law alone, then Christ’s death would have been in vain. It would have been needless (2:21). But “the law” was not intended for that purpose. It was perfect for what it was intended to do, but it was not intended to be the vehicle through which eternal life and the blessings of the Seed Promise would be made available to the world (cf., 3:21). It is through “the faith” that sonship, salvation, and sanctification are made possible (3:26-29).

In Galatians 3:13, Paul demonstrates that it is the law of Moses that is contemplated in his use of the solitary phrase “the law.” He says, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree.” He quotes expressly from the law of Moses in Deuteronomy 21:23. The reference is to the manner of Christ’s death by crucifixion upon the “tree” of Calvary! The affirmation is that the work of Christ in His vicarious sufferings and death redeemed the Galatians—in particular those who had been under the law as Jews formerly—from the curse of the law about condemnation (cf., vv. 10-12). The law revealed the nature of sin, and condemned it, but it made no provision to ultimately remedy it! Christ came and died for that purpose. Paul writes in Romans 3:20, “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” And again he says in Romans 8:3, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” As in Galatians 3 and 4, Paul stresses the relative deficiency of the law of Moses respecting the problem of sin and justification, and how God remedied the problem through the death of Christ. He shows that the law was not intended to be the means or grounds for the salvation of the Human Race, that it could not by design and due to the frailties of man accomplish certain things, such as grant righteousness and life, and that Christ, offering Himself as a sacrifice for sin, has effected redemption through “the faith.”

If the law was not intended to be the means by which salvation and the attendant blessings of the Seed Promise would be effected, then what purpose did it serve in the plan of God? This is the force of Galatians 3:19. The answer briefly stated by Paul in that same verse is, “It was added because of transgressions.” Through it was made known in a forceful, impressive, and didactic way the face of sin, and also nature and demerit of sin. It revealed the ugliness of sin as seen through the eyes of a righteous God, and it manifested the destructiveness of sin as seen in lives of

those ruled by sin. Even the very best of mere mortals in ancient Israel—the veritable flower of the nation—failed to keep it perfectly without succumbing to the pull of sin! By the law, Paul says, he knew what sin was (Rom. 7:7). Sin, as it were, used the law, for the law condemned sin, but did not remedy it. It was impossible that “the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10:4).

The need ultimately for redemption necessitated then an end of the law. Christ would be and was that end (cf., Rom. 10:4). He was its terminus. It was added “till the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Gal. 3:19). That Seed is Christ, according to Galatians 3:14-17. Thus, the Hebrews writer says of Him, “He taketh away the first [testament], that he may establish the second” (Heb. 10:9).

In Galatians 3:24, Paul calls the law “our schoolmaster” or tutor “to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” The force of *paidagogos* may best be understood by the practice of the time in which it was used. The term referred to “the slave whose duty it was to go with” a child to his teacher. That slave was charged with the care, custody, and protection of his ward. He even was involved in some of the instruction and training in the young child’s life. By this imagery, Paul emphasizes the immaturity of those who dwelt under the law, and subsequently the inferiority of the Mosaic system, the *paidagogos*, as opposed to that of Jesus Christ, the Great Teacher!

In subsequent articles we purpose to examine some of the lessons to be gleaned from the law of Moses as a *paidagogos*, and to discuss the fanciful notion that because “the law” has been abolished the Christian is not under any law.

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## And They Caused Great Joy

Eddie Helms

There are many things that cause one to rejoice. The eunuch read the Word of God, heard the application of the Word, obeyed the Word and was saved (Acts 8:30-38). He then went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:39). The apostle Paul wrote of the great themes of justification by faith, having peace with God, the grace of God, and the hope of the glory of God in Romans 5:1-2. When one responds to God in loving obedience he will find himself in Christ and enjoying these great blessings (Eph. 1:3-8; John 14:15; 1 John 2:3-6; 5:3).

Not only can God and His Word bring unto man great joy but brethren can cause great joy as well. It is said of Paul and Barnabas that when they spoke of the many conversions of the Gentiles that the occasion “caused great joy unto all the brethren” (Acts 15:3). What can we do to cause great joy unto the brethren?

We can cause great joy unto all brethren when we all are committed to the preaching of the pure and unadulterated Word of God (2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 20:20, 27; Neh. 8:8). It causes no joy to read articles and see literature that send out uncertain sounds or are outright false (1 Cor. 14:8). It causes great grief to hear sermons and classes filled with opinions and statements that question the five acts of New Testament worship. The proclamation, of the precious word of God brought great joy to the city of Samaria and will bring joy to those who love God’s truth today as well (Acts 8:8). Thank God for godly elders among the churches who are “able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Tit. 1:9). Thank God for teachers, preachers and other brethren who are committed to this same end! We can cause great rejoicing when we preach God’s Word!

We can be sources of joy to one another when we practice the truth. “For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 34). It causes nothing but grief to see and hear of problems and divisions in the Lord’s precious body, the church (1 Cor. 1:11; 2 Cor. 2:4). We need to encourage the truth in one another’s lives. It is indeed joyous to see obedience in action (Luke 15:5-7; 9-10, 22-24, 32). May we commit ourselves to be such sources of joy.

We can cause great joy among the brethren when we promote love, unity, and cooperation among our own congregation and among sister congregations in Christ. Great joy and gladness was evident in the early church of Christ (Acts 2:46). They joyfully gave to others (2 Cor. 8:2; 9:7). They gave of themselves and showed their concern to others. Paul remembered often how the Philippian church promoted Christianity and the thought of them brought

joy to his heart (Phi. 1:3-11). Let us promote simple New Testament Christianity and cause joy in the hearts of men!

Joy is one of the nine fruits that are characteristic of the life of a Christian (Gal. 5:22-23). Dear reader, if you are not a Christian, why not obey the gospel that these fruits might be yours? Christian reader, please recognize the privilege and responsibility you have to others and promote joy. May we all be striving to cause joy unto all the brethren!

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## You Can Be Forgiven

Sin brings guilt, condemnation and death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Eze. 18:20). "For the wages of sin *is* death" (Rom. 6:23). Sin separates one from God. "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2).

All the pain and misery in the world is the result of man's sin. Sin brings no good thing, but costs men, above all else, their souls. As bad as sin is one would think that all would shun it, yet, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Since all (that is, all whom God holds accountable for their actions) have sinned, all need forgiveness. How can that forgiveness be obtained? Man can not by his own doing (without God) find forgiveness. What can man do?

God, in His great love and mercy has provided a way whereby man might be forgiven. He sent his only begotten Son to die on the cruel cross for the sins of all mankind (John 3:16). Only through Jesus Christ might one be forgiven and cleansed by His precious blood. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

"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). Do you believe that? The only way to God and to forgiveness is Jesus' way. Thus, we need to ask, "What is Jesus' way for me to be forgiven?" Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). If you really want to be forgiven, you will not let anything stand in your way. Why not seek forgiveness his way?

# 1990 BELLVIEW LECTURES

May 9-13, 1990

## “What Does God Authorize In Worship?”

Wednesday, May 9

- 7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM Worship In The Old Testament Period . . . . . Curtis A. Cates  
8:00 PM The Development And Influence Of Synagogue Worship . . . . . Rex A. Turner, Sr.

Thursday, May 10

- 9:00 AM Worship With Gladness . . . . . Curtis A. Cates  
9:45 AM Could Our Desire Be To Worship God Or To Entertain Men? . . . . . Ira Y. Rice, Jr.  
10:30 AM Ascertaining Bible Authority For Acceptable Worship . . . . . Roy Deaver  
11:15 AM Singing And Christian Worship . . . . . Noah Hackworth  
1:30 PM What Day Has God Authorized For Christian Worship? . . . . . Jerri Manasco  
2:15 PM The Restoration Of Worship According To God's Pattern . . . . . B. C. Carr  
7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM Is It Possible For A Christian To Worship Acceptably In Or With  
A Denomination? . . . . . Andrew Connally  
8:00 PM The Lord's Supper And Christian Worship . . . . . Joe Gilmore

Friday, May 11

- 9:00 AM Preaching And Christian Worship . . . . . Alton Hayes  
9:45 AM Has God Authorized Different Roles For Men And For Women  
In Christian Worship? . . . . . H. A. (Buster) Dobbs  
10:30 AM Ascertaining Bible Authority For Acceptable Worship . . . . . Roy Deaver  
11:15 AM Shall We Worship In Truth And/Or By Tradition? . . . . . Dub McClish  
1:30 PM Our Fathers Worshipped In This Mountain . . . . . Bobby Liddell  
2:15 PM The Priesthood Being Changed, Has The Worship Changed? . . . . . Jerry Martin  
7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM Practical Suggestions For Improving Our Worship . . . . . Foy Smith  
8:00 PM Does One Sin When He Chooses Not To Assemble With The Saints  
To Worship? . . . . . Bob Duncan

Saturday, May 12

- 9:00 AM Giving and Christian Worship . . . . . Shan Jackson  
9:45 AM Attitude Toward Worship In The Book Of Acts . . . . . Winfred Clark  
10:30 AM Ascertaining Bible Authority For Acceptable Worship . . . . . Roy Deaver  
11:15 AM Are There Essentials and Expedients In Worship? . . . . . Flavil Nichols  
1:30 PM The History And Growth Of Satan Worship . . . . . Garry Brantley  
2:15 PM How Shall We Teach Our Children To Worship . . . . . Stephen Waller  
7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM Prayer And Christian Worship . . . . . Ray Peters  
8:00 PM Four Types Of Worship . . . . . William S. Cline

Sunday, May 13

- 9:00 AM Does Man Worship By Instinct And/Or By Revelation? . . . . . Stanley Ryan  
10:00 AM Is Everything The Christian Does Worship? . . . . . Eddie Whitten  
7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM A History Of Idols And Idol Worship Through The Ages . . . . . Daniel Denham  
8:00 PM Thou Shalt Worship The Lord Thy God . . . . . Guss Eoff

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# THE NINTH ANNUAL SOUTHWEST LECTURES

## “The Book of Psalms—II”

April 15-18, 1990

### Sunday, April 15

9:30 AM	(chapters 74-75)	Perry Cotham
10:30 AM	(chapters 76-77)	Joe Gilmore
1:30 PM	Open Forum	
6:00 PM	(chapter 78)	Darwin Hunter
7:00 PM	(chapters 79-80)	Darrell Conley

### Monday, April 16

9:00 AM	(chapters 81-82)	David Brown
10:00 AM	(chapters 83-85)	Kerry Clark
11:00 AM	(chapters 86-88)	Ron Greiner
1:00 PM	(chapter 90)	Dan Carter
2:00 PM	(chapters 90-91)	Lynn Matheny
3:00 PM	(chapter 119)	Bill Jackson
6:30 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	(chapters 95-98)	Dick Sztanyo
8:00 PM	(chapters 99-101)	Joe Gilmore

### Tuesday, April 17

9:00 AM	(chapters 102-103)	Mac Deaver
	(Ladies)	Irene Taylor
10:00 AM	(chapters 131-134)	Frank Dunn
11:00 AM	(chapters 125-130)	Robert Taylor
1:00 PM	(Ladies)	Irene Taylor
1:45 PM	(chapter 106)	Ray Hunter
2:45 PM	(chapter 107)	John Bowles
3:45 PM	(chapters 135-136)	Bob Berard
6:30 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	(chapters 110-113)	Dub McClish
8:00 PM	(chapters 114-116)	Robert Taylor

### Wednesday, April 18

9:00 AM	(chapter 105)	David Baker
10:00 AM	(chapters 117-118)	Roy Deaver
11:00 AM	(chapters 92-94)	Ted Horn
1:00 PM	(chapters 120-124)	Dave Miller
2:00 PM	(chapter 104)	Steve Gibson
3:00 PM	(chapters 108-109)	Carl Garner
6:30 PM	Singing	
7:00 PM	(chapters 137-139)	Foy Forehand
8:00 PM	(chapters 140-143)	Paul Sain

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# DEFENDER

Volume XIX

April 1990

Number 4

## Is it Possible for a Christian to Worship Acceptably in or with a Denomination?

*Andrew M. Connally*

Brethren and friends, denominationalism is of the devil and all who remain in such till death will be lost! Notice what our Lord has said:

Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable (Mat. 15:15).

There are several significant points in this passage. **One**, our Lord warned that there are religious people who “transgress the commandment of God because of their tradition.” **Two**, there are those “who have made void the word of God because of their tradition.” **Three**, there are people who claim they are “honoring God” while they practice “vain worship,” “teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.” **Four**, many hearing these truths become “offended.” **Five**, there are those disciples who are more concerned over those “offended” than they are over God! **Six**, our Lord stated that all plants (churches) not planted by the Father shall be rooted up! And finally all such blind guides who lead blind followers are going to be lost unequivocally, irretrievably lost! We doubt seriously that any stronger indictment of human denominations has ever been written.

A parallel passage to the above is found in Matthew 7:21-23.

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. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity

Here the scene is the Judgment and the people are expecting Salvation based on these reasons. **First**, they are “calling on the name of the Lord.” **Second**, they had taught “by thy name” and “by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works.” But they are rejected, notice why: “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 who is in heaven.” It is evident the “will of the Father” is one thing, while their actions did not, and we repeat, did not fit the will of the Father! This is a true picture of denominationalism in our day. They are busy worshipping the Lord, they have their “good works going” and they did accomplish things, but neighbor it was all according to “their will,” and not the Father’s!



It is very evident from only these two passages something is radically wrong with denominationalism. Surely it is not the sincerity, for they called on God, they worshipped God, they did it all by the name of the Lord, so if sincerity is not the question, what is?! It is plain to see they did everything without God's will (authority), and their will (authority) was the mitigating circumstance. Let us notice why worship in a denomination is not acceptable to God.

### **Denominations Are of Human Origin and Exist Without the Authority of God**

There is only one body (Eph. 4:4), "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling,*" and that one body is the church of Christ (cf., Eph. 1:23), "*which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*" Jesus built only one church (Mat. 16:18), "*upon this rock I will build my church*" God planned it in eternity (Eph. 3:10-11), "*According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord,*" and Christ built it in time (Acts 2:47), "*And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*"

Human denominations wear unscriptural names, teach unscriptural doctrines and worship in unscriptural ways. Anyone who compares them to the one true church can substantiate each of these points.

God forbids doing anything in religion that is not authorized by the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11), "*Whosoever transgresseth, 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. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*" Since God does not authorize denominations then God forbids denominationalism! If men follow the Bible and the Bible only then no denominations could exist. Think about this!

### **Denominations Wear Unscriptural Names**

The church is found in our New Testament and it has various designations to describe its nature. Notice: It is the family of God, the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15), "*But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*" It is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16). It is the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16), "*Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.*" It is the Church of God (1 Cor. 1:1-2), "*Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.*" It is the church (Acts 8:1), "*And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.*"

It has various designations to describe the nature of the individuals who make up the church. They are disciples (Acts 11:26), "*And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*" These disciples were called Christians (Acts 11:26). They are saints (1 Cor. 1:2), "*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.*" They are sons and daughters of God (2 Cor. 6:18), "*And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.*" They are an elect race, a royal priesthood and a holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9). All such designations of individuals or congregations are divinely named and such names can be worn in honor and with great dignity. Now where does that leave the names of the denominationalist? Completely without divine authority. In fact, to wear any other name than those given by God is to dishonor God! Think about this! Now, how in the world could a child of God be acceptable to God, living, working, supporting and worshipping in a denomination? It is impossible.

No Christian should ever be found worshipping in a denomination. For **it is sin!**

Don't you think we should quit trying to merge the church with denominations and quit fraternizing with them before we are lost with them? "*If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch*" (Mat. 15:1-15).

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# A Few Words

*Bobby Liddell*

We devote this month's Editor's page to a few words about *Defender*. Paul said he was, "set for the defence of the gospel" (Phi. 1:17). From that verse, the name for this paper was taken at its beginning: Now in its nineteenth volume, the purpose is the same. To that end, we commit ourselves.

We express great gratitude for all those sound men of faith who have taken the time to submit articles and for others who have allowed us to reprint their articles from other sources. The article on Page One of this issue, "Is It Possible For Christians To Worship Acceptably In Or With A Denomination?" is from the manuscript prepared by brother Connally for the upcoming Bellview Lectures and found in the 1990 Lectureship Book. Please take the time to read it carefully.

Thanks also to those of you who take the time to write whether in commendation or condemnation. We do appreciate hearing from you, especially letters like those' from which the following excerpts have been taken.

"I do so appreciate the DEFENDER and the church at Bellview for sending us a bundle of each monthly issue. The brethren enjoy reading them and use them in their teaching and preaching" (Jimmie B. Hill, Pago Pago, American Samoa). "We keep DEFENDER in our prayers" (Steve Gunter, Bentonville, AR). "We would like to contribute to the DEFENDER since we are no longer 'there' to help with putting it together. It's a great paper and we truly appreciate it so much" (Gene and Ann Hammock, Valley, AL). "Find inside a check to help publish the DEFENDER. Thank God we still have preachers as you and writers of DEFENDER that will stand for the truth" (Ava Burns, Kilmichael, MS). "We enjoy reading the DEFENDER. Thank you for sending it to us" (Port LaVaca Church of Christ, Texas). "Appreciate receiving your DEFENDER...(and) your stand for the truth" (Jesse Condra, Rogersville, TN). "I just finished reading a couple issues of DEFENDER and I want to sign up for it. It's great to find papers in the brotherhood that are still sound" (Steve Miller, Garrettsville OH). "May the Lord. continue to bless your work" (Allen Webster, Tiplersville, MS). "Brother W. L. Allen left one of your papers here...it sure was good...please send it to me" (Margaret Wells, Greenville, FL). "I will be looking forward to your next publication (lectureship book) in which you will be discussing the matter of authority in Worship" (Kenneth E. Thomas, Bradenton, FL). "I believe the DEFENDER is one of the best papers in the brotherhood. I really enjoy reading them...another brother wants on your mailing list" (Thomas Starkey, McMinnville, TN).

Thanks also to those who have sent in contributions toward the publishing of this paper. The Bellview Church of Christ spends many thousands of dollars each year in sending out *Defender* subscription free to all who request it. Thousands of copies are mailed each month (except December) to addresses here and abroad. We do not solicit donations, but we do appreciate those who seek to help in what we believe to be a good work. These have helped since our last report: J. T. Rainey (\$10.00); Geneva Lancaster (\$5.00); Church of Christ, Green Bay, WI (\$10.00); Ava Burns (\$10.00); Aubrey Simmons (\$20.00); Hairston Brantley (\$25.00); Roy Campbell (\$10.00); Lucille Simpson (\$10.00); Jere Whitman (\$10.00); Celina Mason (\$10.00); Nell Overton (\$10.00); Robert Yarbrough (\$20.00); Too Buttermore; (\$50.00); Gene and Ann Hammock (\$200.00); Ava Burns (\$10.00); Arney Salyer (\$5.00); and, Church of Christ, Duluth, MN (\$50.00).

Each month, many members of the Bellview church work in typesetting, printing, folding, stuffing, stapling and mailing *Defender*. Still others help with their contributions. Thanks to all who make it possible to send out this journal to instruct and to encourage men; to oppose and to expose error; and to call men back to Christ, their only hope.

## "Wherefore Then Serveth the Law?"

*Daniel Denham*

As a "schoolmaster" the law of Moses accomplished several key things in the development of the Hebrew nation and the unfolding of the Scheme of Redemption. As we proceed in our consideration of some of these things, let us remember that for what purposes the law served, it was perfect. It accomplished exactly what God intended it to accomplish. Thus, when the Scriptures speak of the imperfections accompanying the law or describe the relative

deficiencies of it, the emphasis is upon those things that were beyond its planned scope, which was devised and determined by the wisdom of God! Hence the Bible says concerning the law in Hebrews 8:8 that God found “fault” with it, while in Romans 7:12 Paul extols the law as “holy, and just, and good” (cf., v. 16). As Alexander Campbell observed in his monumental “Sermon on the Law,” the law of Moses could not by design, due to human frailties, accomplish certain things, namely: (1) demonstrate **fully** the malignancy and demerit of sin; (2) serve as a universal standard of religious and moral conduct; and (3) grant righteousness and eternal life. But what the law did it did quite well! Gospel preachers would do well to remember the many great lessons to be gleaned from the Old Testament record.

(1) The law of Moses was given to demonstrate to man that he is a sinner. Paul declares in Romans 7:7, “What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” In the passage, he quotes from Exodus 20:17 in the Decalogue. His perception of the fact and nature of sin—particularly of ungodly lust—was due, Paul says, to his knowledge of the law. It revealed sin for what it is (cf., v. 13). The verb “known” means simply “perceived, recognized” and is not used in an experiential sense. Paul was “made aware” of sin by the teaching of the law. It revealed sin in a fashion before unprecedented. Though it was involved in the occasion of sin in that its violation by the Jews produced sin (1 John 3:4; Rom. 4:15), the law itself was upright.

Because of the inability of the law to remedy sin in an ultimate way, sin took occasion by the commandment of the law to bring the condemnation of death upon its transgressors. The law could reveal sin, but it could not remedy it. The death of Christ and the bringing in of a better hope, however, did! The law did not make men sinners, but the violation of the law did, and without any ultimate provision to counter the effects of sin, men under the law were seemingly trapped, as Paul describes it, in “the body of this death” (Rom. 7:8-25). A picture of despair is painted by Paul of man’s plight under the law that condemned sin, but could not grant pardon nor give life! It is then that Paul turns by inspiration to the remedy of the problem of sin by Jesus Christ in Romans 8:14, the result of this remedy practically applied in verses 5-15, and the recompense of reward made possible through it in verses 16-39. An examination of Romans 8 immediately impresses the mind with the beautiful contrast drawn between the condition of despair under the law of Moses and the condition of blessing under “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (v. 2).

(2) The law of Moses also demonstrated to men that they could not of themselves remedy the effects of sin. Hebrews 10:4 expressly teaches, “For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” Think of all the sacrifices made by Israel. The Jews were charged to offer thank offerings, peace offerings, offerings connected with special dedications (e.g., the first fruits), oblations, offerings for purification, sin and trespass offerings, etc. There are offerings to be made in the morning and at evening. There were weekly (Sabbath day), monthly (new moon), and even yearly (feasts) observances requiring the prescribed and appropriate oblations and sacrifices. Yet all of these could not ultimately take away sin!

They all mutely testified and pointed to the need of an ultimate remedy through the Christ. They also demonstrated the ineffectualness of the transient and mundane to accomplish it. It required “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The gallons of blood, even rivers of it, that flowed from Israel’s altars could not take away sin! It required a one-time sacrifice by the Son of God (Heb. 7:27).

(3) The law presented also a glimpse of the demerit of sin. Though it could not do this fully; i.e., to the same extent as the death of Christ has done: for in that latter act involved the death of the innocent, sinless, righteous, godly and holy in the place of the guilty, sinful, unrighteous, ungodly and unholy! But the law did grant a glimpse of the exceeding “sinfulness” of sin, of its terrible nature and consequences. This it did in a number of ways but chiefly by means of its ordinances, including its blessings for them who obey the law and its cursings against them who disobey and its historical record of God’s dealings with men, especially with Israel. The various accounts of divine punishment being directly administered are particularly forceful in stressing the fact that God hates sin. The death of Nadab and Abihu is a strong reminder of God’s anger with those who would tamper with the pattern that He has established. The consequences of violence and unrest brought upon the house of David because of his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of her husband Uriah the Hittite, serve to emphasize the temporal and eternal penalties that may attach themselves to our own indiscretions. Men do not live in a moral vacuum, and social consequences are manifested in generations to come following the doing of any deed (cf., Exo. 20:5-6). God has

always despised wickedness and rejected those who sought to draw nigh unto Him with bloodstained hands and sin-laden hearts (Psa. 34:12-16; 1 Pet. 3:10-12). In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul appeals to several Old Testament examples wherein the people of God then committed sin and were punished, and in doing so the Apostle exhorts the Corinthian brethren, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (v. 12). In verse 6 he says, "Now these things were our examples," and again in verse 11 we read, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Another passage to consider is Romans 15:4.

(4) The law of Moses revealed certain aspects concerning the character of God. As a record of God's dealings with men and actions within Creation, the law provides a look at some of the great attributes of the "I Am." It reveals certain qualities of Deity that are not discernible simply by natural revelation, and expands upon what may be deduced from such revelation about His power and Godhood (cf., Rom. 1:20; Psa. 19:1). Every account and every declaration of God teaches something about Him. Every book bears the imprint of His character. Thus, in Exodus we see Him as Redeemer, while in the book of Leviticus His holiness is stressed. In Hosea, we are presented a moving display of His great and abiding love in the pathos of Hosea's plight with Gomer. In Jonah, God's mercy is demonstrated, while in the book of Daniel we observe the sovereignty of God, who "ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Dan. 4:7, 25, 32). In Micah and Isaiah, the marvelous balance between God's fierce anger with sin and sinners and His earnest desire for their redemption is shown. In the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations, we spy God's heartbreak over the condition of His people in sin; we see the great heart of God rent by the rebellion of stubborn children; and we also note His resolution to chastise as a loving Father those who are His offspring!

(5) The law, as a result of revealing the character of God, demonstrates the idea of holiness. Israel was "sanctified" or set apart to God's special service from among the nations by implementation of the law of Moses (Exo. 19:3-6). God demanded holiness of the Hebrews (Lev. 11:44). Every rite, observance, and office established under its auspices stressed the need for holiness and purity. Through these means, in a more concrete fashion, the concept of holiness was made known to the nation, and through it to the world. The Nazarite vow of Numbers 6, the special status of the tribe of Levi, the anointing of prophets, priests, and kings, as well as all the instruments of Judaic worship, etc., provided visual expression of the concept, which no other recorded legal system bore prior to the giving of the law. The codes of Hammurabi, Solon, Lycurgus, and Confucius were all devoid of the idea as the grounds for fellowship with Deity. The Tabernacle of God, with the golden laver whereat the priests were cleansed daily and all of the other furnishings of it, stood as a constant reminder of the need for redemption and of the holiness of God.

(6) The law served as an aid therefore to the unfolding of the Scheme of Redemption. It served its place in anticipation of "the fulness of time," when God would send forth "his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. 4:4-5). Gradual revelation of God's plan in the Bible was necessary for the preparation of the human race. Suffice it to say that had the pattern and course charted by inspiration not been taken, mankind would have been unable to properly perceive or appreciate the magnitude of what transpired at Calvary and its glorious aftermath in Christ's Resurrection and Ascension! A five-year-old child is not told all the details of the workings of the combustion engine should he make inquiry as to "What makes the car go?" Rather he is given but a small piece of the totality of information on the matter. He is given only that information which we deem he is able to understand in some way. The other more complex facts are reserved for such a time or times that he might be better equipped to handle them. Gradually he is brought to see the fuller picture as to the workings of an automobile. Even so God has dealt with mankind: providing with each successive age the information most appropriate for the condition of the human race, until by Christ in the Gospel we find the portrait completed and all essential details filled in, and can view in one sweep, the drama of the ages! The Mosaic Age was a necessary step from "the starlight" Dispensation of Patriarchy to the time when "the Sun of righteousness would arise with healing in His wings" to inaugurate the Gospel Age. Man had to be prepared for that transition, and all things involved in the New Testament order had to be prepared for it. Thus, man went to school under the law (Gal. 3:24). The law aided in that preparation and brought mankind to the coming of the Great Teacher, who is the central figure of Holy Writ. The law and its constituent elements served as a "figure" of what was to come, as "a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. 9:9; 10:1). The words of the prophets of Israel about salvation find their fruition in the Gospel (cf., 1 Pet. 1:3-12).

Our next installment will examine the doctrine that the end of the law of Moses was the end of all “law.” This idea is not new, but is receiving wide support in certain areas of the Brotherhood. It is the foundational doctrine of the current “all grace, no law” or “grace only” movement troubling the church. It is a false doctrine, as shall be observed.

Let us remember the purposes for which the law of Moses was given, and let us learn the many great lessons and practice its monumental principles: for “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4). It is indeed a remarkable testimony to the wisdom of God.

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Bellview Church of Christ Announces:

## Upcoming Lectures

**Fifth Annual Dierks, Arkansas Lectures:** April 27-29, 1990, *Jesus, The World's Redeemer*, Dierks Church of Christ, Main Street, Dierks, Arkansas.

**Tenth Annual Tennessee Bible College Lectureship:** May 6-10, 1990, *In Times Like These*, Tennessee Bible College, Grandview Drive, Cookeville, Tennessee. Contact David S. Hill (615) 5262616 or (615) 526-2535.

## Baptism and Mans Salvation

Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Notice the Lord said, one who (1) Believes; and (2) Is baptized; (3) Shall be saved. Notice what Jesus did not say. Christ did not say, “He that believes is saved (at the point of belief) and should be baptized.”

Men may teach such but Christ never did. His Word, the New Testament of Christ, teaches plainly that baptism (a burial in water for the remission of sins (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12; Acts 2:38) is essential to salvation. Ananias told the penitent believer Saul (Paul), “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Paul's sins were not washed away until he obeyed the word of the Lord by being baptized.

One's sins today are not washed away until he, as a penitent believer, obeys the Word of the Lord by being buried in water for the remission of sins. Have you obeyed His Word?

# 1990 BELLVIEW LECTURES

May 9-13, 1990

## “What Does God Authorize In Worship?”

Wednesday, May 9

- 7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM Worship In The Old Testament Period . . . . . Curtis A. Cates  
8:00 PM The Development And Influence Of Synagogue Worship . . . . . Rex A. Turner, Sr.

Thursday, May 10

- 9:00 AM Worship With Gladness . . . . . Curtis A. Cates  
9:45 AM Could Our Desire Be To Worship God Or To Entertain Men? . . . . . Ira Y. Rice, Jr.  
10:30 AM Ascertaining Bible Authority For Acceptable Worship . . . . . Roy Deaver  
11:15 AM Singing And Christian Worship . . . . . Noah Hackworth  
1:30 PM What Day Has God Authorized For Christian Worship? . . . . . Jerri Manasco  
2:15 PM The Restoration Of Worship According To God's Pattern . . . . . B. C. Carr  
7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM Is It Possible For A Christian To Worship Acceptably In Or With  
A Denomination? . . . . . Andrew Connally  
8:00 PM The Lord's Supper And Christian Worship . . . . . Joe Gilmore

Friday, May 11

- 9:00 AM Preaching And Christian Worship . . . . . Alton Hayes  
9:45 AM Has God Authorized Different Roles For Men And For Women  
In Christian Worship? . . . . . H. A. (Buster) Dobbs  
10:30 AM Ascertaining Bible Authority For Acceptable Worship . . . . . Roy Deaver  
11:15 AM Shall We Worship In Truth And/Or By Tradition? . . . . . Dub McClish  
1:30 PM Our Fathers Worshipped In This Mountain . . . . . Bobby Liddell  
2:15 PM The Priesthood Being Changed, Has The Worship Changed? . . . . . Jerry Martin  
7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM Practical Suggestions For Improving Our Worship . . . . . Foy Smith  
8:00 PM Does One Sin When He Chooses Not To Assemble With The Saints  
To Worship? . . . . . Bob Duncan

Saturday, May 12

- 9:00 AM Giving and Christian Worship . . . . . Shan Jackson  
9:45 AM Attitude Toward Worship In The Book Of Acts . . . . . Winfred Clark  
10:30 AM Ascertaining Bible Authority For Acceptable Worship . . . . . Roy Deaver  
11:15 AM Are There Essentials and Expedients In Worship? . . . . . Flavil Nichols  
1:30 PM The History And Growth Of Satan Worship . . . . . Garry Brantley  
2:15 PM How Shall We Teach Our Children To Worship . . . . . Stephen Waller  
7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM Prayer And Christian Worship . . . . . Ray Peters  
8:00 PM Four Types Of Worship . . . . . William S. Cline

Sunday, May 13

- 9:00 AM Does Man Worship By Instinct And/Or By Revelation? . . . . . Stanley Ryan  
10:00 AM Is Everything The Christian Does Worship? . . . . . Eddie Whitten  
7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM A History Of Idols And Idol Worship Through The Ages . . . . . Daniel Denham  
8:00 PM Thou Shalt Worship The Lord Thy God . . . . . Guss Eoff

For further information about housing, exhibits, lectureship books, or tapes, send for a free brochure or call (904) 455-7595. Bellview Church of Christ; 4850 Saufley Road; Pensacola, FL 32526.

# DEFENDER

Volume XIX

May 1990

Number 5

## Does One Sin When He Chooses Not to Assemble with the Saints to Worship?

*Bobby Duncan*

*(This article, [Part One] from the 1990 Bellview Lectureship book answers the above question better than any other I have ever seen. Please read it carefully. Editor.)*

I consider this subject to be of great importance, though I realize I might have been prejudiced by having parents like John and Mattie Duncan and growing up in the little church at Jacksonville, Alabama. We thought nothing of driving thirty-five or forty miles one way in a ton-and-a-half flatbed truck to attend a gospel meeting, and we did it night after night throughout the summer months. I guess that's one reason I have such little understanding of people who just do not think attending the services is important.

Please notice in the very outset of this lecture that we are not dealing with those who, because of sickness or some other legitimate reason, cannot be present for all the assemblies. And when I use the word cannot, I am not talking about a physical impossibility. It is physically possible for one who has the Asian Flu, and a fever of 102 degrees, to get out of bed and attend the services. But such would be neither practical nor sensible. It is physically possible for a mother to leave a sick baby at home alone and be present for the assembly, but it is not practical or sensible or right for her to do so. Many people work shift work in the steel mills, or the coal mines, or in hospitals or nursing homes, or with the police force, or the fire department, or the railroads, or the bus lines and airlines, or the power company, or the gas company, or any number of other businesses and occupations. Some of them work a Sunday shift and miss either Sunday morning or Sunday night. Some work the evening shift and are absent from Bible study on Wednesday night. They do not prefer it that way, and they do not love their jobs more than they love the Lord and His church. It would be physically possible for them to refuse to work those shifts, but not possible from a practical standpoint. These situations are not the kind under consideration in this lecture. We are considering rather those people who, as a matter of choice and preference, are absent from the assemblies. They simply choose not to come.

These people may rationalize their decision not to attend. Perhaps they are just too busy. But are they busy doing something they have chosen to do, but which could have been done at a different time? Or is it something they would not have chosen to do at all if it interfered with something else they really were interested in? Have they merely chosen to do something else rather than assemble with the saints? When people make such choices, do they sin in so doing? That is the question we are discussing in this lecture.

In connection with those who work shift work, this matter of preference needs to be emphasized. Most of us have no trouble with one's missing a service of the church because of his having to work. But occasionally something like this happens: The foreman calls on Saturday, and says, "Duncan, would you like to make some time-and-a-half? We need two or three men to work tomorrow, and I just thought I would give you a chance at it before I call anybody else." My job security is not at stake, and I am not depending for my livelihood on such overtime. It is a matter of preference and choice. If I choose not to attend the assemblies under such circumstances, do I sin? As I see it, that is the question to be discussed in this lecture.

In case you have not already guessed, I believe this question can be correctly answered only in the affirmative; yes, it is a sin when one chooses not to assemble with the saints to worship. My reasons for this conclusion are

many. I will give you twelve of them—a dozen reasons why one sins by choosing not to assemble with the saints for worship.

Reason number one is this: Choosing not to assemble with the saints to worship demonstrates one's contempt for spiritual things. Romans 8:1 says, "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Verse 6 says, "For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace." If one chooses not to assemble with the saints to worship, would you say he is spiritually minded, or carnally minded? Look at another passage: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).

Some time ago I saw this question in a church bulletin: "If Christianity were illegal, and you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" I sincerely believe it would be difficult to convict one of being a Christian who demonstrates his contempt for the church by choosing not to assemble with the saints -for worship.

Reason number two: Choosing not to assemble with the saints for worship involves choosing not to do that which is known to be good. James 4:17 says, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin." I have never talked to an individual who denied believing it would be good for one to attend all the services of the church. Would you deny that? Would you agree that one who chooses to assemble with the saints for worship makes a good choice? Would you criticize him for that decision? I doubt it. I doubt anyone here would say that one should ever choose, as a matter of preference, not to assemble with the saints to worship. It is always good to go to church. One who knows that, and then chooses not to go, sins by such a choice.

Reason number three: Choosing not to assemble with the saints for worship is choosing not to give and receive needed provocation in living the Christian life. Hebrews 10:24 and 25 admonish: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 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." There are a number of ways one might encourage others to be faithful in good works and sincere love for God and the brethren, but the one way specified here is by attending all the services. In doing so, we both give and receive the kind of encouragement we need to help us grow and develop as children of God. Some years ago, someone did a study that led to the conclusion that only about one out of seven people who are baptized into Christ remain faithful; six of seven fall by the wayside. If a new convert, a babe in Christ, should ask me to name the one thing he should do to help him be faithful, I would name the thing named by the writer to the Hebrews. I would tell him to attend every service of the church. I know faithfulness involves more than just attending the services, but if I could only name one thing it would be attending the services. You see, if he attends all the services, he will learn about all the other things he needs to do, and will be encouraged to do them. If he fails to attend the services, he can never hope to grow and develop into a mature Christian.

Another passage emphasizes the fact that, from our gathering together to worship, we are edified. "Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. 14:26). This is in a context where the apostle is discussing the proper way for Christians to conduct themselves during public worship. One rule he lays down is simply that all things be done unto edifying. The Greek construction suggests purpose, that is, everything done in the assembly is for the purpose of edifying those who worship. While our worship is directed toward God, God has designed our worship so that it will edify us. Choosing not to worship is choosing not to give and receive edification we all need to live the Christian life.

Reason number four is also found in Hebrews 10:25: Choosing not to assemble with the saints for worship is a violation of an explicit command of God. It is doing the very thing God said not to do. "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." I know what the word forsaking means in this passage. And there is nothing in the original language to indicate one cannot forsake the assembling without quitting altogether. In fact, the language indicates otherwise. Look at it again: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*." The American Standard Version says, "as the custom of some *is*." The Revised Standard Version says, "as the habit of some." The New Berkeley Version says, "as is habitual with some." The writer is not here talking about something some had done in the past—quit assembling altogether; he is rather talking about something that was



their manner, their custom, their habit at the time he wrote. If a man has quit assembling altogether, you would not say he has a habit of forsaking the assembling of the saints, or that his custom is to forsake the assembling. You would say he has already forsaken Christ and His church.

Why would it be wrong to quit assembling altogether? Why would it be wrong to miss every service of the church? The answer is, because it would be wrong to miss one service. If it's not wrong to miss one service, then it's not wrong to miss two. And if it's not wrong to miss two, then it's not wrong to miss ten. And if it's not wrong to miss ten, then it's not wrong to miss a hundred. And if it's not wrong to miss a hundred, then it's not wrong to miss a thousand. If it's wrong to miss a thousand services in succession, it's only because it is wrong to miss one. Choosing to miss one service violates the command of Hebrews 10:25.

Reason number five: Choosing not to assemble with the saints for worship contributes to ignorance. God said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge" (Hos. 4:6). The Bible teaches we are to give diligence to add knowledge (2 Pet. 1:5). And the last verse in this same epistle says, "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). Ignorance is a terrible condition, especially ignorance of the will of God. Ignorance was one of the things that crucified the Lord. Peter said, in Acts 3:17, "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers." In Romans 10:3, Paul talked about some who were ignorant of God's righteousness, and went about to establish their own righteousness. At least twice in 1 Corinthians and once in Romans the apostle expressed his desire that brethren not be ignorant with reference to certain aspects of the gospel of Christ. Ignorance is responsible for so much of the infidelity and unfaithfulness on the part of God's children. One way of helping avoid ignorance is by assembling with the saints on a regular basis.

Let us suppose two fifteen-year-old boys obey the gospel at the same time. One is in a family whose attendance at church is limited to the Sunday morning worship hour; the other is a member of a family who never misses a service. The habits of church attendance these boys develop in their teens stay with them through life; one goes to church one hour a week, and the other goes about four hours a week, plus gospel meetings and the like. If each boy learns one truth for each hour he spends in Bible school and in worship, at the end of the first year the first boy will have learned 52 new things, while the second will have learned 208. In ten years the first will have learned 520 things, but the second will have learned more than 2,000. If they both live to age seventy, the first will have learned 2,860 things, and the second will have learned 11,440 or 8,580 more than the first. If these two were to stand side by side in the judgment, which one would you rather be? And remember, please, that this is the difference just attending the services makes.

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## "With the Mouth Confession Is Made unto Salvation"

*Bobby Liddell*

"Does one have to confess his faith in Christ in order to be saved?" How may we know? The quotation from which the title is taken is found in Romans 10:9-10: "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."

Notice, Paul, by inspiration, uses the word "if." **If** one confesses with his mouth **and** believes in his heart he **shall** be saved. Which one of these is not important to salvation? Faith? Confession? Faith in Jesus as the risen Savior prompts the good confession. Both are necessary.

Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 10:32). In order to have Jesus confess us before the Father in heaven, we must confess him before men on earth. That certainly makes confession important.

Peter confessed Christ, saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus pronounced Peter blessed for that good confession (Mat. 16:16-17).

When the Ethiopian nobleman desired to be baptized, Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." The Ethiopian confessed his faith in Christ by saying, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts

8:37) and he was baptized (v. 39).

Even demons acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God: “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?” (Mat. 8:29).

God acknowledged Jesus’ Sonship. “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mat. 3:17). “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Mat. 17:5).

Jesus acknowledged his Sonship. “for he said, I am the Son of God” (Mat. 27:43). “These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:...And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:1-3).

Confession is a part of God’s plan for man’s salvation—it is “unto salvation.” Confession follows faith and precedes one’s being baptized into Christ. After baptism, one should live a life that confesses to all by word and deed his faith in the risen Lord.

When one makes the good confession, he does not confess his experiences, emotions, visions or dreams. He does not confess that he is saved before completing obedience in being baptized. He does show his faith in the Christ and with his mouth confesses that faith before men.

“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” (John 12:42-43). Many refuse to confess Him in this life, but **all** will one day confess Him, only then it shall be too late. “For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Rom. 14:11).

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God” (1 John 4:15). Have you by faith made that good confession? Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God? Are you willing to surrender your life to His will and take Him as your Lord and Savior? Will you obey His commands to repent and be baptized? Will you live faithfully thereafter worshipping and serving God? If so, He will save you now and eternally. What doth hinder you? If you believe with all your heart, “arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

## Deacons and the Pure Church

*Stephen Law*

In the epistle to the Philippian Christians, the apostle Paul notes two of the functions or positions occupied by qualified men in the church there. “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Phi. 1:1). Much has been written concerning the bishops and their work in the church, but not so much with deacons. This article will present the deacons’s work as can be revealed by the holy Scriptures. This will be done using the following steps: (1) a word study on deacons; (2) a study of Acts 6 and connections to deacons; (3) how they fit into the organization of the Lord’s church.

“Deacon” is from the Greek work *diakonos*. Thayer points out that “*diakonos*” generally means “one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, attendant, minister.” There are three ways that *diakonos* is used in the New Testament. First, it is used in the sense of “the servant of a king” as seen in Matthew 22:13 and 23:11. Next it is used in Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-12 in regard to one who “by virtue of the office assigned him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use.” Finally, *diakonos* is “a waiter, one who serves food and drink.” This is the case in John 2:5-9 where the inspired record tells of Jesus’ first miracle at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. These three scriptural usages show that a deacon was a servant that executed commands of another. He is to serve others.

In Acts 6:1-4, Luke, led by the Holy Spirit, tells of the appointment of seven men who were to serve. The apostles were alerted by members of the Jerusalem church to a problem. In the daily ministration to the widows, the Grecian widows were neglected. The apostles, in order to give themselves “continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word,” told the members to choose seven men who could be appointed over this business. Seven were chosen and

then appointed by the twelve.

Though the word *diakonos* is not used in this passage, a verb form of it is used. In verse two, the apostles said, “It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and **serve tables**” (Acts 6:2). One of the ideas of *diakonos*, as noted above, is “a waiter, who serves food and drink.” It is also significant that the apostles gave themselves to the *diakonea* of the Word. They served in the spreading of the Word by preaching and teaching. In like fashion, the elders and evangelists are to serve in their God-given works. Elders are charged to minister to the members by caring for their spiritual needs. (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17; Tit. 1:7-11). The evangelists are to proclaim the, pure gospel to the members and non-members. (Tit. 2:1, 15; 2 Tim. 2:12; 4:1-5). In order for both the eldership and the evangelists to be unhindered in their work, then the deacons are needed to do the work of serving tables and caring for the physical needs of the congregation’s members.

Since the church will only benefit by deacons who truly serve, then two things need to be mentioned. First, the men to be deacons must meet the qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. God has given these to help reveal men who will truly be qualified to serve. Second, there should be specific duties given by the elders to meet the needs of the congregation. When the deacons clearly know their duties, then they can do much more to make the body of Christ function effectively. If they do not understand their part in the body, then it is harder for them to function properly.

Deacons work as special servants in several ways. Some specific suggestions regarding their work are given here:

1. “Serve Tables”—Care of the poor, widows and orphans.
2. Maintenance of Building—Lights, heating and air-conditioning, physical structure, care of baptistry, etc.
3. The Church Property—Keep grounds clean, mow grass and keep property hazard free.
4. Worship Service—Ushers, order of worship, etc.
5. Look After Financial Interest—Count contribution, make deposits, distribute to the poor, widows and orphans, pay bills, etc.

These suggestions might be expounded upon or changed to best suit the needs of individual congregations, but regardless of how the work of deacons is divided up or assigned, the work should always be done out of a heart that truly wants to serve God and man. The position of deacon should never be used to gain the glory or praise of men, or to “keep the men busy” by trying to give them something to do.

Deacons are servants to wait on the needs of the members. “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Mat. 23:11). Thank the Lord for good deacons.

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## It Is Good for Me To Draw near To God

*Shan Jackson*

I wonder how many times the Bible says, “It is good?” Almost the first words we hear from God are, “It is good.” David also seems impressed with this phrase. Eighteen times in the book of Psalms he uses it and half the time he is referring to God. One of the things the Psalmist recommends as being good I will use for our text of study. “It is good for me to draw near to God” (Psa. 73:28).

First, it is good to draw near to God in nature. The word, “nature” is a faceted word as we use it. Nature includes all physical areas below man but it also points to man and what we call “human nature.” Just as it is good to draw near to God in appreciation of His creation it is also good to draw near to Him on a higher plane of human nature.

Discovering His creation, with its crowded and complex forms of life, serves as proof of the Creator. In nature, we see God in the beauty and delicacy of His handiwork but it is also good to draw near to Him in human nature as well. We are, in fact, created in the image and likeness of the Father. A sinful man is, therefore, a temple in ruins. "In Our image, after Our likeness" is the separation of the man of nature and the man of human nature. Human nature allows man to rise to a fuller love and approach toward God. In this way we are permitted to cry, "My Lord and my God."

But just as it is good to draw near to God in nature it is also good to draw near in conscience. Within man there is a thing called conscience. Often it is dumb by consent, sometimes doubtful, but never is it silent if we earnestly pursue God's truth. To draw near to God, we must strive to hone the barbs of conscience. By doing this it will assist us in our pursuit of heaven. To draw near to God, we must draw near to His divine message. His message is, after all, the only message that counts.

It is also good to draw near to God in His church. One of the great sources of strength for the Christian is the gathering together with fellow saints. The church can buffer our lives from the tugs and thugs of the world. Together we can assemble to worship and honor our Father and remember the heritage of our past in Him. To refuse to gather with the assembly indicates a disagreement with Christ and His plan. To sing, pray, and worship God is the glorious buffer and source of encouragement we need. Another "It is good" passage from David expresses this feeling so wonderfully. "It is good for me to draw near to God: I have made the Lord Jehovah my refuge, that I may tell of all "My works."

In similar manner it is good to draw near to God as we draw near to His Son. Jesus said, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." Paul said, "God is with Him." Thomas said, "My Lord and my God." John said, "We beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father; full of grace and truth."

In nature, we can draw near to God as we appreciate His skill. In conscience, we draw near His will. In His church, we draw near His family of love, but in Christ, we draw near God's very heart. In Christ, we see that God will resort to great lengths to afford our salvation. In Christ, we see both love and compassion. The Old Testament offers us a glimpse of this as we see: Adam communing with the Lord; Abraham's intercession; Jacob wrestling with the angel; on Mt. Sinai, Moses talking to God face to face, friend to friend; when Samuel uttered, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant waiteth to hear"; Daniel with his windows open toward to Jerusalem; and, even Jesus in His agony of prayer in the garden. All these show how good it is to draw near to God.

As we see His love in nature, as we feel His warmth in conscience, as we draw close to Him with His family and understand His purpose in Christ we must agree "It is good for me to draw near to God."

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"And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead" (Acts 13:29-30).

# 1990 BELLVIEW LECTURES

May 9-13, 1990

## “What Does God Authorize In Worship?”

Wednesday, May 9

- 7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM Worship In The Old Testament Period . . . . . Curtis A. Cates  
8:00 PM The Development And Influence Of Synagogue Worship . . . . . Rex A. Turner, Sr.

Thursday, May 10

- 9:00 AM Worship With Gladness . . . . . Curtis A. Cates  
9:45 AM Could Our Desire Be To Worship God Or To Entertain Men? . . . . . Ira Y. Rice, Jr.  
10:30 AM Ascertaining Bible Authority For Acceptable Worship . . . . . Roy Deaver  
11:15 AM Singing And Christian Worship . . . . . Noah Hackworth  
1:30 PM What Day Has God Authorized For Christian Worship? . . . . . Jerri Manasco  
2:15 PM The Restoration Of Worship According To God's Pattern . . . . . B. C. Carr  
7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM Is It Possible For A Christian To Worship Acceptably In Or With  
A Denomination? . . . . . Andrew Connally  
8:00 PM The Lord's Supper And Christian Worship . . . . . Joe Gilmore

Friday, May 11

- 9:00 AM Preaching And Christian Worship . . . . . Alton Hayes  
9:45 AM Has God Authorized Different Roles For Men And For Women  
In Christian Worship? . . . . . H. A. (Buster) Dobbs  
10:30 AM Ascertaining Bible Authority For Acceptable Worship . . . . . Roy Deaver  
11:15 AM Shall We Worship In Truth And/Or By Tradition? . . . . . Dub McClish  
1:30 PM Our Fathers Worshipped In This Mountain . . . . . Bobby Liddell  
2:15 PM The Priesthood Being Changed, Has The Worship Changed? . . . . . Jerry Martin  
7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM Practical Suggestions For Improving Our Worship . . . . . Foy Smith  
8:00 PM Does One Sin When He Chooses Not To Assemble With The Saints  
To Worship? . . . . . Bob Duncan

Saturday, May 12

- 9:00 AM Giving and Christian Worship . . . . . Shan Jackson  
9:45 AM Attitude Toward Worship In The Book Of Acts . . . . . Winfred Clark  
10:30 AM Ascertaining Bible Authority For Acceptable Worship . . . . . Roy Deaver  
11:15 AM Are There Essentials and Expedients In Worship? . . . . . Flavil Nichols  
1:30 PM The History And Growth Of Satan Worship . . . . . Garry Brantley  
2:15 PM How Shall We Teach Our Children To Worship . . . . . Stephen Waller  
7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM Prayer And Christian Worship . . . . . Ray Peters  
8:00 PM Four Types Of Worship . . . . . William S. Cline

Sunday, May 13

- 9:00 AM Does Man Worship By Instinct And/Or By Revelation? . . . . . Stanley Ryan  
10:00 AM Is Everything The Christian Does Worship? . . . . . Eddie Whitten  
7:00 PM Singing  
7:15 PM A History Of Idols And Idol Worship Through The Ages . . . . . Daniel Denham  
8:00 PM Thou Shalt Worship The Lord Thy God . . . . . Guss Eoff

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# DEFENDER

Volume XIX

June 1990

Number 6

## Does One Sin When He Chooses Not to Assemble with the Saints to Worship?

*Bobby Duncan*

*(This article, [Part Two] from the 1990 Bellview Lectureship book answers the above question better than any other I have ever seen. In this conclusion, the last seven of twelve reasons for not forsaking the assembly are given. Please read it carefully. Editor.)*

Reason number six: Choosing not to worship with the saints sets a bad example. Paul wrote to Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).

*A little girl with shining eyes  
Her little face aglow,  
Said: "Daddy, it is almost time  
For Bible school. Let's go!  
They teach us there of Jesus' love,  
Of how he died for all  
Upon the cruel cross to save  
Those who on him call."  
"Oh, no," said Daddy, "not today.  
I've worked hard all this week,  
And I must have one day of rest.  
I'm going to the creek.  
For there I can relax and rest,  
And fishing's fine, they say.  
So run along; don't bother me.  
We'll go to church some day."  
Months and years have passed away,  
But he hears that plea no more:  
"Let's go to Bible school."*

*Those childhood days are over.  
And now that Daddy's growing old  
When life is almost through,  
He finds the time to go to church,  
But what does daughter do?  
She says: "Oh, Daddy, not today!  
I stayed up almost all night,  
And I've just got to have some sleep.  
Besides, I look a fright."  
Then Daddy lifts a trembling hand  
To brush away his tears,  
As again he hears a pleading voice  
Distinctly through the years.  
He sees a small girl's smiling face  
Upturned with eyes aglow,  
As she says: "It's time for Bible school.  
Please, Daddy, won't you go?"  
(Author Unknown)*

If you do not assemble with the saints on a regular basis, do you want those you love most to follow your example? Remember: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Rom. 14:7).

Reason number seven: Choosing not to assemble with the saints discourages the faithful. Some may think the faithful never get discouraged, but even the great apostle Paul became discouraged. He was encouraged, however, by the coming together of the brethren to meet him at Appii forum and the Three Taverns (Acts 28:15). When 350 people worship on Sunday morning, and then only 225 come back on Sunday night, and maybe 175 on Wednesday night, it's discouraging. On the other hand, one of the most encouraging things about church work is good attendance. I'm not talking about setting attendance goals and reaching them on a given Sunday morning, though there's nothing wrong with that. I'm talking about faithful and regular attendance at all the services by all the members of a congregation. It is an encouraging thing when a church can count about as many people on Wednesday nights as it counts on Sunday mornings. It is discouraging when some simply choose not to be present.

Reason number eight: Choosing not to assemble with the saints is a failure to let one's light shine.

In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus said: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

A few years ago, in a certain Alabama town, an older gentlemen—we will call him brother Walker—who had been unfaithful for about forty years was restored. He was attending every service of the church and living as best he could according to the will of the Lord. He was usually one of the first ones to arrive at the meetinghouse for any service. The church was beginning a gospel meeting on a certain Sunday in the spring of the year; it just happened that turkey season was to open on Thursday of that week, and brother Walker was a turkey hunter. When the local preacher arrived at the meetinghouse on Sunday morning, brother Walker met him at the steps, and said, "I'm going to attend every service of this meeting, morning and night, until Thursday, and then on Thursday I'm going after that big gobbler." The preacher suggested to brother Walker that he wait until after the closing of the meeting to go turkey hunting. He pointed out the importance of the meeting, and the fact it was a great opportunity that should not be neglected, and that the gobbler would probably still be there when the meeting was over. Guess what happened! Brother Walker arrived at the meetinghouse for the morning service on Thursday in time to see two of the elders drive past the building pulling their boat. Question: Were those elders letting their light shine by going fishing instead of attending the meeting that day? Now, let it be said to the credit of those two elders that when they realized they had done wrong, they repented and made confessions. But they dimmed their Christian lights by choosing to go fishing instead of assembling with the saints that day.

Reason number nine: When one chooses not to assemble with the saints, he demonstrates that his priorities are not properly arranged. Jesus said: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mat. 6:33). Can one who is a member of the body of Christ, by any stretch of the imagination, think he is seeking God's kingdom and God's righteousness ahead of everything else in the world, when he prefers and chooses not to assemble when the saints come together for worship? Can he convince his children that God comes first in his life, when those children know he chooses not to be present for worship? What do his neighbors think about the matter? When they know the church is gathered together on Sunday night, or Wednesday night, or during a gospel meeting, but they see him at home, or at a ball game, or in the shopping mall, would they say he considers the kingdom of God the most important thing in the world? Listen carefully, friends: Even if that man's failure to attend the services were not a sin, his attitude toward the importance of God and spiritual things would be a sin. His nonattendance would be a demonstration of that sinful attitude.

Reason number ten: Choosing not to assemble with the saints for worship is an affront to God personally. I mean by that, that while all sins are against God, some are indirectly against him, and others are directly against him. The first four of the Ten Commandments have to do with man's relation to God; the last six have to do with man's relation to his fellow man. When Jesus was asked about the great commandment in the law, his reply was: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Mat. 22:37). In second place was the command to love one's neighbor as he loved himself. If loving God supremely is the first and great commandment, then it would seem that a failure to love God would be the greatest sin one could commit. If love for our fellow man takes second place to loving God, then it would seem that a sin directly against God would be worse than sins against our fellow man.

As we have already seen, when one chooses not to assemble with the saints, he sins against his fellow man, but in a more direct sense he sins against God. The man who picked up sticks on the sabbath day sinned directly against God (Num. 15). The sin of Nadab and Abihu was a sin directly against God (Lev. 10). The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was a sin directly against God (Acts 5). These serve to let us know how serious a thing it is to sin against God, and especially if we sin directly against God. When one chooses not to assemble with the saints, he sins directly against God.

Reason number eleven: One who chooses not to assemble with the saints for worship does so according to intent and purpose. Some sins are committed unintentionally, through the weakness of the flesh, or through ignorance. The faithful Christian does not live a perfectly sinless life, but he does not plan to sin. John wrote: "If we say that we

have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:8-10). While this passage shows that even the faithful do not live above sin, we must recognize a difference between the sins of the faithful and the sins of those who sin presumptuously, according to plan and purpose, and without compunction. Those who choose not to worship with the saints usually know they should, and they could if they would, but they plan not to do so. One of the things that makes Jezebel, the wicked wife of Ahab, so repulsive to us is that she plotted and planned her sins. Her sins were cold and calculated, and not committed through weakness or ignorance.

Reason number twelve: Choosing not to assemble with the saints is the only thing it would take to destroy the church from the face of the earth, if everyone did it. If one member of the church can, as a matter of preference and choice, not assemble with the saints for worship without committing any sin, then two can. And if two can, then ten can. And if ten can, a hundred can. And if a hundred can, then all can.

The only reason it would be wrong for all to forego the appointed assembly is that it is wrong for one to do it. If it is not a sin for one not to assemble with the saints for worship, then it would not be a sin to do away with the assemblies altogether, and to destroy the church of Christ from the face of the earth.

Yes, my dearly beloved, when one, as a matter of preference and choice, does not assemble with the saints when they gather for worship, he sins. Those who are guilty of such sin need to repent, and make a public confession—the sin of non-attending is a public sin—and pray for God’s pardon.

I would emphasize that what we have said about choosing not to assemble with the saints for worship would apply just as much on Wednesday night or Sunday night as on Sunday morning. The late beloved brother Gus Nichols, a great gospel preacher, was also somewhat of a poet. In one of his poems, he used irony to show how ridiculous it is for one to insist on the importance of being present on Sunday morning, and then make a practice of not attending on Sunday night. I think that poem will serve as a fitting conclusion to this lecture.

### ***Not on Sunday Night***

*Gus Nichols*

*I love the church that Jesus bought  
And know that it is right.  
I go there every Sunday morn,  
But not on Sunday night.  
I love to sing the songs of God,  
Such worship must be right.  
This I do on Sunday morn,  
But not on Sunday night.  
I love to hear the gospel, too;  
It gives me pure delight.  
I hear it every Sunday morn,  
But not on Sunday night.  
May God bless our preacher, too,  
And give him power and might.  
And put a sinner in my place  
On next Sunday night.  
I d go through mud, even snow.*

*Do anything that’s right,  
To be at church on Sunday morn,  
But not on Sunday night.  
Let all the others be on hand  
To worship God aright.  
But I just want my easy chair  
And comforts Sunday night.  
I know I really need more strength  
To keep me in the fight.  
For help I come on Sunday morn,  
But not on Sunday night.  
Tine, the church can save the world  
If its pure light shines bright.  
I help it shine on Sunday morn,  
But not on Sunday night.  
Yes, all of us must surely die;  
I hope I’ll be doing right.  
So may I die on Sunday morn,  
And not on Sunday night.*

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## **The 1990 Bellview Lectures**

***Bobby Liddell***

*What Does God Authorize In Worship?* was the theme for the 1990 Bellview Lectures conducted May 9-13, 1990, at the Bellview church building, Pensacola, Florida. The need for this study is evident. Now, more than ever in recent times, the world and the church need to know what God authorizes in Christian worship. The world, in



general, and religious denominations in particular, have long since abandoned God's word as the authoritative answer to the question, "How shall we worship God?" Under the direction of its good elders, the Bellview church has sought, by these lectures and the book and tapes prepared and made available, to instruct and to encourage men to worship God in accordance to his revealed will.

Thirty topics, presented by men of proven faith and ability, covered such areas as: Ascertaining Bible Authority For Acceptable Worship; Are There Essentials And Expedients In Worship?; The Restoration Of Worship According To God's Pattern; Has God Authorized Different Roles For Men And For Women In Christian Worship?; Is Everything The Christian Does Worship?; Practical Suggestions For Improving Our Worship; Shall We Worship In Truth And/Or By Tradition?; Does One Sin When He Chooses Not To Assemble With The Saints To Worship?; and others.

Many in the Lord's church are not satisfied with what God has authorized and long to be like their religious neighbors (for whatever reason). In order to accomplish that, they have introduced into the worship of the New Testament church that for which they have no authority. Choirs and choral groups introduced years ago as "simply entertainment" and once designated as "not a part of our worship" have now been eased into the worship in many churches. They have been joined by "vocal bands," humming, clapping and whistling. The idea that a Christian may worship acceptably in or with a denomination is now being promoted by some whose contention is that the blood bought church of which Paul, Peter and John were members is "just another denomination" and some would say, "a big sick denomination."

Connected with the erroneous assertion that the church of Christ is just another denomination, departures in every area of worship have arisen—from "Gymnastics To The Glory Of God" to women leading in worship with men present (in prayer, singing, drama skits and puppet shows) and Ritz crackers and Coke as elements of the Lord's Supper.

Is it possible to say what is authorized and what is not authorized in Christian worship? How may one know when his worship is acceptable to the God of the Universe, the Creator of man? How may one know when "worship" is vain, ignorant or according to man's will and when worship is in spirit and in truth? These are questions that need to be addressed and resolved.

The beginning point is ascertaining Bible authority. As brother Roy Deaver pointed out in his excellent manuscript and lecture on this subject, man does not and cannot establish Bible authority. Bible authority is established by God and ascertained by man. He showed God authorizes by: (1) Example; (2) Implication; (3) Direct Statement; and (4) Expediency. All who are interested in understanding what God does and does not authorize need to study carefully this masterful presentation.

Man is capable of ascertaining Bible authority and of following God's will by doing what God has authorized in the way God has authorized. Accountable men are also capable of knowing what God has not authorized. For example, why is it wrong to worship God with a piano? God has not authorized it! What man can find the authority for it? It is not found in God's Word.

What does God authorize in worship? Surely, members of the Lord's church should be instructed and determined to know what God authorizes and to worship accordingly.

## Price Paid

*Harold L. Blevins*

The saved have their price paid via Christ on the cold and cruel cross of Calvary. The redeemed (Tit. 2:14) are brought with the price of the blood of the Lamb (Acts 20:28 [Thayer, p. 384, "By payment of the ransom, i.e. to redeem"]; Eph. 5:25; et al.). The Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6) purchased our salvation with all His blood (John 19:34); therefore, we need never doubt the faith (Jude 3) nor the end for the faithful (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:8).

Life is real! Life is earnest!  
And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.

The unsaved exchange their souls for a season of sin (Mark 8:34-37). Presently there are many false teachers. Do they get any better? Evil men wax worse and worse (2 Tim. 3:13)—false prophets/false Christ's (Mat. 24:24)—seducing spirits and doctrines of devils (1 Tim. 4:1-2)—wolves in sheep clothing hate the church for which Christ died (John 15:18-20; Acts 28:28-29)—and put us to death thinking that they are doing the Savior's service (John 16:1-2).

What will they do in the end thereof? The price of corrupt teaching will be totaled (Jam. 3:1). Paul still asks, "What saith the scriptures?" (Rom. 4:3); Jeremiah entreaties "Where is the word of the Lord?" and "Where are the wise men?" (Jer. 17:15; 8:9). The Devil desired to have them (Luke 22:31)—they were tossed about with every wind of false doctrine (Luke 22:31; Eph. 4:14); they gave place to the devil (Eph. 4:27)—they would not resist the corrupt one, since they were seemingly unknowledgeable in the Word of God (1 Pet. 5:8-9). Ignorance was ignored: they went into bondage because of it (Isa. 5:13); were rejected because of it (Hos. 4:6); destroyed themselves because of it (Hos. 13:9); did err from the truth because of it (Mark 12:24); and crucified the Lord of Glory not knowing the way of truth (1 Cor. 2:8; Heb. 6:4-6).

Thanks be to God the saved have the hortatory of the Holy One. He brings them out of their distresses (Psa. 107:27-29) and makes the Christians to sail the sea called calm (Mark 4:37-41).

Half the wrecks upon life's ocean,  
If some star had been their guide,  
Would have safely reached the harbor,  
But they drifted with the tide.

## "Choice"

*Mark McWhorter*

We hear a great deal concerning the causes, results, and punishments for crime. Our world (particularly the experts on criminal behavior) would have us believe that all criminals are acting out mental illnesses as a result of the influence of society or improper parenting. They say the criminal is not responsible for the behavior; in fact, the criminal is the victim and should be treated as the innocent sick party. "The poor criminal had no control over the obsessive character trait which blossomed into a criminal act. He must be rehabilitated not punished."

While it may be true that environmental influences can alter behavior and encourage certain character traits, it is a misconception that such a situation absolves the criminal of responsibility. In Ezekiel 18:10-32, God states that the son of an evil man will bear responsibility for his own actions whether they be evil or good. In verse 13, he states of the evil son: "he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him." In verse 17, it is said of the good son, "he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live." In verse 20, we read, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

Some might say that it is unfair for an individual to be held responsible and accountable for actions and behavior that were caused by others. The misconception here is that "influence" and "cause" are considered equal. Behavior may be influenced by many factors but the final action is by choice. The "cause" of the behavior is the reasoning and mental processes used together, with the philosophical, ideological, and religious beliefs of the individual. This "choice" is by the individual; it is not by society or the parents. Therefore, it is not unfair for the one making a choice to be held responsible and accountable for that choice.

Of course, others want to argue that there is really no choice. It is a forced behavior from ingrained character traits. But, the very fact that the son of verses 14-18 is able to do good while having an evil father suggests that the son had and made a choice. In verse 21, it is stated that the wicked can "turn" away from his sins and "do that which is lawful and right." The same holds true for the righteous man, in that he can "turn away" and commit iniquity (v. 26). These turnings involve choice and that choice requires mental processes (v. 28, "Because he considereth, and turneth away").

So, choice demands responsibility and responsibility requires accountability. As was noted earlier, the evil son "shall surely die" (v. 13) and the good son "shall surely live" (v. 17). If the wicked will turn from his ways "he shall

not die,” but “shall surely live” (v. 21), and if the righteous turn from his ways he shall die (v. 24).

Is all of this unfair? Not according to God. “Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?” (v. 25). God gives us the rules and regulations of life. He also set up a system of retribution and reward for the adherence or non-adherence to those rules. Since God is Just, it is without question that he will mete out justice (justice being the carrying out of the law).

Some would argue that justice including punishment is against God’s nature. But proper and real love requires justice, for if one is not consistent in reward and punishment, then one fosters confusion and resentment. Since God is Love and is Just, then justice with punishment is not against God’s nature. God does not have joy that some will require punishment (v. 32, “For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth”). But by his nature he must “judge you...every one according to his ways.”

All of this brings us to the point that if God says we have choice, responsibility and accountability in eternal matters he must also expect such in our daily matters. As a society, we must require accountability for actions and behavior that do not conform to the will of God. That is the purpose of government as given in Romans 13. We must return to the proper concepts of sin, righteousness, reward, and punishment.

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## Bible Course

To receive your **free** Bible Correspondence Course from the Bellview Church of Christ, send your request to:

Bible Correspondence Course  
% Harold Maxey  
20 Emory Drive  
Pensacola, FL 32526

## Repentance

*Lynn Blair*

Lots of folks these days are sorry but do not repent. Some, it seems, are just sorry that they got caught!

Repentance is commanded by Christ (Luke 13:3). Repentance is given as one of the answers to men when they heard the first gospel sermon in Acts 2:38. In Acts 17:30-31 we are not only told that God expects repentance, but also given a sound reason for repenting, that is, the judgment to come!

Repentance is perhaps best described in 2 Corinthians 7:9-10. There we learn that sorrow is **not** the same thing as repentance. We also learn some things about repentance itself. Repentance is brought about by Godly sorrow. Repentance leads one to salvation. (It is not all that there is to salvation. For instance, it does not get rid of the quilt of sin, baptism does—Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). We also learn that repentance brings no regret. Have you ever known anyone who was constantly reflecting (bragging) back on their days as a sinner? We also learn that there is a vast difference between Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. Godly sorrow leads to repentance which leads to salvation (eternal life). Worldly sorrow leads to death. “For the wages of sin *is* death” (Rom. 6:23).

True repentance is a military term that means “about face.” It is shown forth in the fruit that it bears (Acts 26:19-20).

We do not want to hurt God with our sin. God wants us all to repent (2 Pet. 3:9).

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## Are There Christians in Other Churches?

*Moses I. Etugo*

Zealous, humble religious people are being taught and strictly believe that the church is nonessential to salvation, that one can be saved out of the church as easily as within. They say one church is as good as the other provided they preach Christ and are believers. They say one can therefore join the church of his choice because it is only one God

we worship and the same paradise we are aiming to. With these assertions, a maze of churches have been established by men to compete against the church, built by divine authority on the first Pentecost after Jesus arose from death and ascended to heaven.

People in these churches built by men with doctrines of men without authority of Christ joined the churches because of personal problems not for salvation. The church of Christ has her divine authority in name, doctrine, work, worship and laws from Christ. First, let it be known that divine revelation authorized only one church. Christ did not promise to build more than one church. Jesus Christ promised, “**I will build my church**” (Mat. 16:18). It is universally used singular. “My Church” is his, not any other. As the divine Son of God, he promised to build the divinely authorized church for he said, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Mat. 15:13).

**Divine Birth of the Church:** As promised by Christ which was to be fulfilled he told His Apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of His Father (Luke 24:49). The church came with power, the kingdom of God (Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27). This power was the Holy Ghost which revealed all truth to the Apostles (John 14:26; Acts 1:8). It came on the first Pentecost after Christ ascended (Acts 2:1-4). Therefore, the church or kingdom started on the Pentecost, and the preaching of the gospel went on (Acts 2:31-34, 41-42, 47).

**Those Being Saved Were Added to One Church:** After the first gospel sermon by Peter, those that received the Word of God gladly, believed, repented from their bad ways and were baptized (Acts 2:37-38, 41). The same day, about three thousand baptized souls were added unto them and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:41-47). The believers did not join the church but, the Lord added them—not by human pursuance for solving problems as it is found in men’s unauthorized churches.

These believers found themselves guilty before God, lost before him for Christ’s crucifixion and agreed to follow the divine way for salvation. God did the adding of his people to the church. God would not have added souls to other churches than the church Christ promised and started from Jerusalem with all authority till now and through out the world. Remember there was . no denominational body/church at that time. However, the departure from the faith came in later as prophesied in Acts 20:29-30. The church through the Apostles maintained the same name and doctrine in all local congregations (Rom. 16:1-26; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). Even the local churches at that time were referred to as “the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven” (Heb. 12:23). Not assemblies and churches of different practices and doctrines while calling on Christ, but one church of Christ as the first born.

Those being saved were added by the Lord to the church. The church is the called out body of people—out of the world of sins into Christ, into the kingdom of God’s dear son (Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:9). The plan is the same now for the Lord to add those being saved to His church/body. He will not add those into another body/church.

Any person who joins any church of his choice thinking that he is worshipping God in spirit and in truth without being added to the body of Christ is missing the mark (Rom. 10:2-3).

Christ is the head of the body or church and He is the saviour of the body/church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18). Since Christ saves the body/church and He is the head, saviour, will He save those outside the body and the church which He did not build? Keep this in mind, denominationalism or falling off from faith was prophesied and warned and departure came in later centuries. Appearances of perverted doctrines, practices and names took place (Acts 20:29-30; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; Rom. 15:17-18; Gal. 1:6-7; 1 Tim.4:1-3; 2 The. 2:3-4; 1 John 2:19). Churches of men sprung up well after the Apostles till now even to the end of the world.

Now it is for men who want to worship God in spirit and in truth to know what is the church and which is the divine authorized church. The New Testament church, the body, church of Christ is the divine one in name, doctrine, laws and worship. It is the spiritual body of Christ (Col. 1:18).

**The Members’ Relationship to the Body:** The church being the spiritual body of Christ, the members enter into this body by:

1. Hearing the Word of God; that is, the Gospel (Rom. 10:14-17).
2. Believing in Christ (Acts 8:34-39; 16:31).
3. Repenting of any and all past sins in their lives (Acts 2:38).
4. Confessing their faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Rom.10:9-10; Mat. 10:32-33).
5. Being baptized (buried in water into Christ (Rom.6:3-4; Col.1:12).

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13). One should not be baptized into any body

which is not Christ's. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). We are members of the body of Christ, not members of another body. We are the body of Christ and members in particular (Rom. 12:5). "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12).

The body of Christ is one, the church (Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18). Any other body is not his and he is not the saviour of any other church/body. Therefore, the body of Christ, the church is in your midst. For salvation, heed God's Word and visit the assembly of the church of Christ in your locality.

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"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).

# DEFENDER

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## “Wherefore Then Serveth the Law?” IV

*Daniel Denham*

There has long existed in the sectarian world a spirit of antinomianism; i.e., an opposition to the idea of law (antinomianism being derived from the combining of anti “against” and *nomos* “law”). The antiquity of this doctrine is seen in the subtle remark of the serpent in Eden, “Yea, hath God said?” (Gen. 3:1). The tendency toward lawlessness has been strong ever since Satan on that occasion first questioned the Word of the living God! In the early libertine and Gnostic movements in the closing days of the Apostolic period of church history, there arose a concerted effort to “liberate” those professing Christian beliefs from the restraint of law. These movements bore no sanction from the apostles, but rather were quite vehemently denounced and refuted by their writings. The anti-law people of recent times have merely borrowed the same hackneyed ideas of these early movements, and ultimately of Satan himself! It should be noted that the libertine and Gnostic dogmas were drawn not from the wellspring of biblical revelation, but from the philosophies of the Pagan Greeks and Romans.

The current anti-law elements have even effected a large and vocal following within the churches of Christ. Those involved are fond of speaking of absolute liberty and are equally fond of deriding the concepts of duty, responsibility, accountability, and temperance. It is averred by many among them that “the law” that Paul contemplates in Galatians 3:19 and elsewhere is in reality “all law,” viz., the very concept of law itself! They teach that Christians are now under “pure grace” and not under any law at all. Theoretically this grace, unmixed with law, covers every imaginable sin that a child of God may commit regardless of his attitude toward that sin! Anything that is opposed to these notions is termed “legalistic” and “unloving.”

We have seen in our previous articles that “the law” as used in Galatians 3:19, etc., does not refer to “all law” or “law as law,” but to a specific body of law given at Sinai by Moses and called the Old Testament in contrast with that given by Jesus Christ through His apostles and prophets! In this article we shall examine a number of proofs demonstrating that the New Testament system is one constituted under law—the law of Jesus Christ. One should be aware that the concepts of law and grace are not mutually exclusive. The fact is that it is by God’s grace that His law exists! Paul says in Titus 2:11-ff. that the grace of God, teaches us “that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” Instead of granting “absolute liberty” for men to do as they please, God’s grace instructs (which involves necessarily the idea of law, cf., Pro. 4:1-2) men that God forbids certain actions and lives, and expects other kinds to be observed and practiced. The word “soberly” evidences proper reflection and thought on something. To be “sober” in the biblical sense is to think rightly, and that demands some **standard** or law. The word “righteously” implies that presence of some law: as it involves moral rectitude and uprightness in conduct. John says that “he that doeth righteousness is righteous” (1 John 3:7), and it is in the Gospel of Christ that the means by which God makes man righteous is revealed, according to Paul (Rom. 1:16-17). The word “godly,” in Titus 2:12, also requires the existence of law. The term refers to piety in one’s manner of life. How could one be deemed “pious” in such without there existing some implied contrast with “impiety”? By what standard or on what basis (by what LAW) could one distinguish between pious living and impious living?!

Let us now turn to further proofs of the existence of divine law under the Gospel Age, The “grace only” doctrine is false, and must be opposed by all who place confidence in the precious truth of God’s Word.

1. First, there are a number of passages that explicitly set forth the presence and binding nature of law in the New

Testament. In Romans 3:27, Paul declares that boasting of one's salvation is excluded try "the law of faith." This law stands textually in direct contrast with "the law" under which Israel had lived in the Old Testament period. By the deeds of the Mosaic law "shall no flesh be justified" in the sight of God (v. 20). If the law of verse 27 is not the same law as in verse 20, then it, must contemplate some other legislation of God! It refers to that which involves the idea of salvation by faith in Christ, and which forbids boasting or glorying in that salvation as an earned right (cf., Eph. 2:8-10). But the Gospel of Christ is God's power "unto salvation, to everyone that believeth" (lit., keeps on believing, Rom. 1:16). Thus, this "law of faith" must contemplate the Gospel. Observe, it is designated as "law"!

In Romans 8:2, the Bible says that Paul was made free from the law of sin and death by another law, which he terms "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Here is a tremendously descriptive phrase that obviously does not refer to the law of Moses, as Paul, in chapter 7, had just bemoaned his hopeless condition under that law, which revealed and condemned his sin, but made no provision to remedy sin's dreadful effects! Again, salvation's attainment is coupled to a specific body of "law" (note the definite article) distinct from Mosaic legislation. Furthermore, it is through walking after the instructions of the Holy Spirit that true sonship is made possible (Rom. 8:14). This guidance by God's precious Spirit requires communication, and "the law of the Spirit" provides the means of that communication. This is in perfect harmony with the moral nature of man **as God made him!**

Galatians 6:2 commands: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." This command is addressed specifically to the churches of Galatia (Gal. 1:2). It binds upon them a certain obligation, which in meeting will in turn fulfil the terms of a specific body of law. This law is modified by the prepositional phrase "of Christ" showing that He is the giver and possessor of it! By no stretch of the imagination could this be identified with or confined to the law of Moses. Here then is a command binding upon Christians and involving the concept of **law!**

Hebrews 8 also devastates the antinomian view. The text reads in verse 6 about the New Testament that it, "was established upon better promises." The verb *nenomotheteetai* is rendered by Vincent as "enacted." It is from *nomotheteo*, which means "to enact a law, to make laws." In the passive voice, as here, its force is that of "to have a code of laws" (Liddell & Scott, p. 466). Of Hebrews 8:6, Thayer provides the definition, "to sanction by law, to enact" (p. 427). The verse evidences that God has indeed legislated in the giving of the New Testament, and that there exists a code of laws that form the basis of that testament. In verse 10, the Hebrews writer eliminates any quibbles that might be raised on the preceding by his citation of Jeremiah's prophecy (Jer. 31:31-34) ascribing to the New Testament the presence of divinely-given "laws" to be inscribed upon the hearts and set within the minds of the people of God! Hebrews 10:16 : repeats the affirmation of the prophecy's fulfillment in the giving of the New Testament.

James 1:25 speaks of "the perfect law of liberty." The word *teleios* means "complete." Without doubt it is the complete (*teleios*) thing that was to come (as per 1 Cor. 13:8-10), whose coming would signal the close of the miraculous era. This could not possibly refer to the law of Moses: for that had long been a completed body of revelation. Also the idea of liberty attached to the word "law" in James 1:25 contrasts with the New Testament portrayal of the Mosaic economy as one of "bondage" (cf., Gal. 5:1). James 2:8 refers to it as "the royal law" The adjective denotes that it is "of or belonging to a king, kingly, royal, regal." It emphasizes the primacy of the law in view. It is given by the One "who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:14-15; Jam. 4:12). None therefore should dare trifle with its proclamations, nor ignore its precepts, nor disregard its promises! James 2:8 demonstrates its binding nature, and thereby forever destroys the notions of the "grace only" folk.

2. Second, there are a number of absurdities that must obtain before the idea that no law exists under the New Testament can be true. These absurdities render the doctrine to be itself foolish at best. Let us now consider a few of these.

A. The entire view on the very face is false: for it is obvious that certain forms of law, even outside the Scriptures, do exist, and Christians are amenable to these laws. It is fatuous to claim absolute liberty, as is presupposed by the doctrine, in the face of these laws. For instance, in our own nation we are subject to the laws governing the affairs of the United States of America and its citizenry. The "all grace, no law" folk are compelled to "qualify" their universal negative "no law!" How absurd it would be for them, if caught speeding in an automobile, to deny responsibility to our traffic laws!

Someone might quibble that only divine law is excluded by the principle of "all grace." However, this fails on

the premise that the rightful laws of civil government are derived ultimately in their authority by the edict of God (Rom. 13:1ff.). Our civil authorities are God's servants when they exercise proper justice and administer laws that reflect His will! Furthermore, there are **natural laws** that govern the physical workings of our universe. These are given and directed by the great Monarch of Heaven. It is not unreasonable to conclude that law then is not intrinsically evil, and is intended for the betterment of the Human Race. The same is also true of spiritual laws that govern the moral realm.

B. It is patently absurd to even speak of Divine Government or of the rule of God and Christ separate from the existence of law. Law is the foundation of all government, the instrument of all rule. One can not speak of these without implying the presence of law. The "all grace, no law" heresy argues for rule without submission, of government without obedience, and of power without responsibility. It is a plea for chaos and confusion on the part of God.

C. The doctrine also implies universal salvation, a position not shared by many of its advocates. If no law exists, then there can be no sin: for sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). Paul affirms that, "where no law is, *there is* no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). Thus, without law to violate or transgress, there is no sin! If no sin, then no condemnation can exist, and if no condemnation exists, then there must be universal salvation! This conclusion is refuted by such passages as John 3:19; Matthew 7:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 1:4-8; etc. It therefore must be false. That being the case, the idea of "all grace, no law" is also false!

D. The doctrine as held by many would make God a respecter of persons. As noted in part C, universal salvation is not taught by many advocating this doctrine. These are compelled to provide an adequate explanation then as to why some are saved but others are condemned by God! If no law is, then sin cannot occur. Upon what basis then are those condemned by God so condemned?! Without the existence of law, all acts are mutually reduced to being morally neutral—neither right nor wrong. It is just as good, on that basis, for one to perform an heinous act of murder as it is to do some kindness to another! In fact, the words "good," "heinous," "murder," and "kindness" are reduced to mere oxymoronic status. By what **standard** could any act be classified as objectively, concretely, and absolutely "good" or another as "evil"? By what **law** would men be able to be termed "wicked" or "ungodly"? Yet the Scriptures abound in the New Testament with such appellations! Each use mutely testifies to the presence of a supreme Standard—to **law** of the highest origin and the noblest character!

E. The, presence of commands implies the existence of obligations, and this in turn requires the presence of law. One cannot teach on baptism or even faith without implying the fact of law in the New Testament. Exhort one to believe on Christ, and you invariably appeal to an obligation (Heb. 11:6; cf., 1 John 5:3)!

F. Even the responsibility to practice New Testament love implies the fact of law! How can one comply with Christ's command to so love, if no commands exist, as per the "all grace, no law" doctrine?! But such commandment is given (John 13:34-35; 1 John 2:7). Therefore, that doctrine is false! These "loving" brethren must reject the idea of love itself!

The grace only folk are affirming a doctrine that is morally bankrupt, one which promises liberty but grants bondage to sin, one which reduces all good to the same level as all evils, one which places a premium upon doing evil in effect: for the wicked and the righteous will reap the same rewards under its auspices! What benefit then exists for practicing righteousness? How could one even know what is "good," "righteous," and "godly" without some objective standard? No, this doctrine is not Heaven's answer to human fears and worries, but rather it is the same old primordial lie uttered by Satan, "Yea hath God said?" It is infidelity in its very essence. Let us then oppose it and expose those who would use the cloak of liberty deceitfully!

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## The Tongue of Fire

*Bobby Liddell*

"Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (Jam. 3:5-6).



The fiery tongue is dangerous, destructive and even deadly; thus, God commands its control. The tongue reveals the heart (Mat. 12:34), so a tongue out of control signifies a heart out of control. Neither pleases God.

**The Uncontrolled Tongue Is Dangerous!** Note the dangers of a tongue out of control. The danger: (1) of sin, for one who fails to take heed to his ways will surely sin with his tongue (Psa. 39:1); (2) of falling into mischief (Pro. 17:20); (3) of sowing hatred (Pro. 26:28)—do we stop and think that gossip and false witness indicate hatred whether due to envy or malice?; (4) of growing more and more evil (Jer. 9:3-8)—none ever grows better by allowing his tongue to be out of control; an evil tongue defiles the whole body; (5) of vain religion (Jam. 1:26)—many, whose sin may have been that of an uncontrolled tongue, will be astonished at the judgment to hear; “Depart!”; their religion was vain for it was not strong enough to curb their tongue; (6) of boasting (Psa. 12:4)—unless the Lord is Lord of our lips, he is not our Lord at all; are we too proud and self-willed to submit our tongues to His will?; (7) of lying and gossip—were there no listeners, gossips would soon become discouraged and cease; Proverbs 17:4 shows one sins when he listens to lies and gossip; (8) of misrepresenting God (Jer. 23:31)—one who misrepresents God will be lost and those who follow such a man will be lost; and, (9) of flattery (Pro. 6:24)—flattery is an insincere compliment meant to bring gain to the giver.

**The Uncontrolled Tongue Is Destructive!** The tongue out of control is like a fire out of control. Great destruction accompanies the unbridled tongue; (1) for those who do not control their tongues (Hos. 7:16); and, (2) to those against whom the tongue is used (Psa. 57:4; 64:3; Jer. 18:18).

**The Uncontrolled Tongue Is Deadly!** The unbridled tongue is deadly: (1) to man (Psa 12:3); (2) to nations (Isa. 3:8); and, (3) eternally (Pro. 6:16-19).

**The Controlled Tongue Is Treasured:** (1) For its value, like choice silver (Pro. 10:20); (2) for its wisdom (Psa. 37:30; Pro. 10:31; 12:18); (3) for its speaking of God’s Word (Psa. 119:172); and, (4) for its restraint (Psa. 34:13). Do men, and God look upon the utterances of your mouth with favor? Would they say, of you, “She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue *is* the law of kindness” (Pro. 31:26)? Or would they honestly say, “His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue *is* mischief and vanity” (Psa. 10:7)?

**The Controlled Tongue Is True.** It is: (1) true to the praise of God (Psa. 35:28); (2) true to the wise use of knowledge (Pro. 15:2); (3) true to its profession of love (1 John 3:18); and, (4) true in its assessment (Pro. 28:23).

**The Controlled Tongue Is a Tree of Life (Pro. 15:4).** 1) Death and life are in its power (Pro. 18:21). (2) Truth lives ever (Pro. 12:19). (3) Control enhances life’s quality (Pro. 21:23; 1 Pet. 3:10). With the tongue: (4) confession is made unto life (Isa. 45:23; Rom. 10:10); and, (5) others are brought to life (Mark 16:15-16).

Our tongues speak from our hearts. A heart filled with love and the Word of God will speak forth truth and righteousness, rejoicing and salvation. A tongue out of control is as a terrible destructive fire. “LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. *He that* backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour” (Psa. 15:1-3).

## The Only Christians

*Steve Miller*

In the summer of 1809, at a meeting of some Presbyterians in Pennsylvania, the phrase “Where the Scriptures Speak We Speak, Where the Scriptures are Silent We are Silent” was born. The men in this meeting were interested in getting back to the Bible. Things would not be the same after this because restored Christianity would turn this country upside down.

The man who uttered this famous phrase had a family who traveled to this country the same year. His oldest son would surpass his accomplishments in restoring New Testament Christianity through means of preaching and even more in his writings.

The first man mentioned above is Thomas Campbell. The second is his son Alexander. When they were searching the scriptures they were looking for the ancient order of the New Testament Church. This they accomplished mostly by Alexander through his papers called the Christian Baptist and the Millennial Harbinger. Their conclusions on the New Testament order of things were backed by the all inspired word of God. They were not interested in starting

a church or denomination after themselves which is clearly seen through their biblical approach to everything.

When people, back at that time, took the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice and were known as Christians only, they were labeled "Campbellites." This is all the denominations have to do is resort to name calling when people are seeking the truth and finding it. Anyone that can read the Bible can plainly see that Alexander Campbell did not die for our sins, Christ did, (1 Cor. 15:34). We are not baptized in the name of Campbell, John the Baptist, or any man, but Christ (Acts 2:38). The Scriptures plainly teach men today should be New Testament Christians only.

A sincere open minded study of God's Word will clearly show that the Bible does not make Campbellites, Catholics, Mormons or denominationalists of any other name unknown to the Bible. When we obey the gospel of Christ as only the Bible says then we will be pleasing to God (Col. 3:17; 2 John 9-11). The Bible only makes Christians only, and the only Christians.

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## The Duty of Defense

*Ray Peters*

In 1 Peter 3:15, the apostle Peter, through inspiration, commanded, "and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." The word "answer" in the text is the Greek word *apologia* from whence we get our word "apology." The word basically means "defense." Thus, Peter, was and is commanding Christians to, "defend the Faith." It is not left to one's whimsical desire or in the area of, "If I want to." Therefore, it is a child of God's **duty** to defend the Truth he believes. Our Lord pointed out that: "when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). Among the definitions of duty the phrase "moral obligation" is found. To be "moral" is to do that which is "right" and "proper," and to not do so is to be "immoral." It is set forth that it is the "moral obligation" of a Christian to defend the Faith. Paul exclaimed, "I am set for the defence of the Gospel" (Phi. 1:17). The apostle Paul was declaring that he was "placed" to stand for the Truth and he challenged the Corinthians, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). The trend has been, down through the years of the history of God's people, for nominal Christians to be aloof. The attitude of, "I don't really want to get into a fight," or, "I don't like controversy," and, "Let somebody else do the arguing," in too many instances has been the prominent one expressed. This attitude is in direct violation of inspired directives. Further noticing the definition of "duty," the phrase, "a course that is required" and the word "service" capture one's attention: These statements advance the fact that one does not have the luxury of choosing not to defend the Gospel. Just as a "good soldier" does not have the "right" not to defend his country neither does a "good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3), have the correct position when he "betrays" the defense of the Truth.

It is not indicated in this short treatise that one has to enter public debate, but each in his own way has to come to the aid of the Truth. To do so is to come to the help of the Lord and the cause of Christ. Remember the curse the angel of the Lord put upon Meroz, "because they came not to the help of the LORD" (Jud. 5:23). The help they failed to render was in fighting against the idolatrous Canaanites, even though the Lord, through the mouth of the prophets, charged them to uphold His cause. The inhabitants of Meroz, a village 12 miles from Samaria, did not feel they had done anything wrong. How similar is the situation among those, who claim to be the soldiers of Christ, who feel they have not violated the Scriptures by doing nothing in safeguarding the Faith?

### **The Defense of Doctrine**

Let me hasten to make it perfectly clear that one's defense is to be that of doctrine, Truth, Gospel, and not of opinions or the ideas of man. This seems to be a problem among some anti they cannot distinguish between the two. Then, there are those who are saying, "Doctrine is not important." It has been among us for a long time but now there are those who are coming out of the closet and openly and brazenly advocating such. It should be commonly understood that "doctrine" means "teaching." Paul, to the young preacher Timothy, emphasized the importance of "sound" (wholesome, healthy, no admixture of error) "doctrine" in 1 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; and 2:1. If it is not important, why did Paul give such emphasis? The apostle John informs one if he does not have the

doctrine of Christ and does not abide in that teaching, he does not have Christ (2 John 9)! Much more could be said to demonstrate the importance of doctrine, but 2 John 9 says it all!

The false idea that Gospel and doctrine are different still lingers in the hearts and minds of some. Some adhere to the spurious concept that the gospel is to be preached to the alien sinner and that doctrine is to be preached to Christians. The Bible does not teach such. Paul preached the Gospel to the Galatians and the Romans (Gal. 1:6-9; Rom. 1:15). He mentioned the “fellowship of Christians in the Gospel” (Phi. 1:5) and that the Gospel governs the Christian’s manner of life (Phi. 1:27). Jesus taught people who were not members and He taught them “doctrine” (Mat. 7:28). The Scriptures are inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and include doctrine and instruction in righteousness. Righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel; therefore, the Gospel and doctrine of God are the same thing. Another passage that is pertinent to our study is 1 Timothy 4:16: “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” Those that would hear Paul would not always be members of the church; hence, he preached doctrine, as did Timothy, to non-members.

It is this body of Truth, whether referred to as the Gospel, doctrine, the Word (2 Tim. 4:2), or the Faith, that a Christian is to shield. Paul, to Jude, implored “Contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3), and to Timothy, “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12).

### **The Decor of Defense**

The word “decor” is a synonym for “manner,” thus the “manner of defense.” The apostle Peter addressed the subject of how one is to go about defending the Truth in 1 Peter 3:15: “with meekness and fear,” and verse 16, “good conversation in Christ.” One is not to be caustic, hateful, nor belligerent with the Truth. This is not the same thing as boldness. The Word of God may be preached forcefully and without fear, but never with an ugly attitude. Sometimes there are those that will mistake enthusiastic, straight-forward preaching as being haughty and unchristian Paul said, “speaking the Truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). Our outlook must always be one of being directed by God, reverend for Him and His Word, and love for the souls of mankind. This is the thrust of 1 Peter 3:15. Peter not only addressed one’s speech but also his conduct of life in 1 Peter 3:16. One must not only be sound in teaching but sound in life; if not, then he is not sound. The apostle Paul guarded his life (1 Cor. 9:27), lest after he had taught others he would be a “castaway.” In 1 Timothy 3:15, the words, “behave thyself in the house of God” point to our demeanor as members of the Lord’s church. The way sometimes becomes dreary and the burden of defense heavy, but we must endure as “good soldiers” (2 Tim. 4:5; 2:3).

### **The Diadem of Defense**

The diadem or crown that will be awarded to those who are faithful in the discharging of “contending for the Faith” will by worth it all. Paul referred to the “crown of righteousness” that he would receive as would all of the faithful (2 Tim. 4:8). We must not become “weary in well doing” (Gal. 6:9), but remain “steadfast” (1 Cor. 15:58). It many times seems to be a thankless task, but be reminded we are not trying to please the brethren or the world, if so, we should not be the servants of Christ (Gal. 1:10). Revelation 22:14 instructs us if we, “do his commandments,” then we may have the, “right to the tree of life and enter in through the gates into the city.” That is our ultimate goal. So, let each of us be “faithful” even in the “face of death” (Rev. 2:10), and uphold and defend the Truth.

Again it is implored, begged and appealed that our defending be on the doctrine of Christ and not the opinions and concepts of man. Let each stand firm and tall against error with all our fiber, but not go around as busy bodies, as the Pharisees, and make laws where God made none. Be careful not to enter into the opinionated, fault-finding, mote hunting that was characteristic of the Pharisees.

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## **Bible Course**

To receive your **free** Bible Course from the Bell view Church of Christ, send your request to:

Bible Correspondence Course  
% Harold Maxey  
20 Emory Drive  
Pensacola, FL 32526

# Not Everyone Shall Be Saved. Shall You?

*Bobby Liddell*

Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ born of the virgin, Mary, is the only one through whom man may find salvation. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). “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). “From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:66-68). Jesus said, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

Jesus is the Savior and by his words shall he judge us; thus, to him we should listen. He said, “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). Did you hear what Jesus said? Not every one will be saved (enter into the kingdom of heaven)! Why not? Does God not love everyone? Oh, yes: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Does he not desire all to be saved? Oh, yes: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9); and, “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). Has he not made salvation available to all? Oh, yes; “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for {the sins of} the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

If God loves all men, wants all men to be saved and has made salvation available to all men, then why shall not all men be saved?

The answer comes from Jesus: “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). He asked, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). Christ is, “the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). John the Baptist, forerunner of Christ, said, “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36—ASV). Not all shall be saved for not all shall chose to obey and do the will of God. Now, will you?

# DEFENDER

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## Christian Intellectuals!

*Jerri Manasco*

Christians ought to be the most intellectually profound people on earth! No, I did not say that Christians must be “intellectuals.” Nor did I say that Christians must be formal “scholars.” There are true scholars in the church, and we need such. There are pseudo-scholars in the church, and we do not need such! In this article I am speaking about the “average” (?) Christian. There is no reason for a Christian to be biblically illiterate in this age of accessible knowledge. While one may not be able to afford a huge library of encyclopedias or other study aids, he should try to purchase a few such aids. Subscribing to at least one sound, well-written religious journal would be a great help. Above all, the Christian should (**no, he must**) have a Bible! If he has no other aids for study, a single concordance (Young’s or Strong’s) will prove to be invaluable.

A study of the Bible is intellectually stimulating. One who approaches his study of the Bible in a systematic way can achieve wonderful results. The Bible student does not read arbitrary passages here and there. He or she doesn’t randomly select a verse here and one there. Systematic Bible study means that one selects a Bible book, a chapter, a Bible character, a Bible subject, etc., and pursues the study of it until the mind has gained a firm hold of the lessons revealed in the Scriptures.

To become knowledgeable of the Bible, one must study the **Bible**! He must not rest his case with what I have said or what other uninspired men have penned. While consideration of the comments of skilled men is of great help, the Christian must study the Bible itself to see what **God** has said. It is not enough to know what the preacher said, but what God said! The Christian must challenge himself to search the Scriptures to see what is actually revealed on those pages. Jesus asked, “Have ye not read this **scripture**?” (Mark 12:10). Jesus frequently called attention to the Scriptures (Mark 12:26; Mat. 22:31; Luke 4:21). Bible class discussions sometimes become battles of wits as ignorance of the Bible shines through the preconceived absurdities of unlearned brethren. The Scriptures have been put to rest while foolish opinions reign supreme. The “victor” in the discussion comes away with his or her self-esteem exalted by the supposed superior notions they have expressed.

One must **study** the Bible. One may have Bible in hand and actually do some reading, but has he actually **studied** the sacred volume? Many people are quick to remind you that they have read the Bible over and over, but they know little about what is in it! One must dig deeply into the Word of God if he would find strength for life’s battles. Study is hard work, but when a person invests the time and effort he will uncover things he never dreamed of!

Shallow reading habits have produced a shallow generation. It is so disheartening to hear some member of the Bible class talk about how he or she “got up” the lesson! Generally this means that they have filled in the blanks in the workbook (and probably did this Saturday evening!). The vital question is, “Have they gained any real insights into God’s truth?” Has he weighed out the spiritual implications of the lesson? Has she considered the context and pondered how the lesson applies to his or her own life situation? Has he or she found some principle to guide through life’s journey?

The Christian can be intellectually profound because he is a student of the most profound work that has ever been placed in human hands! The works of Plato, etc., are masterpieces of ingenious speculations, but the Bible is the Divine Masterpiece of truth revealed! It is the fountain from whence true wisdom springs forth into the heart of him who drinks freely from it. It is in the revelation of God that we have insight into the total dimension of God’s grand purpose (Eph. 3:14-21; Col. 2:3). Israel’s God gave them the law which was “your wisdom and your understanding”

(Deu. 4:6). The psalmist boldly declared, "I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts" (Psa. 119:100). The spiritual perception is heightened by the knowledge of the Word of God (Heb. 5:12-14).

The Christian, through study of the Bible, obtains knowledge of the most profound subject! Through study of the Bible we know **God!** "This is life eternal, that they might **know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ,** whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3).

What profound knowledge is gained from the Bible! The Bible student becomes profoundly aware of things that can be known from the most profound source: **God Himself!** One who is conversant with the Bible is learning things that can be known **only** from revelation! "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:9-10). That which God revealed through chosen vessels is our mental stimulant! Anyone who will take the time to search these things out can discover profound truths that silence the foolish reasonings of man!

A commitment to Bible knowledge is the need of the age! Humanism and its related evils is assuming a prerogative that it does not have. Our young people need the challenge of stimulating Bible studies. The adults in the church need to be renewed in the challenge of in-depth Bible studies. One who studies the Bible thoroughly will be able to see that the Bible does indeed answer the quibbles of Atheism! One who studies the Bible to learn something will see that the Bible is indeed the source book for practical knowledge. One who yields his will to the sacred volume will find that the Bible does indeed give more peace of mind, more hope, more contentment, more reason to live than any other book or collection of books possessed by man.

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## Guidelines for Writers

*Bobby Liddell*

Recently, several have inquired concerning guidelines for articles written for *Defender*. Some have asked if we accept unsolicited articles and if so, of what nature. We submit these guidelines: (1) to instruct those interested in writing for *Defender*; (2) to help make our job of editing less difficult by making the articles submitted of a uniform nature; and, (3) to make *Defender* the best it can be in every way. Our efforts in connection with this paper are to win souls to Christ, strengthen the brethren, uphold the truth, expose error and by it all, to bring glory to God. We welcome quality articles from faithful brethren as well as your comments and criticisms to help us better serve him in this way.

1. Articles should be typewritten or computer generated and double-spaced on letter size white paper. Avoid using onionskin paper and small type. Margins on all four sides should be at least one inch.

2. Carefully check the article for spelling and grammatical errors before submitting.

3. Articles should be no longer than three pages. We prefer those of two to three pages. Under special circumstances, we publish longer articles, but not usually.

4. If you send an article which you have submitted to other publications please attach a note telling when and to whom. We prefer not to publish material which has been printed in several other brotherhood publications unless special conditions warrant.

5. Be sure all Scripture references are accurate and all quotations are exact quotations from either the King James or American Standard versions. Other versions may be used for comparison but please state which version is cited.

6. Place the title of the article at the top center of the first page and the name of the author underneath. Place the author's address at the end of the article.

7. When citing quotations from Scripture, place commas and periods inside quotation marks. "Jesus wept." If a reference is to follow the quotation, place commas and periods after the reference and outside the parentheses. "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). The following examples are incorrect. Please avoid them. "Jesus wept". "Jesus wept." (John 11:35.)

8. Please note references to books other than the Bible in the same way instead of in footnotes. Otherwise, please make endnotes if necessary and not footnotes.

9. Contrary to formerly accepted usage, we prefer ellipses to be three periods without spaces before or between ...and four periods if occurring at the end of a sentence....

10. A dash is indicated by two un-spaced hyphens—not one.

11. Please use Arabic numerals when referring to Bible books; for example, 2 Peter 3:9—not II Peter 3:9.

12. Do not abbreviate the names of any Bible books when used in a sentence. Abbreviate the names of Bible books in Scripture references (Gen., Mal., 1 Cor., Rev.) unless the name has four letters or less (Job, Amos, Luke, Acts).

13. Do not capitalize pronouns referring to deity. “Those who love Christ keep his commandments.”

An excellent source of help in proper writing is Kate L. Turabian’s *a Manual for Writers*, published by The University of Chicago Press.

We always appreciate well-written articles submitted by sound brethren. Please note there may be some time between your submission and our publishing your article. It is not unusual for us to plan the *Defender* two or three months in advance. Also, if your article is on a topic, which we have recently covered, we may hold it for a few months before printing it. Please do not think a delay means your article is unworthy.

We need articles which deal with basic Bible subjects. Those that deal with issues should be presented in a proper Christian spirit.

## What Will Happen to the Earth at the End of Time?

*Randy Vaughn*

Will the earth stand forever, or will it cease to exist? People have always been curious about the end of the world. It has been an age old question as far back as the days of Noah (Gen. 9:11-15). Even today, curiosity and confusion abound in man’s attempts to understand this mystery.

Many religious cults arrogantly claim to have discovered “new truths and insights” which have supposedly been lost or forgotten to mankind. They say that the earth will **not** cease to exist at the Lord’s second coming. Instead of destroying it, God will destroy wickedness, rejuvenate the planet and make it the home of the righteous. Earth will then become the paradise that was lost in the beginning. But these “new truths” are only the old heresy of Materialism. Scoffers have denied for centuries that the earth will one day cease to be (2 Pet. 3:3-4).

This idea of earth’s rejuvenation has been reinforced by the misunderstanding of certain passages. In several verses, the Bible actually says that the earth will abide forever. The psalmist says, “he built his sanctuary like high *palaces*, like the earth which he hath established for ever...it should not be removed for ever...He hath also stablished them for ever and ever” (Psa. 78:69; 104:5; 148:6). This seems to say plainly that this old world will always be around, that it will never be destroyed.

On the other hand, passages such as Matthew 24:35 and 2 Peter 3:7-10 tell us the heavens and the earth will be destroyed, will pass away or dissolve when Christ returns. After which, faithful Christians will have an eternal home in heaven.

Which will it be? Will the earth be rejuvenated or will it dissolve and pass away at Christ’s return? This writer believes the answer can be found in the way the Bible uses the phrase “for ever.” The Bible does not use “for ever” as we do in modern English. In the Old Testament the word “FOREVER” comes from the Hebrew word ‘*olam*. ‘*Olam* is defined as: “forever, ever, everlasting, evermore, perpetual, old, ancient.” But the important thing to notice is that “forever” **does not always mean without end or limitless, time**. ‘*Olam* is used over 300 times in the Old Testament. In at least twenty occurrences Allan A. McRae says:

It (‘OLAM) clearly refers to the past. Such usages generally point to something that seems long ago, but rarely if ever refer to a limitless past.... That neither the Hebrew nor the Greek word in itself contains the idea of endlessness is shown both by the fact that they sometimes refer to events or conditions that occurred at a definite point in the past, and also by the fact that sometimes it is thought desirable to repeat the word, not merely saying “forever,” but “forever and ever”.... Both words came to be used to refer to a long age or period... (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. II, p. 672).

When the Bible uses the words, “**for ever**” especially in reference to a promise or prediction, it usually does not refer to a limitless, never ending period of time, but simply to a very long time. If one does not understand this, he is destined to be confused on this point when studying the Bible.

There are many examples where the idea of “for ever” **can not** mean limitless never ending time. Notice these:

1. In Genesis 17:7 and 10 the Bible says that **circumcision** was to be an “**everlasting covenant**” between God and Abraham’s children, but the New Testament clearly shows that circumcision was done away. Galatians 5:3-4 says: “to every man this is circumcised...he is a debtor to do the whole law.” And in Romans 2:28-29 we find that circumcision today is not of the flesh, but of the heart. In Acts 15:1-2 and 15:10-11, the apostles admonished the Jews not to “put a yoke...which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.” Thus, circumcision was not “**for ever**.”

2. In Exodus 12:14,17,24 the Passover feast was a memorial of the Exodus from Egypt to be observed “**for ever**.” But today the Passover should not be observed anymore (Col. 2:16-17). The Lord’s Supper is our memorial of Christ’s death and resurrection.

3. Leviticus 16:29-34 tells us that the Day of Atonement was “**for ever**.” But Hebrews 9:25 says, that Christ should not offer Himself often as the high priest offered the sacrifice once every year. The Day of Atonement ended because Christ is our final sacrifice.

4. Leviticus 6:18 and 22; and 7:34-36 state that the Levitical Priesthood with its High Priest was to continue “**for ever**.” And yet, this priesthood was done away to make room for the high priesthood of Christ. Hebrews 8:1-6; 7:11 show us that since Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, He could not be a priest after the Levitical order. He was after the order of Melchizedek. And so, the Levitical Priesthood was never meant to be “**for ever**” in the sense of never ending.

In each of these cases, things which were supposed to last for ever, in actuality only lasted a few centuries. Sometimes it was because the promises and predictions were based on conditions that the people failed to meet. And sometimes it was because these things were never meant to be for ever. God simply dealt with man in different ways as His scheme of redemption unfolded. (Heb. 1:12).

With all of this in mind, when the Bible says the earth will abide for ever, and again that it will also be destroyed, we must remember that “for ever” does not always mean eternal. The Bible does not contradict itself. The New Testament teaches us that Christ is coming back one day to gather His faithful to heaven to be with Him (John 14:13; 1 The. 4:16-17). There will be a new heaven and a new earth, and this old earth will be dissolved, destroyed and no longer in existence (2 Pet. 3:11-13). Let us be ready for that day.

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## Do the Standards for Modesty Change?

*Rod Rutherford*

We live in a world of changing standards. That which once was considered right and moral is today laughed at or ignored. That which was once considered sinful and wrong is practiced and defended. This is not a new phenomenon for as long ago as Isaiah’s day, people were reversing God’s standards of right and wrong. “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isa. 5:20)!

Most people today, including many who profess to be faithful followers of the sinless Son of God, determine their standards of conduct by the prevalent and popular fashions and fads of the day. They do not stop to inquire if God has a standard. This is perhaps more readily seen in the area of dress than in any other.

Fashions and styles of clothing change annually. The clothing industry is a multibillion dollar a year concern. It is aware of the human desire to conform, to be just like everyone else. If leaders in fashion decree that mini-skirts are “in,” then all style conscious women flock to buy mini-skirts. If they decide that faded, torn and tight blue jeans are “in” for teenagers, then teenagers will all stampede to the store to pay thirty or forty dollars for a pair of pants that a hobo would not be seen wearing. Such are the foibles and follies of human nature!

What about styles of clothing as they pertain to standards of morality and modesty? One who is concerned more with finding happiness in Heaven than in the fleeting fads of earth will give serious consideration to this question (1 John 2:15-17). What the majority does matters little to such a person for he knows that he must not “follow a multitude to do evil” (Exo. 23:2). He knows that the broad, popular, easy way leads to destruction (Mat. 7:13-14).



The child of God will understand that changing styles in and of themselves are not wrong. High button shoes were “in” for women at the turn of the century, but they have been out of style for nearly eighty years. There is nothing moral or immoral in such shoes. Most styles of clothing would come in this category. However, there are other styles of clothing which are wrong and sinful. They may be sinful because they are worn in pride with a selfish desire to call attention to oneself and to excite the envy of others who do not possess such clothing. The apostle Peter had such as this in mind when he wrote to Christian women “Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; <sup>4</sup>But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Pet. 3:3-4).

Styles of clothing may also be sinful because they excite lust and passions in others which ought not to be aroused except in the marriage bed between a husband and his wife. Clothing which is tight and clearly reveals the contours of the body provokes such sinful desires. Clothing which reveals nudity certainly creates in others lustful thoughts. Our Lord said: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mat. 5:27-28). If it is sinful to look upon another and lust after that person in one’s heart, is the person guiltless who dressed (or undressed) in such a way as to provoke that lust? Jesus said: “Woe unto the world because of offences [occasions of stumbling—ASV]! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” (Mat. 18:7).

Fashions will continue to flourish and fade. Many of them are neither right nor wrong in themselves. That which appears to be so desirable today will be dated and even ridiculous looking in a few years. The child of God will choose clothing that is modest and becoming, which does not call attention to itself or the wearer. His emphasis will be upon clothing himself with Godliness and good works (1 Tim. 2:9-10). He will seek always to “abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11).

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## Why Don't They Answer?

*Jimmie Hill*

Have you ever spoken to someone concerning a matter you felt to be of the utmost importance only to find that he wasn't paying attention as you spoke? Have you ever put forth much time and effort into a presentation only to find out later that those to whom it was presented were totally uninterested in you and your work? Have you ever made a request for assistance and received a “We'll let you know...” answer and then waited for a reply that never came? If you have done any of these, then you probably felt angry, ignored and forgotten.

All of these acts are crude and discourteous and yet, they happen. And, it's sad to say but, they even happen among God's children. Not many of us would stand face to face with someone and treat him in such a manner. It would be rude and completely uncalled for and especially to a brother in Christ, yet it happens. We would not want to be treated in this way so, to treat others in this way would be a violation of the “Golden Rule” (Mat. 7:12). And while we may not do these things face to face, they happen everyday through the U.S. Mail.

When an individual or a congregation of the Lord's people receives a request from a brother for financial aid in a worthwhile project, we should respond to that request whether it be in an affirmative or a negative manner. It is much easier to ignore someone through the mail but, in principle, it is the same as ignoring them in a face to face situation. And while it is true that we may not be able to support every worthwhile project in the brotherhood or contribute to every effort being made to advance the gospel of Christ, we can at least respond and let the brethren know that we cannot be counted on at this time. This would be greatly appreciated by many of our brethren. Yes, it would take some effort on our part but is that too much to ask for your brother's sake?

Plans cannot be made, works cannot be started and mission efforts cannot be carried out without cooperation from each other and that includes knowing who one can and cannot rely on for support. If one sends a letter and gets no reply, how can he know where he stands?

If you have ever been in the planning stages of a mission effort, building a new building, or any project that

would advance the cause of Christ, surely you must know the frustrations of receiving no replies. Brethren, let us no longer be guilty of this but let us answer the requests of our brethren. Let us do it out of love and consideration for one another. **“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another”** (Rom. 12:10).

It is my hope and prayer that you never find yourself in a situation where you are left to wonder **“why don’t they answer?”**

*P O. Box 3024 Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799*

*Editor’s note: There are occasions when churches receive requests from “brethren” of whom they have never heard, about whom they have no knowledge of their soundness and about whose work they have no idea as to its legitimacy. Other times, mass mailings are made with no explanation of the work other than it is a “church of Christ” somewhere or some unknown “brother” somewhere and they “need” money. Some have obviously failed to think through their requests. Brother Hill does not include such vague and sometimes questionable requests in the scope of his article. Too often, though, we fail to respond as we should, whether positively or negatively, to legitimate requests for much needed help from faithful brethren and congregations. Before we think it easier simply not to reply, let us put ourselves in the place of the one(s) making the request.*

## A Special Need, a Special Appeal

The elders of the Pearl Street church in Denton, Texas, are appealing for help for the Bill Altaffer family. This family (4 children, 6-12 years) has supported itself through secular employment while faithfully preaching the gospel for 12 years in Wyoming. They now find themselves in a set of unfortunate and unavoidable circumstances. Bill has been unable to hold a secular job for more than three years due to back and knee injuries (he has had unsuccessful surgery on both knees). In November, 1987, Norma, Bill’s wife, was in a collision with a drunk driver injuring her left elbow, left knee, neck and back. Treatments have already cost almost \$20,000. Her neurologist indicates an immediate need for back surgery. She also faces expensive treatment and/or surgery for her neck and knee injuries. Additionally, Bill needs further knee surgery to be able to stand long enough to preach. If this were not enough, one of the children is in need of foot surgery. This good family can scarcely scrape enough together for each month, much less repay the \$20,000 they had to borrow. They had no medical insurance (it was beyond their means) and they have been unsuccessful in getting the insurer of the drunk driver to pay any of their medical bills. They are facing surgical and treatment-related expenses of approximately \$75,000, an overwhelming amount, even for a family with a regular income. When the Denton elders heard of their plight they decided to place these needs before a merciful brotherhood and to serve as receivers and caretakers of a fund for this family’s desperate needs. These brethren encourage individuals and congregations to please respond rapidly and generously. With many helping, the burden will not be heavy on any. If you can help, please make your check payable to **Pearl St. Church of Christ** and send it to: 312 Pearl St., Denton, TX 76201, marked for “Altaffer Account.”

# Second Annual POWER Lectures

## *The Minor Prophets*

August 26-30, 1990

Hosted by Southaven Church of Christ

P O. Box 128 Southaven, MS 38671 — 601-393-2690 — Hwy. 51 at Brookhaven Dr.

### SUNDAY AUGUST 26, 1990

9:30 AM	Introduction—Book of Hosea	Rex Turner, Sr.—Montgomery, AL
10:30 AM	Commentary—Book of Hosea	Garland Elkins—Southaven, MS
	NOON FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON	
7:00 PM	Greet Lessons—Book of Hosea	Bill Jackson—Austin, TX
8:00 PM	Introduction—Book of Joel	Curtis Cates—Memphis, TN

### MONDAY AUGUST 27, 1990

9:00 AM	Commentary—Book of Joel	Terry Varner—Marietta, OH
10:00 AM	Great Lessons—Book of Joel	Harrell Davidson—Obion, TN
11:00 AM	Introduction—Book of Amos	Jerry Moffitt—Harrisville, MO
	NOON LUNCH PROVIDED	
1:00 PM	Commentary—Book of Amos	Charles Williams—Texarkana, TX
2:00 PM	Great Lessons—Book of Amos	Michael Gifford—Montgomery, AL
3:00 PM	Introduction—Book of Obadiah	Thomas Eaves—Cookeville, TN
7:00 PM	Commentary—Book of Obadiah	Wayne Coats—Jett, TX
8:00 PM	Great Lessons—Book of Obadiah	Lynn Metheny—White Hall, AR

### TUESDAY AUGUST 28, 1990

9:00 AM	Introduction—Book of Jonah	Roger Jackson—Somerville, AL
10:00 AM	Commentary—Book of Jonah	Perry Hall—Tyler, TX
11:00 AM	Great Lessons—Book of Jonah	Paul Kidwell—Ringgold, GA
	NOON LUNCH PROVIDED	
1:00 PM	Introduction—Book of Micah	Kenneth Gossett—Jonesboro, AR
2:00 PM	Commentary—Book of Micah	Dub McClish—Denton, TX
3:00 PM	Great Lessons—Book of Micah	Gary Colley—Pine Bluff, AR
7:00 PM	Introduction—Book of Nahum	Mac Deaver—Austin, TX
8:00 PM	Commentary—Book of Nahum	Buster Dobbs—Houston, TX

### WEDNESDAY AUGUST 29, 1990

9:00 AM	Great Lessons—Book of Nahum	Joe Gilmore—San Jose, CA
10:00 AM	Introduction—Book of Habakkuk	Stephen Wiggins—Jonesboro, AR
11:00 AM	Commentary—Book of Habakkuk	Bill Lockwood—Bay, AR
	NOON LUNCH PROVIDED	
1:00 PM	Great Lessons—Book of Habakkuk	M. H. Tucker—Kinston, NC
2:00 PM	Introduction—Book of Zephaniah	Clarence Lavender—Christiansburg, VA
3:00 PM	Commentary—Book of Zephaniah	Darrel Conley—San Antonio, TX
7:00 PM	Great Lessons—Book of Zephaniah	Andrew Connally—Seagoville, TX
8:00 PM	Introduction—Book of Haggai	William Wilder—Columbia, TN

### THURSDAY AUGUST 30, 1990

9:00 AM	Commentary—Book of Haggai	Joseph Meador—Madisonville, KY
10:00 AM	Great Lessons—Book of Haggai	Gary McDade—Memphis, TN
11:00 AM	Introduction—Book of Zechariah	Keith Mosher, Sr.—Walls, MS
	NOON LUNCH PROVIDED	
1:00 PM	Commentary—Book of Zechariah	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.—Ripley, TN
2:00 PM	Great Lessons—Book of Zechariah	Kenneth Jones—Parrish, AL
3:00 PM	Introduction—Book of Malachi	Foy Smith—Riverside, CA
7:00 PM	Commentary—Book of Malachi	Roy Deaver—Austin, TX
8:00 PM	Great Lessons—Book of Malachi	Thomas B. Warren—Seagoville, TX

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# DEFENDER

Volume XIX

September 1990

Number 9

## The Authority of the Scripture Concerning Worship

*Jerry Moffitt*

We have always been a people who made the Word of God our authority in religion. However, since there are signs in our brotherhood of drifting from this mooring, let us express two propositions regarding why God's Word, revealed in the Bible must be our sole authority in worship.

### **Proposition One: All Else Is Rejected as Authority**

First, the church cannot be our authority for it did not give us the truth. Rather, truth gave us the church. The church must support the truth and be the pillar and ground of it. Paul wrote to Timothy: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

Second, we reject denominations and ecclesiastical bodies as authority. They are not from heaven, but from man (Mat. 21:25). They are evil plants the Lord wants rooted up (Mat. 15:13).

Third, we reject human reason as authority. God has made it foolish (1 Cor. 1:18-31), so the way of man is not in himself (Jer. 10:23). Under this category we would place traditions of men (Mat. 15:7-9), human philosophy (Col. 2:8), secret knowledge (1 Tim. 6:20-21), and all men as an authority. Men can be false teachers (2 John 9-11; 1 John 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:13; Jude 3-4).

Fourth, we reject angels (Gal. 1:8-9; 2 Cor. 11:13-15), and human experiences (Mat. 24:24; 2 Cor. 3:13) as authority concerning worship. It is possible for us to be deceived, especially in the realm of human experience.

### **Proposition Two: Why Scripture Is Our Sole Authority**

First, only it is the Word of God (Deu. 8:3; 1 The. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mat. 4:4). No other book, than the Bible, can stand tests intended to discredit this claim.

Second, it is in the Bible that God exercises His authority (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 The. 2:1-3; John 14:16-18; John 14:26; John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). God had authority and delegated it to the Son (Heb. 1:1-3). The Son put it in men (2 Cor. 5:20), and they wrote it down (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 The. 2:1-3).

Thus, third, the Bible claims to be an authority (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 The. 1:7-9; 2 Pet. 3:5). As a church, we dare not sail off the map of God's Word.

Fourth, Jesus appealed to Scripture as the final authority to settle religious concerns (Mat. 22:28-33; Mat. 19:4-5; John 10:35-36). The apostles did the same, quoting Old Testament passages to authenticate their teaching.

Like the Hebrews writer, time fails if we try to tell all. Scripture is our authority for it is reliable; it will judge us; and, it is indestructible. It will convert us (Psa. 19:7), guide us (Psa. 73:24), cleanse us (John 15:3), save us (Jam. 1:21), sanctify us (John 17:17), edify us (Acts 20:32), and work in us (1 The. 2:13). What else could we ask? So may we continue to hold it up as our sole authority in Christianity.

*P.O. Box 1275; Portland, TX 78374*

# The Authority of the Scripture

*Shan Jackson, Guest Editor*

To authorize is to: “(1) invest with esp. legal authority: EMPOWER; (2) establish authority (as precedent): SANCTION; (3) to furnish a ground for: JUSTIFY” (*Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1967). Mankind has universally recognized the necessity and existence of rules or standards by which life is regulated. Without proper recognition of authority, there can be no unity or system in society. What if there were no standard for time, no rule for weights and measures? Imagine the chaos that would exist.

Behind all persons and institutions stands authority. Christians recognize God as the absolute source of authority (Rom. 13:1ff). The question of authority involves proof of the existence and nature of God. Our ideas about God affect conduct, but, ideas may be right or wrong, true or false. In order to make valid distinctions there must be a court of final appeal by which men can discover their true place and purpose in the world (Jer. 10:23).

In what way does God reveal Himself and His will for man? Truly, we do learn something of the Almighty’s “everlasting power and divinity” from nature. However, God has primarily made his nature and will known through the special revelation of Scripture. Human will and conduct is either in conflict or in harmony with the will of God. The history of sin is the story of man’s rebellion against God’s authority. God is creator and ruler of the universe. All his attributes testify to His supreme authority. Thus, all other authorities are subordinate. His authority, exercised in legislative, executive and judicial areas, extends ultimately to the Scriptures (Mat. 17:5; John 17:17; Rom. 10:4; Psa. 24:27; Heb. 1:1-2; Acts 2:36; John 5:27; 12:48). Man’s ultimate purpose is to function according to God’s revealed will (Ecc. 12:13).

Authority is not self-justified. Even Jesus came with divine credentials bearing witness to his claims. The Apostolic message was confirmed by miracles (Heb. 2:1-4). Any human doctrines or practices raised to an equality with God’s Word are usurpers and enemies of God’s power and majesty whether in the form of ecclesiastical tradition or subjectivism (liberalism). There exists a vast chasm between human and Divine words (1 The. 2:13). Efforts to equate mortal ideas with Heaven’s message always meet with disaster. Every doctrine and practice stands or falls with an appeal to Scripture (1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Tim. 3:16ff).

We may agree that the Scriptures are authoritative and yet differ about the scope of God’s revelation, how He communicates or the way we are to apply it. This is the point from which most of our disagreements and divisions originate. It has raised such questions as: “How does the Bible authorize?”; “Must every action of the Christian life be authorized by Scripture?”; “Is the silence of the Scripture binding?”; “Does the Bible teach implicitly?”; “Is the principle of expediency valid?”; etc. One may easily see the tragic results of failure to recognize God’s Word as the absolute and final authority in religion. The chaotic state of religious society is evidence enough. Only by answering these questions can we hope to achieve Bible unity.

Jesus asked if John’s baptism was from “heaven or from men?”; i.e., did John’s baptism come by human or Divine authority? This question should test our every action. God’s Word gives the limits of His will. We live under the “law of liberty,” yet, this very principle restricts us in order to insure that freedom. The restrictive nature of biblical authority is clearly taught in the Scriptures (Deu. 4:2; Pro. 30:6; Luke 6:46; Heb. 5:8-9; 1 John 2:3-4; 2 John 9; Rev. 22:18ff).

No issue is greater than that of biblical authority and its smallest component takes on the greatest proportions. It is our sincere hope the articles in this issue of *Defender* will help in the understanding of authority and in the resolving of issues which for so long have hindered the cause of Christ.

## The Authority of the Scripture Concerning the Plan of Salvation

*Shan Jackson*

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the

worlds.” Thus said the writer of Hebrews in the first two verses of that great book. The inspired writer thereby gave further proof of the authority of Jesus in relation to his statement of Matthew 28:18: “All power (authority—ASV) is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” This also sets forth the fact that in all matters, Jesus through His Word, is our authority in all aspects of Christian life. His Scripture is our conviction and guide and the authority by which we speak and teach. His instructions, therefore, concerning salvation are binding no matter what man might think or theorize. His parting charge in the Great Commission was for the apostles to teach these new believers to, “observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” This is the basis of a Christian’s understanding of salvation.

In order to accept the authority of the Scripture concerning the plan of salvation one must believe that the Bible must be taught and received without addition, subtraction, or substitution. Any alteration of God’s plan forfeits the salvation he affords to the penitent believer. Therefore, what the Bible says we say and do and when it does not speak we do likewise. So what does the Scripture say about God’s plan of salvation?

First, one must hear the truth of the Gospel because, “faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Second, that person must believe the good news he has heard, because without this belief (faith), “*it is impossible to please him [God]*” (Heb. 11:6). Third, he must repent of past sins for God, “commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). Next, he must make his faith known publicly by confessing Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus assures us that if we will confess Him before men, He will confess us before His Father which is in heaven (Mat. 10:32). Now those steps, taken by Christ’s authority, lead a person right to the door of salvation. But, since His plan does not stop there, neither can we. The final step in our securing salvation comes with our contacting the blood of Jesus which cleanses us from our sins.

Today, this can be done in only one way and this one way has His authority because it was spoken from His own lips. “Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). In this, no reasoning is needed, no theorizing is called for or allowed. The Scripture teaches that baptism is essential to one’s salvation.

On the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2, Peter preached salvation to those lost Jews. Following his stirring remarks about salvation he said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ (or by the authority of)” (Acts 2:38). Why would Peter call upon them to be baptized if baptism were not a condition of salvation?

My friends and brethren, baptism is not a “Church of Christ ordinance.” It is a command of the Scripture. Of Cornelius and his household, the Bible says, Peter: “commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:48). Unless one submits to the authority of the Scripture concerning the plan of salvation which includes baptism for the remission of sins, as far as that person is concerned, God’s plan is worthless.

By comparison to the salvation of Noah, Peter says: “The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21). However, this is not to say that salvation is by “baptism only” since this would challenge Christ’s authority as well.

When Christ died on the cross He made salvation available to all men. In the Bible, the inspired apostle Peter says, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34). Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mat. 11:28). Just as we know that some will come to Christ and accept His authority concerning salvation, we know that others will refuse.

Consider Christ’s plea, His sacrifice, and His authority. Accept His plan. Hear the truth, believe it, repent of sins, confess His name, and be baptized for the remission of sins.

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# The Authority of the Scripture Concerning the Eldership

*Eddie Whitten*

“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders [*presbuterous*] of the church” (Acts 20:17). “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers [*episkopous*], to feed [*poimein*] the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). “Let the elders [*presbuteroi*] that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine” (1 Tim. 5:17). “The elders [*presbuterous*] which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder [*sumpresbuteros*—literally “co-elders”]...Feed [*poimanate*] the flock of God which is among you...Neither as being lords [literally “exercising lordship”] over *God’s* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:1-3).

The above passages are only part of the teaching of the Bible with respect to the authority of the Scriptures concerning the eldership. However, they do not contradict, nor leave incomplete, the teaching of the rest of the biblical references to the eldership, and they are sufficient to serve as a basis for three observations concerning this subject.

Objections are made claiming that the word “elder” is a translation of the word *presbuteros* or *presbyter* which simply means “an older, or elderly man,” as used in 1 Timothy 5:1. If that were true, the idea of the term “elder” has no significance other than that of one who is older in age and carries no implication of authority. This is a popular view of those who embrace the “rule by example only” position, and of those who espouse the “evangelistic authority” concept of church government. However, in considering the passages given above, we learn that the same men are referred to as “overseers” (*episkopos*) in verse 28. They were older men, but they had a specific responsibility in regard to the flock they were to oversee. Furthermore, they were fulfilling the responsibilities of an office that has Divine sanction since verse 28 literally states they were “Holy Spirit placed overseers.” It would be safe to assume that not all of the older men of Ephesus were summoned by Paul to Miletus, but only those who were functioning in the special work of the overseers of the church at Ephesus. This established fact, coupled with the examples of elders being appointed (not recognized only because of age) in every church (Acts 14:23) and in every city (Tit. 1:5), gives us the scriptural authority for appointing older men to the special office of the eldership in the Lord’s church today.

Probably the most misunderstood, abused and confused aspect of the office of eldership is its function. What is its function? Some feel there is nothing the elders are to do except “tend to the spiritual matters of the people.” As such they are not to be concerned with the general, every day operation of the church, its programs of work, the worship, or the activities of its staff and other members. Some advocate that the elders should “step aside so as not to hinder the growth of the church” and let the ministers assume the responsibility of determining the activities of the church and the spiritual direction the church is to take.

Again, we must appeal to the Scriptures for the authority inherent, in the office in regard to its function. In 1 Timothy 5:17, the literal translation is thus rendered, “the well ruling elders of double honor let be deemed worthy,” etc. There is the authority of rule associated with the office (Heb. 13:17). It would be inconceivable for those with the charge of oversight not to have the authority to exercise that oversight. In both Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2, the elders are instructed to “Feed the church of God,” or “Feed the flock of God which is among you.” The term “Feed” comes from the Greek word *Poimein* meaning “Shepherd.”

The function, therefore, of the eldership is two-fold in nature. A shepherd provides both the proper food and water for his sheep, and he sees that they are protected from any danger that might threaten his flock. Attacks by the ravening wolves that roam about is certainly a threat to the flock, but wandering away from the flock and the fold is just as dangerous (Luke 15:4-7). Thus, elders are charged to provide for the church the proper spiritual food that will result in their spiritual development and strength, and to protect the church from erroneous doctrines and trends that would weaken or threaten the spiritual welfare of the flock (Tit. 1:9; 1 Pet. 5:8).

Elders are often accused of “lording it over the flock.” Tragically, too many times this accusation has merit. However, more often the accusation is misused and false. To “exercise lordship over” implies action without regard

or consideration for those involved. This would not include decisions that, as Roy Deaver states, would be necessary “to see that things that are to be done are done rightly.” Peter warns against this type of attitude toward the scriptural authority of the elders. He says the elders are to be the proper example to the flock, and Paul admonished that he must have a good report from them that are without.

The concept of the “shepherd” implies leadership. The eldership is to “tend or feed the flock.” These words include the capability and responsibility of “taking care of, to oversee, to superintend, to rule, to govern.” In none of these terms is there given the privilege or authority to become lawmakers. Elders operate only within the scope of expediency. Therefore, elders are to know the law of Christ well enough to be able to “convict the gainsayer” (Tit. 1:9), they are to “take care of the church of God” (1 Tim. 3:5), They are to “admonish” the flock (1 The. 5:12), they are to “oversee” the flock (Acts 20:28), they are to “tend” the flock (1 Pet. 5:2), and they are to be examples to the flock (1 Pet. 5:3).

The office of eldership is the highest office that exists in the Lord’s Church. It is the only office in which God has delegated authority concerning the well-being and the propagation of the true church of God. It constitutes an awesome responsibility, and those who serve in that exalted capacity should be acutely aware of the need to be guided by Godly wisdom derived from a careful study of the Bible and the scriptural authority contained therein.

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## The Authority of the Scripture Concerning Instrumental Music

*Bill Jackson*

Jesus Christ indicted the Jewish leadership of His day for “not knowing the Scriptures” (Mat. 22:29), and He showed His belief in the power of the Scripture in citing it in answer to every temptation Satan placed before Him (Mat. 4:4, 7, 10). The Lord directs us to the Scripture in all matters pertaining to worship by His statement, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). And the Lord identifies that truth as being the **Word of God!** (John 17:17). Thus, we find the Scriptures are authoritative, furnishing us completely (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and forming the basis of our eternal judgment (John 12:48).

As we consider the issue of instrumental music, the pertinent question then must be, “What saith the Scripture?” We have a record of approximately 63 years of the history of Jesus’ church in the New Testament and the record is inspired, complete and authoritative. What do we find in that volume? We find a complete silence as to the use of mechanical instruments of music! That silence, in keeping with the repeated statements as to what God does sanction in worship, is a thundering voice of God against the use of the instrument!

May we illustrate what we do find in the New Testament? In reference to Jesus and the apostles, we find them **singing** (Mat. 26:30). Saints of God at worship in a jail cell (Acts 16:26), in their public assemblies (1 Cor. 14:15), and in instruction that applied in any circumstances of worship (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), are found engaged in **singing!** The praise offered to God is called the **fruit of lips** (Heb. 13:15), and in any circumstances of joy the expression that God expects of us in terms of music is to **sing** (Jam. 5:13). More, even Old Testament pictures of the Christ coming into the midst of men, and then worshipping the Father, are pictures of the Lord in **song** (Rom. 15:9; Heb. 2:12). And there we have it, from the Scripture: All that is said about worship of God, in terms of music, from the time of Christ throughout the revealed history of the church, and it is **vocal music**, and vocal music **only!** When we ask, “What do the authoritative Scriptures say?”, we have the answer!

Mechanical instruments of music, in this Christian age, do not have Scriptural authority! The origin of such is in the realm of man’s desire, and against the Scriptures! It is important to note that: (1) there is absolute silence as to their use in the New Testament; (2) no verse authorizes such; (3) no inspired writer recommended or used such; and, (4) we have no record of a New Testament congregation that practiced such!

And, with all that has been said, we must also note the warning that if any go beyond what is written in the doctrine of Christ then God is not with that person (2 John 9)!

We go further in noticing that Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 do indeed specify the “instrument,” and that



is the human heart! God knoweth the heart (Acts 15:8), and the worshipper thus expresses “from the heart” his devotion to God. The Scripture not only speaks against the mechanical instrument, but in favor of the instrument God places in each of us! The use of vocal music **only** in worship of God is one of the marks of the New Testament church of Jesus Christ. We call upon all men to obey the gospel of Christ, and to worship him in every way as the Word of God directs! That worship will not be with mechanical accompaniment!

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# The Authority of the Scripture Concerning Unity

*Garland Elkins*

There must be authority in all fields. For example, there are twelve inches to the foot and three feet to the yard. Likewise, there must be authority in religion. From Matthew 21:23-27, it is clear that every religious act is either done by divine or by human authority. To perform a religious act by only human authority is to be guilty of sin (1 John 3:4; 2 John 9-11). Authority inherently resides in God (Gen. 1-3; Psa. 24:1). God gave all authority in heaven and on earth to Christ (Mat. 28:18-20). Christ sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles to guide them into all the truth (John 16:13; 14:26; Acts 8:14-25). For a time, the Word of God was in inspired men, but, with the passing of time, these men wrote the various books of the New Testament. Today, there are no inspired men, but our rule of faith and practice is the New Testament, the inspired book and no religious act which is not authorized by that book is pleasing to God (Phi. 3:16; Eph. 5:17; 2 John 9-11; Rev. 22:18-19).

A passage of Scripture authorizes only what it authorizes. This is universally understood in all matters. If a mother sends her son to a store to buy a loaf of bread, he is authorized to buy bread and only bread. If a doctor writes a prescription, all understand that the medicine authorized by the prescription and only what is specified is authorized. If the pharmacist, though not intending to harm the patient, nevertheless, acted without authority in failing to fill the prescription as authorized by the doctor, he has greatly erred and may have endangered the patient.

Many seem to think that God is divided against Himself. The New testament teaches there is only one “way” that leadeth unto life (Mat. 7:13-14). This way is through Christ (John 14:6; 15:6; Rom. 6:3; Rev. 14:3). This “way” is a “new and living way” (Heb. 10:19-20). The Bible teaches only one doctrine (2 Tim. 4:3; Tit. 2:10; 2 John 9-11; Acts 2:42). The command is to “teach no other doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:3). Paul wrote, “This testimony is true. For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Tit. 1:13). The New Testament condemns the doctrines and commandments of men (Mat. 15:9; Eph. 4:14; Col. 2:20-22; 1 Tim. 4:1).

The greatest need of the world is undenominational Christianity, which simply means Christianity in its primitive purity. It means Christianity minus denominational marks, minus the party spirit, minus the doctrines and commandments of men. The spirit of denominationalism (religious partyism) is a great and terrible menace to New Testament Christianity; thus, to the salvation of souls. To the extent that denominationalism prevails, to that same extent New Testament Christianity suffers. Denominationalism and undenominational Christianity are poles apart, and are diametrically opposed. Sectarianism, denominationalism, is the great blot upon modern Christianity and is doing more to encourage atheism, infidelity and agnosticism than perhaps all other causes combined!

Jesus earnestly prayed in His great intercessory prayer for the unity of all His disciples. He prayed for them in these words, “Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me” (John 17:20-21). Our Lord prayed for unity, not some kind of loose-jointed union. There is a vast amount of difference between unity and union. It is possible to tie two cats’ tails together and throw them across a clothes line, in which case there would be union, but it would be far from unity! Sadly, the religious world as a whole will contend for union, not unity.

In the beginning of the church, before there was a falling away from the faith, the followers of Christ had no creed but Christ and no rule of faith and practice but the Word of the Lord. They did as Peter taught, “if any man speaketh, *speaking* as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, *ministering* as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Pet. 4:11).

When false teachers arose and ambitious men began their evil work among the congregations, human creeds and rules of faith and practice were born to curse the church of the Lord with sects and sectarianism.

If we see correctly at all, we see alike, for there is only one way to see it correctly (Eph. 5:17; 1 Cor. 1:10). What do 2 plus 2 equal? If we see the answer correctly at all, we of necessity must see it exactly alike.

The church in Jerusalem saw things exactly alike. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one *of them* said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" (Acts 4:32). The ideal unity for which our Lord prayed was clearly exhibited in the oneness that existed in the primitive body of Christ, the church of Christ in Jerusalem. The disciples of Christ were one as the Father is in Christ and Christ is in the Father (John 17:20-21).

It is the aim of all who plead for New Testament Christianity that we return to that original ground and once again practice (as did the church in Jerusalem) Christianity in all its primitive purity. Let us observe and imitate the marvelous unity of the Jerusalem church as it is set out in Acts 4:32. They were of one heart; therefore: (1) their understanding was exactly alike; (2) their desires were the same (Rom. 10:1); (3) they were united in their love for God and man (Mat. 22:37-39); and, (4) their purposes, aspirations and goals were exactly the same (Dan. 1:8; 2 Cor. 9-11; Acts 11:23).

Our Lord prayed for unity that the disciples, being united, might convince the world there is something that is important and necessary for their own eternal welfare (John 17:20; 13:35). There are those who deny that our Lord intended for unity to prevail upon the earth; nevertheless, the same people claim to believe the model prayer wherein our Lord taught His disciples to pray, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (Mat. 6:10). It is admitted by all there will be no division in heaven. That being the case, anyone who prays the above by implication obligates himself to work toward the elimination of division and the obtaining of unity!

The plea for New Testament Christianity urges all to cut loose from everything of human origin and to get back to, and once again stand upon, original ground. Our Lord said the Word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11). The apostles and others preached the gospel (sowed the seed). What was the product of the sowing? The people heard it, believed and obeyed it, and that same obedience both saved them and caused the Lord to add them to the church (Acts 2:38, 41, 47). Just as certain as we sow the same seed as was sowed by the apostles, just that certain, it is that the crop produced from the seed will be identical. The crop produced from sowing the seed into the "honest and good heart" (Luke 8:11, 15) in the days of the apostles were Christians which made up the churches of Christ (Acts 26:28; Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16; Rom. 16:16). The seed did not produce Catholics, Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists nor Episcopalians. The simple acts of gospel obedience made people members of the New Testament church in the days of the apostles; the same gospel obedience makes people members of the same church today (Luke 8:11, 15; Acts 2:47). In this study, we have examined the Lord's plea for unity (John 17:21). We have also pointed out the ideal unity which existed in the church in Jerusalem. "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).

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# DEFENDER

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## What I Gained by Becoming a Christian

*Lee Harber*

A lot of times, we who are Christians blame God if he does not help us get rich or we think we are a deprived people if we do not have a lot of this world's goods like our worldly friends. When I became a Christian, I wanted to give up certain things, but by doing so, I gained far more than I gave up.

**I Gained God as My Father and Christ as My Savior.** In Galatians 3:26, Paul states it this way, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." In John 8:44, Jesus called those people who did not want to accept Him as Messiah children of the devil. They had let the devil darken their hearts and they did not want to acknowledge Jesus as their Lord.

When I became a Christian, I followed the divine pattern that God set out in His Holy Book. I heard the Word of God (Rom. 10:13ff), which in turn, produced faith in Christ. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). "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). Then, I repented of my sins as Christ said to do (Luke 13:3). I confessed him as Christ (Mat. 10:32-33), and I was baptized in the watery grave of baptism to have my sins forgiven (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 2:38). When I did those things, the Lord added me to His body the church (Acts 2:47).

Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Now, with God as my Father and Christ as my Savior, I am no longer under the heavy yoke of the devil, but I submit myself to the easy yoke of Christ (Mat. 11:28-30). Again, Paul says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3). Now, I know if I remain faithful to God and keep the faith, I can be prepared like Paul was (2 Tim. 4:68), but I have to remind myself always that our Lord gave up the glory of Heaven and even His very life to bring us to God. He did not promise us a rose garden.

**I Gained Heaven as My True Home.** We can read in John 17:1-2 that one day Jesus will return for His people and judge us all. Those who have obeyed the gospel and remained faithful will go to dwell with God and Jesus forever. Like Moses, Abraham and the faithful of old, I am looking for a home not made with hands. The world is telling people today to grab all of life and pleasure you can. The world says, "When you die, you are like Rover, dead all over." Christians are not of this world. We are just passing through and we have to remind ourselves to keep our heart and mind on that heavenly land.

In Galatians 6:7, Paul, by inspiration, wrote: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Just think! What would I be without Christ? Nothing. If I were not a Christian what would I be right now? Would I be a murderer? A thief? Some other godless person? Well, if I were not a Christian, I would be lost and on my way to a devil's Hell! When I became a Christian, I gained God as my Father, Jesus Christ as my Savior and Heaven as my home.

**I Gained the Promise of God's Care.** Last, but not least, God has promised to take care of my needs in this life. "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in

the world to come eternal life” (Mark 10:29-30). So, next time, my friend, when you think you would be happy if you had this or that, Wake Up! If being in Christ and serving him does not make you happy, nothing will!

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## Some Things We Can Do

*Bobby Liddell*

What one cannot do often discourages and defeats. Truly, there are many things one cannot do though he might earnestly desire the good that would come from the doing of them. Let us not allow Satan to block our view with what we cannot do, but let us look for what we can do and do it with all our might.

Every gospel preacher knows he cannot obey the gospel for another though he earnestly desires their salvation. He may preach the Word (2 Tim. 4:1-4); that is, the gospel of salvation (Rom. 1:16) and do so faithfully and lovingly (Eph. 4:15), but he cannot respond for another to its call (2 The. 2:14). That decision must be made by the hearer, **but he can keep on preaching the truth** and those with good and honest hearts will obey it (Luke 8:15).

Faithful congregations of God’s children cannot force others congregations, who would rather please men than God (Gal. 1:10), to be faithful. The faithful cannot choose sound men to occupy pulpits other than their own. They cannot select and appoint good qualified men to be elders of other congregations. Neither can they insure only the truth of God is preached and practiced at another local church, **but they can keep on being faithful** and know their salvation or damnation depends on their Christian living (2 Cor. 5:10) and does not depend on the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of others.

True followers of God cannot select the speakers and subjects for all the lectures and meetings of the brotherhood. They cannot keep some men from standing somewhere and saying some things which vex the souls of the righteous. They are not asked if they agree with those who say: (1) worshipping with an instrument is alright; (2) there are sincere knowledgeable Christians in all denominations; (3) worship must be a “mystery”; (4) women may lead men in worship; (5) the church of Christ is just a big sick denomination; and, etc. We cannot speak for other men, **but we can speak for the truth and we can speak against false teachers** and that we must do.

Those who love Jesus and His body, the church (Col. 1:18), cannot make their erring brethren be united in the one faith. They cannot force brothers and sisters whose weakness of spirit seeks union (not unity) based on compromise to give that up and be one in spirit and mind with those walking in the light. They cannot get some to see the largest church in town may not be the most faithful and pleasing to God, **but they can be sure they are walking in the light and united with all others so doing and divided from all who are not.**

We cannot prevent the present day apostasy of many individuals and congregations (the majority in some locations) when such are bound and determined to leave the faith once delivered (Jude 3). We cannot stop the downward slide of the blind following the blind, **but we can make sure we are not of that number** and we can take our stand with those who have not bowed the knee to other than Christ.

There are a lot of things we cannot do, but so many things we can do which are needed and which only we can accomplish. Let us look for those things and do them. Beloved brethren, God knows what we can do and what we cannot do and he will not be pleased with our simply saying there were so many things we could not do.

We can study His Word (2 Tim. 2:15) and meditate upon it day and night (Psa. 1:2), hiding it in our hearts that we might not sin against Him (Psa. 119:11). We can teach others the saving gospel (Mark 16:15-16). We can watch and work and pray living faithfully every day. We can insist that those who claim to be “gospel preachers” preach the gospel. We can please God now and be saved eternally regardless of what others may do.

## Let Us Excel

*Bill Graddy*

With love for God and with malice toward none, let us examine ourselves and evaluate our practices in some areas (2 Cor. 13:5).

A building or a body cannot be stronger than its foundation (Mat. 7:24-29). The undergirding spiritual char-

acteristics will not only make us strong but guarantee the future of the church in generations to come. The foundation principles will cement the Christians with truth in love (Psa. 11:3).

As we cannot build a structurally sound literal house on a sandy foundation, so we cannot erect a strong membership on a weak doctrinal base.

From an educational perspective, one of our Bible class teaching techniques has been erected on a faulty foundation. Since there is no short cut to learning, let us seek none. Perhaps the main reason for our lack of leadership material, numerical and spiritual growth can be attributed to this tragic practice. It seems that the philosophy behind our Bible classes is more interested in not embarrassing and inhibiting people than teaching them the truth. (Of course, we never want to offend anyone. Christianity is not crude, rude or harsh). But, we have majored in this thinking to the neglect of imparting Bible knowledge to the students.

Consider this scenario which may be typical of many of our Bible classes, especially the adult classes. In the main, the method of teaching is lecture. We ask no one to read because we do not want to embarrass the reader. We do not ask direct questions for the same reason. We do not want to disagree with any because we do not want to offend anyone. As a result, many Bible questions are unanswered. The lack of teaching techniques among our teachers has helped create and nourish this cherished abuse. We dare not assign a lesson to each student, especially in an adult class, and ask each to recite before the class on the next Lord's day. To give report cards to our Bible classes has not been popular. We maintain these classes are voluntary, and whether this is a valid objection or not, we are promoting mediocrity and have voluntary ignorance in our Bible classes which stifles spiritual growth. That is, little learning takes place all because we are afraid we will hurt someone's feelings or drive them away.

Learning the Bible is relegated to a secondary position and boredom is a problem as well as attendance. It seems that our classes are dying and are an exercise in futility. If we suggest we start a new class to teach people how to read, how many would attend? Yet, we call on people to read the Scriptures who cannot pronounce many of the words and can be heard only a few feet away from the reader. If one chooses not to read, we wonder why? Should we try to help him? (1 Cor. 14:12). Opinions run rampant in a class like this because we think more of allowing people to remain in their weaknesses than trying to help them learn the truth. They "do err, not knowing the scriptures" (Mat. 22:29). No wonder we have a shortage of elders and Bible class teachers. We should not be surprised at poor attendance.

The same procedure has been characteristic of our song leaders. We let everyone, regardless of ability lead singing. To say no to these men of less ability, is to embarrass and stifle them. They might leave us. We have all but quit having singing schools. Even when we have them, some will not attend. It seems that some men are majoring in mediocrity. Yet, when we have a gospel meeting, we want our best song leader to lead the singing. Even the members of the congregations are embarrassed at times by our inefficient and ineffective song leaders.

A few years ago, we assumed everyone could do personal work because we could put a filmstrip projector in his/her hands. Many could operate the machine, but they could not always answer Bible questions that were asked. If they did answer, it was often a shallow and pitiful attempt to meet the error involved because of the lack of experience of the teachers. Perhaps we have learned that a machine cannot teach a Bible class. Also, not everyone can do personal work, lead a song, or teach a class (1 Cor. 12:29).

How badly do we need to learn that a crash course in any Bible endeavor is not the answer to laying a good foundation. We have observed "burn out" with all such workers who were not willing to sacrifice the time necessary for learning how to be effective preachers, song leaders, personal workers, and Bible class teachers.

Jesus did not present this technique relative to men who would serve as elders of the church. The qualifications are somewhat stringent and selective. Not everyone can qualify to be an elder. Perhaps we have recognized this more in the selection of elders than we have with these other workers, but even here, we have made being a "good man" the main qualification. There is a difference in the talents men have and Jesus exercised that difference in giving the qualifications for elders. Those who have talent should not be proud but rather be thankful and use that to the glory of God. Timidity, laziness, and ineptness in the Scriptures must never be our criteria for any leadership role in the church. (Rom. 12:1-2). Perhaps the dilemma we are now facing relative to the above has come as a result of reaping what we have sown.

A partial answer to our problem is we should have ongoing classes for each as the church is to reproduce itself in every area. The home and school may serve as great assistants, but the church is the only divine institution,

wherein is salvation, that has the God given responsibility to reproduce itself.

We, in the church, have never desired to drive people away but to help them. Yet, some do not desire to be helped. They will not attend special classes designed for them and always pick and choose their classes and resent the elders or anyone who would insist they attend the classes suited for them. The elders have the responsibility to feed the flock (Acts 20:28). Those who do not desire to improve their skills in our Bible classes must not become a stumbling block to those who do. The object is to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:18). The spiritual body must work together as the physical body works together. When one part of our physical body becomes ill, we try to heal that member. Likewise, when the members of the church or those desiring to be members lack in spiritual maturity, they need to be nurtured to maturity (Col. 1:28). The elders have the responsibility and the members have the accountability. Jesus so ordained (1 Cor. 12).

We must not exalt one member of the church over the other and show partiality (Jam. 2:1-4), but we do want each to function wherein he/she has the ability to perform. The five talent people must not mistreat the one talent members, but the one talent members must not be allowed to drag down and defeat an effective program to teach and train workers for the Lord.

Let us take heed to the feeder programs, Bible classes, and all work to make them the best learning situations possible. Our mediocrity has caught up with us, and our Bible classes are not producing students of the Word.

Brethren, let us “seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church” (1 Cor. 14:12).

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## “I Just Wish I Could Die”

*Allen Webster*

Most Christians are interested in spiritual growth, but a few appear only interested in spiritual death. So, if you are numbered among those who “just wish they could die,” there are three certain ways to commit spiritual suicide.

1. **Do not study** (Heb. 5:11-14). God once declared, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6) and the same can be said of you! You will die spiritually if you do not regularly read, study and meditate upon the Divine precepts (Psa. 119:9, 11). There are far more interesting things to do each night than to get out the old Bible and read. Further, you probably could not understand the archaic language anyway. So, just let it wait until Sunday.

It would also be best for you to find something else to do on Sunday nights and Wednesday evenings. Oh, and certainly your physical rest is better for you than spiritual exercise during the Sunday morning Bible class! By so doing, you can be assured that you will never be numbered among the blessed for their “delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law” do they “meditate day and night” (Psa. 1:2; cf. Mat. 5:6).

2. **Love the world** (1 John 2:15-17). Those in Corinth had been able to remain babes in Christ for years because they were carnally minded (1 Cor. 3:1-3) and if you continue to long for worldly pleasures, you can also remain a “spiritual baby!”

But, “know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jam. 4:4). This friendship can be observed by the way one acts, talks and dresses. “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15). If your heart remains in the world, it is sure that you will soon join it! (cf. 2 Tim. 4:10).

3. **Never commit yourself** (Rev. 3:15-17). “That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:14). If you do not want to grow, it is imperative to lose any moral convictions you may have. You should just “go along” with the crowd and you will “get along” with them easily. Laugh at their dirty jokes, dress in their fashions, go with them to their places of recreation, drink their drinks, and speak their language, but, “be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33).

Further, do not stand strong on any doctrinal point. Baptism is not really necessary for the forgiveness of sins; instrumental music does not really corrupt worship; sprinkling is just as good as immersion; a loving God would never keep anyone from heaven; baptizing babies is not very much different from praying for them; and it is not actually important how often a person partakes of the Lord’s Supper—is it?

But do not look to Paul for your example in this, for he was “set for the defence of the gospel” (Phi. 1:17). Nor

seek the blessing of Christ (2 John 9-11).

These three things will help stunt your growth as much as anything you can do. What cancer is to the body, ignorance is to the soul; what poison is to the bloodstream, worldliness is to the spirit; and what cataracts are to the eyes, lukewarmness is to the Christian life. So, if you just wish that you would die, then just put them into practice right away! But, realizing that most of us want to live, we will try to avoid being caught in these “snares of the devil!”

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## Keeping the Saved Saved

*George Reed*

One man said, “Win all you can. Train all you win. Use all you train.” That is our motto at Prunedale. We try to make it simple at Prunedale. The more complicated you make something the harder it is to work on it. We want to keep it simple.

I believe we have an outstanding youth group. As soon as a young boy is baptized, we start up a young men’s training class with a group of other young boys. The class consists of about fifty memory verses for one ten-week quarter, three papers to write (Why I am a Member of the Church of Christ, Why I Believe in God, and Why I Am a Christian). They must know how to spell every book in the Bible, and give the main point of every book in the Bible. They must also know the divisions of the Bible. The girls are in a class that teaches them how to teach. The teacher does an excellent job with these girls. All of our teachers make up all their own material. We do give our teachers questionnaires on what they are going to teach on a variety of subjects. We use only the faithful in teaching others (2 Tim. 2:2). Every student who graduates from one class to another must memorize all the assigned memory verses that were required. Some have stayed in class for several extra years.

We at Prunedale try to watch for spiritual dangers facing the members (Gal. 6:1-2; Phi. 2:4) without becoming a watchdog. We continue to make a public announcement every so often that if you cannot make it to one of the assemblies, please give us a call so we may tell the other members where you are. When a member has forsaken the assembly, we talk to that member beseeching him to make it right. I think I can honestly say that 99 percent of the members here do that. Sad to say, we have had to use church discipline. “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...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” (2 The. 3:6, 14). In the eleven years I have been at this congregation, we have taken disciplinary action on immodest apparel, forsaking the assembly, false doctrine, and drunkenness. In many cases the erring brother came back. In some, they are still lost. But two things were accomplished: (1) The church was kept pure (1 Cor. 5:6), and (2) the person’s spirit was delivered unto Satan (1 Cor. 5:5). The most important thing was done—we did what God told us to do.

When people are busy, they don’t have time to get in trouble (2 The. 3:11). We try to keep busy. On Wednesday night we have a sign-up sheet for a short invitation. All our young boys who have been baptized give the invitation. My son Josh, age 16, has preached at several of the local congregations in this area. Shawn, age 12, has spoken once on a Sunday night. We have four song leaders, two of them are under seventeen, Josh and Jason. Again, we have provided the training for them to be preachers and good song leaders. We either have singing schools or take them to where they can learn.

Some by now are probably asking about activities. Yes we do have activities. We have a youth devotional every second Friday of the month at one of the area congregations. Once in awhile we take the kids skating. We try to put more emphasis on the heavenly and not the earthly (Col. 3:1-4).

You snooze, you lose. No snoozing can go on in the Lord’s church (Mat. 13:24-30). We must always win, train, and use. If not, we will lost what we have gained.

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# Appoint the Faithful to Do God's Work

*Eddie Helms*

"To the work! To the work! We are servants of God..." is a line of a wonderful song God's people sometimes sing. It is an immense pleasure to be used by God as a servant involved in doing His will (Phi. 2:13). It is a privilege to teach a Bible class, to preach a sermon, to lead a prayer or to be a worker on the Lord's table serving the elements representing the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also an high and holy responsibility for one to have prepared himself for these great tasks. The facts are easily recognized that for one to practice medicine he certainly needs to be qualified for the job. To be a truck driver one must have prepared himself with certain knowledge and skills. Any technician must be qualified in his particular field to do the work. Godly people, prepared people, and faithful people are the only ones who should be appointed to do God's work!

The Bible, giving unto man all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), shows that only certain people having certain qualities are authorized to serve. Even a heathen pharaoh understood the importance of having a godly man appointed over a work of God (Gen. 41:32, 38)! One may be willing to teach, to lead in a prayer or to serve in another capacity, but may not be fit, holy or meet for that task. What does the Bible say?

To be a servant in the Lord's church one must meet certain requirements (Acts 6:1-4). "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (v. 3). Are the Bible class teachers sound in the faith? Is the man leading the opening prayer faithful in attendance? How about their influence? Are the men and women who are given tasks to perform in the local congregation faithful in their business and home lives? The word translated as "proved" in our Bibles in 1 Timothy 3:10 means to test, examine, prove or scrutinize to see if one is genuine or not (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*, p. 154). Brethren, one is not to be appointed to a task to make him faithful, but because he has proved himself to be faithful! Let us use these principles in God's Word in the appointments in the Lord's church!

The apostle Paul, by inspiration, told Timothy to put the brethren in remembrance of how they may be unashamed workmen and vessels of honor in the Master's use (2 Tim. 4:14-15; 20-21). In order to be a vessel fit for God's use one must, of necessity, know God's Word and rightly apply it to his life (v.15). He must have purged himself from sin (v. 21), therefore he must be a faithful Christian (1 John 1:6-9). He must be sanctified (v. 21), which means, "to separate from things profane and dedicate to God" (Thayer, page 6). He must have prepared himself for the Master's use (v. 21). Thayer, in his Greek Lexicon, on page 255 says the word translated "prepared" means, "to make ready, prepare, to make necessary preparations, get everything ready, prepared or fit for accomplishing anything." In doing these things one has qualified himself for engaging in these holy tasks of God and is now meet or suitable for the Master's use (v.21).

Song leading, teaching, preaching, waiting on the Lord's table, leading public prayer and certainly the offices of the elders and deacons are special jobs for special people—God's people! May God's people always be found striving to appoint the faithful to do God's work!

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## Bible Course

**Free Bible study course conducted through the mail.** To receive your Bible Correspondence Course from the Bellview Church of Christ, send your request to:

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Bellview Church of Christ announces:

## Ninth Annual Denton Lectures

The Pearl Street Church of Christ in Denton, Texas, will host its ninth major annual lectureship November 11-15, 1990.

The **Ninth Annual Denton Lectures** will be devoted to a study of the epistle of James. A wide variety of material will be covered by 35 outstanding speakers from all parts of the nation, delivering 35 lectures.

The aim of this lecture series is to provide fundamental and sound biblical teaching to edify all who attend and who will have access to the lectures through the audio and video tapes and the book of lectures. Another major aim of the lectures is to help combat and expose religious error both within and without the church. The lectureship book (approximately 500 pages) will be a fitting companion to those of previous years (*Studies in 1 Corinthians*, *Studies in Hebrews*, *Studies in the Revelation*, *Studies in Acts*, *Studies in Galatians*, *Studies in 1, 2, & 3 John*, *Studies in 1 & 2 Thessalonians and Philemon*, and *Studies in 2 Corinthians*).

A daily "Discussion Forum" (Monday-Thursday) will feature controversial subjects. The subjects this year will be: "James Did Not Subscribe to the New Hermeneutics"; "We Are Under Both Grace and the Law of Christ"; "Confessing Sins to and Praying for One Another"; and "God is Not Too Good to Judge and Destroy Us." After a lecture on each of these subjects on their respective days, questions from the audience will be encouraged.

Exhibit space is available for both commercial and non-commercial interests, subject to invitation and/or approval by the Pearl Street elders. Housing in the homes of local Christians will be provided as long as it lasts. Several major motels are located in Denton. Hookups (including a dump station) for travel trailers and motor homes are provided on the church parking lot by advance registration. For further information you may write to: Church of Christ, 312 Pearl Street, Denton, Texas 76201, or phone: 817-387-3531.

## Salvation in Christ

"Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11).

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4-7).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10).

# DEFENDER

Volume XIX

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## Singing and Christian Worship

*Noah Hackworth*

### **The Authority of God**

One of the distinctive features of the Christian System, as Alexander Campbell called it, is that it is authoritative. Authority means "The right to command and to enforce obedience; the right to act" (cf., John 1:11-12). God, because he is the Sovereign of the universe as well as the Creator of mankind, has the undeniable "right to command and enforce" obedience, which he does through love (cf., John 14:15). Whatever, then, is done in homage paid to God through the ascended Christ, must be authorized by him. "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). Belgian writer S. Van Mierlo explains:

Modern theologians condemn "authoritarian religions" and will not permit any authority outside of man to be imposed on men. But they themselves end up with this kind of religion. For if all Scripture is not inspired of God, if it is in large measure made up of documents of doubtful value, brought together by unknown authors, how is the believer not versed in criticism going to make up his mind? How will he understand where the Bible is simply giving the human opinions of certain august personages? So each man has to consult the theologians to find out what texts he can have confidence in and how he is supposed to regard them. But since these critics often differ among themselves, he will have to decide on one among them. Thus the selected one will become the voice of authority. So it turns out that while the authority of God is rejected, that of man is accepted.... (315).

The problem with many is that they do not understand the concept of authority. If one is walking down the hall and sees a sign on a door that says, "Authorized Personnel," what does it mean? If one is driving down the street and sees a driveway with a sign in it that says "Authorized Vehicles," what does it mean? There is not one person in this assembly who does not know how to react in these kinds of situations. An individual would automatically know whether he could pass through the door or enter the driveway. To fail to understand the implications of authority makes it more difficult to understand when something is authorized by God and when it is not.

### **The Authority of Silence**

According to the Sacred Text there were certain well-defined occasions upon which silence was definitely imposed (Hab. 2:20; 1 Cor. 14:28; 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:12). Why, then, should we think it a strange thing to recognize its authority? That we do not truly respect the authority of the Bible unless we respect its silence is a contention that does not admit of doubt. In fact, we are forbidden by apostolic instruction (1 Cor. 4:6; 2 John 9) to "go beyond that which is written" or "beyond the teaching of Christ." To do so is to deprive ourselves of any semblance of authority for what we say or do (cf., Col. 3:17). And should this be the case, to whom shall we give account for our actions? A perversion of this principle is the assumption that the silence of the Bible grants the right to proceed with the action or activity. Not so! Attitudes toward the silence of the Scriptures are effectively demonstrated by Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1564). Luther wanted "to retain in the church all that was not expressly contradicted in the scriptures, while Zwingli wanted to abolish all that could not be proved by scripture" (Cox 60). As far as Luther was concerned, "he saw at a glance where his rule of interpretation on other subjects must inevitably lead him on this point" (Shepherd 115). In the case of Zwingli, he, "...reduced the church to extreme simplicity; pictures and statues were removed from the churches...organs were banished..." (Shepherd 123). Subsequent to his arrival in America (ca. 1807), Thomas Campbell, near the end of a speech, reportedly said, "That rule, my highly respected hearers, is this, that where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are

silent, we are silent”(Hailey 52). In a description of the attitudes that would characterize the advocates of the Great Restoration Movement, Robert Richardson, in *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, said:

Thus the silence of the Bible was to be, respected equally with its revelations, which were by Divine authority declared to be able to “make the man of God perfect and thoroughly furnished unto every good word.” Anything more, than “the whole counsel of God” would be a dangerous deficiency. Simply, reverentially, confidingly, they would speak of Bible things in Bible words, adding nothing thereto and omitting nothing given by inspiration (237).

### **God Authorizes Singing**

At this point we have only one thing to prove: God authorizes singing. Remembering that one way to establish biblical authority is by direct statement, we submit the following passages which authorize singing:

Matthew 26:30 “they had sung a hymn”

Mark 14:26 “they had sung a hymn”

Acts 16:25 “and singing hymns”

Romans 15:9 “sing unto thy name”

1 Cor. 14:15 “sing with the spirit”

Ephesians 5:19 “singing and making melody”

Colossians 3:16 “singing with grace”

Hebrews 2:12 “will I sing thy praise”

Hebrews 13:15 “the fruit of lips”

James 5:13 “let him sing praise”

Surely no one will deny that these passages authorize singing. And at least two of them show that it is a command. And remember, where there is a command there is the authority. First, Ephesians 5:18-19, “but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.” The grammatical make-up of this passage is extremely important.

...For the active participle in connexion with an imperative, either declares the manner in which the imperative shall be obeyed, or explains the meaning of the command. To this I have not found an exception: for example, “Cleanse the house, sweeping it.” “Cleanse the garment, washing it,” shews the manner in which the command is to be obeyed, or explains the meaning of it.... This rule has passed through a fiery trial. I have only been more fully convinced of its generality and value. There is no rule in English syntax more general in its application. I would only add that the participle does not always express everything in the command; but it always points out something emphatically in the intention of the imperative, and without which the injunction cannot be suitably and fully performed (Campbell 202-203).

This is an imperative sentence, hence it carries the force of a command. The subject of the sentence is “you” (understood). The command is “be filled.” The sense is: you be filled with the spirit. “Speaking,” “singing,” and “making melody” are participles which show how the imperative is to be obeyed. The participles expressed by the imperative are a part of the command; hence, “singing” is a part of the command, “be filled,” as expressed by the passage (Wallace 270).

Next, Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.” “The imperative in this verse is ‘let’ with the subject ‘you’ understood—(you let)—followed by the participles ‘teaching’ and ‘admonishing’ and ‘singing’ which limit the subject of the imperative verb ‘let’” (Wallace 270). Contradicting those who charge that there is no command for singing in the New Testament are these two powerful passages: Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:18-19. They go “unanswered” by the advocates of instrumental music in worship. To attempt to avoid the thrust of the Colossian and Ephesian passages regarding singing is to do nothing less than a failing effort to “strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel” (Mat. 23:24—ASV). Shades of twentieth-century Phariseeism!

### **Congregational Singing**

The only ones known to this writer who deny that congregational singing is authorized in the New Testament are the ones who advocate instrumental music in the worship of God; and they apparently have been doing so for many years. However, their opposition to congregational singing has seemingly been rather obscure until more recent times. But regarding singing there are only two ways it can be done; either individually or collectively. Either one sings “solo” or accompanied by others. But why would one want to sing alone unless he is alone? If singing is

authorized by the New Testament, and it is, (shown above) and one is authorized to do it why aren't two? And if two why not an entire congregation? But that we may leave nothing to the imagination, let's see if the New Testament authorizes congregational singing.

It must be remembered that the church is commanded to assemble (Heb. 10:25), and the only way this point can be denied is to deny that Hebrews 10:25 is a command. Next, this command applied to all New Testament congregations. Next, both First and Second Corinthians were written to "the church of God which is at Corinth" (cf., 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 2:1). The church at Corinth, consisting of those who were "sanctified" and "called to be saints," was in the habit of "gathering together" (1 Cor. 5:4) or "coming together" (11:17-20; 14:23-26; 16:2). And it is a matter of fact that in the assemblies of the Corinthian church a number of things were done including the singing of psalms. "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (14:15). Where were the psalms sung? In the church!

Next, both the Ephesian and Colossian Epistles were written to the respective churches. The former consisted of the saints at Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus (1:1); the latter consisted of the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse (1:2). Did these churches ever "meet or come together?" If not, how would they have followed apostolic instruction to lay by in store or eat the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week? But what else did they do? Ephesians 5:19 says they were to "sing and make melody in their hearts." Colossians 3:16 says they were to "sing with grace in their hearts to the Lord." When did they do this? When the congregations were dispersed and every saint had gone to his own house? Ridiculous! They sang when they were together in worship. And no man can prove otherwise. Added to this is the fact that "speaking one to another" and "admonishing one another" are reciprocal and demand an assembly. "Each other" in both passages translates a pronoun (*eautois*) which is reflexive in nature, hence requiring "a response." In order for the Colossians and the Ephesians to carry out Paul's instructions concerning these matters the saints in these respective places would have to assemble together. M. C. Kurfees states:

This clearly and definitely presents one of the divine purposes of the music appointed for Christian worship. It is to be music that instructs, music which communicates ideas from one to another, and which admonishes those engaged to right living. Nothing must interfere with this divine purpose. Any music which fails at this point, and to whatever extent it thus fails, is not pleasing to God, not being embraced within, not plainly excluded from, the scope of the divine command (82-83).

William Barclay adds:

It is interesting here to see that from the beginning the Church was a singing Church. The church inherited that from the Jews, for Philo tells us that often the Jews would spend the whole night in hymns and songs. One of the first descriptions of a church service which we possess is that of Pliny, the Roman governor of Bithynia, who sent a report of the activities of the Christians to Trajan the Roman Emperor. In that report he said, "They meet at dawn to sing a hymn to Christ as God." The gratitude of the Church has always gone up to God in Christian praise and Christian song (191).

Next, Hebrews 2:12 says, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, In the midst of the congregation will I sing thy praise." This is a quotation from Psalm 22:22, and refers to Christ. It affirms an action on his part in the midst of his brethren, no doubt in the synagogue. As others have observed, Jesus frequented the synagogue. He preached in them. Why then is it difficult to understand that he obviously sang with his brethren in them also? "This, therefore, proves what the apostle intended—that the Messiah was among them as his brethren; that he spoke to them as such; and that he mingled in their devotions as one of their number" (Barnes 68).

Last, Hebrews 13:15, "Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name." The two questions to be asked concerning this passage are: (1) by whom were the instructions of this passage carried out? and, (2) when? The most reasonable answer is: they were carried out by the recipients of the Hebrews epistle wherever and whenever they assembled (cf., 10:25). There is no valid reason for thinking otherwise. Lyman Coleman says:

The prevailing mode of singing during the first three centuries was congregational. The whole congregation united their voices in the sacred song of praise, in strains suited to their ability. Their music, if such it could be called, was, of a kind of recitative chant. The charm of their sacred music was not in the harmony of sweet sounds, but in the melody of the heart... But, however this may be, the most ancient and most common mode of singing was confessedly for the whole assembly; men, women and children blend their voices in their songs of praise in the great congregation. Such is the testimony of Hilary, of Augustin and—Chrysostom. "Formerly

all came together and united in their song, as is still our custom.” “Men and women, the aged and the young, were distinguished only by their skill in singing, for the spirit which led the voice of each one blended all in one harmonious melody” (41).

**The Case Against Instrumental Music In Worship.** What is the apparent reason for denying that the New Testament authorizes congregational singing? Those who do so do not deny that the early church assembled (Heb. 10:25); that it had the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7); that it had preaching (Acts 20:7); or that it took up a collection (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 16:2); but that it sang “as a corporate body” (congregationally) is emphatically denied. Why? The reason seems to be the desire to retain the mechanical instrument in worship. The argument runs like this: even though the New Testament does not authorize congregational singing (a contention lacking in proof) it is still acceptable. So even if instrumental music is unauthorized it is also acceptable.

The only problem is that the argument is false. Instrumental music is not authorized in the New Testament, but congregational singing is (previously shown). Gospel preachers have debated this issue many times, and in many cases circles have been drawn on the blackboard and the instrument advocates have been asked (challenged) to put the passage of scripture that authorizes instrumental music in worship inside the circle; to this very day, all the circles have gone empty. Why? Because no such scripture exists. Moses E. Lard says:

Now in the light of the foregoing principles what defense can be urged for the introduction into some of our congregations of instrumental music? The answer which thunders into my ear from every page of the New Testament is, none. Did Christ ever appoint it? Did any one of the primitive churches ever use it? Never. In what light then must we view him who attempts to introduce it into the churches of Christ of the present day? I answer, as an insulter of the authority of Christ, and as a defiant and impious innovator on the simplicity and purity of the ancient worship (331).

**What About Hand Clapping, Humming, Choirs, Vocal Bands, and Other Special Effects?** Regarding the above-mentioned things my first question is, why? Why such things should be included in a worship service of the Lord’s church is a question of no little importance, one that is being pondered by concerned brethren all over the country. The “why” of such things indicates to many brethren the introduction of “special effects” calculated to enhance worship. The entertainment world (movies, concerts, comedy) puts a great deal of emphasis on special effects, and some of the Lord’s people are beginning to do the same thing. Somehow the feeling that worship must be entertaining has gotten into the minds of good people. Some have found themselves “going to church more, but enjoying it less”; so efforts are being put forth to add the “missing thing,” not only in worship but in everyday life. Pentecostalism, here we come!

Choirs and choral groups. Many years ago in a congregation of the church in Northern California, at a singing service, one of the congregations in the area was represented by a choral group. They approached the front of the auditorium with long, black, flowing robes. They numbered about a dozen and were led by a very talented individual. They began singing a song that had to do with the crucifixion of Christ, a song that solicited strong emotions from the start. The group members began “humming” while the leader fell to his knees, clasped his hands, lifted his eyes toward the ceiling and began “moaning” and “wailing.” He became so emotional that his eyes “rolled up in his head.” It was quite a spectacle. Fortunately, the hosting congregation had the good judgment not to tolerate such a “dramatic presentation.” In fact, all group singing was discontinued. What was the motivation behind such a performance? Nothing but the addition of “special effects” designed to play on the emotions of the audience. Since when do we need such things to “enhance” worship? Such artistic displays only appeal to the sensual part of us, but brethren, choirs do not provide for reciprocation. How can we afford to let someone else do our singing for us? Can we really afford to fall for such maneuvers?

Humming, Vocal Bands, Hand Clapping. What is wrong with humming? Well, for one thing it is not singing. Singing and humming are two different acts. The former is authorized (Eph. 5:19; Co. 3:16), the latter isn’t. Singing consists of words that are spoken in order that those who are participating may be “taught” and “admonished.” Humming cannot fulfill this obligation. What will be next? Once the door is opened, all sorts of “deviations” and “variations” will become grievous problems for which there will be no easy solution. Vocal bands are unnecessary sounds added to the worship service for effect. But if the advocates of such “additions” do not really believe in instrumental music in worship, and they say they do not, why try to get as close to the sound of an instrument as possible? People will be listening more to the “vocal sounds” rather than concentrating on what is being said.

Brethren, it doesn't make sense! A vocal band has as much relation to New Testament worship as the North Pole does to a goose nest. Some of us still haven't learned not to go beyond the things that are written (cf., 1 Cor. 4:6). It comes back to what the Word actually authorizes and our attitude toward it. The precedent for instruction from the written Word is given by Jesus Himself: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:30-31). As for the clapping of the hands in worship, it offers absolutely nothing conducive to worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24). There is nothing more powerful and more convincing than congregational singing that is designed to motivate the Christian and persuade the sinner. Are we trying to please men or God? This is the most important question.

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*Editorial by Bobby Liddell*

## Access by Faith

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1-2).

Faith, if not coupled with obedience to the faith (the gospel), avails nothing. Paul's inspired record of Abraham's obedient faith (Rom. 4) shows the justified are they "who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham" (Rom. 4:12). Contrary to the preponderance of denominational doctrines and the false teaching of some who claim to be brethren, obedience is neither obtained by "faith only" nor excluded by God's grace. Rather, access to the blessings of God's favor, now and eternally, is by an obedient faith.

Note these passages. "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name" (Rom. 1:5). "But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Rom. 16:26). "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 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. 6:16-18). "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).

Larry Dotson, in *Integrity*, March/April, 1990, on "Baptized Into Christ...Without Getting Wet," denounces as "legalism" a "plan of salvation" which emphasizes conditions of salvation. He says, "Repentance for me means the realization and personal acknowledgement [sic] that people are under the 'law of sin,' spiritually sick and in need of a physician; and, eternally separated from God until they turn to God and, by faith only, accept and trust in the

remedy God has provided for their sins—Jesus.... This turning to God and trusting in his only begotten son is what it means to obey the gospel, and the gospel can only be obeyed in the heart.” At the close of the article, Mr. Dotson is described thusly: “Larry Dotson, a lifelong member of the Churches of Christ, resides in Centerville, Tennessee.”

Should Paul, who penned these words, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27), have asked some of these “non-legalistic” birds what getting into Christ “meant to them”? Remember the words of Jesus, “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). Jesus says water (baptism) is necessary to one’s entering the kingdom. Mr. Dotson says water is not necessary: “Remission of sins is never promised in the Bible apart from repentance and faith but is promised apart from baptism. Why else would people claim that baptism puts us ‘in Christ’ when the Bible does not say this?” I choose to believe Jesus! Man is not saved by grace without faith. Neither is man saved by “faith only” “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jam. 2:24).

Since Pentecost (Acts 2), not a single living accountable being has been promised salvation “without getting wet.” By faith, one who obeys the faith is baptized (immersed in water) to obtain remission of sins. Those who refuse to so do or who teach others, “...they should not worry about those outside their fellowship who attach a different meaning to baptism or who have been baptized in a different manner,” shall find at the judgment eternal condemnation—not access into Heaven.

## Correspondence

“Greetings from the land down under. I appreciate so much receiving DEFENDER and THE BEACON on a regular basis. In the time we live it is good to be able to read Biblically sound material...We pray that God will bless you and the work you do. Please pass on our appreciation to all concerned in the publication of these materials.” David F Atkins, Australia.

“Please send me (2 books) title What Does God Authorize In Worship?” I am sending a check for \$35.00. Use the remainder for DEFENDER.” L. H. Howze, Baker, Florida.

“May I please have DEFENDER sent to me. I saw my first copy today and I think it is great. I wish every member where I worship would read it. I pray you will continue to preach the word forcefully and continue to condemn all sin.” Marvin Sanders, North Little Rock, Arkansas.

“I recently obtained a copy of DEFENDER while visiting the East Main St. Church of Christ in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. I greatly admire your stance for the truth as revealed in Scripture. Please add my name to the mailing list. May God bless you as you continue in this good work.” Donald G. Drye, Nashville, Tennessee.

“I really appreciate the stand for truth DEFENDER takes. May God continue to bless you as you serve him through the paper.” Louise Lavender, Valdosta, Georgia.

“Please put me on the DEFENDER mailing list. I have been a reader for the last two years and have always drawn strength and encouragement from every article. May God continue to bless your work as you strive with us all to seek and save that which is lost.” Barry N. Clay, Tyler, Texas.

“I was given an old copy of DEFENDER and I have enjoyed reading and studying it many times. Would you please put my name on the mailing list. It would be a pleasure to be a member of the Lord’s body at a place where they seem to be doing much for his cause. May God continue to bless you in his work.” Judith Willoughby, Caneyville, Kentucky.

“I would love to receive DEFENDER. I had the blessed privilege to read a copy. May God bless all of you as we strive to fight the good fight. We are in a spiritual war!” Marie Carson, Indianapolis, Indiana.

“Please send me the book on What Does God Authorize In Worship?” Thank you for sending me DEFENDER. It has been a real big help for me in my growth in our Lord.” Daniel Bardes, The Dalles, Oregon.

“Our brother in Christ, Robert Foshee, introduced me to DEFENDER. I found the reading therein to be scriptural, informative and quite thought provoking. Please add my name to your mailing list. Also please accept the small token enclosed and use it for the furtherance of the gospel.” David J. Komisak, Rochester, New York.

“I enjoy very much DEFENDER. Use the check (\$25) as you please...I have passed 88 years and preached the pure gospel for 56 years before an operation left me unable.” A. C. Knight, San Angelo, Texas.

"We really enjoy THE BEACON and would like to receive DEFENDER. We give THE BEACON to others (except some we keep) and they give it on to others and we'll do the same with DEFENDER." Leamon Britt, Randolph, Mississippi.

"I would like very much to receive your publication, DEFENDER. I receive your BEACON and secure much information from it." Ted Matthews, Jekyll Island, Georgia.

"I recently picked up a copy of DEFENDER at a local congregation. It contained your editorial on 'The Whole Truth.' This was especially timely because I was preaching from Acts 20 that week. Thanks for your challenging reminder of the importance of the whole truth. Please place me on the mailing list for the paper." Don Jackson, Memphis, Tennessee.

"I would like to receive DEFENDER. You are doing a good job, keep it up." R. F Knox, Jr., Eva, Alabama.

"Please accept this small gift to help with the good work done by your fine publication, DEFENDER and your bulletin, BEACON. Keep up the good work!" Robin W. Haley, Scott City Kansas.

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"I have enjoyed very much receiving DEFENDER and look forward to it each month. Thank you for sending it our way. Greet the brethren there for me and may God bless each of you as you strive for Him." Jimmie B. Hill, Pago Pago, American Samoa.

"Enclosed you will find a check to be used for the publication of DEFENDER. I have received the paper for many years and feel it does much good." William Mickelson, Louisville, Tennessee.

"I very much enjoyed your recent article on 'No R Movies For These Kids.' We ran it in the 'Tiplersville Teacher' and I believe it was helpful for our teenagers (and parents!).... Keep up the good work. Keep us in your prayers." Allen Webster, Tiplersville, Mississippi.

"Just want you to know how much I appreciate the paper. It is a strong and sound voice in a brotherhood that needs to get back to the book ...Keep up the great work." Steve Miller, Garrettsville, Ohio.

"Please put me on your list to receive DEFENDER. I like your bulletin (THE BEACON) very much because you stand for the truth in this day when many are beginning to teach error. May God bless you." Luther Savage, Tolar, Texas.

"...We treasure every issue and often hear men proclaim the benefit the paper has brought unto their clearer understanding of the scriptures." Steve Gunter, Bentonville, Arkansas.

## Contributions

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