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Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

DUMB DOGS THAT CANNOT BARK!

DANNY DOUGLAS

What good is a watchdog that cannot bark? Man depends on his dog for many useful purposes. One of them is to alert the household when a stranger approaches the house, especially at night! However, a watchdog that cannot bark is of no use in this regard.

In this age, when many no longer endure sound doctrine, that Paul predicted would occur (2 Tim. 4:3-4), there are certain brethren who ridicule and bemoan faithful brethren for sounding alarms against error and false teachers. They style such faithful brethren as, “brotherhood watchdogs”! They resent the sounding of alarm against preachers, schools, and congregations that they hold as sound in the faith, and some resent the sound of warning against anything that pertains to the brotherhood. They are so unlike Jesus, the apostles, the prophets, and other inspired men (Mat. 7:15-20; 23:27-28; Jude 3-4; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; Phi. 3:18-19)!

Such brethren might say, “Well, you can warn against error, but just don’t call names”! Again, they are not like the faithful brethren in the Bible, such as Paul, who were not afraid to name false teachers and unfaithful brethren (cf. 1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 1:16). To Timothy, Paul wrote:

But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some (2 Tim. 2:16-18).

It is absolutely astonishing that certain brethren who in

the past have been so valiant against error and for the truth, will be virtually silent against certain errors with which they themselves have admitted is against the truth! How can they be silent regarding false doctrines that will destroy the souls of men and divide the body of Christ, except it be that their consciences are seared as with a hot iron (1 Tim. 4:1-2). They have been courageous against error that was not in their “nest” (i.e., eldership or congregation), but are cowardly when taking a stand may that threaten their very livelihood and financial stability!

Such brethren are like the watchmen about whom the prophet Isaiah wrote: **“His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber”** (Isa. 56:10). Yes, we have a lot of elders, preachers, leaders, and members of the church today who, in their ignorance, blindness, fear, and silence, are like dumb dogs that cannot bark!

Is it because their **“barking”** might wake up the elders and the congregation? Will such an alarm result in their having to move from their present location? Is it because they are in fear of offending an influential brotherhood school, or congregation, or person? Are they afraid to lose the opportunity to preach full-time? Thus they, like many sound brethren would have resort to “make tents” or raise support to continue to do the Lord’s work as a gospel preacher? Are they afraid to lose gospel meeting and lectureship opportunities? Are they afraid that influential brethren may influence the local church where they preach against them? Do such men consider that no man, even those who appear to be **“somewhat”** (Gal. 2:6) in the brotherhood, can equal the power of the Lord God Almighty? It is the case that such men fear man over God, rather than fearing God over men, as Jesus warned (Mat. 10:28)!

Paul charged Timothy, **“before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ,”** to: **“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering**

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
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Editorial...

AND WHY CALL YE ME, LORD, LORD, AND DO NOT THE THINGS WHICH I SAY?

(LUKE 6:46)

Regarding the scripture from Luke serving as the title of this article, it is clear that our Lord was not condemning people for confessing Him to be their Lord, but He was rebuking them for their failure to obey Him in all areas of life since they acknowledged Him to be their Lord. Serving God requires right thinking, but it also requires right doing (actions) (Col. 3:17; Heb. 5:9).

In attempting to justify their failure to sing in the worship assemblies, some have said, “I just sat there worshipping God in my heart.” Thinking about the meaning of the words of the songs, but not engaging in the act of singing them is to sin. Proper thoughts formed by the meaning of the words in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are imperative, but they do no substitute for the act of audibly singing the words of such songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16, 17).

Concerning the late Hugo McCord’s article on page 3, it is clear that right thinking is necessary if one is to obey the directive of the apostle. However, all the correct thinking and right motives possible will not take the place of engaging in the right actions, or as the case demands, ceasing to engage in certain actions. The faithful are not to behave themselves toward disorderly brethren as they would toward those brethren who are orderly. Thus, Paul’s command to “**withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly**” is not obeyed by only thinking the correct thoughts and informing the disorderly church member of his lost condition, the eternal consequences awaiting him at death if he does not repent, that the faithful love him and are praying that he will repent—whether such is said to him one time or on a multiplicity of occasions.

The actions that are peculiar and special to Christian fellowship are to cease with this disorderly brother or there is no withdrawal. There is nothing in the New Testament that authorizes a Christian only to mentally withdraw from a disorderly brother. The thoughts of 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 are worthless if they are not acted upon. Acts of fellowship between and among faithful brethren must cease regarding the disorderly brother. Obviously, those actions that are reserved for, engaged in, and shared only by the faithful with each other must cease.

As faith without works is dead, withdrawal of spiritual fellowship is also dead when it does not reveal itself in obedience (Jam. 2:17, 18). Regarding Paul’s directive in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, et al., there are some brethren who think one thing but practice the opposite with certain disorderly brethren. However, “respect of persons” is no more acceptable to God regarding Paul’s directive in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-5, et al., than it is with Him regarding our discharging any other obligatory matter bound on us by New Testament authority.

—David P. Brown, Editor

(Continued From Page 1)

and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:1-2). We must warn, rebuke, mark, and condemn error and false teachers, without fear or favor, even if it is a close friend greatly respected (Tit. 3:10-11; Rom. 16:17-18; Eph. 5:11).

Here is another principle from the prophets:

But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I

require at the watchman's hand (Eze. 33:6; cf. 33:1-9; 3:16-21).

The apostle Paul was **“pure from the blood of all men,”** because he had not shunned to declare **“all the counsel of God”** and to **“warn every one day and night with tears”** (cf. Acts 20:26-31). Brethren, will we be like the beloved and faithful apostle, or will we be like dumb dogs that cannot bark?

—704 Azalia Dr.
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“WITHDRAW YOURSELVES”

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

Hugo McCord

No right-thinking brother in a physical family here on earth would delight in withdrawing fellowship from his blood brother. Something serious could and would demand a severance of fellowship, but it would not be pleasant for anybody concerned. **“Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to live together in oneness”** (cf. Psa. 133:1). Under some circumstances, however, a fleshly brother would lower himself, compromise moral principles, and even injure his blood brother if he continued in fellowship with him. In order to keep himself and the rest of his family **“pure”** he must draw a line against his own blood kin, else he becomes a **“partaker of other men’s sins”** (1 Tim. 5:22).

The same principle is true in a spiritual family, God’s church. An example is presented in the New Testament in the church at Thessalonica. About 51 A.D. news came to Paul that some Thessalonian Christians were refusing secular jobs: **“we hear that there are some who walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies”** (2 The. 3:11). Speculation is that those non-workers were under the misapprehension of an imminent return of the Lord. But, regardless of their motive, they were wrong. God wanted them to get secular jobs, and through his apostle commanded them **“to work, and eat their own bread”** (2 The. 3:12).

In the event that those church members did not obey God’s word **“by this epistle”** (2 The. 3:14), they must be marked as walking disorderly. Then the rest of the church folks were obligated to **“withdraw”** themselves from **“them that are such”** (2 The. 3:6,12). With them they were not to have fellowship (2 The. 3:14). This withdrawal of Christian association was not in malice, but in unfeigned love **“to the end that”** the erring brothers **“may be ashamed”** (2 The. 3:14). The humanly administered discipline was divinely ordained that sinful Christians might repent and be restored to fellowship with good Christians, and so be ready to meet

their Lord in judgment.

What is included in the sin of walking disorderly? Certainly there is more than one way to be *ataktein* (be slack [as a soldier breaking rank]; so, be truant, irregular, not in line). In the list of disorderly ones those who are called liberalists, who make Jesus solely human, would have to be included. John styled such church members as **“anti-Christ”** (1 John 2:18; 4:1,3). It was a blessing that some of them of their own accord **“went out from”** (1 John 2:19) the church fellowship, and it would be a blessed thing if they would do so today. When they insist on staying in the fellowship only wrong and bad things result. God’s qualified elders know that the **“mouths”** of liberalists **“must be stopped”** (cf. Tit. 1:11), and that such people cannot be tolerated (2 John 7-10).

The list of disorderly Christians included such men as Hymenaeus and Philetus, who, though not liberalists, yet erred so in doctrine as having to be exposed publicly (2 Tim. 2:17). Further, a doctrine far separated from the deity of Jesus, namely, slave-master relations, was also a matter of fellowship: every true **“man of God”** must **“flee,”** not fellowship, any man who **“teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness”** (1 Tim. 6: 1-3).

In addition, a man like Diotrephes, perhaps not an anti-christ, perhaps not unsound doctrinally, but self-centered and factious (cf. Tit. 3:10-11; 3 John 9-10), was clearly not in the fellowship of the apostle John: such a man **“hath not seen God”** (3 John 11).

Also, a whole congregation could be disorderly, though sound in doctrine, when it left its first love. From such a group of people, unless it rectified the situation, all other congregations, if they did what Christ did, would withdraw

fellowship (Rev. 2:1-7).

Those neglecting to assemble with the saints (Heb. 10:25) are not letting their lights shine (Mat. 5:16) and they are stumbling blocks to weaker Christians (Rom. 16:17). There is no way to characterize such people but as walking disorderly. Should their names be read out in the assembly or published in the bulletin as those from whom the church is withdrawing? Sometimes such a public notification might do some good, causing the guilty to be ashamed and repent. But, practically speaking, those people have already withdrawn fellowship from the church. They have beaten the

church to the “draw,” and there is no fellowship existing that a public notification could retract.

The elders in one congregation keep going to see those who have quit attending services, attempting to get them to see their spiritual situation with the Lord, and trying to get them to repent and be restored. Then failing, they list their names in the bulletin and ask the church folks to delete the names of such people from their membership directory. (Hugo McCord, *The Spiritual Sword*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Jan. 1974. p. 27).

—Deceased

[The following article is an excerpt from a lengthy missive of 26 pages on my computer. It is titled “Two Decades of Triumph and Tragedy” by brother Jerry C. Brewer. The email with bro. Brewer’s article attached was sent to 17 other preachers beside me. I received my copy of the article in early January 2019. Bro. Brewer wrote his article to explain the good things done by the East Side congregation, but especially to set out and explain the problems that brought the East Side Church of Christ, Elk City, OK to an end on Aug. 12, 2018. As brother Brewer wrote, “After more than two decades, our existence ended when the last worship was conducted in our building on August 12.”

However, since the appearance of “Two Decades of Triumph and Tragedy” the controversy over brother Dub McClish’s doctrine as stated below developed since March 2019. Now brother Brewer upholds and defends the view that encourages having family members who are out of fellowship with God to be included in “family gatherings that surround them with those whom they know are diametrically opposed to their ungodly behavior and/or damnable doctrines.” Further, the doctrine says and brother Brewer defends, “We believe it would be counterproductive to our aim of restoring them if we cut them off from the only avenue of continued contact we have with them (i.e., love of family ties) and that they have with godly people.”

In view of the foregoing, please notice what brother Brewer wrote in the following excerpt from said missive. We titled it with a quote from it. In view of the foregoing doctrine that bro. Brewer now defends, please notice what we have placed in bold italics, beginning at the bottom of the first column and ending in the second column on pages 5 and 6. —Editor]

“WE CAN’T TEACH HIM IF WE DISFELLOWSHIP HIM”

Jerry C. Brewer

The tragedy that befell the Northeast church of Christ in July and August, 2018 was the devil’s work, conducted by at least one of his agents in my own family whose seething hatred for his parents and the Lord Jesus Christ led to the flight of others from the congregation. After more than two decades, our existence ended when the last worship was conducted in our building on August 12.

THE BACKGROUND

From his earliest childhood, one of our sons was rebellious. He hated correction and especially despised attending worship. My wife would dress our three sons and daughter in their “Sunday best,” consisting of dress shirts, jackets, and ties for the three boys, ages 8, 7, and 5, and a Sunday dress for our two-year-old daughter. The seven-year-old son would remove his tie and jacket when we got to the church building and displayed no interest in Bible class lessons or sermons. We read Bible stories to them, discussed the Bible,

and prayed together each night at bedtime, but he never indicated an interest in those things.

Hatred of things spiritual seethed in him. He ultimately directed his hatred at me as the family head, and later turned it to his mother. As the years passed, he resisted the Lord’s Truth, and his opposition to the church and all things spiritual intensified. He demonstrated what Jesus meant when He said, “**He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me**” (Luke 10:16). Like men in all ages, he could never separate personality from the doctrine he hates. He despises not only the message, but the one who preaches it.

After graduating from high school, he married a Catholic. When their first child—a girl—was born she was “sprinkled” into the Catholic Church. At least one of our family members protested to him but, of course, to no avail. He later

told his mother that he thought all religions were “okay.” He had been taught the truth from earliest childhood, but rejected not only the truth, but his parents who taught it to him. He later had three other children—two more daughters and a son. All were raised to adulthood as Catholics and a few years ago, he joined the Catholic Church himself. That was his ultimate “in-your-face” act of rebellion against Jesus Christ, the church for which Jesus died, and the parents he despised.

As his children grew up, he poisoned their minds against the church, his mother, and me. His children avoided us, never coming to visit us, either as children or adults, as our other grand children (sic) did. Nor did they ever indicate a desire to be around us. Through those years, his hatred of us intensified even more. He was happiest when his mother and I were apart and within a few years of our remarriage, he told her that he “was sorry” she remarried me, which she did after I repented and made a public confession in order to mend what I had broken. He despised the fact that I was a gospel preacher and constantly attempted to persuade other family members that I was a “bad” person. More than 20 years ago, he told one of our younger sons that his childhood was terrible because of me. He further described me to our other children as “lazy” and “a poor provider.” Through his adult years, he has played the hypocrite in our relationship while waging an unceasing campaign of calumny against the Lord’s cause which he personifies in me.

For a period, after he joined the Catholic Church, we had what might be termed a “truce” in which religion was not mentioned between us. Our entire family was wrong—including me—in our silence. This son had been baptized when he was a child—after our oldest son obeyed the gospel. As such, he was a member of the church. When he left the faith (if he was ever really converted) no one spoke with him about (sic). When he allowed his first born child to be “baptized” as a Catholic, only one of his siblings confronted him, saying, “You know better than that.” The rest of us held our peace. Because we said nothing to him, he thought we accepted his religion, and family relations seemed to improve. But, as Jesus said in Matthew 10:34-39, serving Him takes precedence over all family relations. We cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6:24). There is no middle ground. Christians can never fellowship sin and follow Jesus at the same time: “**He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad** (Mat. 12:30).

One who departs from the faith cannot be fellowshiped by other Christians—even his family. There are always objections to that statement. Some family members will say, “We need to continue as a family,” (despite what Jesus said about loving Him more than family) or, “We can’t teach him if we disfellowship him.” But Paul said withdrawal of fellowship is a form of teaching with a view to saving a soul. To the church at Corinth, he wrote,

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? (1 Cor 5:1-6).

Then, there is the objection that, “We can’t disfellowship every family member who is not a Christian.” Paul addressed that in the same context by inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother (Emp. JB) be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person (1 Cor. 5:9-13).

The Lord’s command through Paul was directed at a brother in Christ who sinned, not those in the world, and he made that clear:

I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. ...what have I to do to judge them also that are without.” He continued, “... do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth.”

Christians are in the world, but not of the world. We have no obligation to withdraw from those still in the world, and cannot do so without going out of the world. **But we are commanded to withdraw from unrepentant brethren who sin. Paul’s statement that, “ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you” applies to our family and to every family of Christians when one of them departs from the faith and the family remains silent. A cavalier attitude in the face of sin is a deadly leaven that will not only destroy the soul of the one who sins, but is also sin in those who say nothing. The “leaven” of which Paul writes, is the influence of the member who is unrepentant and continues to be fellowshiped by the others. Their toleration of his sin violates Scripture (2 John 9-11) and creates the impression that they approve of what he has done. That is wrong,**

and no amount of rationalization by family members can change an iota of God's Word.

For several years, family life continued with the “elephant in the room” that no one dared to point out. I even thought that he and I had an improved relationship. But I was so wrong. We always prayed for our lost children—and still do—hoping that our good examples before them would help bring them to repentance. *But an example—even a*

good one—has no effect if those who are lost assume that the silence of Christians is tacit consent to their lost condition. By mid July, 2018, that course of action devastated our family and, consequently, the Northeast church.

—308 South Oklahoma Ave.
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“LET HIM BE UNTO THEE AS THE GENTILE”

Matthew 18: 15-17

Guy N. Woods

Our Lord, in Matthew 18:10-14, solemnly warns of inflicting injury on “**little ones,**” or weak ones—those of child-like simplicity of faith and those not fully mature in spiritual stature. In verses 15-17, immediately following, he deals in detail with those who have been subjected to wrong by their brethren, with specific attention to the actions which should characterize them in the relationship which they sustain to those who wronged them, and to the attitude which they ought to exhibit toward those who have thus sinned.

(1) “**And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.**” The relationship contemplated here is that of brothers in Christ. A brother sins; the sin is against another brother; the wronged brother is to go to the offending party and point out “**his fault**” privately, thus involving no others in the controversy. If the sinning brother hears (responds by acknowledging the wrong he has done and makes proper amends), the matter is resolved, and two things have been accomplished: (1) a brother is “**gained**” the gain accruing being not simply or solely to the brother sinned against, but to the Cause of Christ; and (2) fellowship is restored.

(2) “**But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established.**” The erring brother’s stubbornness may be so pronounced that he will not listen to his brother’s plea for reconciliation, in which case one or two other brethren—not parties to the original dispute—are to be called in and asked to intercede. Hopefully, two things will result from this effort: (1) the willful brother may be brought to his senses by appeals from brethren not involved; and (2) their presence will provide opportunity for the offended brother to show that he exhibited the proper spirit and disposition throughout. The purpose of this procedure remains the same: to “gain” an erring brother. It is significant that, throughout this narrative, our Lord places the emphasis

on the restoration of the brother who sinned, more than upon any satisfaction which may accrue to the offended party.

(3) On occasion, so perverse will the sinning brother be that both of the foregoing steps will fail; and, another involving the entire congregation is to be taken: “**And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church . . .**” It is noteworthy that our Lord provided for the least possible publicity in these matters. If the first step (wherein the wronged brother is to contact the person who sinned against him, and discuss the problem between the two alone), succeeds, no others would know of the altercation. If the second step (involving one or two others) succeeds, the problem is still contained in a very narrow area, thus of minimum effect insofar as the congregation is concerned. However, in those instances where the brother’s persistence in his attitude toward his brother is so great that these efforts fail to bring him to repentance, the matter is now to be placed before the whole congregation so that the impact of all the members upon the sinning brother may be felt. If the wronged brother cannot convince him of his error; if one or two brethren failed so to do, perhaps, the realization that the whole congregation believes him to be in error in his attitude will bring him to his senses. It is, of course, implied here that the brother is clearly and unmistakably in error and that he has actually sinned against his brother. With such a united body of Christian opinion against him, unless his heart is hardened beyond the possibility of repentance, he will surely come to see the error of his way and repent of the wrong he has done his brother.

This section of our Lord’s teaching is clearly anticipatory—it looks forward to the time when he would have returned to heaven (no longer here to arbitrate their difficulties as he was then doing, Matthew 20:20-28, and when the church would have been established (henceforth to be the arbiter of the brethren’s problems.) Our Lord knew that so hard of heart are some that all efforts will fail to bring them to a recognition of their error, and he provided for all severance of fellowship from those of this disposition who will

not repent.

(4) **“And if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.”** The church speaks through its members. The implication here is that the members have sought to convince the man of his wrong without success. To **“refuse”** to **“hear the church”** is to disregard its pleas for penitence and restoration. Moreover, the church acts through its representatives—the elders. If the brother will not listen to the members of the church, he will not heed the warning of those whose right it is to designate the course he should follow and be reconciled to the brother against whom he has sinned.

Thenceforth, he is to be regarded in the same light as **“the Gentile and the publican.”** A **“Gentile,”** as here used was one not embraced in the promises of God, and thus without hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:11,12). A **“publican”** was an outcast who (by his occupation) had disgraced himself and was thus no longer regarded as worthy of the name of his fathers. For one to be regarded **“as the Gentile and the publican,”** was to be considered as no longer a Christian, no longer worthy of Christian fellowship, an outcast from the local congregation of believers. Such action involved the withdrawal of all fellowship; until he fully confessed his sins he was henceforth to be treated as a sinner by the entire congregation.

If, to this the objection is raised that the Lord said **“Let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican,”** thus limiting this action to the brother actually sinned against, it should be observed that this is to be done only after the church has acted and on the decision of all the brethren who would be similarly motivated, inasmuch as this course was to result from the brother’s impenitence, and not simply or solely from the fact that he has sinned against one of the brethren. His sin now extends to the church, in his refusal to **“hear”** the church, and thus the church must act in its own behalf, against the offending brother. He has now added sin to sin; and, by his refusal to heed the appeals of the brethren individually, he stands condemned by the brethren collectively—the whole church. Until he repents, he is no more worthy of Christian fellowship than a heathen Gentile, or an apostate publican. Moreover, he is to be made to realize that such is his condition by being excluded from all Christian fellowship as much so as if he were actually a heathen and publican. So, our Lord taught. So, are we to act. When brethren oppose such action, whether from timidity, lack of faith, or the feeling that such is harsh and objectionable, they sin against Christ. How great must be the distaste of our Lord toward those who pass judgment on the propriety of his teaching! (*The Spiritual Sword*, Vol. 5, Jan. 1974, No. 2, p. 18). —**Deceased**

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST IS THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY

James called the body of doctrine known as the New Testament or Covenant **“the perfect law of liberty”** (Jam. 1:25). Paul called the same body of teaching **“the law of Christ”** (Gal. 6:2). It is perfect because it is complete for what God intended it to do—save men from past sins and by their continuance in faithfulness to the Lord, as taught in the perfect law of liberty, preserve them in Christ to enjoy Heaven when all things material have ceased (Eph. 1:3). The Law of Moses never offered men forgiveness of sin by itself, for it was not perfect or complete by itself (Heb. 10:4, 11). It was a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ and His perfect law of liberty (Gal. 3:24).

Christ’s law liberates those who are faithful and obedient to it from the power, condemnation, and guilt of sin. As Jesus said:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18, 19).

Thereby the perfect law of liberty delivers the faithful from the power of darkness and translates them into the kingdom the God’s Son when they are baptized into Christ (Col. 1:13; Gal. 3:26, 27; 1 Pet. 3:21).

Thus, the perfect law of liberty is the gospel, the power of God to save mankind from sin (Rom. 1:16). Hence, Paul said he was not ashamed of it, for it is God’s truth and, therefore, has the power to free us from moral and spiritual ignorance, error, fear, false religions, and superstition. Indeed, Paul wrote that it freed the Jews from the bondage of the Law of Moses (Gal. 4:1-9; 5:1). Thus, it is to be preached to every person (Mark 16:15, 16).

From the perfect law of liberty, we learn that no man can earn his salvation in the sense that man can do anything to obligate God to pay him with salvation as a worker earns his pay by working for someone else. Our human efforts alone cannot save us from sin. We obey Christ according the perfect law of liberty as the manifestation of our faith in Christ and His system (the New Testament system) to save us (Heb. 5:9; Rom. 6:3, 4, 17, 18, 23; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21 Acts 2:38, 42, 42, 47). When we obey Christ, we are passive as we comply with our Lord’s will and thereby demonstrate to Him our trust that He will save us according to His will. Indeed, Christ saves no one apart from His perfect law of liberty. Thus, God favors lost mankind through Christ and His gospel system (the law of liberty) to save those who come to Him in an obedient faith (Eph. 2:8, 9; Heb. 4:12; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6; Jam. 2:17-20).

We enjoy the benefits of the perfect law of liberty eternally only when, in God’s church, we continue to live as it teaches—being doers of the word and not hearers only, with our faith working through love (Gal. 5:6; Rev. 2:10).

—**Editor**

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