

The DEFENDER— March 2026

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

A monthly publication of the
IN DEFENSE OF TRUTH radio broadcast
and the Cub Hill Bible Presbyterian Church.



FROM THE DIRECTOR’S Desk: What To Do

There’s enough evidence to show a correlation between substance abuse and mental illness. Abusing drugs and/or alcohol can alter brain chemistry, which can trigger or exacerbate mental health symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, or psychosis. Currently more than one-in-four adults with serious mental health issues also have a substance use problem. Several attempts to solve this runaway problem have been tried. As a Christian, I have my thoughts on the matter. I’ll list three methods and let you decide what you think is best.

Let’s begin with San Francisco’s Tenderloin district, an area known for its vibrant night life and significant social challenges like homelessness, drug use, and poverty, with high rates of chronic illness and crime. Socialist city leaders don’t enforce laws for stealing or selling narcotics allowing the problems to fester and increase. And all of it transpires in the shadow of Nancy Pelosi’s opulent Pacific Heights neighborhood, just two miles away. As lax as government is in controlling this problem in San Francisco, Singapore borders on unforgiving in their approach. A zero-tolerance policy is in place against drugs to prevent a widespread problem, driven by the belief that addiction threatens economic productivity and social stability. The government utilizes harsh penalties, including the death penalty for traffickers and caning for consumption. While approximately one in seven Singaporeans experience a mood, anxiety, or alcohol use disorder in their lifetime, illegal drug use and homelessness are not factors in the mental health of Singapore.

A third approach is the Christian point of view: seeking moral clarity while staying within the bounds of the law and being true to Jesus’ Parable of the Final Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46). The church is morally obligated to feed, clothe, shelter, and advocate for the vulnerable, ensuring that they are actually cared for in ways that lead toward life, not further harm. Could this be why Jesus said the poor would always be with us? Under consideration must be the safety, health, and long-term outcomes. Anything less is an evasion of Christ’s teaching in Matthew 25. Interpret the scripture in the literal sense. If the vulnerable are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them drink. If someone is a stranger to you, befriend them. If they are in need of clothing, clothe them. If they are in the hospital, or a nursing home, or in prison, visit them. Jesus said “Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, you have done it unto Me.” These are the words of the Lord. It is a mandate, and it’s not optional.

If you’re reading this as a born again, Bible believing Christian, know that the Holy Spirit is convicting you. Thank Him and do what you know you have to do. If you feel no conviction or obligation, take a long, hard look in the nearest mirror and seek God’s forgiveness. He has just gotten your attention. The time to act is now. Tomorrow is not promised.

Rev. David Lewis

Redeeming the Time in a Life Well Lived

Compiled by Robert Luthardt, Sr.

The Rev. Hal Ricker delivered his biblical message of our “Final Glorification” at the 21st Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches in Collingswood, NJ on June 28, 2023. The title Rev. Hal selected for his sermon was, “When We All Get to Heaven” and the hymn continues: “what a day of rejoicing that will be, when we all see Jesus, we’ll sing and shout the Victory.” Rev. Ricker has been a missionary, a biblical scholar, and an evangelist for most of his more than 102 years. (He runs a book store and is still preaching.)

Rev. Hal’s sermon was published in “Redeeming the Times,” a publication that encourages God’s people to apply His “WORD” in our daily lives and can be reached at www.RTTPUBLICATIONS.ORG or to “Redeeming the Times, P.O. Box 26281, Charlotte, NC 28221-6281. Any donation, large or small, would be blessed of God, especially in these last days – (enough said to the wise among us).

To Hal’s article, he starts with two principal scriptures: 1 John 3:23 and Romans 8:30; “It does not yet appear what we (God’s people) will be like, but when Christ appears from heaven we shall be ‘like Him’ for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3.2). In addition, Rev. Hal pointed us to the Apostle Paul’s Roman epistle saying, “Whom God did predestinate, He also called, and whom He called, He also justified; and in one future day, the Lord will at last glorify us” (Rom. 8:1-2, 28-30; John 14:1-3). In simple terms, as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the “sons of God,” to believe on His name (John 1:12). The verses cited by Rev. Ricker are helps to all believers as we tell others of “the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear,” being always ready with an answer to everyone who asks us of the faith God puts into “opened hearts” (Acts 16:14, 26-34; 1 Pet. 3:15; Titus 3:5-7).

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to us by a divine appointment from our Triune God from heaven (Matt. 28:18; John 3:14-15). We read that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Way, the TRUTH, and the Life, and that no one comes to a holy God except but by the finished work of Christ on Calvary’s mount (John 6:44, 65). Further still, our Lord taught of our need to be “BORN AGAIN,” of having a NEW HEART within our mortal bodies (Ez. 36:25-28; John 3:1-3; John 3:1-3, 5-7); “Now you will be my people and I will be your God” (John 3:7, 17). “The Bible tells us that Christ will return his to receive His chosen believers: His Church (John 14:3); those living and deceased saints awaiting redemption of their bodies (1 Thes. 4:13-18).

Thousands of years ago, man was told that a Savior would one day come for them (Gen. 3:15) by the “seed of the woman” and today His “day is as Christ revealed, near even at the doors” (Matt. 24:30-33) to at last take His seeking, trusting believers to their home in heaven (John 14:1-6). Soon our waiting will be over. The Holy Spirit of God led Paul in his letter to the Romans and to the Thessalonians to live now in HOPE; “we say by the Word of the Lord” those who died in the faith of Jesus Christ will also “be caught up” to be with our Lord (1 Thes. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54) and so we are to “comfort one another with Christ’s Words.”

The promises of God allow receiving Christ's victory over our last enemy – death. Our mortal bodies come into divine redemption and immortality for death's defeat is swallowed up by Christ's "finished work" on Calvary's Cross. Therefore, brethren be always steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work for the Lord; "our labor is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58). Another precious promise of God was seen in Daniel's vision and prophecy (Dan. 2:27-44). A master teacher of prophecy such as Dr. Henry Ironside would have been well known to Rev. Hal Ricker who noted, "We have a more sure Word of Prophecy that all should heed as a light that shines in darkness" until God's "day star" arises in your hearts. Prophecy came NOT by the will of man, but holy men of God were moved by the will of the Holy Spirit. The God of heaven is about to set-up a Kingdom which will stand forever (Dan. 2:44; Ez. 36:24-28). By His prophets and Apostles, Christ promised to every born-again believer a "New Heart" opened by the power of God – alone (Is. 46:9-13; John 1:28-36, 3:7-8; Acts 16:14, 26-34).

Our Sovereign Lord Christ Jesus came down from heaven to seek and to save that which was "LOST." Now man comes by faith in our Triune God (Matt. 18:11) to any and all to "believe by GRACE through faith in the gift of God" (Ep. 2:8-13). Jesus taught, "As many as hear my word and believe on Him who sent me, has 'EVERLASTING LIFE' and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to LIFE – eternally as the "SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD" (John 1:12-13; 5:24-25). All may come no matter how young or old, even the "chief of sinners" (1 Tim. 1-15) but not by our works, but by the mercy of God (Rom. 8:1-2, 14-17).

During his 102 years of life, Rev. Hal frequently taught that the Holy Spirit turns men from their idols and fleshly lusts to hope in the blessings found in the Gospel taught by Christ Jesus. Once the Lord opens one's heart to the spiritual cleansing of the blood, shed in the garden by innocents God provided (Gen. 3:21) to the blood of the Passover Lamb (Ex. 12:1-14) to the soul-saving blood of Christ on the Cross of Calvary is the blood of the New Testament that is shed for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28). Our Savior washed us from our sins in His own blood (Rev. 1:5; Col. 1:20-21; Heb. 9:22).

In our time, many biblical scholars now believe we are at the "doors" of the dreaded Tribulation (Matt. 24:33) which our Lord Jesus warned was coming and all He taught will be fulfilled for the Lord's Word "will not pass away" (vs. 34-35), yet all who call upon the Lord will be saved being justified by Christ's blood and divinely delivered from the "wrath to come" (Acts 2:21; Rom. 5:18, 10:13). God's wrath will not come to the adopted children of our holy, living God (Rom 8:15-16; 1Thess. 5:9; 2 Tim. 1:9). Our Savior will keep every "believer" from the "hour of temptation to come" (Rev. 3:10).

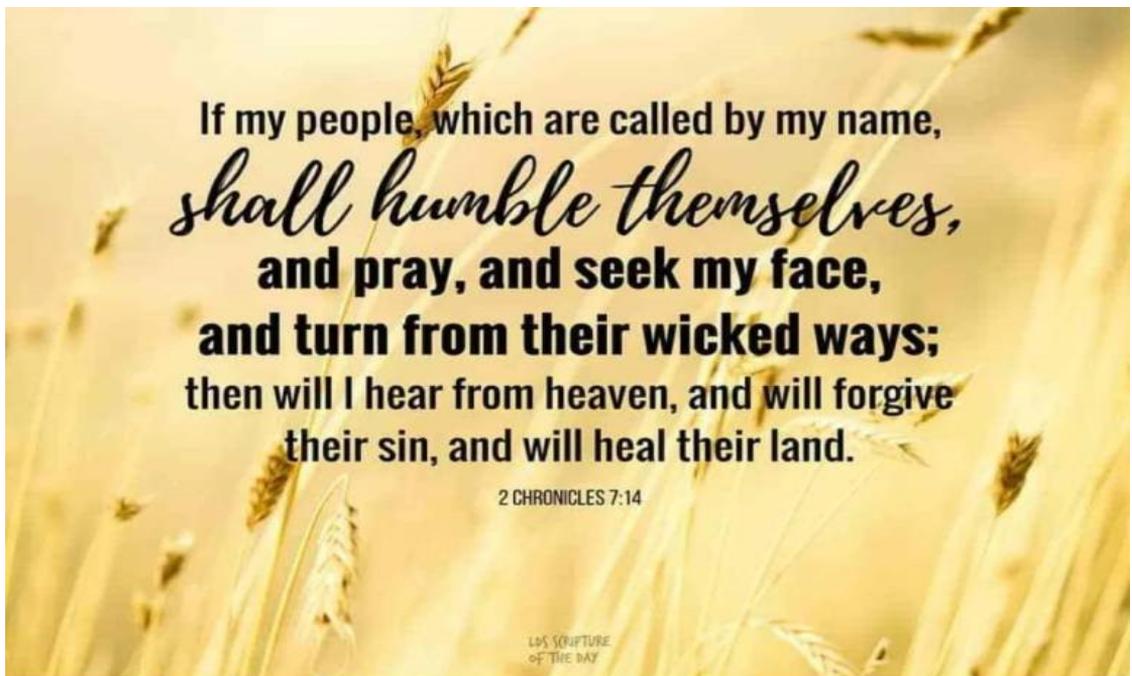
In Rev. Ricker's article, published in "Redeeming the Times," he pointed to the Old Testament and New Testament scriptures but also to various confessional documents (Westminster Confessions, catechisms, etc.). Rev. Hal also cited the fact that in the older scriptures of the Old Testament, the people of God were "gathered to their Fathers" while the New Testament has a clearer statement; "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).

God created ONE MAN in His own image (Gen. 1:27) with the ability to think and reason, meditate and decide. God made man from the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7) male and female He made them (vs. 27). In time, God said it is not good for man to be alone (Gen.2:18); I will make a helpmate for him (from Adam's own body (his rib = Gen 2:21-24).

Man is God's unique special creation being both physically and spiritually made (Gen. 1:27, 2:7, 21-22; 1 Cor. 15:51-58). God has given to all; as many who willingly come to Him, a "blessed Hope" through Christ's death accomplished "FOR US" (vs. 53; Titus 2:13). The "old man" is dead (Ep. 2:8-13) the New Man (Col. 3:10-15) who does all in word and deed in the Name of Jesus, are ever giving thanks to God the Father through Christ our Lord (vs. 17).

This Defender is a tribute to our living God, His Son, and the Holy Spirit who sends His faith and GRACE to us all through a 102-year-old preacher because he, like the Lord, laid down His life for us (John 3:16). Hereby we perceive the "Love of God" because Christ laid down His life for us."

Rev. Hal Ricker taught that we and the Patriarch Job could say, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25) and "whosoever believeth in Him, should NOT PERISH, but have eternal life" (John 3:15-17). Amen! Christ said to the hopeful, "KEEP LOOKING UP" (Luke 21:2-8).



John 3:3: “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Born Again and Born From Above

By Joseph Burghauer

In chapter 3 of the Gospel of John, our Lord gives His response to Nicodemus, a Pharisee and “a ruler of the Jews,” who came “by night” (secretly) as the representative of a group which recognized Jesus as a “Rabbi” or teacher and also as a worker of miracles through the power of God. Christ told Nicodemus that He was stating something very important and certain (“verily, verily”): “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Christ revealed what was necessary to “see the kingdom of God.” Verse 5 explains that “see” does not mean just to perceive or understand; it means to “enter in.” In this passage, to “enter into the kingdom of God” refers to those who are spiritually saved and who will spend eternity in Heaven (See I Corinthians 6:9-11). To enter God’s kingdom, a man must be “born again.”

The phrase “born again” translates the Greek phrase which means both “again” and “from above.” God and the apostle John state that there must be a second birth whose origin is from Heaven. In John 3:4, we read that Nicodemus sees this as meaning a second physical birth, but our Lord clarifies this to be a spiritual rebirth “of water and the Spirit”. (We will, as The Lord wills, examine “of water and the Spirit” next month). Verse 6 confirms that He is speaking of a spiritual rebirth, “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

Christ rebukes Nicodemus (verse 10) for being “a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?” So, Nicodemus should have known from the Scriptures that man needs a spiritual rebirth to enter God’s kingdom. Nicodemus should have recalled verses such as Ezekiel 18:31: “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” And just as man cannot “be perfect” (Matthew 5:48) outside of Christ, man is unable to “cast away from you all your transgressions,...and make you a new heart and a new spirit” on his own. But God provides what He demands: He provides the “new heart” and “new spirit.” We will consider a few passages below, that Nicodemus should also have known, that tell of His provision.

We cannot examine how the Scriptures use the terms “heart” and “spirit” in detail. Some consider these to be synonyms, and they refer to verses such as Exodus 35:21. They often say that the “heart” includes our intellectual, emotional, and spiritual lives. Others define man’s spirit as being the life-force that God breathed into man (Genesis 2:7), and distinguish man’s “spirit” from his “heart.” Whichever view you take, “heart” and “spirit” are interconnected. The Old Testament uses the term “heart” over 700 times, primarily referring to our inner nature rather than to our physical heart. This “heart” includes our emotions, desires, motivations, and will. Proverbs 4:23: “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”

So God reveals in the Scriptures that sinful man needs a new heart and spirit, and that He gives these to His chosen ones. David begs God to: "Create in me a new heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me (Psalm 51:10). Jeremiah 31:31-34 foretells the writing of God's Law in the "hearts" of "the house of Israel." Ezekiel 36:26: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." God promises to give His people a new heart in a spiritual rebirth. This new birth would not be a result of human effort. Birth is an apt comparison, because just as we have no role in causing our physical birth, we have no role in our being "born again." This inner transformation is the work of God: John 1:13: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." 1 John 3:9 states "is born of God" twice. 1 John 5:1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." (We know that even our faith is a gift from God; He provides our belief - Ephesians 2:8-9).

The new birth is also referred to as regeneration or effectual calling. Our Westminster Confession of Faith is helpful in Chapter 10: Of Effectual Calling points 1 and 2:

1. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only. He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty Power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace (Rom. 8:30, 11:7; Eph. 1:10-11; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6; 2 Thes. 2:13-14; Rom. 8:2; Eph. 2:1-5; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 2:10, 12; Eph. 1:17-18; Ezek. 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 11-19, 36:27; Phil.2:13; John 6:44-45; Eph.1:19; Psa. 110:3; Song 1:4; John 6:37; Rom 6:16-18).
2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man; who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it (Rom. 9:11; Eph. 2:4-5, 8-9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:4-5; Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:5; Ezek. 36:27; John 5:25, 6:37).

The Scriptures and our Westminster Confession tell us that God uses His word as the means to bring about this new birth. Our Confession gives us Scripture to support this, and we can add from among other verses these two:

1 Peter 1:23: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible,
by the word of God."

James 1:18: "Of His Own will begat He us with the word of truth."

God alone saves His chosen ones in the new birth:

Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy. He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

A Sinner's Plea

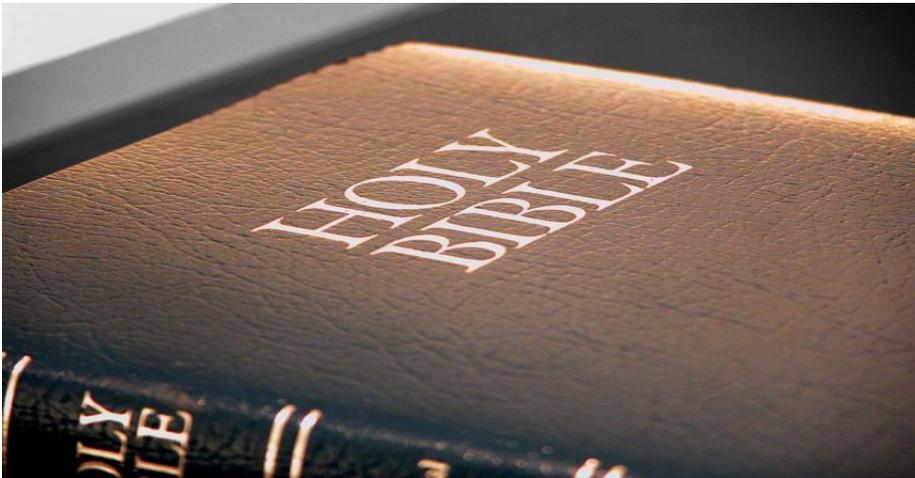
By Linda Tyson

Blessed Saviour oh hear my plea.
Grant salvation unto me.
I am lost and full of sin.
My heart is troubled deep within.

There's no peace wherever I go,
There's no rest within my soul.
My eyes are blind, but yet I see.
Oh precious Lord please save me!

Take these blinders from my eyes.
Loving Saviour my heart does cry!
I cannot bear my sinful ways.
Oh Cleanse me Lord, please this day!

Change my heart and make me whole.
Put a longing in my soul.
Blessed Lord to You I plead,
Have mercy on a sinner like me!



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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WRITE TO US!

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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
Daylight Savings Time (March 7th)	2:00 am