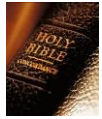


The DEFENDER— August 2025

“... defending the faith once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S Desk: Keep Looking Up

The phrase “Keep Looking Up,” often used when parting company, is popular among many Christians. It’s great advice, especially for the believer, as they head out into a world filled with indecision, confusion, immorality, chaos, and evil. Besides, what’s the alternative? Keep looking down?

Our hope is in God. Our hope comes from on high. Heaven is perfection. The earth has been cursed. There is hope in the supernatural, not the natural. Our Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48). Look up, unto the things of God which are eternal. The things of earth are temporary, at best. And even then, they can’t be counted upon. The government is corrupt, the media is not honest, and academia teaches revisionist history. Even the church can’t be trusted. Wolves in sheep’s clothing parade around like paragons of virtue, when in fact they are leading their apostate congregations right into the tent of ecumenism.

As Christians, we have the faith to recognize God as our source of strength and help, often made manifest in us through the power of the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:4).

Scripture is clear that we can acknowledge God’s power and wisdom. The prophet Isaiah exhorted us to lift up our eyes to the heavens, to the God who created the stars, and calls them all by name (Isaiah 40:26). We humans can’t even number the stars, but God knows all their names. Do you think He knows your name, and what your needs are? Keep lookin’ up.

We all need God’s mercies, and the prophet Jeremiah tells us that they are there for us—new each morning (Lamentations 3:22-23). And God is always there for us as well—He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). If you don’t feel as close to Him as you once did, He’s not the one who moved.

And finally, the day will come when the Lord Jesus will return to earth with all of His saints. Jesus as our Redeemer prophesied His return in Matthew 24 and Luke 21. Immediately after the Tribulation Jesus will appear in the sky as He returns to the mount from which He ascended (Zechariah 14:4). Jesus exhorts all those alive at that time to “lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near” (Luke 21:28).

Where we are now is obviously not heaven. That is yet future. But what a glorious future we have. Take your eyes off your current circumstances and set them on things above. And may God grant you His peace that passes all understanding. Keep looking up!

Rev. David Lewis

America's Christian Heritage

Part IV – Returning to Our Forgotten Roots

By Robert Luthardt, Sr.

No one gains the new life God gives unless and until that one is first made willing (John 6:44, 65) to believe in and fully trust He who paid for their sins – The Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:15, 16; 15:16). The truest form of individual liberty is to be ransomed out of spiritual blindness, death, and slavery and bondage to Satan (Ep. 2:1-3; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Col. 2:13-15, 3:6-7; Ep. 5:14). Once drawn by the Father, ransomed by the Son and sealed by the indwelling Holy Spirit (Ep. 1:13; Rom 8:11; 1 Cor.3:16) one is free eternally (John 8:36). All who are liberated by God, are given to be co-heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:7; Titus 3:7; Heb. 1:14) to one day rule and reign with the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim 6:15; Rev. 17:14, 20:6).

Until that day, God's heirs live in self control under the indwelling self-government of the mind of Christ perfected in every believer (Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:16). In Biblical truths like these, the Seventeenth-Century Settlers and their Eighteenth-Century offspring, founded the United States of America. They were well-versed in God's plan for those chosen to life eternal (Rom 8:28-30; 2 Tim. 1:9) but also knew that even saved men are still saddled with their old nature prone to sin. The change in their hearts was an undeserved gift of God's grace (Ep. 2:8-10). They further knew it was God's will that saves, not man's (John 1:13; James 1:18). They were aware that while true liberty resulted from Christ's finished work alone, man's propensity in his old nature is to be "entangled again with ... bondage" (Gal. 5:1).

James Madison, a renowned Founding Father, knew from his Bible and life experience that men, uncommitted to God, will not follow His moral law (Matt. 22:37-38) nor the greater law of love (1 John 3:14, 23). Madison wrote, "If men were angels, government would not be necessary." His conclusion was, of course, that government was necessary. For men to be free and remain so, they must be protected from their government and from themselves. Men, even under the New Covenant, are not to be left unrestrained with either power or freedom.

Lord Acton's famous quotation, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" needs no amplification. No man or group of men should ever be left to wield unchecked political power.

Early in human history, God exposed mankind's sinfulness (Gen. 6:5). Man's fallen will can make no one fit for heaven, always coming short (Matt. 5:48; Rom. 3:10, 23). God, in His manifest triunity, devised His rescue plan for those He chose as His own (2 Tim. 1:9), of which believers are assured (1 John 5:13). God sent His only "BEGOTTEN SON" (not His "one and only Son" as it is sometimes poorly translated – He has many sons – John 1:12-13; Rom 8:14, etc.). Jesus Christ is the exclusive "ETERNAL SON" who alone can be our perfect sacrifice; that open door (John 10:9) that allows our ordination to eternal life (Acts 13:48).

Outward evidences of virtue from individuals and the community of professing believers in Jesus Christ was of paramount importance to America's Settlers and Founders. From the settling era (Jamestown 1607 and Plymouth 1620) Biblical Christianity's morality was a key factor in their spiritual AND political prosperity. The most distinguished of America's Founders (George Washington, Samuel

and John Adams and others) were unified in commitment to Biblical morality and mandates, looking to Jesus Christ through and by His Spirit without which man cannot long remain truly free.

A God sanctified life yields in individuals the fruit of the Holy Spirit's guidance which yields the true liberty the soul of man craves. One's old cursed nature is kept under while their inner joy, peace and pleasantness, allows a contented anticipation of heavenly rewards and life eternal.

America's Settlers and Founders were well-taught in the Biblical admonition of Spirit-inspired repentance which alone affords God's forgiveness and life-changing sanctification. Unregenerate men, especially leaders, are not only unacceptable in God's sight, they were also unwelcome in Puritan America. Our Lord Jesus Christ warned Christians in every age to "Beware of false prophets ..." (Matt. 7:15-16) who are known by their fruits (19-20) to men and judged by God (21-23).

What our forebears knew they taught their children and all who would listen that to trust the Bible and believe in Christ and His way of salvation was the only way to true liberty in this life and the next. What the students in 1775-1789 read in their newspapers, those in the 21st Century ought also to be taught. Those 18th Century students read that at the same time Washington received his copy of the Declaration of Independence from the Continental Congress, they received his request for hiring chaplains for every regiment. He wrote, "The blessings ... of heaven are necessary ... especially so in times of public ... danger." His goal was every officer and soldier to live as becomes a Christian while defending his country. This was even before the Constitution (1789). Congress allocated funds for military and congressional chaplains.

In 1787, during the Constitutional Convention, the delegates were at an impasse. So little progress had been made that it appeared fruitless to continue. Then the elderly Benjamin Franklin (over 80) reminded them that they had been neglecting prayer. Only the hero of the War for Independence, George Washington, could be said to be more respected than Ben Franklin. His plea for prayer (proving he was no rigid deist if one at all) provided the turning point of the Convention. What follows is a portion of Benjamin Franklin's admonition to lay their difficulties before the throne of God on June 28, 1787. "The small progress we have made ... methinks a melancholy proof of the imperfection of the human understanding. We have gone back to ancient history for models of government ... republics which now no longer exist ... How has it happened Sir, that we have not thought of humbly applying to the Father ... to illuminate our understanding?" "In the beginning of the [WAR] ... when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayer ... Our prayers Sir were heard and ... graciously answered. All of us ... observed ... a Superintending Providence in our favor ... have we now forgotten that powerful Friend? ... no longer need His assistance?"

"I have lived a long time Sir, and the longer I live, the more ... I see this proof – that God governs in the affairs of men [NO DEIST!!] ... And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice [Matt. 10:29, Luke 12:6], is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured Sir, in the SACRED WRITINGS, that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Ps 127:1). If Benjamin Franklin lived today, he might well add, "Without God, they labor in vain to keep it from perishing."

In the 21st Century, our nation is again in grave danger without "AND WITHIN" and our duty is humility and prayer before God's throne. Just before God granted us peace and safety in our form of government (1775-1789), He had sent a Great Awakening to slumbering American Christians (1730-1770) through the evangelistic British preacher George Whitfield (1738-1770). Simultaneously,

God raised up and illumined Theodore Frelinghuysen (Dutch Reformed), William Tennent (Presbyterian), and Jonathan Edwards (Congregational) to preach, calling for repentance and returning to God, and the "Awakening Spirit" spread through the colonies. It was no mere coincidence in history that this Great Awakening came just a decade or so before the war when great cooperation was an imperative.

President Ronald Reagan signed "A Proclamation" making 1983 the "Year of the Bible." Here follows several portions, "Of the many influences that have shaped the United States of America into a distinctive Nation and People, none may be said to be more fundamental and enduring than the Bible." "Deep religious beliefs stemming from the Old and New Testaments ... inspired many of the early settlers of our country ... with the strength ... and faith necessary to withstand great hardship and danger in this new and rugged land." He pointed to the shared beliefs and common purposes among the settlers of the Colonies that laid the foundation for the spirit of nationhood in later decades. The President further noted that it was this Biblical influence that formed the Founder's belief that "unalienable rights" and liberty were irrevocable grants from Almighty God and not in any way from government. They knew as loyal Englishmen they inherited the ancient English Common Law but now also, by Divine Providence, a totally new establishment as expounded upon in the Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

Centuries of Biblical influence and the Spirit of God have inspired benevolent outreaches from America: schools, hospitals, food and medicine, melting away bigotries, abolishing slavery, and warring against murderous tyrants. This same Spirit that nurses babes inspires and guides Presidents. Andrew Jackson referred to the Bible as, "The Rock on which our Republic rests."

Today our beloved America is again being severely tested. We need God's Spirit more than our armaments. "I Ronald Reagan, President ... encourage all citizens ... to rediscover the Bible's priceless, timeless message. In the Year of our Lord 1983, Ronald Reagan."

If we ask Him, God WILL bless America. Keep looking up.



2 Corinthians 5:21 and the Basis of Our Reconciliation With God

By Joseph Burghauser

“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (KJV)

2 Corinthians 5:20 includes Paul’s prayer that the unsaved would be “reconciled to God.” The ground or basis of this reconciliation is given in our verse: God the Father (the He in our verse), “hath made Him” (Christ), “Who knew no sin” (Christ could not and did not commit sin), to have our sin credited to Christ in His death for us. We are declared righteous as we are credited with Christ’s righteousness. We are not reconciled to God on the basis of our own righteousness or even our faith, but on the basis of Christ’s righteousness and death for us.

“For He hath made Him to be sin”: Christ was “made to be sin” in His crucifixion in that He “bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). Our verse does not teach that the God-Man, the “Holy One” (Luke 4:34; Acts 2:27, 3:14), actually became sin or a sinner on the cross. (See Isaiah 53:9; Luke 1:35; Hebrews 7:23-28; 1 Peter 2:22; Revelation 3:7). The guilt and penalty of the sins of the elect (those God chose to become believers) are imputed (credited) to Christ, but sin was only legally on Him, not actually in Him. A few modern English translations such as the NLT translate this phrase “to be the offering for our sin”. This helps us to understand that Christ was pictured by the “unblemished” Passover lamb (Exodus 12:5; Leviticus 4:3,23,32). This lamb had sin imputed to it but did not itself become sinful (Leviticus 4:4, 24,33). The sins of believers were imputed to the animals sacrificed for the forgiveness of their sins as a picture of their final and actual imputation to Christ (Hebrews 9:28). And, “He made Him” does not mean that Christ was forced to take this role. Christ voluntarily became our substitute (John 10:17-18). We read in the account in the garden of Gethsemane of His agonizing in His humanity over His death for our sins, but the will of His Divine Nature was the same as the Father’s will. And He yielded His human will to His (and the Father’s) Divine will (Luke 22:42). So, “made Him” refers to the imputation or God’s legal declaration of our sin to be upon Him, not that He was forced into this role or that He actually became a sinner or sin.

“For us”: The word “us” in our verse refers to believers. 2 Corinthians 1:1 is addressed “unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia”. (These saints are also at times referred to as “you”). They are justified (declared righteous), as we see in 2 Corinthians 1:19-24; 4:6. 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 refers to “us” as those “in Christ” who God is “not imputing their trespasses unto them.” (The “world” in verse 19, as we have seen in previous Defender articles, may refer to the elect, composed of both Jew and Gentile.) 2 Corinthians 5:20 does say, “we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” Here, “you” and “ye” refer to those unbelievers Paul is addressing who are not those referred to as “us” (or even as “you” elsewhere in 2 Corinthians). Paul prays that the unsaved (even those unsaved who are among but separate from the true church) would trust Christ alone to save them so that they also would be “reconciled to God.” So, “for us” means that Christ had the sins of the elect credited to Him, not the sins of all humanity (Matthew 1:21, 20:28).

“That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”: The KJV and most of our modern English translations use the word “might” in our verse, whereas a few versions translate the phrase as “that we should (or would) become the righteousness of God”. The word “might” is understood by some to mean that Christ took everyone’s sins upon Himself to provide for everyone’s righteousness, but (they claim) one must ‘choose to accept’ Christ to make His sacrifice effective. We disagree with this interpretation of the word “might” in our verse. In our English translations it can be used to convey the purpose clause in the original Greek. In our verse, “might” translates the Greek expression of the aim of God’s action, not to indicate that it may or may not happen. Christ was made “to be sin for us” for God’s purpose of our being “made the righteousness of God in Him”. God’s purpose in not imputing sin to “us” (the elect) must come to pass (John 6: 37-44; Ephesians chapters 1 and 2; Romans 8:28-30). We are “made the righteousness of God in Him” in the same manner that Christ was “made to be sin for us”. God imputes our sins to Christ and His righteousness to us. God justifies the ungodly (Romans 4:5), but those justified are not perfected until they enter Heaven.

What is “the righteousness of God”? It includes the righteousness that God requires of us and the righteousness that He gives to us. God’s Law tells us that He requires perfect righteousness from us, and His Gospel (good news) tells us that He freely provides the righteousness of Christ to us (His elect). The Law includes Matthew 5:48: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Romans 2:13: “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Galatians 3:10 and James 2:10 tell us that our obedience to God’s law must be perfect for us to be declared righteous. Sinful man cannot meet this requirement. 2 Corinthians 5:21 is Gospel (good news). It tells us what God has done for elect sinners to be declared righteous—Christ paid for our sins.

“In Him” speaks of our union with Christ and the ‘alien righteousness’ that believers are given. This righteousness is outside of ourselves. (Philippians 3:9). And as believers, we still sin (Matthew 6:9-12 and I John 1:8-10), so we know that in ourselves we are not yet perfected.

2 Corinthians 5:21 is a wonderful verse which teaches the basis of the forgiveness of our sins and our justification, but we must not view it in isolation from other verses which focus on other truths of our being credited with Christ’s righteousness. We should not forget the provision of faith in Christ alone. Although our faith (trust) in Christ alone is considered the means or instrument and not the basis of our justification, it is still necessary for us to be declared righteous. And God gives His elect the gift of faith (Ephesians 2:8). We also cannot neglect verses such as Romans 5:19: “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.” The forgiveness of our sins that 2 Corinthians 5:21 teaches should be paired with Romans 5:19. We take the “obedience of One” to include Christ’s life of perfect obedience to the Law (His righteousness as the Last Adam (I Corinthians 15:45), along with His obedience unto death (Philippians 2:8). 2 Corinthians 5:21 deals with His obedient death, whereas Romans 5:19 includes His obedient life. The forgiveness of “our” sins was accomplished as Christ took “our” sins upon Himself, but we still need His perfect obedience to the Law to “be made the righteousness of God in Him.” As we place our trust in Christ alone and His obedience for us, our sins are placed upon Him, and we perfectly fulfill God’s Law because Christ kept it for us.

If you have not yet realized that you are a sinner and that you need a righteousness outside of yourself, please call upon the Lord Jesus Christ to convict you of your sins against God in breaking His Law. Then put your trust in Christ alone to reconcile you to God. As you call upon Him, God will give you the righteousness of Christ so that He can adopt you as His child and save you from His wrath against you for your sins. Then you can know that Christ “was made to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”.

God’s Perfectness

By Linda Tyson

Heavenly Father, Thou art the perfect one.
You created the stars and radiant sun,
The heavens and earth are from above,
You created them with your perfect love.

Your power and wisdom are beyond compare,
Your holiness and mercy are found everywhere,
You chasten your children with your holy rod,
To bring them back to a sovereign God.

Your holy word made known to us,
To show and teach that in God we can trust.
You gave your only Son to die for our sins,
What a wonderful God to choose us in Him!

All glory and praise belong to only You,
For all the perfect things You do.
So with humble thanks dear God from me,
I thank Thee for a God like Thee!



Our mission through the broadcast of In Defense of Truth and the publication of The Defender newsletter is to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Our vision today is just as strong as it was back in 1963 when Dr. John Dekker began this outreach. We pray that you will continue to stand with us as we hold true to God's holy Word.

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DEFENDER CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. David R. Lewis, MDiv., Director, IDOT
Robert Luthardt, Sr., Elder, CHBPC
Joseph Burghauser, Elder, CHBPC
Linda Tyson, Member, CHBPC

WRITE TO US!

Rev. David Lewis &
In Defense of Truth
2927 Cub Hill Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21234

Upcoming Events!

If you are in or around the Baltimore area, we'd love to have you join us for these upcoming events!

Adult & Children's Sunday School	10:15 am
Sunday Morning Worship & Children's Church	11:00 am
Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study	12:30 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 pm
Outdoor Movie Night (August 8th)	8:30 pm