

HAPPY NEW YEAR

MISSIONARY BIBLICAL SOVEREIGN GRACE LANDMARK PREMILLENNIAL

The Baptist Examiner

Baptist Is Our Middle Name

Paid Circulation in All States and in Many Foreign Countries

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" -- Isaiah 8:20.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT-ELECT BILL CLINTON

Sir, may I say first of all, I did not vote for you. With all due respect, I voted for President Bush and Vice President Quayle. I voted for them because I felt their views on morals, family values, and Christian principles were more in line with mine, but



Jack Whitt

more importantly, more in line with God.

Even though I did not vote for you, however, it remains that you are to be the leader of this great nation of ours, and as such you have the awesome power and responsibility bestowed upon you to lead and influence the people of our country. As a Christian

(Continued on Page 10, Col. 1)

A FREE IMMORAL AGENT

by Gene Darwin Abbott
Romans 3:11 "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."

I don't really have any trouble

(Continued on Page 11, Col. 2)



Gene Abbott

**LET'S GET THE
TRUTH OUT THIS
YEAR!
SUBSCRIPTIONS
NEW OR ONE
RENEWAL
\$1 EACH**

SOUL SAVING: OUR ONE BUSINESS PART I

by Charles H. Spurgeon

It is a grand thing to see a man thoroughly possessed with one master-passion. Such a man is sure to be strong, and if the master-principle be excellent, he is sure to be excellent too. The man of one object is a man indeed. Lives with many aims are like water trickling through innumerable streams, none of which are wide enough or deep enough to float the merest cockleshell of a boat; but a life with one object is like a mighty river flowing between its banks, bearing to the ocean a multitude of ships, and



C.H. Spurgeon

spreading fertility on either side. Give me a man not only with a great object in his soul, but thoroughly possessed by it, his powers all concentrated, and himself on fire with vehement zeal for his supreme object, and you have put before me one of the greatest sources of power which the world can produce. Give me a man engrossed with holy love as to his heart, and filled with some masterly celestial thought as to his brain, and such a man will be known wherever his lot may be cast, and I

(Continued on Page 7, Col. 2)

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

by Gene Flynn
Indore, W.V.

As we look in the book of Acts 2:41 we see Peter as he preached that great sermon, and about three thousand souls were saved. In Acts 4:4 we see about five thousand were saved. Now in Acts 6:1 "AND in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians

cause their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." Now, this started a murmuring and complication. Who was going to wait on whom, in verse 3, "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom whom we may appoint over this business."

Now, we want to follow one of the brethren picked out of the seven. His name is Stephen and the Bible says he was full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. In verse 8, "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people."

Now, any time you see a man of faith, and full of the Holy

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

ABORTION

"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination to him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood" (Pro. 6:16-17). Note that God hates hands that shed innocent blood, and surely there is not any more innocent blood on the face of the earth than that of a baby in

its mother's womb. Abortion is the shedding of that innocent blood; therefore, God hates abortionists.

I write this on November 8th. America has just elected a pro-choice man (which is the same as pro-abortion; which is the same as pro-murder) for the next president of the United States. They have also elected the same kind of

man for vice president. They have also elected a party that is pro-choice, which is the same as pro-abortion, which is the same as pro-murder. Long before the election, I said that November 3rd could be a lengthening of God's mercy for America, or the beginning of judgment day for America - it has proved, I believe, to be

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 1)

CHRIST FOR YOU, CHRIST IN YOU

by Fred C. Beard

"AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught



Fred Beard

them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:1-4.

Two questions should be foremost in the ministers dealing with that person. First of all,

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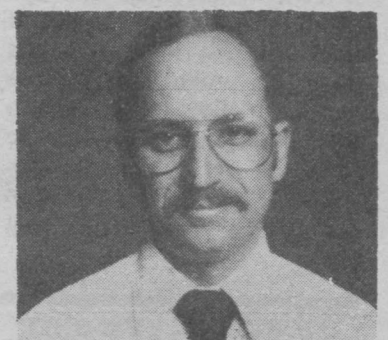
THE GREAT TASK OF KEEPING THE HEART - PART V

THE GIRDLE OF TRUTH
EPHESIANS 6:14

by John Pruitt

In the course of study in Ephesians 6:10-18, we have learned some things which will aide us in knowing how to use the armor that is provided for us in the Word of God. In short form, we have learned that we must be (according to Matthew Henry) "both stouthearted, and well armed," for we wrestle against an enemy that is invisible except in

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John Pruitt

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ABORTION

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the latter. I have a great fear in my heart as to what will come on America in the next few years.

Shame on professed Christians who voted for either Clinton or Perot not as to politics, but as to their stand on abortion. Did you let your pocketbook or your Christian conscience guide your vote? It is a mystery to me how any professed Christian could vote for a pro-abortion, (which is pro-murder) candidate or party. This election was not simply a matter of politics, it was a matter of decency and morality.

Well, we Christians can find comfort in the sovereignty of God over all things. In His sovereign providence, He has seen fit to allow this election to come out as it did. He has some sovereign and wise purpose in allowing this. I strongly believe that it is a purpose of judgment

upon America. And, I must say that, if any nation deserves the judgment of God, America surely does. Our sins as a nation cry to heaven for vengeance. God's holiness cannot allow Him to continue to forbear judgment upon a nation as wicked as ours. I would explain this election by the following Scripture, "...the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it



Joe Wilson

to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Dan.4:17). Notice especially the words, "the basest of men." God has brought about His purpose, but please know that this will not excuse

men voting for pro-abortion men and a pro-abortion platform.

In October I was at a great Bible Conference in Appalachia, Virginia. The Godley's were there with a beautiful and precious two weeks old baby boy. Suppose I had taken that baby from his mother's arms, torn his arm from its socket, tortured the baby with knives, pins, and needles; and then cruelly murdered that precious baby. Oh, you would say that I was a very cruel and wicked person. You would say that I was a vile murderer. You would say that I deserved the severest of punishment (you would be right). How many of you would say that I had a right to do that? How many of you would believe in my "free choice" to do that? How many of you would say that I had done nothing wrong, and that I should be received by society as a decent person and treated as such? Well, had I done that, I would have been no worse than a doctor if he had murdered that child a few months before, while in its mother's womb - no worse at all - my crime would have been no greater than that doctor's, or that mother's, or any who had part in said abortion. Had I done that,

how many of you would have voted for me for president or any other office?

It has twice been my privilege, delight, and honor to stand with others on the streets of Ashland in an anti-abortion stand-in. We held signs which read "ABORTION KILLS CHILDREN." Well, that is the bottom line of the abortion debate. No honest person can or will argue with that statement. Be for KILLING CHILDREN if you will, but do not be hypocritical enough to deny that "ABORTION KILLS CHILDREN." Anyone who will argue with this statement is a liar and a hypocrite.

My text says that God hates hands that shed innocent blood. Abortionists shed innocent blood. Therefore, God hates abortionists. "Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen" (Deut. 27:25). We would call the man described in this verse a "hit man." That is what every doctor is who performs an abortion. He taketh reward to slay an innocent person. he is a "hit man." He is under the curse of god. Every

right-minded person will say, "amen" to this. Of course, pro-abortion people do not believe the Bible. But that does not change the fact that the bible is true, or that every man will be judged by the standards of the Bible - not by the Democratic platform, not by the beliefs of Clinton and Gore - but by the Bible.

"...When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women...if it be a son, then ye shall kill him....And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river...." (Ex.1:16,22). You will say, "How awful, Pharaoh was a terrible murderer, he deserves to be punished by God." What Pharaoh did was no worse than what everyone involved in abortion does. He was a murderer; they are murderers. There is absolutely no difference as to criminality before God or as to sin between the abortionist who murders a baby in its mother's womb, and Pharaoh who murdered them right after birth.

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 1)

FROM THE EDITOR

I plan to have Bible reading and prayer in my home regularly. Oh, I have failed so much in this.

I plan to be faithful in witnessing to others about Jesus Christ. I started witnessing to at least one person each day on September 16th, and to this date (Nov.9) I have continued this. I realize that possibly circumstances could occasionally hinder this; but unless providentially hindered (stopped), I plan to do this throughout this year. I plan to usually witness to more than one person each day. I plan to become more systematic about visiting and witnessing to others. I plan to seek to witness to one or more unsaved persons each day. I have learned that many to whom I witness already profess to be saved, and I have counted that as my daily witnessing to at least one person. I plan to continue this, but to concentrate on trying to witness to one or more, usually more, unsaved persons each day. I plan to frequently seek to win souls to Christ, right then and there as I witness to them - not just a witness, but an effort to win them to Christ - at least to do this frequently. I plan to do much, very much, towards winning souls to Christ this year. If I do not win souls; I want to be able to say that I earnestly, prayerfully, with deep concern, very frequently, diligently tried to win them - wonder if one can really do this, and not win some to Christ?

I plan to get victory over some sins in my life this year. I believe we can do this. I do not believe in the possibility of sinless perfection in this life, but I do believe that the Christian can obtain complete and lasting victory over some of his sins. I believe our lives should be that of obtaining victory over sins. Get victory over this sin, that sin, and the other sin. There will always be other sins to battle, but I believe that we should get the victory over many sins in our lives. I plan to do this, God willing and God helping.

I plan to do my best to be a better pastor this year to the members of my church. I plan to love them more, pray for them more, and visit them more when and as I can.

I plan to grow in grace and knowledge and to be a better Christian at the end of this year than at its beginning.

I plan to keep a copy of this editorial and to read it frequently during the year, confessing when I have failed, and seeking to renew these things before the Lord.

I plan to take better care of my health this year. Oh, God has been good to me in this matter. I have not yet suffered as I could have suffered over my failures as to my health.

Well, these are a few of the things I plan to do this year. They are big plans you say; well I have a big God; I should make big plans to serve my big God, and seek His big help in carrying out such plans. Hey, one more thing - two more: 1. Who will join me in some or all of these plans? 2. Who will pray for me relative to these things?

ABORTION

(Continued from Page 2)

"Then Herod...was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children...from two years old and under...." (Matt. 2:16). You will say, "How awful, Herod was a murderer, he deserves punishment. Herod was no more a murderer, no more guilty before God, than the abortionist who murders innocent babies in their mothers wombs, or those connected therewith.

Life begins at conception. Only liars and hypocrites will deny this. All men know that this is true. Some will lie about it for various reasons, but this only proves their hypocrisy. The truth that life begins at conception has long been the position of both the legal and medical profession. Now, some of these, for love of money, will lie about this fact; but they all know that life begins at conception. No honest person will deny this.

If that life is not aborted, it will grow and develop, and a beautiful and precious baby will be born. This proves that life begins at conception, dead things do not grow.

"...the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived" (Job 3:3). It was not just a fetus, not a blob, not a thing; it was a man child that was conceived. It was a man child from conception. There was life at conception.

"...in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51:5). It was not just a fetus, a blob, a thing; it was David who was conceived. His life began at conception.

"For thou hast possessed my reins: thou has covered me in my mother's womb" (Psa. 139: 13). (Read vv. 13-16). It was not just a fetus, a blob, a thing; it was a person who was conceived in the womb. Life begins at conception. There is life in the womb. To abort that life is to commit murder.

"...The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name...And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant" (Isa. 49:1,5). There was a person in the womb from conception. Life begins at conception.

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5). What was formed in the belly? What was in the womb? Not just a fetus, a blob, a thing; but Jeremiah, a

person. Had he been aborted; Jeremiah, a prophet of the Lord, would have been murdered in his mother's womb. Life begins at conception.

".. when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb...the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (Lk. 1:41,44). What was in Elisabeth's womb? Not just a fetus, a blob, a thing; John the Baptist was in her womb, and he leaped therein for joy. Had Elizabeth had an abortion, John the Baptist would have been murdered in his mother's womb - and what then? Life begins at conception. Abortion is murder.

"And, behold thou shall conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS" (Lk. 1:31). What was conceived in Mary's womb? Just a fetus, a blob, a thing; who would dare say this? The dear Lord Jesus Christ, our wonderful and precious Saviour was conceived in Mary's womb. Are we not glad that Mary did not have an abortion? Life begins at conception. Abortion is murder. Of course, pro-abortionists do not believe the Bible. Neither do they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Still, they will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ, and; they will be judged by the Bible.

Everyone knows that life begins at conception. However, some will lie about it for different and wicked reasons. They are liars and hypocrites. They will lie about this to cover up their sin of illicit sex. I suppose that most abortions are performed on single women who have had sinful sex and desire to do away with the results of their sins. If women would remain virgins until marriage - which they should do - abortions would be greatly lessened in number.

Married women may lie about life beginning at conception to seek to quieten their guilty conscience about murdering the baby that is in their womb. They do not want to be troubled with another baby; it may cramp their lifestyle or hinder their careers; so they want to pretend that they believe that life does not begin at conception, so that they will not feel like the guilty murderers they really are when they have an abortion.

Doctors may lie about life beginning at conception because they want their pay as hired killers, as "hit men"; but do not want to be accounted such.

Understand what I am saying. I am saying that all men and women know that life begins at conception. I am saying that when they say they do not believe that life begins at conception; they are liars and hypocrites.

Abortion is murder. No matter

what lies are told, or excuses made abortion is murder. No matter what wicked, murdering courts decide, even and especially, the Supreme Court of the United States; abortion is murder. Men's laws cannot set aside the laws of God. Abortion may not break the laws of wicked men, but it surely does break God's laws. Remember that the Supreme Court will not be your final judge; Jesus Christ will be your final judge, and you will be judged by the Word of God.

All involved in abortion are involved, more or less, in murder. The doctor is a hired killer. Oh, the poor innocent and helpless baby in its mother's womb. In a little while it would be born, a precious and beautiful baby. But in comes the hired murderer, dressed in white (he should be all dressed in black). He viciously, cruelly, usually without a twinge of conscience, murders that poor, innocent, helpless baby. Where has there ever been a more wicked scene than this? Oh, this cries to heaven for the vengeance of God. If Abel's blood cried out for vengeance, surely the murdered baby's blood does the same thing. The doctor who performs an abortion is a murderer. He is the worst kind of murderer;

He is a murderer for hire; usually, he is a mass murderer. The worst criminal in town, in God's sight, is the doctor who has performed the most abortions. The medical profession may be on its way to becoming the most murderous organization in the history of the world. It may soon pass the Roman Catholic church as such. The doctor is also a liar and a hypocrite. He is a betrayer of the medical profession. He is a betrayer of the oath he took in becoming a doctor - at least most doctors used to take this oath.

The nurses who assist in an abortion are murderers. Their being under doctor's orders will not excuse them from their guilt. The woman (she is not a lady, or even a true mother) who has an abortion is a murderer. She is lower than the wild beasts of the field. Most of them will even die protecting their young, but this woman murders her baby. Whoever pays for the abortion is guilty of murder in God's sight. Is it a crime to pay someone to murder another? Yes, it is. Then all such are criminals and murderers. The parents who give consent, or aid and abet in abortion, are murderers in God's sight. Those who are involved in the laws that allow abortion are involved in murder - what about this, Supreme Court of the United States?

I heard that President elect Clinton, while campaigning, said that he was not for abortion, but believed in a woman's right to choose to have such. It would take stupid idiot (mentally and

spiritually) to say this, and the same kind of person to believe it. Suppose I say that I am not for murder, but I believe that anyone has the right to kill anyone he pleases; and nothing should be done about it; he should be treated as every other citizen? Suppose I say that I am not for robbing banks, but I believe that anyone who wants to should have the "free choice" to rob banks; and nothing should be done about it. He should be treated as a decent, respected, and law-abiding citizen. You would say, "Preacher, that is stupid." You would be right, and it is just as stupid for someone to say he does not believe in abortion but that he is "pro-choice" as to a woman's right to choose abortion.

Now, what about people who vote for a government official who is pro-choice, which is the same as pro-abortion, which is the same as pro-murder - what about those people? I leave it to those of you who voted this way to answer that question. I think you already know my answer.

Brother Troy Sheppard was standing with me in the anti-abortion stand-in referred to earlier. He said something like this, "It is a pity that these pro-abortion peoples' mothers did not believe in and practice abortion; it would save us a lot of trouble today." Good for you, Troy. Of course, he did not mean that he wished those parents had believed in and practiced abortion; he was just making a point. Now, let me prove that all pro-abortionists are liars and hypocrites. They are all glad that their mothers did not believe in and practice abortion. What hypocrisy! To be glad your mother did not murder you while in her womb, but say it is all right for others to do this.

Well, what about free choice? Well, let it be known that I believe in free choice for a woman - to an extent. She has the freedom to choose to remain a virgin until she gets married. She has the freedom to remain a virgin all her life, and never get married. After marriage, she has the freedom of choice to use birth control. But, when she has conceived another person's life in her womb; her free choice is ended.

What about a woman's right over her own body? Why, of course a woman has a right over her own body. I have already told you that. But the abortion debate is not over a woman's right to control her own body. Hear me. It is not over this at all. The abortion debate is over a woman's right to control (to murder) the body of another person. Abortion does not relate to what a woman does with her own body; it relates to what she does (murder) to the body of another person. Oh, I wish people would be honest in these things.

When is it all right for a woman to have an abortion? It is never (I said "never") (I say it again, "never"); it is never all right for a woman to have an abortion. It is not all right to have an abortion in a case of rape or incest. Now, this is a sad situation, and I sympathize with the innocent victim of such crimes to the utmost. But a woman being a victim of such a crime does not give her the right to murder an innocent baby in her womb. Rape is a terrible crime. I am in favor of making it a capital crime. I am in favor of executing any one properly convicted of rape. Give the person a fair trial, and if convicted, a speedy execution. I would say that most pro-abortionists, who are in favor of killing an innocent baby in its mother's womb, are not in favor of killing the convicted rapist.

It is not all right for a woman to have an abortion when the mother's life is in danger. I sympathize to the utmost with the woman in such a case and with the loved ones, but this does not give one the right to murder an innocent baby in the womb. Life is in the hands of God. It is not at all certain that the mother will die. God is well able to protect her through pregnancy and birth. Where is one's trust in God when one feels that a terrible crime must be committed to save the mother's life? Most likely, the mother will not die. No one will die before his or her appointed time. This is a very feeble argument as to having an abortion. No, abortion would not be right in such a case.

It is not all right to have an abortion when it seems sure that the child will be physically or mentally handicapped. These things are also in the hands of a sovereign God. Such children are often the source of much joy to their parents. Parents, and others can demonstrate love, compassion, and kindness in such cases. It is never all right for a woman to have an abortion. There are no cases, no situations, in which it would be right to have an abortion.

My dear reader, do not be involved in abortion in any way at all. Do not be personally involved. Do not show any approval whatsoever in the matter of abortion. If one whom you dearly love is, or has been, involved in abortion; love that one still, but let it be known that you totally disapprove of such. Do not budge an inch on this matter with anyone.

Stand against abortion with all the passion of your soul. Let it

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THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

JAN. 2, 1993

PAGE THREE

The Baptist Examiner Forum I

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT
THE BAPTIST EXAMINER, P.O. BOX 60, ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060

Explain I Cor. 11:5 as to a woman praying or prophesying.

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"But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head; for that is even all one as if she were shaven." (I Corinthians 11:5).

Let me say first of all that I do not believe that this verse is giving license to women to pray and preach, explain, or declare a word from God. That is clearly forbidden in I Corinthians 14:34, 35 which says: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." Also we are told, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (I Timothy 2:11, 12).

I do not believe that the Word of God gives license for a thing in one place and then forbids that same thing in another place. I am aware of the exceptional gifts of Priscilla (along with Aquila her husband) and Lydia. Their special "ministries" did not, however, violate the Scriptures I just quoted. The home was their place of exercising their gifts. Without doubt there is a distinction between what is permitted for man and what is permitted for a woman. The woman, if she were so gifted, would not usurp place over the men in praying, or

prophesying. There is a wide scope of opportunity afforded to women with special gifts, but not to the violating of God's restrictions. God always has a time, a place, and a purpose for special gifts, edification, exhortation, and comfort given at the right time, the right place, and for the right reason are just exactly what the three words signify. If, however, their presentation is in opposition to Scriptural restrictions, nothing but dishonor and waste occurs.

I believe that I Corinthians 11:5 is not giving a sanction for this kind of behavior for woman (gifted, or otherwise), but is simply telling us what took place at Corinth among certain men. No sanction can be given here in light of the declaration of I Corinthians 14:34, 35. And other Scriptures. If a miraculous gift is possessed by a woman, or women, the congregation is not the place to exercise them. I do not belittle the gift. I caution the time, the place, and the Scriptural restrictions for its exercise. May God endow many of His handmaidens blessing for her brothers and sisters in Christ according to His Word.

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"But every women that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven" (I Cor. 11:5).

It is generally assumed that Paul is referring to the women in church service, but it said, "every women that prayeth or prophesieth" without stating where this may take place. Certainly the woman can pray silently in the church service, but in I Corinthian 14:34 it is said, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they

are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." This verse strictly forbids women speaking in the church service. Therefore, 11:5 must mean at any time or place where it is permitted and right for her to pray or prophesy (teach the Word of God), at home, in the teaching of other women, "The aged women..., teachers of good things; ...teach the young women... (Titus 2:3, 4), or any other place where the opportunity arises.

To me, verse 5 of chapter 11 is teaching that when a woman is in a situation where she is praying or explaining the "Word" (prophesy), she should have her head covered thereby showing that she is not usurping authority over the man (I Tim. 2:12).

How can she do this? I am from the "old school." I remember back when I was a boy when the women first begin to "bob" their hair. I well remember when my older sister came home with her hair cut, you would have thought she had committed the unpardonable sin. Back then the "covering" was considered to be the long hair of the woman. "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering" (I Cor. 11:15). As this verse is still in the Word, I must accept it as stated, "her hair is given her for a covering."

Note: The views expressed here are strictly my own and are not necessarily those of my church and certainly are not those of my pastor.

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This verse should only be a problem if you do not have a good understanding of what the Bible teaches about the woman's place in the assembly.

A good rule of interpretation is

to first examine a verse according to the context in which it is found. Next, you must consider a matter in light of the overall principle that is taught throughout Scripture.

The phrase in question is taken from a passage which deals with the woman's place in the assembly. Specifically I Corinthians 11:1-16 has to do with the order in which God has placed man and woman in relation to Himself: the order being God the Father, Christ the Son and head over His church, man the head over the woman, and the woman being in subjection to the man, thus in subjection to Christ. The head covering or veil symbolizes the woman's subjection and obedience to God and the uncovered head of the man symbolizes the man's headship and obedience to God.

The overall principle in the Scriptures is that the woman, being in subjection to God and the man is to keep silence in the public assembly: that is, she is not permitted any kind of leadership in the worship services, such as preaching, leading in prayer, or teaching.

Please study I Corinthians 14:34,35; 1 Timothy 2:9-15; Colossians 3:18, and Ephesians 5:21. Now, after you have carefully studied these verses, you must conclude that Paul could not have been teaching that a woman could pray or prophesy (preach) in the assembly whether covered or uncovered. So what is the answer?

John Gill provides a good explanation in his commentary, volume VI, page 222. "Not that a woman was allowed to pray publicly in the congregation, and much less to preach or explain the Word, for these things were not permitted them: see I Cor. IV. 34, 35, I Tim. ii. 12; but it designs any woman that joins in public worship with the minister in prayer, and attends on hearing of the word preached, or sings the praises of God with the congregation, as we have seen, the word prophesying signifies, with her head uncovered." Thank you for your question.

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I. CORINTHIANS 11:5 "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head; for that is even all one as if she were

shaven."

First, we must realize that Paul is dealing with specific problems in the church at Corinth at that time. In this chapter he is dealing with the question of the head covering. He is not dealing with the question of women speaking in church. I realize that there is an implication here that women were praying and prophesying in church. First, prayer could easily be silent. Prophesying is a different matter. I think it is important to understand that just because it was being done does not make it right. The church at Corinth was making a meal out of the Lord's Supper, but that did not make it right. Just because Paul does not condemn this action here does not mean it is all right. We will notice that it is condemned later on by Paul. Paul, in this chapter, is dealing with the head covering and the length of hair, not women speaking in church.

Let us now look at a couple of verses that deal specifically with women speaking in church. I Corinthians 14:34 says: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law." Verse 35 says: "And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." In these verses. Paul is dealing with women speaking in the church. He could not be any clearer about the fact that it is not supposed to be done. It was not a custom; it is the Word and therefore the law of God. It is still applicable today. Paul says that it is not permitted for a woman to speak. He says that she is to ask her husband at home. That is what was to take place at Corinth, and that is what should take place today. I Timothy 2:11 says: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection." The next verse tells us that women are not to teach nor usurp authority over men, but to be in silence. The Bible could not speak more plainly concerning the fact that women are to remain silent in the church. I am so thankful for the women at the Grace Baptist Church, who have their heads covered and gladly remain silent in obedience to God's Word. Thank you ladies and God will bless and reward you for this. May God bless you all.

The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER, P.O. BOX 60, ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060

Are the activities, "learn" and "teach" in 1 Tim. 2:11-12 restricted to the church service?

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"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 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. 3:14-15). These two verses are the conclusion of the previous three chapters in which Paul, as he writes to Timothy, gives direction for a range of church activities. He instructs concerning the teaching of doctrine, the office of a bishop, the office of a deacon, the position of men in a church service, and the activities of women in a church service. These two verses are a summary of behavior for the house of God. It is necessary that the two verses in question be looked at within the context of what Paul has written.

Within the context, he states that women are to learn in silence with all subjection. The word learn is from the Greek word mathano and is akin to another word Mathetes, a disciple. Learn means to increase one's knowledge. The disciples learned by listening to Jesus teach. In this context, a woman is to learn as a disciple by listening, in subjection, to the pastor, teacher, or her husband, as they instruct in the Word of God. If there is something that they do not understand, they are to ask their husbands at home. This was what Paul directed the church at Corinth to do. "And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (1 Cor. 14:35). There are those who think this type of direction is an attack on women. It is not. The word "ask" is from a strengthened form of the Greek word eroto, eperoto, and speaks of the one that asks as having

equal footing with the person of whom the request is made. The woman has equal status with her husband, but is required by the law of God to ask her husband if she will learn anything.

The second word, teach, is also restricted as to the church service. In verse twelve it states: "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." The Greek makes the statement a little stronger: "But a woman to teach I do not allow, nor to exercise authority over man, but to be in quietness." Teach is used in the absolute sense of giving instruction. A woman is not allowed to be in the position of teaching if a man is present. She may teach other women or children, but she is not to exhibit authority over a man in a church service. The word authority means to dominate or have dominion over. A man being taught by a woman allows her to exercise authority over him and places the man in a position of subjection.

It is my belief that the activities of learning and teaching in this case are restricted to the church service.

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It is my conviction and belief that 1 Timothy 2:11-12 is restricted to church services as to the authority of it. The woman is to learn in silence. She is to be in subjection to the authority of the church. She is to learn in silence with all subjection to the authority of the church. She is to learn in silence with all subjection to the teacher that the church has appointed. This has to do with the church services.

Then the women are to keep silence in the churches (1 Cor. 14:34). They are not to speak in the assemblies. If they cannot

speak in the churches, how then can they teach, that is in the place of, or take authority over the man. If they would learn anything (that is, of what was being taught at the church service) let them ask their husbands at home. This shows that the woman was not to speak, that is; teach in the services in the assembly.

Then, still further, let it be observed that, the Scriptures teach that the man is the head of the woman. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man: and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3). This is shown further in Ephesians, that the man is the head of the woman, and the wives are to be in submission to their own husbands (Eph. 5:22).

While I am convinced of and stand firm on the teaching of the Scripture that women are to be in subjection and to learn in silence in the churches, I believe also that she can teach in private and teach in the home. Paul told Titus, "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children" (Titus 2:4).

I believe that godly women can teach their husbands at home. Sometimes a husband will not attend the church services. If the husband does not have enough care for his spiritual welfare to attend the services and learn the way of salvation, then the wife can, yes should, teach her husband at home.

The Christian woman has a right or liberty to teach others, but not in the assembly. She is not to teach in mixed assemblies of adult men and women. The Scripture forbids this. The women are not permitted to take the place of the men in the services. She can teach at home or in some place that is not in the church services.

There was a man by the name of Apollos spoken of in Acts 18:24. He was an eloquent man. He was mighty in the Scriptures. He was instructed in the way of the Lord. He was glowing in the Spirit. He was passionate in the Spirit. He spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord. But he knew only the baptism of

John. He even spoke boldly of those things that he knew. Aquila and Priscilla had heard him. They knew that he lacked some things in his teaching. They took him unto them. I believe that they took him to their home, or at least took him aside out of the public eye. They did not seek to teach him in the assembly. They did not make an effort to teach or instruct him in the presence of men and women. They sought to instruct him in the best way, "...they took him unto them."

Let us take notice here a little further in Acts 18:26, "...whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." Who was teaching spoken of here? They taught. Who are the "they?" Aquila and Priscilla taught. Aquila taught and Priscilla taught. This shows to us that a woman can teach, even though it was along with Aquila. Yet nevertheless she taught, but not in the assembly.

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Genesis 2:21 reads, "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;" Verse 22 reads, "And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." 1 Timothy 2:13 reads, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Verse 14 reads, "And Adam was not deceived, but the women being deceived was in the transgression."

According to our Scripture text God put man in charge, or over the woman. Adam was the federal head of man kind. Paul, under inspiration, tells the wives in Ephesians 5:22 to submit themselves to their own husbands, as unto the Lord. Verse 23 says, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Reading the rest of this chapter tells the men to love their wives as Christ loved the church.

I say all of this to let you know that women are to be in subjection to their husbands, and

to the Lord God. If the Word of God tells the women to be silent in the church, He means just what He says, this means they cannot preach, teach men, pray aloud or to lead singing. To do so would be usurp authority over the man and be in rebellion against God's Word.

You asked, "is this restricted to the church services?" Yes, especially so. This may get me in hot water, but, I think that women should stay out of government also.

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1 Timothy 2:11, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection."

1 Timothy 2:12, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

I believe this portion of Paul's letter (ch. 2 & 3) to Timothy is dealing with instruction to the church and her witness in the world. The verses in question especially relate to the testimony of the church concerning the conduct of the women in the church. They should be women "professing godliness with good works" testifying to the wisdom of God, who in His divine order created Adam first and meant for him to have authority over the woman. I believe women can teach other women and children in the church in separate classes. (Titus 2:4) Women are not to teach or preach to men. In the church service where men are present, women should be silent.

I do not believe that women should be over-bearing or bossy outside the church either; but especially in the church, a woman should respect her God given position.

ABORTION

(Continued from Page 3)

be known that you totally and vehemently disapprove of abortion. If this stand costs you many friends, let them go; they are not worth keeping at the cost of sinning against right, conscience, and God. Oh, I urge my readers to take a strong, unyielding, un-

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THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

JAN. 2, 1993

PAGE FIVE

FOR WHICH WE NEED TO PRAY

by Paul Jackson

"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased; one of his disciples said unto him, Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1).

Like the saved today, the disciples of the Lord did not know how to pray. They knew they needed to be taught of the one who knew how to reach the Heavenly Father. His instruction to them was simple and yet was complex in its thought. He taught them to pray unto the Father in heaven; to recognize His holiness; to look for His kingdom; to have His will in heaven and on earth; to ask for their daily needs; to ask forgiveness for sin; to forgive all who sin against them; and keep them from temptation and evilness. Some are satisfied with just quoting verses that make up the model prayer. It is fine to quote these verses but there is much more to praying than this.

Apostle Paul brings out an interesting thought in the book to the Romans. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit -- itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

According to Paul, God will receive the petitions that are in accordance with His will only. Besides the things in the model prayer, which we know are in accord with His will, there are a few other things saints need to pray about.

We need to ask for blessings. God has many blessings for His children. Those who keep themselves pure from the world, God will bless more than they can comprehend.

We need to ask for love. We need to pray that God would teach us to love our brethren in the faith. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

We need to ask for zeal to serve the Lord. We live in a day when

it is hard to get people to give of themselves to the Lord. The Apostle said, "... present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

Oh, there is so much for which we need to pray.

ABORTION

(Continued from Page 5)

compromising stand against this terrible sin and crime of the shedding of innocent blood.

Get involved in the pro-life battle. Stand with those who wage this battle. Do anything right and possible in battling abortion. I would urge the reader to never vote for any political candidate who is pro-choice, which is pro-abortion, which is pro-murder. Let it be known that for a man to be pro-abortion will cost him your vote. Might I kindly suggest that if you voted this way, that you now repent, seek the Lord's forgiveness, and promise Him that you will never do this again. Crucify me if you will.

Every Christian should be against abortion - surely every true Christian is against abortion. Let me urge you that from now on, your hatred of this terrible sin will have a controlling influence on your voting. If it be said that The Baptist Examiner is becoming involved in politics; let me insist that pro-abortion is not simply a matter of politics; it is a matter of immorality, indecency, ungodliness, pro-murder, wickedness, and great sin. Being totally against abortion (I mean totally) is a matter of obedience to the Word of God.

What shall we do if and when it comes to the place that both candidates and parties are pro-choice: which is pro-abortion, which is pro-murder? We will have to cross that bridge when we come to it (we were not at that point in the last election). Most likely, I, for one, would just stay home and not vote at all.

Well, let me close with a word of comfort and hope. Abortion is a terrible sin, but it is not an unpardonable one. There is mercy in the Lord. There is cleansing power in the blood of Jesus Christ. One can find forgiveness and cleansing, even for this sin, in Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, even this terrible one, praise the Lord! "...though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). Fly to the Fountain, fly. Jesus' blood can cleanse you. His power can save you. There is mercy, grace, and forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Let me add that, though you have never been guilty of the ter-

rible sin of abortion; still you need salvation. If you have not trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you are as lost as is the abortionist; and without Jesus Christ you will spend eternity in hell with abortionists, other murderers, drunkards, whores, and whoremongers, etc. However, praise the Lord, there is salvation for abortionists and non-abortionists in the precious blood of Jesus Christ. I urge the unsaved reader to speedily trust Jesus Christ, receiving Him as Lord and Saviour. Comments, pro and con (if you dare) welcomed.

CHRIST

(Continued from Page 1)

what has Christ done for you? Secondly, what has Christ done in you? Keeping these two questions in mind, may we follow our text and see if truly we can ask them in light of God's Word.

Our text says blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed, how art thou blessed? You know those of the Catholic religion believe that when they have sinned, they must go to confession and ask the priest, "Bless me father for I have sinned." They ask a man sitting on the other side of the wall to bless them; how ridiculous! What power could that man possibly have to bless anyone? He has none. None whatsoever, yet, "...they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." Matthew 23:4. "And call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." Matthew 23:9.

"And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Matthew 23:12. The priest exalts himself, and why not, after all he is of his father the devil, who also exalted himself saying, "I will be above God."

Man cannot bless man; the very idea is foolishness itself! And only those whom God has given over to the god of the world to blind the minds of those that believe not the glorious gospel of Christ, only they will ever be foolish enough to serve such an evil and satanic teaching such as that. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto

them." II Corinthians 4:3-4.

Our blessings come not from man but from God, Jehovah God! "And God blessed them." Genesis 1:22. Who? Adam and Eve, that's who. Man receiving blessings from God and from God only. "I will bless thee." Genesis 12:2. Who will? God will, that's who.

"God Almighty bless thee." Genesis 28:3. Isaac knew from whom blessings came, they certainly were not from him. He didn't even know who it was he was asking blessings for! But he knew who to ask. God almighty bless thee.

Mark 14:22 we find, "Jesus took bread and blessed it." Today we hear those who would say bless this food before we eat it. I tell you no man, including and especially the Pope has any power to bless anything. My blessing your food will in no way improve it one bit. God, on the other hand, can take a few small fishes and a few pieces of bread and feed thousands of people and still gather twelve baskets of food from what is left over. God makes the difference!

Proverbs 10, Solomon speaking to the sons of God says, "Blessings are upon the head of the just." God blesses the just! How? In many ways, but always by God.

The Lord of hosts speaking in Malachi 3:10, "I will pour out a blessing, and if that's not enough, I'll rebuke the devourer for your sake!" Our blessings all come from God, even the controlling of Satan, that he spoil not that which we have. Be it the things of material or spiritual nature, but especially those things spiritually.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and with out blame before him in love." Ephesians 1:3-4.

Our blessings come from God and they were chosen for us even as our salvation. The ultimate of God's blessings, chosen before this world was ever created.

How art thou blessed? "...knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." I Peter 3:9. As a child of God, you were called to receive that blessing.

Blessed! Who is blessed? The poor in spirit. Well then, who are the poor in spirit? Certainly that one who claims to be above sin cannot be poor in spirit. This one's spirit is one of self inspiration. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

These don't qualify.

Those that have been motivated to make a decision; their spirit relies on their motivation, they are not poor in spirit. Not those that have esteemed themselves to be better than those about them, standing with head lifted high saying, "I thank thee god that I am not as other men are," these are not poor in spirit. They are self-righteous hypocrites. My Lord says so.

Nor is it those who have their trust in their membership of the church. They are not the poor in spirit. Their spirit rests in the church, in the building, things that were made with the hands of man. Theirs is a spirit to serve the molten images of the mind. They will give their all for the building, but not for the Christ, the Lord, Saviour, God Almighty.

All these are not the poor in spirit. In fact, they are all, every one, destitute of the spirit of God. They are without hope.

Then who is it? That sinner, whom the Spirit of God has opened his own vile and depraved mind and heart. Laid them wide open right before his own eyes, that he can see his own condition before a Holy God. He finds himself miserable in his present condition, he also becomes aware that he is nothing, has nothing, can do nothing to better his condition before God. This person, then, is truly one who is poor in spirit. And beloved, unless you have been in that condition you don't have that blessed hope, the kingdom is not yours.

"For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Here is that blessing that Jesus speaks of. The blessing to have the kingdom to claim as your inheritance, given to you from God Himself.

So many, for so long, have been looking for something to happen, something with great sights and wonders, things that the mind could not even imagine. Yet people look for these happenings, and they don't see the forest for the trees.

Beloved, the kingdom of God is here. It's been here, the Lord Jesus Christ established His kingdom and the gates of hell shall not prevail.

"For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." I Corinthians 4:20.

"Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." Revelation 11:17. God reigns in His kingdom today, right now! It is not something yet to come.

Jesus said in Mark 9:1,

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CHRIST

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"Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." None of those live today. Well, when did it come?

Daniel told us of its coming, and he set the time of its coming when he told Nebuchadnezzar the meaning of the dream. The image with the head of gold, representing the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon, The breast and arms of silver, thus the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, who took over after Bels-hazzar, larger and yet weaker than the kingdom before them.

Then the belly and thighs of brass. The kingdom of the Grecians, and that kingdom shall rule over the earth, and it did by the might of Alexander who conquered the then known world.

But then was to come the legs of iron, representing the Roman Empire, strong as iron, and their kingdom subdued all things.

Yet that kingdom was divided in the feet; and while one part was strong, the other was weak because it was mixed with weaker nations. (Sounds like America doesn't it?)

Daniel said, **"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."** Daniel 2:44.

I tell you that kingdom came with Christ some two thousand years ago, it stands today, and praise be to God, He has drawn me into that kingdom.

He did so when I was poor in spirit having no where else to turn, nothing to look to, or for. God, in His infinite mercy and by His saving grace, lifted me up from the miry clay, the filth and evil of this world and set my feet on solid ground, well within the family of faith, who dwell in the kingdom of God.

How about you, do you know in whom you believe? Have you been blessed by the Lord God?

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Mourning for those sins, for that condition we have found the heart in. No, not running down some church aisle, Not weeping just so others could see your tears and say, "oh, how spiritual he is."

No, not doing your alms before men, then going out to do all those things you claim to have

left at the altar all over again. I've always wondered what was ever meant by such statements as, "Bring your sins to the altar of sacrifice and leave them here." What would the Lord want with your sins as sacrifices. Flee from them, repent of them!

Mourning, broken hearted deep within knowing the condition of your heart, knowing where your soul stands with God. Repenting of that condition and yielding to the conviction of the Holy Spirit of God that dwells within you.

And beloved, there is true comfort in knowing that the Spirit has done a work of saving grace within your heart. That Spirit is actually a part of your life, leading, guiding, directing you as a citizen of the kingdom of God. Have you this comfort? It is given those that are poor in spirit, to those that mourn. To those that the Spirit dwells within.

I ask you in closing beloved, what has Christ done for you? Has He brought you low, has He saddened you with the guilt of your sins? Has He paid the debt, the one that you owe for your sins? For the wages of sin is death. Has He given you the gift of eternal life? Has Christ paid that wage for you?

Has He lifted you from that poor condition of sin enslavement and set you firmly down in His kingdom? And what has Christ wrought in you? Has that salvation been manifested in you? Have you been created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them? Ephesians 2:10, **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."** If you are not walking in these works, how can you claim the gift?

Can others see those works in you? Or are your works and doings no better than those of the lost world about you? **"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."** Ephesians 2:12.

Where are you this morning? What has Christ done for you? And what has Christ done in you?

SOUL

(Continued from Page 1)

venture to prophesy that his name will be remembered long after the place of sepulchre shall be forgotten.

Such a man was Paul. I am not

about to set him upon a pedestal, that you may look at him and wonder, much less that you may kneel down and worship him as a saint. I mention Paul, because what he was we ought every one of us to be; and though we cannot share in his office, not being apostles; though we cannot share in his talents or in his inspiration, yet we ought to be possessed by the same spirit which actuated him, and let me also add we ought to be possessed by it in the same degree. Do you demur to that? I ask you what there was in Paul, by the grace of God, which may not be in you, and what had Jesus done for Paul more than for you? He was divinely changed; and so have you been if you have passed from darkness into marvelous light. He had much forgiven; and so have you also been freely pardoned. He was redeemed by the blood of the Son of God; and so have you been -- at least, so you profess to have been. He was filled with the Spirit of God; and so are you, if you are truly such as your Christian profession makes you out to be. Owing, then, your salvation to Christ, being debtors to the precious blood of Jesus, and being quickened by the Holy Spirit, I ask you why there should not be the same fruit from the same sowing? Why not the same effect from the same cause? Do not tell me that the apostle was an exception, and cannot be set up as a role or model for commoner folk, for I shall have to tell you that we must be such as Paul was if we hope to be where Paul is. Paul did not think that he had attained, neither that he was already perfect. Shall we think him to be so -- so think him to be so as to regard him as inimitable, and so be content to fall short of what he was? Nay, verily, but let it be our incessant prayer, as believers in Christ, that we may be followers of him so far as he followed Christ, and wherein he failed to set his feet in his Lord's footprints may we even outstrip him, and be more zealous, more devoted to Christ than even the apostle of the Gentiles was. Oh, that the Holy Spirit would bring us to be like our Lord Jesus Himself!

At this time, I shall have to speak to you upon Paul's great object in life; he tells us it was to "save some." We will then look into Paul's heart and show you a few of the great reasons which made him think it so important that some at least should be saved; then, thirdly, we will indicate certain of the means which the apostle used to that end; and all with this view, that you, my dear hearers, may seek to "save some;" that you may seek this because of potent reasons which you cannot withstand, and that you may seek it with wise methods such as shall

in the end succeed.

I. First, then, brethren, what was Paul's great object in his daily life and ministry? He says it was to save some.

There are ministers of Christ present at this hour, together with city missionaries, Bible women, Sunday school teachers, and other workers in my Master's vineyard, and I make bold to enquire of each one of them: Is this your object in all your Christian service? Do you above all things aim at saving souls? I am afraid that some have forgotten this grand object; but, dear friends, anything short of this is unworthy to be the great end of a Christian's life. I fear there are some who preach with the view of amusing men; and as long as people can be gathered in crowds, and their ears can be tickled, and they can retire pleased with what they have heard, the orator is content, and folds his hands and goes back self-satisfied. But Paul did not lay himself out to please the public, and collect the crowd. If he did not save them, he felt that it was of no avail to interest them. Unless the truth had pierced their hearts, affected their lives, and made new men of them, Paul would have gone home crying, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

It seems to be the opinion of a large party in the present day that the object of Christian effort should be to educate men. I grant you that education is in itself an exceedingly valuable thing, so valuable that I am sure the whole Christian church rejoices greatly that at least we have a national system of education, which only needs to be carefully carried out and every child in this land will have the eyes of knowledge in his hand. Whatever other price others may set upon ignorance, we are promoters of knowledge, and the more it can be spread the better shall we be pleased. But if the church of God thinks that it is sent into the world merely to train the mental faculties, it has made a very serious mistake, for the object of Christianity is not to educate men for their secular callings, or even to train them in the politer arts, or the more elegant professions, or to enable them to enjoy the beauties of nature or the charms of poetry. Jesus Christ came not into the world for any of these things, but He came to seek and to save that which was lost; and on the same errand has He sent His church, and she is a traitor to the Master who sent her if she is beguiled by the beauties of taste and art to forget that to preach Christ and Him crucified is the only object for which she exists among the sons of men. The business of the church is salvation. The minister is to use all means to save some; he is no minister of Christ if this

be not the one desire of his heart. Missionaries sink far below their level when they are content to civilize; their first object is to save. The same is true of the Sunday School teacher, and of all other workers among children; if they have merely taught the child to read, to repeat hymn, and so forth, they have not yet touched their true vocation. We must have the children saved. At this nail we must drive, and the hammer must come down upon this head always -- that we might by all means save some, for we have done nothing unless some are saved.

Paul does not even say that he tried to moralize men. The best promoter of morality is the gospel. When a man is saved, he becomes moral; he becomes more, he becomes holy. But to aim first at morality is altogether to miss the mark; and if we did attain it -- as we shall not -- yet we should not have attained that for which we were sent into the world. Dr. Chalmers' experience is a very valuable one to those who think that the Christian ministry ought to preach up mere morality, for he says that in his first parish he preached morality, and saw no good whatever arising out of his exhortations. But, as soon as he began to preach Christ crucified, then there was a buzz, and a stir, and much opposition, but grace prevailed. He who wishes for perfumes must grow the flowers; he who desires to promote morality must have men saved. He who wants motion in a corpse should first seek life for it, and he who desires to see a rightly-ordered life should first desire an inward renewal by the Holy Spirit. We are not to be satisfied when we have taught men their duties towards their neighbors, or even their duties towards God; this would suffice for Moses, but not for Christ. The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. We teach men what they ought to be, but we do far more; by the power of the gospel, applied by the Holy Ghost, we make them what they ought to be by the power of God's Spirit. We put not before the blind the things that they ought to see, but we open the door and take away his fetters. We are not content to tell men what they must be, but we show them how this character can be obtained, and how Jesus Christ freely presents all that is essential to eternal life to all those who come and put their trust in Him.

Now observe, brethren, if I, or you, or any of us, or all of us, shall have spent our lives merely

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STUDIES IN REVELATION

by Willard Willis

"...or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" Rev. 2:5).

The people in the church at Ephesus had a lot going for them in that they had added to their account many good works. They were also in the process of adding many more good works to their account by way of their labours. They were also a very patient people in that they were willing to sow and then wait for the Lord to give the increase. They, however, had a serious problem in that their works, labour, and patience were not motivated by their "first love" for their Lord and His work. They, as I have said, were like a husband who provides well for his wife out of routine rather than love. Love from a husband is far more important to a wife than the furniture, etc. It is the same with our Lord. He, of course, requires that we express our love to Him by adhering to His Word. He, however, will not accept work that has not been motivated by our love. He, after all, doesn't need anything from us. It was because of a lack of love for Him that the Lord was considering removing His "candlestick", that is, withdrawing the Holy Spirit from the church at Ephesus so that the church would no longer be His representative.

"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans which I also hate" (Rev. 2:6).

Lack of love for their Lord did not cause the people in the church at Ephesus to have more love for the world and this was commendable. They, in other words, were not filling their void of love for the Lord by an additional love for the world. They, in fact, hated the "deeds of the Nicolaitans". It is to be noted from Revelation 2:15 that what had been termed the "deeds of the Nicolaitanes", became the "doctrine of the Nicolaitanes". Their deeds became that which was their habit and even that which they taught others. It appears that the "deeds of the Nicolaitanes"-the deeds which became their doctrine, related to a belief that there was no such thing as a sin of the flesh. They, in other words, believed that preaching false doctrine was a sin, but they did not believe that drunkenness was a sin.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit

saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

That which was to be heard and heeded by the people in the church at Ephesus was that they needed to repent from their lack of love and return to a labor of love that they had exercised when they began as a church. They, if they followed this path, would be given the privilege of eating of "the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God". They, of course, if they did not repent, would not have access to the tree of life.

The text before us makes it very obvious that the right "to eat of the tree of life" is based upon good works which are motivated by love. This same truth is set forth in the following passage of Scripture.

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

This latter passage teaches that good works ("they that do His commandments") not only give one the right to the tree of life, but they also give one an entrance into the holy city. It appears from the subject passages of Scripture that one's entrance into heaven is to be based upon good works. This, however, is not what is being taught. We, in fact, know from numerous passages of Scripture that salvation from hell is not based upon our good works. This fact is brought out clearly by Titus 3:5 which states:

"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."

We also know from Ephesians 2:8,9, Romans 4:1-4 and Romans 11:6 that our works do not save us from hell.

Let me point out first of all that our text is referring to rewards rather than salvation from hell. The people in the church at Ephesus, in fact, would have been saved from an eternal hell even if they did not repent of their lack of love. They, as is stated in I Corinthians 3:15, will "be saved; yet so as by fire". They, in other words, if they did not repent, would be like a person who escaped, "so as by fire", or so as through a fire. The fire consumed everything but them. There will be people in heaven with no rewards to show for the time they spent upon the earth.

We, as we carefully examine our text, will find that those who have "right to the tree of life" and the privilege of entering "through the gates into the city", are those who are faithful members of the Lord's

New Testament Churches-members whose works are based upon love which is acceptable to our Lord. Let me point out that if the hard working and patient Ephesians were about to be prevented from eating of the tree of life, then we can be sure that no person who is not a faithful member of our Lord's church will be privileged to eat of the tree of life or to enter into the holy city. All people, on the other hand, who have trusted the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior, will go to heaven.

To what then does our text refer? The reference is not to heaven itself, but to the "holy city" which John saw (Rev. 21:2) coming down from God out of heaven. Our text, then, is referring to the Lord's Bride and the special home He has gone to prepare for her. His Bride, in order to dwell in her new home, must be, according to I Timothy 3:15, "the pillar and ground of the truth". Churches which are the pillar and ground of error rather than truth, will not inhabit the "holy city".

"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and last, which was dead, and is alive" (Rev. 2:8).

The name "Smyrna" is derived from the word "myrrh"-a fragrant spice which was used in Israel's rituals. The most significant thing about myrrh is that it doesn't release its fragrance until being crushed. Christians resemble myrrh in that the more they are persecuted, the more their faith in God is activated, or the more the fragrance of their faith is released.

The church Smyrna and the church at Ephesus were only forty miles apart which seems to say that the work at Smyrna was a fruit of the church at Ephesus. You may recall that Paul spent three years at Ephesus. One, however, can be quite positive that his message reached far beyond Ephesus.

Polycarp, that great saint of God who was burned at the stake because of his stand for the Word of God, was, according to history, the pastor of the church at Smyrna. It is quite likely that he was "the angel of the church" to which this letter was addressed.

"...These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive." (Rev. 2:8).

How would you react if you were to receive a letter from a person who said that they had been dead, but now were alive? You, no doubt, would throw the letter into the trash. You will recall that Thomas responded in the same manner when he was informed that His Lord was alive from the dead. Thomas, in fact, said: **"...Except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his**

side, I will not believe." (John 20:25).

Death is the great enemy of every person in the world. There, in fact, have only been two people who ever got out of this world alive. Each moment we live means that we have one less moment to live. We are slowly but surely being crushed under the foot of the monster of death. It is therefore a great blessing to hear of that one, "the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive". It is because of Him that we, with a voice full of confidence and a smile on our face, can quote the following passages of Scripture.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" I Corinthians 15:55-57.

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9).

You probably wouldn't be too concerned if I said to you that I knew your works. I, after all, have no ability to reward or condemn you. It, however, is quite a different thing when the "first and the last" says, "I know thy works". He has the authority and power to regard or condemn, and He will be around to do that very thing since He is the "last". It is as stated in the following passages of Scripture.

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment". (Matthew 12:36). "I know thy works, and tribulation..."

The word "tribulation" is derived from the Latin word "tribulum". It is a word which refers to the work done by a harrow-a harrow like the farmer uses to break up the clods of dirt in his field-a harrow with sharp teeth. We are to understand, then, that the trouble which was being inflicted upon the people in the church at Smyrna was similar to a harrow being dragged over their bodies. The pastor of the church, in fact, and several of the members had been burned to death. They, when they receive their reward, will thank God that they did not deny the faith. The suffering which was inflicted upon them will not begin to compare with the everlasting reward which will be given to them.

"...and poverty..."

Those dear folks in the church at

Smyrna had not sunk their roots very deeply into the earth. The reference to their "poverty", no doubt, means that they did not own houses and lands. They, no doubt, could have owned houses and land if they had conformed to the demands of those who were persecuting them. They, however, were well aware of the fact that only that which is done for Christ will last. They knew that the day in which they lived would soon be gone and that the night of eternity would be upon them. They, therefore, were more concerned with being filled with the Spirit than being filled with food. It was far more important to them that their children be covered by the blood of the Lamb of God than with clothing. We who live nearly two thousand years this side of these people know that they chose wisely and well. We know that those in Smyrna who did not know the Lord Jesus were the ones who were really poverty stricken.

"...but thou art rich..."

The poor people in the church at Smyrna were not rich by the standards set down by society, but they were rich by the standards of Him who is "the first and the last". This fact is all that will matter when the last chapter of our life on earth has been written. The people in the church at Smyrna were rich because the blood of "the first and the last" had cleansed them from all their sins. They were rich because God had no charge against them. They were rich because they were storing up treasures in heaven.

"...I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9).

The Lord knew "the blasphemy" of them which said that they were Jews, and were not. The following passage of Scripture explains how it is that He knows the evil as well as the good.

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3).

The Lord, in the text which is before us, charged the Jews with "blasphemy" and called their synagogue "the synagogue of Satan". The charge of "blasphemy" means that they were teaching heresy and making light of that which was being taught by the church at Smyrna. Jews in other places were teaching that one must be circumcised and keep the law in order to be saved. It is likely that such was also being taught by those to whom our text makes reference. Our Lord, as the result of their teaching and action, termed their synagogue "the synagogue of Satan". They, after all, were anti-God, anti-Christ and anti-Spirit.

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REVELATION

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"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

The natural thing for us to do is to fear those things that we must suffer. The Lord's message, however, to the church at Smyrna and to those "who love God, to them who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). Is that we should "fear none of those things" which we shall suffer. Our Lord's reason for them and us not to fear is because suffering is under His sovereign control. The suffering of the people in the church at Smyrna was to be controlled in that it was to last "ten days". God would use the "ten days" of suffering for His glory, but the remainder of suffering He would restrain. It is as stated in the following passage of Scripture.

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Psalms 76:10).

Many of the people in the church at Smyrna were to have been arrested, tried, placed in prison and some killed. The significant point here is that our Lord attributes the action of the court to the devil. This fact bears out Ephesians 6:12 where we are taught that we "...wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Our Lord, through John, admonished those in the church at Smyrna to "be faithful unto death". Their reward for such an experience was to be a "crown of life". They, in other words, if they lost their lives for Him here, would receive a "crown of life" from Him. The song says, "It will be worth it all when we see Jesus". Those in the church at Smyrna will find that it most certainly will be worth it all.

How long, then, are we to suffer for our Lord? How long are we to be "faithful"? The answer, as our text states, is "unto death". There is no place down the road where we can say that "it is enough". There is no place down the road where we can cease contending for the faith.

The crown of life to which our text refers, is a special ability to enjoy the home to come. They were not given the opportunity to enjoy this world, but the Lord as-

sured them that they would be given a special ability to enjoy their new home with Him.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2:11).

The "ear" to which the above text refers, is not the physical ear, but is the ear of our understanding. We who have the ability to discern between good and evil should lay hold on those truths which were spoken to the seven churches of Asia. We should consider those truths as a vital part of our daily walk in order that our every step will be for the honor and glory of God. We who "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches", will be governed by that which we have heard. We, as it is said in the following passage of Scripture, will not let these truths slip away from us.

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1).

"...He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2:11).

We are to understand that the overcoming to which our text refers, was not to be the basis for their escaping the second death. Many of the members of the church at Smyrna were to lose their lives as a result of their contending for the faith. Let them, however, take courage in the fact that the "second death" was to have no power over them. They, in other words, were to "hurt" in this life, but after this life was over they would never suffer another pain or shed another tear.

SOUL

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in amusing men, or educating men, or moralizing men, when we shall come to give in our account at the last great day, we shall be in a very sorry condition, and we shall have but a very sorry record to render for of what avail will it be to a man to be educated when he comes to be

damned? Of what service will it be to a man to be educated when he comes to be damned? Of what service will it be to him to have been amused when the trumpet sounds, and heaven and earth are shaking, and the pit opens wide her jaws of fire, and swallows up the soul unsaved? Of what avail even to have moralized a man if still he is on the left hand of the Judge, and if still, "Depart, ye cursed," shall be his portion? Blood-red with the murder of men's souls will be the skirts of professing Christians, unless the drift, and end, and aim of all their work has been to "save some." Oh! I beseech you, especially you, dear friends, who are working in Sunday and Ragged schools, and elsewhere, do not think that you have done anything unless the children's souls are saved. Settle it that this is the top and bottom of the business, and throw your whole strength in the name of Christ, and by the power of the Eternal Spirit, into this object -- if by any means you may save some and ring some to Jesus that they may be delivered from the wrath to come.

What did Paul mean by saying that he desired to save some? What is it to be saved? Paul meant by that nothing less than that some should be born again; for no man is saved until he is made a new creature in Christ Jesus. The old nature cannot be saved; it is dead and corrupt; the best thing that can be done with it is to let it be crucified, and buried in the sepulchre of Christ. There must be a new nature implanted in us by the power of the Holy Ghost, or we cannot be saved. We must be as much new creations as if we had never been; we must come a second time as fresh from the hand of the Eternal God as if we had been today moulded by divine wisdom as Adam was in Paradise. The great Teacher's words are, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit." "...Except a man be born again (from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God." This, then, Paul meant, that men must be new creatures in Christ Jesus, that we may never rest till we see such a change wrought upon them. This must be the object of our teaching, and of our praying, indeed, the object of our lives, that "some" may be regenerated.

He meant, beside that, that some might be cleansed from their past iniquity through the merit of the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. No man can be saved from his sin except by the atonement. Under the Jewish law it was written, "...Cursed is every one that continueth

not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." That curse has never been reversed, and the only way to escape from it is this: Jesus Christ was made a curse for us, as it is written, "...Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Now, he who believes Jesus, who puts his hand upon the head of Jesus of Nazareth, the Scapegoat of His people, has lost his sins. His faith is sure evidence that his iniquities were of old laid upon the head of the great Substitute. The Lord Jesus Christ was punished in our room, and we are no longer obnoxious to the wrath of God. Behold, the sin-atoning sacrifice is slain, and offered on the altar, and the Lord has accepted it, and is so well pleased that He has declared that whosoever believeth in Jesus is fully and eternally forgiven. Now, we long to see men thus forgiven. We pine to bring the prodigal's head into the Father's bosom, the wandering sheep to the good Shepherd's shoulder, the lost piece of money into the Owner's hands; and until this is done, nothing is done, I mean, brethren, nothing spiritually, nothing eternally, nothing that is worthy of the agony of a Christian's life, nothing that can be looked upon as deserving of an immortal spirit's spending all its fires upon it. O Lord, our soul yearns to see Jesus rewarded by the salvation of the blood-bought! Aid us by Thine effectual grace to lead souls to Him.

Once more, when the apostle wished that he might save some, he meant that, being regenerated, and being pardoned, they might also be purified and made holy, for a man is not saved while he lives in sin. Let a man say what he will, he cannot be saved from sin whilst he is the slave of it. How is a drunkard saved from drunkenness whilst he still riots as before? How can you say that the swearer is saved from blasphemy while he is still profane? Words must be used in their true meaning. Now, the great object of the Christian's work should be that some might be saved from their sins, purified, and made white, and made examples of integrity, chastity, honesty and righteousness, as the fruit of the Spirit of God; and where this is not the case, we have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nought.

Now, I do protest you all that I have in this house of prayer never sought anything but the conversion of souls, and I call heaven and earth to witness, and your consciences, too, that I have never laboured for anything except this, the bringing of you to Christ, that I might present you at last unto God "...accepted in the beloved." I have not

sought to gratify depraved appetites either by novelty of doctrine or ceremonial, but I have kept up the simplicity of the gospel. I have kept back no part of the price of God's Word from you, but I have endeavored to give you the whole counsel of God. I have sought out no fineries of speech, but have spoken plainly, and right straight at your hearts and consciences; and if you be not saved, I mourn and lament before God that up to this day, though I have preached hundreds of times to you, yet I have preached in vain. If you have not closed in with Christ, if you have not been washed in the fountain filled with blood, you are waste pieces of soil from which no harvest has yet come.

You tell me, perhaps, that you have been kept from a great many sins, that you have learned a great many truths by coming here. So far, so good; but could I afford to live for this, merely to teach you certain truths, or keep you back from open sins? How could this content me if I knew all the while that you were still unsaved, and must, therefore, after death, be cast into the flames of hell? Nay, beloved, before the Lord, I count nothing to be worthy of your pastor's life, and soul, and energy, but the winning of you to Christ. Nothing but your salvation can ever make me feel that my heart's desire is granted. I ask every worker here to see to this, that he never turns aside from shooting at this target, and at the centre of this target, too, namely, that he may win souls for Christ, and see them born to God, and washed in the fountain filled with blood. Let the workers' hearts ache and yearn, and their voices cry till their throats are hoarse; but let them judge that they have accomplished nothing whatever until, at least, in some cases, men are really saved. As the fisherman longs to take the fish in his net, as the hunter pants to bear home his spoil, as the mother pines to clasp her lost child to her bosom, so do we faint for the salvation of souls; and we must have them, or we are ready to die. Save them, O Lord, save them for Christ's sake!

But now we must leave that point for another.

(To be continued)

BRETHREN PRAY FOR US

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and a citizen of the United States, it is my responsibility to pray for you. I should do this daily. It is my prayer that God will bless you with wisdom and courage to make wise decisions. Mr. President-elect, you assume office at a time when many crucial issues must be addressed. They must be weighed and measured and decided upon, not by what some groups or organizations think to be right necessarily, but what is right morally and in accordance to the Word of God. Thus would I beseech you to seek counsel often from the Word of God. May I remind you, sir, that many of our great men who helped build this nation, were men who believed in God and had the courage and conviction to draw wisdom from His Holy Word. Men like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and others. Permit me please, to use a few excerpts of documented writings from some of these men: On April 30, 1863, President Lincoln wrote the following proclamation for a national day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer: "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us, then to humble ourselves before the offended power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness." What would the people of our country say to such a proclamation, if made by our President today?

One of George Washington's early official acts was the first Thanksgiving proclamation, which reads: "Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly implore His protection and favor." John Quincy Adams wrote: "The first and almost the

only book deserving of universal attention is the Bible." Then again President Lincoln wrote these words: "All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated through this book; but for the book we could not know right from wrong. All the things desirable to man are contained in it." Space will not permit me to enter the writings of so many great men whose faith in God was strong. Mr. President-elect, I present these testimonies to emphasize and stress what not only I believe to be of paramount importance, but to show that men of renown including presidents past, have embraced the Bible and faith in God to assist them in, not only their private lives, but in their public lives as well. Sir, I would ask and encourage you to likewise seek the wisdom from God's Holy Word.

Sir, I would also point out to you glaring evidence of the decline of our country with regard to godly living and high moral standards once held in great reverence by our forefathers -- one obvious decline is in our schools throughout the nation. Martin Luther, the great religious reformer of the sixteenth century is quoted as saying: "I am much afraid that schools will prove to be great gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not increasingly occupied with God must become corrupt."

Humanism, another name for atheism, has taken over public education in this country. God and His Word (the Bible) have no place no value, so they say, for our modern times. What we have today instead of "moral absolutes" is "values clarification," which means, since there are no eternal truths which are valid for this generation and succeeding generations, everybody has to find his own values in his own time. It is recorded in God's Word, in the book of Judges, chapter 17 verse 6: "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Do not we see this today, every one doing his own thing? Sir, there is no fear of God today. Frankly, we may have already reached the point of no return. I do not know this of course, only time will tell. But this I do know; God is still in control. He is judging our nation, our leaders, and every individual on this earth.

Mr. President-elect, I must say too that you have cast your lot with the wicked, when you support the ungodly killing of babies by the millions. This is open and blatant sin that will not go un-

judged by God. You call it pro-choice and a woman's right to control her body. May I remind you she has two bodies to think of. One is just as much human and alive as the other. Yes, a woman should have control of her body. She should control it before she gets pregnant. It is a wicked sin against God and a heinous crime to mankind to commit abortion. I urge you to repent of this great sin in supporting a choice to kill babies.

Then Mr. President-elect, what about another great sin that you must deal with. It is the sin of homosexuality and lesbianism. Sir, these are gross sins. It matters not what people say or what gay rights activists are demanding. In sight of God they are sinners. I can say this on the authority of God's Word. Read the book of Romans, chapter one. God calls it "vile affections." God says it is changing the natural use into that which is against nature. God destroyed Sodom and gomorrah for this sin. We may read of this in Genesis 19. They may call themselves gay but God says they are Sodomites.

Sir, I ask you, are you going to permit these people to infiltrate our schools with their books and teach our children that homosexuality and lesbianism is normal? Do you expect me and all decent, moral Christian people to just let them move in, preying on our children and recruiting them to their filthy lifestyle? No way! I stand with God, and you would do well to do likewise.

May I point out to you, Mr. President-elect, that the greatest woe and ill of our country is not the economy; it is the spiritual condition we live in. We are a nation without God and unless we get back to God, as it was in the days of our pilgrims and forefathers, we are a doomed nation. We read in Psalms, chapter 9 verse 17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Our land is experiencing a famine. Not for want of food and water, but for want of and reverence to God. God's Word again speaks in Proverbs chapter 17 and verse 15. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD." Sir, you are justifying the wicked when you approve and support the killing of babies in the mother's womb, and when you allow homosexuality to infiltrate our schools and institutions of this county. May I say that god will not hold you guiltless on these matters.

Sir, you talked a lot during your campaign and mentioned a lot of things this country needs; and perhaps you are right as to a need for change on some policies. But I never once heard you make

a plea for people to turn to God. I never heard you speak openly that you have faith in God. Is it perhaps an indication of your stand with the non-Christian majority of our country who feel that God is not to be spoken of and has no place in our government or homes? I once heard you say, during a speech, that family values was not an issue. You said the change is not needed in families but in Washington. It may be true that some changes are needed in our government. But a government that denies God and removes His Bible from our schools, and allows and promotes the sin of abortion and homosexuality to spread, is not the kind of change we need. It is this kind of change and permissiveness that is leading to the destruction of our once great nation.

Sir, it may well be true that our country's economic condition needs a lot of fixing, but let me make this comparative illustration to an automobile that needs fixing. The mechanic rolls up his sleeves and completely overhauls the engine and replaces all the old equipment. The automobile is now mechanically in good shape. The mechanic then takes the car for a road test. He exceeds the speed limit, fails to negotiate a curve, swerves off the road over an embankment, demolishing the automobile. All the work the mechanic had performed on the automobile does not now matter; the car is of no value. What is my point? The President with Congress can upgrade our economy, balance the budget, create jobs, improve health programs (all of which are good); but if our nation continues to deny God, condones and mocks at sin, we are just as certain to be destroyed as the automobile commandeered by the mechanic who thought he could get away with violating the speed law and plunged over the embankment. Sir, we cannot continue to violate God's laws and expect our country to survive.

God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for the same sins that are sweeping our nation today. The Roman Empire fell because of sexual permissiveness and godlessness. We may be sure our sins will find us out.

Mr. President-elect, our forefathers based our system of government on the first commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." They understood that man was created to serve God, not the state. It is therefore proper and necessary to first comply with God. Again allow me to apply Scripture to emphasize this point: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Sir, the decisions you face now and in the future are many, var-

ied, and complex. Some will be more difficult than others. The effects of many issues, as they are decided by due process of law, will have tremendous impact upon our society for years to come. It is my hope and prayer that God will grant you wisdom to make decisions rightly. And while you seek counsel from those of your staff of advisors, I pray you seek counsel from the greatest counselor of all, God Almighty.

In summary Sir, may I say, you will make a difference to our country in one way or the other. But it is only fair to say our country will prosper only as we are obedient to God. As the new President of the United States, will you consider your responsibility to promote standards of morality, strong family values, and a return to Christian principles? President Clinton, will you do this? Will you contribute to the fall of our nation or to its salvation?

GREAT

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the works that he does through men, women, boys and girls. Our enemy is not only strong and highly intelligent, but one who is evil. He is the wicked of all wicked, and the sinner of all sinners. He is the liar of all liars and the deceiver of all deceivers. He is cunning and crafty. He is subtle, yet bold. He is relentless, (pitiless), ruthless, (cruel), and vicious. Besides all that he is mean and powerful. (I Peter 5:8). There is but one way to combat an enemy such as this, and that is to "Put on the whole armor of God..."

Beloved, I cannot emphasize too much the importance of following after the admonition of God through the Apostle Paul. It is not just one individual enemy that we are facing, but many. The demonic population is every bit as great as the human population, perhaps more. They are all likewise powerful, intelligent, wicked, evil, deceptive, cunning, crafty, subtle, relentless, ruthless, vicious, and bold.

For sure, we must "keep the heart above all keeping." These many thousands of devils direct a great deal of their attention toward the saints of the Lord God, provoking them to spiritual wickednesses such as pride, envy, and malice. These three engulf virtually every sort of sin known to mankind. Peter tells us in I Peter 2:2 that the child of God must lay these sins aside, and seek the spiritual food of the Word of God. These enemies of God and man openly and deliber-

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GREAT

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ately defy everything that is holy, righteous, and good. I wish there were words in my vocabulary that would amply describe the character of these, our arch adversaries and emulators of God.

Shall we ignore the wicked one? Shall we shrug, fold our hands, and say, "It can't be as bad as all that". Shall we slumber while he (Satan) works? What shall we do? We must withstand. How shall we defend ourselves? We must put on the whole armor of God. In whom shall we trust? We must trust in the Saviour, the God of all truth and holiness. We must not yield to Satan's deceiving and insidious seductions. We must keep the heart through prayer, praise, service, and submission to the will of the Master. This is the only way that you and I will be able to "withstand in the evil day."

The fact is that the first piece of armor is the girdle or equipment belt of truth. In Romans 13:12, Paul admonishes us to put on the armor of light. Light is symbolic of "truth" in the Word of God. (See vv. 12-14) Jesus told His disciples in John 14:6, "...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Truth has no half brothers: truth is absolute. The Lord said, "the truth", meaning the only truth. Truth leaves no room for compromise. There is a liberal movement today among so-called Baptists who say that unity is more important than truth. We must set our doctrinal differences aside and move ahead with a free spirit of praise and worship. With this sort of mind set, someone has to compromise. When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989 and the East and West of Germany were reunited, the free world rejoiced to see the day. Notwithstanding, there had to be a great deal of compromise. In Matthew 6:24 Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters..." He told the woman at Jacob's well "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." David exclaims in Psalm 51:6, "Behold, thou desireth truth in the inward parts..." Beloved, we are exhorted to strap on the belt of truth.

It is not enough to know the truth, we must do the truth. Too many of God's people take great pride in their humility of embracing the truth, but have not yet allowed the truth to embrace them. Their faith is dead, not being mixed with works. Has truth fully embraced you? If you notice, the Roman soldiers girdle was wrapped around him and se-

cured tightly.

Truth is the foundation of love. In any loving relationship, each one involved must be able to trust the other for there is no fear in love. If there is fear and dishonesty in a marriage, that marriage is in trouble. If there is hypocrisy and compromise in your relationship with God and the church, that relationship is in trouble. God desires truth in inward parts. They that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Simply agreeing with the Word of God is not enough. Just as marriage partners must prove their integrity by their actions, your lifestyle and bodily actions must be a testimony of your heart toward God.

I speak concerning the believer's fellowship with the Lord, "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

Conclusion: What shall we do? Shall we ignore this wicked adversary? Shall we shrug our shoulders, fold our hands and say, "It can't really be as bad as all of that"? Shall we slumber while old Satan works? What shall we do? We must trust the God and Father of all truth. We must yield ourselves to Christ. We must embrace truth, but much more allow truth to embrace us. We must through prayer, praise, service, and submission "keep the heart above all keeping, for out of it are the issues of life."

Bottom line question: Where are you?

A FREE

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understanding why any person will feel that each person must first commit his life to Christ before he can be saved. I may become impatient with preachers who say this, but I do understand why they think it. Why do I get impatient? Because a preacher is supposedly "called" by God, and I expect him to speak the exact truth on the matter of salvation. I feel there is no doctrinal system more important than the set of teachings known as sovereign grace.

I met a deacon in an American Baptist Association church (Texarkana group) who said, as if he could not possibly be mistaken; "Man is a free moral agent!" His postulate appeared right (to him), because (perhaps) it was almost right. It comes very close to being totally correct. I have suggested my reply to such a statement in the title of this thesis. Man is free to take his own course; but due to his depravity, he will always, without fail, take the wrong course. I

can understand why one thinks it is this way and I can also understand that one always takes an errant course. Let me attempt to illustrate both. When I entered college, I remember arguing that I could quit smoking if I wanted to, but that I simply didn't want to. As with the deacon, I wasn't totally wrong, but I was a long way from being totally correct. I might wish I could, but this alone would not mean that I could've done my will; because at that particular time I could not. I had to want to, in a way in which I could not either want or understand.

I never really felt smoking was any proof of intellect: to me it was more of a social crutch. It was not only an opiate to a self-consciousness, but was also a means of enhancing social acceptability. It helped me to feel a little more like "one of the boys," for I was an exceptional student and this was a detriment among many of my age, in my home town, at that time. It was also a strong habit, for it didn't seem like such a problem, logically, but it was. I might intellectually decide that I would like to quit using this crutch, but it was all too easy to slip.

The verse from Romans provides us with a clue to the matter. We are simply incapable of wanting to, in the proper fashion. In all things, humans are capable of choosing the right path at a given moment; but are not capable of persevering at all time, for sometimes they are going to fail. There will be a time when a person will blow the whole game. It does not matter whether I had academically decided to quit smoking or academically decided I'd be a Christian. I would not succeed in either until God would intervene and take control of the matter Himself. I can make academic decisions, on a whim, but God will control our sincerity. God can change our innermost wants. Academic decisions will save no one. There is a song that asks that our will become lost in God's will, or at least that is the idea if not the actual wording. This is what must occur, because our will has been tainted and will take control whenever we drop our guard. This will always happen until that time, we are "converted" by the Spirit. Our will is greedy and must be divinely redirected. We're free immoral agents until this change has been invoked.

A reading of the third chapter of Genesis will provide us with a Biblical basis for the truth of this situation. It will explain why we aren't truly free moral agents. It is my understanding that this statement would've been true, at the proper time, but became antiquated by the fall in the Garden of Eden. Perhaps this is an-

other reason that deacon's words might appear to have some merit. Perhaps they would have been true in antiquity. The 17th through the 19th verse of this chapter of Genesis brings the fall to a climax. These verses also point to exactly what changed the will of man.

In historical studies, we're all taught what the turning points of history were, and it is too bad the history books fail to recognize the event that has been recorded in the third chapter of Genesis, for no historic event has had greater impact upon man and the world (as an entirety) than that which this chapter describes. As history, Genesis three surpasses all history since. There would have been no need for Judaism or Christianity had this not occurred. There would have been no humanism, atheism, or any form of false worship had not this or some similar event occurred. The direction of mankind and the nature of the will of men changed with this one infraction, for here man disobeyed God. Here sin began. I am incapable of doing justice to the impact of the fall of mankind as recorded in Genesis. The defeat of the Spanish Armada is actually anti-climactic to the world, in true perspective, and the Battle of Tours shrinks by comparison.

The disobedience in Eden seems to have produced a new nature, in man. It was self-satisfying and signaled a motivation emanating from a basic greed. It would appear that greed has now become the agent which will influence the will of man the most. Greed (love of money, if you prefer) is the basis of practically all (maybe all) evil. Yes, man has control over his own will; but, then, this is exactly why men are depraved and thereby under condemnation. This is why man does not understand, and this is why man will not willfully seek after God. God does not prevent it. Man willfully declines to seek after God. Man does truly have a free will, but man will not dedicate himself to God until he has a redirected will, until God will have already adopted him, and individually at that.

Perhaps readers of this have heard a remark attributed to agnostics, or free-thinkers of some sort, which goes something like this: "However much I disagree with what you are saying, I'll defend until death your right to say it!" I've heard the remark credited to Voltaire. I don't know for certain just who said it. I do know it hasn't truly been a characteristic of disbelievers; whether we call them agnostics, humanists, free-thinkers, or atheists. This has been a Satanic delusion upon the public. Their history has been one of oppression! These people are often called liberal, and a

generous connotation has been associated with this term; but let's not be deluded, for they are only liberal with the rights and goods of other people. They give little, or nothing, of their own. They are constantly fighting Christianity and dare working, in this very country today, to restrict the free exercise of the Christian faith.

I doubt that I need to remind anyone that these enemies of Christianity are prime examples of those who do not seek after God, or do not seek after God in the genuine fashion. This is why they're enemies of Christianity. They are champions of anti-Christian depravity. The point of this is that if men try to achieve a society by their own will, they do everything wrong. They will aggressively oppose God. They do not, as we might be led to believe, defend our right to say things they disagree with. If we are not for Christ we are against Him. There are, obviously, those who do not understand, or seek after God; just as the quoted passage relates; and God has not chosen to bring them to Him.

This paper has been prepared (primarily) to advance the understanding of the depravity of the natural man, and to attest that man cannot willfully repent. It is further intended to indicate that God does not aggressively prevent man from redirecting his will, and one might even suspect from the verse we're considering that God is open to free-will repentance; but that He recognizes that it will never happen, not even one time throughout the history of the human race. It is my understanding that God (with His foreknowledge) saw that not one single person would ever be dedicated by his own will, and that He (therefore) chose some regardless.

In summary let me assert that the Bible and facts are consistent. Man is not basically good. We cannot blame environment for crime. Many rise above hostile environment while others fall under ideal circumstances. The question is why! Divine intervention is the most logical response, even if we look at the issue from a cursory vantage-point. The Bible and facts are consistent, when studied objectively.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS PRAY FOR US

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PAGE ELEVEN

WHAT PARENTS AND TEACHERS SHOULD TELL THEIR CHILDREN

by T.T.Martin

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." This is an unheard note in many modern homes. Instead, there is heard, "Jimmie, you must be a good little boy, and mind Mamma and Papa, and do what they tell you to do, and Jesus will take you to heaven when you die; but if you do not obey Mamma and Papa, the 'bugger man' will catch you." A more fatal, soul-destroying teaching could not be given. Jimmie is not going to be saved by obeying Mamma and Papa. If he dies before he knows right from wrong, he is going to heaven; for all babies go to heaven when they die; but, after he knows right from wrong, he will be saved just like any other sinner, by repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by Christ dying for his sins ("...Christ died for our sins..." I Corinthians 15:3); by Christ's dying redeeming him from his future sins as well as his past sins. **"...our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity..."** (Titus 2:13-14).

Yet many fathers and mothers, alas! many Sunday School teachers utterly blind children to God's way of salvation by telling them they are going to get to heaven by being good boys and girls and by loving Jesus. They are like the city dude who decided to become a farmer. He built him a splendid home on the farm, and then built himself a splendid barn for his corn. Someone then told him that if he didn't have a good lock on his barn some of his mean neighbors would steal his corn. He got an old Maltese cat with five kittens. His little head then came up against a granite wall of difficulty; for he saw that if he locked the barn door to keep the neighbors from stealing the corn, the old cat and kittens could not go in and catch the rats; and if he left the door open so the old cat and kittens could go in and catch the rats, the neighbors would go in and steal his corn. He thought he was ruined as a farmer until one bright idea got loose in his head. He had the carpenter cut a hole in the bottom of the barn door about four inches in diameter, so that the old cat could crawl in and out while his door was locked, and the neighbors could not crawl through and steal his corn. Then he had the carpen-

ters cut five little holes by the side of the large hole, one hole for each kitten! Foolish do you say? Yet many parents and many Sunday School teachers are just that foolish in dealing with children. They talk to them about being good children, and obeying Mamma and Papa and loving Jesus and that they will go to heaven when there is not one word of truth in it, but the most deadly soul-destroying error **"...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"** (John 3:14-15). The people bitten by the serpents and dying, God told Moses to make a brass serpent and put it upon a pole, and tell them that everyone that was bitten **"...when he looketh upon it shall live."** An old hardened sinner, looking at the brass serpent was certain to live; a small boy or girl, bitten by the serpent, couldn't understand that if he would look at the brass serpent, he would live.

Why not tell the child of God's love for sinners; that our sins must be punished; but that Jesus came and died for the sins of His believers; that He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity; that the moment he repents from his sins and receives Jesus as his Saviour, the one who died for all of his sins, clear up to the time he dies, that the moment he trusts his whole salvation to the Saviour that Jesus says, **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life"** (John 5:24). Then tell the child to live a good life and do right, from love of Jesus for dying for his sins, for Jesus said, **"If ye love me, keep my commandments."**

I AM

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Spirit, you will see the sons of Belial going to work. And this is what happened in verse 9. Certain of the Libertines, Cyrenians, and Alexandrians started disputing with Stephen. And in verse 12, the elders and the scribes brought him to the council. I believe some of these people are the same ones, that caused trouble in Chapter 4; the priests, the captains of the temple. And the Sad-

duces the scribes and the Pharisees, were after Stephen. I love this next verse 15, **"And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."**

Oh dear people, it brings great joy, when the time comes for the Bible Conferences, to see old friends, and make new friends. The joy of the fellowship, the joy of hearing the preachers bring forth the Word Of God, rejoicing because the blessed Spirit has enlightened us.

It seems like we get closer to heaven and we just want to go home. This is what happened to Stephen, for we see in Chapter 7:1, **"Then said the high priest. Are these things so?"**

In verse 2, Stephen said "men, brethren, and fathers hearken." Stephen started with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and Solomon. And he preached of these saints of God; our forefathers.

In verse 51, I believe Stephen looked these sons of Belial right in the eye and said. **"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."** I'll say this: a preacher, when he's preaching, ought to look the people in the face, and not look up at the ceiling, or find a spot on the wall and preach to that spot. I saw a fellow one time preach with his eyes closed, (I said a fellow). Paul said in Romans 1:16, **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."**

Stephen preached to them and when they heard these things they were cut to the heart. Look at the beautiful words that came from Stephen's lips, verses 55 and 56. **"But he being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Oh, dear people, the people of darkness can not stand the light of God's Word."**

As the sons of Belial had cast Stephen out and stoned him, they laid their clothes at a young mans feet, his name was Saul.

In Chapter 8:1, we see Saul consenting to the death of Stephen. Verse 3, Saul was a persecutor, he made havoc of the church, that meant he tried to tear down, destroy, demolish to ruin, he committed men and women to prison. Saul was a highly educated man, he knew the law, he had the best teacher in Tarsus,

Gammaliel, he had a great zeal, but lost. But one thing for sure, he heard the gospel. I believe Stephen laid his eyes upon this young man, and the seed was sown. The Word of God, that brings forth fruit. Look at Chapter 9:3-4-5-6-, **"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who are thou Lord?"** You see, Saul didn't know he was one of God's elect, he didn't know he was of the chosen.

"Who art thou Lord?" He didn't know his name was written in the Lamb's book of life.

"Who art thou Lord?" Verse 6, **"And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"** Dear Saints, this ought to be our prayer. Lord what wilt thou have me to do? As Samuel was a small boy, eh said, speak: for thy servant heareth Lord what wilt thou have me to do? What wilt thou have me to do? Could I be a blessing to others, could I be a better witness for thee throughout my life? Lord, could I walk before thee and never bring shame or disgrace upon thee? This would be some of my prayers.

Saul arose and was baptized. Saul was called Paul in Chapter 13 verse 9. Now Paul was being educated in the ways of the Lord. In Galatians 1:11-12, **"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."** Paul says, I certify you this is true, this is right. Then we hear the apostle Paul saying Romans 1:16, **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."**

II Timothy 1: 7-8-12, We can follow the apostle Paul and hear him say in verse 7-7. **"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God."** Look at verse 12, **"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed**

unto him against that day".

Paul says, God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind. Paul says, in Romans 1:16, **"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."** Paul says in II Timothy 1:8 I am not ashamed of the testimony of my Lord. Paul says in verse 12 I am not ashamed for I know whom I believed and have committed to him. In the book of Psalms 34:5, **"They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed."** I think of Matthew 5:14, **"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."** God has given us this marvelous light, the blessed Holy Spirit, and led us into the church that Jesus built. Oh, praise God, we should never be ashamed.

Let us look at one more verse in the book of I John 2:28. **"And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."** I am not ashamed of His coming. Oh dear people, are we looking for that blessed hope we have in Christ Jesus? When our Lord will take us to heaven.

Heaven is real in Revelation 21:18-23. **"And the building of the wall of it was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald, The fifth, sardonyz; the sixth, sardins; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."**

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Oh dear people, the promises that God, has given us! We can rejoice and praise our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now, let me speak to you that are lost for a few minutes. In Luke 16:19, there is nowhere in

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THE DECREES OF GOD

by Arthur W. Pink

The decree of God is His purpose or determination with respect to future things. We have used the singular number as Scripture does (Rom. 8:28, Eph. 3:110), because there was only one act of His infinite mind about future things. But we speak as if there had been many, because our minds are only capable of thinking of successive revolutions, as thoughts and occasions arise, or in reference to the various objects of His decree, which being many seem to us to require a distinct purpose for each one. But an infinite understanding does not proceed by steps, from one stage to another: "Known unto God are all His works, from the beginning of the world" (Acts 1:18).

The Scriptures make mention of the decrees of God in many passages, and under a variety of terms. The word "decree" is found in Psalms 2:7. In Eph. 3:11 we read of His "eternal purpose." In Acts 2:23 of His "determinate counsel and foreknowledge." In Eph. 1:9 of the mystery of His "will." In Rom. 8:29 that He also did "predestinate." In Eph. 1:9 of His "good pleasure." God's decrees are called His "counsel" to signify they are consummately wise. They are called God's "will" to show He was under no control, but acted according to His own pleasure. When a man's will is the rule of his conduct, it is usually capricious and unreasonable; but wisdom is always associated with "will" in the divine proceedings, and accordingly, God's decrees are said to be "the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11).

The decrees of God relate to all future things without exception; whatever is done in time, was foreordained before time began. God's purpose was concerned with everything, whether great or small, whether good or evil, although with reference to the latter we must be careful to state that while God is the Orderer and Controller of sin, He is not the author of it in the same way that He is the author of good. Sin could not proceed from a holy God by positive and direct creation, but only by decretive permission and negative action. God's decree is as comprehensive as His government, extending to all creatures and all events. It was concerned about our life and death, about our state in time, and our state in eternity. As God works all things after the counsel of His own will, we learn from His works what His counsel is (was), as we judge of an architect's plan by inspecting the building which was erected under his directions.

God did not merely decree to

make man, place him upon the earth, and then leave him to his own uncontrolled guidance; instead, He fixed all the circumstances in the lot of individuals, and all the particulars which will comprise the history of the human race from its commencement to its close. He did not merely decree that general laws should be established for the government of the world, but He settled the application of those laws to all particular cases. Our days are numbered, and so are the hairs of our heads. We may learn what is the extent of the Divine decrees from the dispensations of providence, in which they are executed. The care of Providence reaches to the most insignificant creatures, and the most minute events -- the death of a sparrow, and the fall of a hair.

Let us now consider some of the properties of the Divine decrees. First, they are eternal. To suppose any of them to be made in time, is to suppose that some new occasion has occurred, some unforeseen event or combination of circumstances has arisen, which has induced the Most High to form a new resolution. This would argue that the knowledge of the Deity is limited, and that He is growing wiser in the progress of time -- which would be horrible blasphemy. No man who believes that the Divine understanding is infinite, comprehending the past, the present, and the future, will ever assent to the erroneous doctrine of temporal decrees. God is not ignorant of future events which will be executed by human volitions; He has foretold them in innumerable instances, and prophecy is but the manifestation of His eternal prescience. Scripture affirms that believers were chosen in Christ before the world began (Eph. 1:4), yea, that grace was "given" to them then (II Tim. 1:9).

Second, the decrees of God are wise. Wisdom is shown in the selection of the best possible ends and of the fittest means of accomplishing them. That this character belongs to the decrees of God is evident from what we know of them. They are disclosed to us by their execution, and every proof of wisdom in the works of God is a proof of the wisdom of the plan, in conformity to which they are performed. As the Psalmist declared, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all" (Psalm 104:24). It is indeed but a very small part of them which falls under our observation, yet we ought to proceed here as we do in other cases, and judge of the whole by the specimen, of what is unknown, by what is known, he who perceives the workings of

admirable skill in the parts of a machine which he has an opportunity to examine, is naturally led to believe that the other parts are equally admirable. In like manner should we satisfy our minds as to God's works when doubts obtrude themselves upon us, and repel the objections which may be suggested by something which we cannot reconcile to our notions of what is good and wise. When we reach the bounds of the finite and gaze toward the mysterious realm of the Infinite, let us exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (Rom. 11:33).

Third, they are free. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" (Isa. 40:13, 14). God was alone when He made His decrees, and His determinations were influenced by no external cause. He was free to decree or not to decree, and to decree one thing and not another. This liberty we must ascribe to Him who is supreme, independent, and sovereign in all his doings.

Fourth, they are absolute and unconditional. The execution of them is not suspended upon any condition which may, or may not be, performed. In every instance where God has decreed an end, He has also decreed every means to that end. The One who decreed every means to that end. The One who decreed the salvation of His elect, also decreed to work faith in them (II Thes. 2:13). "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isa. 46:10); but that could not be, if His counsel depended upon a condition which might not be performed. But God "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11).

Side by side with the immutability and invincibility of God's decrees, Scripture plainly teaches that man is a responsible creature and answerable for his actions. And if our thoughts are formed from God's Word the maintenance of the one will not lead to the denial of the other. That there is a real difficulty in defining where the one ends and the other begins, is freely granted. This is ever the case where there is a conjunction of the Divine and the human. Real prayer is indited by the Spirit, yet it is also the cry of a human heart. The Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, yet were they written by men who were something more than machines

in the hand of the spirit. Christ is both God and man, He was Omniscient, yet "increased in wisdom" (Luke 2:52). He was Almighty, yet was 'crucified through weakness' (II Cor. 13:4). He was the Prince of life, yet He died. High mysteries are these, yet faith receives them unquestioningly.

It has often been pointed out in the past that, every objection made against the eternal decrees of God applies with equal force against His eternal foreknowledge. "Whether God has decreed all things that ever come to pass or not, all that own the being of a God, own that He knows all things beforehand. Now, it is self-evident, that if He knows all things beforehand, He either doth approve of them or doth not approve of them; that is, He either is willing they should be, or He is not willing they should be. But to will that they should be, is to decree them" (Dr. Jonathan Edwards).

Finally, attempt to assume and then contemplate the opposite. To deny the Divine decrees would be to predicate a world and all its concerns regulated by un-designed chance or blind fate. Then what peace, what assurance, what comfort would there be for our poor hearts and minds? What refuge would there be to fly to in the hour of need and trial? None at all. There would be nothing better than the black darkness and abject horror of atheism. O my reader, how thankful should we be that everything is determined by Infinite wisdom and goodness! What praise and gratitude are due unto God for His Divine decrees. It is because of them that "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Well may we exclaim, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 11:36).

I AM

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the Bible that is plainer about hell than the Scriptures about the rich man and Lazarus.

Hell is an awful place to go. You go there because you are a sinner. You were born in sin, and the only way to heaven is through the blood of Jesus. The rich man had everything; fine clothes, plenty to eat, all the worldly goods. The beggar named Lazarus, had nothing of these worldly goods. The beggar died, listen to verse 22. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died and was buried." What a contrast! The

beggar died and was carried into Abraham's bosom, the rich man died and went to hell.

Now, there is no rest in hell. The rich man cried out, let Lazarus dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. If you put your finger in water you could get one drop and that's about all. But the rich man cried out, "I am tormented in flames." Oh my friend, hell is not a place to go. My friend where are you going to spend eternity, in heaven or hell?

How you hear some smart alec say, "I'll have plenty of company." How do you know? Jesus says they will be cast in the furnace of fire where there's wailing and gnashing of teeth. My friend there is no way out, for the Bible says there is a great gulf fixed. That means in hell you will stay.

In the book of Acts Chapter 8, Philip was down in Samaria, and souls were being saved. And there was an Ethiopian eunuch who came to Jerusalem to worship, and on the way home, God spoke to Philip, "you go down and meet him". The Eunuch was reading from the book of Isaiah, verse 30-31. "And Philip ran thither to him and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, understandest thou what thou readest? and he said, How can I except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him."

In the book of Romans 10:14-15. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." Verse 17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

The eunuch was reading "he was led as a sheep to the slaughter and like a Lamb dumb before his shearers, so opened he not his mouth." Philip preached to him about Jesus. Isaiah 53:7, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

Philip preached, Jesus the Lamb.

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WHAT THE ABORTION ISSUE IS ABOUT

The Atlanta Constitution
by Joan Beck

It's curious how that weighty Supreme Court abortion opinion and almost all of the volumes of reporting and commentary written about it managed to ignore its essence: the life of a baby.

So does the freedom of Choice Act being pushed through Congress in response to the Supreme Court ruling and in hopes of final approval by Congress soon after the Democratic convention.

The strategy of the bill's backers is to force President Bush into a vote-losing veto that will hurt him in November. Its intent is not to produce the definitive national debate on abortion that might get the divisive issue of the national agenda.

Even mentioning the baby is politically incorrect, a feminist heresy, and invitation for liberal scorn. But without the baby, the abortion issue would be no more inflammatory than a D&C (dilation and curettage.)

Years of reporting on new research about how to help children be born normal and healthy, how to reduce preventable birth defects, how to persuade mothers to care for their babies during those first crucial nine months of existence leave their mark.

There is no escaping the fact that a baby is involved in abortion, like it or not, politically convenient or not, however redefined by the rhetoric intended to mask the reality.

How awesome a miracle that unborn baby is.

Even by the end of the second month of her existence, all of a baby's organs have been formed and are beginning to work. Her tiny brain is already directing her first gentle movements. Her arms are long enough for her to touch her face.

Already, the growing child is not an it, but a she or a he, not an indistinct cluster of cells but an increasingly recognizable, unique human being.

By the end of the third month--the first trimester of pregnancy--the baby is moving spontaneously. Floating serenely and gracefully in the amniotic fluid at the end of her life-giving umbilical cord, she can kick and swim and twist and pivot and even somersault.

The sculpting of her features continues and her face begins to take on a recognizable sort of family resemblance. In another

month, there will be nails on her little fingers. Her heart will be pumping blood through her tiny arteries.

But it will be at least two more months before there is a possibility she could survive outside of her mother's sheltering womb--before she has lived long enough to be safe from death by the decision of her mother, as provided in that proposed Freedom of Choice Act.

The most powerful arguments against abortion are not the horrible, bloody pictures that some pro-life demonstrators wave outside abortion clinics: They are those fantastic photos that show the amazing grace and unbelievable beauty of an unborn baby as she floats, peaceful and protected in her inner-space capsule, changing and growing according to an inexorable timetable of development.

Many of us hurt to see 1.5 million of these new lives deliberately destroyed every year and to know that at least 26 million unborn babies have been put to death since Roe v. Wade made it legal.

This is not a politically correct viewpoint or politically correct vocabulary. But perhaps there should be more talk about how so many people use their awesome power to create another human being so casually and irresponsibly that it is considered necessary to kill the resulting unborn child.

I AM

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In the book of John 1:29 John the Baptist says, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

This Lamb is the Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour. Now, listen to the eunuch say, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Now, the Bible says Philip baptized the eunuch and he went on his way rejoicing.

Let me share somethings with you. With all the ups and downs in life, when the world looks so dark, there is light. And many times there are heartaches and sorrows, sometimes the valleys but when you think all is gone, Jesus is there. Oh the joy, the rejoicing, the sweet communion with God. He says, I will never leave nor forsake thee. Let me close with these verses. Romans 10:9-10-11, "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 thy heart heart man believeth

unto righteousness; and with thy mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

My dear friend, I wouldn't tell you a fairy tale or a myth about hell and its torments. God's Word is true.

May God add His blessing.

WHAT NEW DOCTRINE IS THIS?

by Joe Wilson

"...what new doctrine is this?..." (Mk.1:27).

What is the relationship of an excluded member to the excluding church? This is a very important question. So far as my observation, reading, and knowledge goes; it has long been the teaching of nearly all of our kind of preachers and churches that the excluded member is no longer a member of the excluding church. However, few, I think very few, hold a different opinion.

So far as I know, it is the opinion of our kind that for a church to receive an excluded member of a sister church is to show blatant and total disrespect for the authority of that church. Sadly, I have learned that many men teach this, desire that it be practiced so far as their church is concerned; but will rather readily receive or use an excluded member of a sister church. Still, most (likely all) of our kind, even these men who do not practice what they preach, say that the receiving of an excluded member of a sister church is to fail to respect the authority of that church.

This point is where the problem of the relationship of an excluded member to the excluding church comes in. Some men fear that, if we say the excluded member is no longer a member of the excluding church, then it would be all right for another church to receive that member; and such church would not be showing lack of respect for the authority of a sister church in so doing. These men say that the excluded member is still a member of the excluding church, but is a member under discipline. I can see how this has come up, and why men are thinking along this line; but I hope to give a better, and I think more Scriptural, answer to this problem.

I suspect that J.R. Graves might be responsible for some men holding this. In "Old Landmarkism" pp. 38,39, Graves deals with this matter, taking an opposite position to that which I, and nearly all of our brethren, take. I suggest that those who hold this position, and who are

fans of J.R. Graves (of which I am surely one) would read those pages a little more carefully. J.R. Graves does say, "When a church has excluded a member, she has no further jurisdiction over him than over a publican, or one who never belonged to her body. She has no right to say what church shall not, any more than what one shall, receive him. Each church has an unquestioned right to receive whom she pleases to her fellowship." I think that Graves is wrong in this, and I feel sure that most of my brethren will agree with me.

I think this is a case where a man was battling one error, and went too far in doing so. This happens frequently. Graves is dealing with a case where a person is wrongfully excluded from a church, and teaching that another church can take that wrongfully excluded person into membership. I know what he says in battling this; he says what those who oppose me in this will say that he said. But I think he went too far in this matter, and I think he almost realized it. He speaks in this place about a brother advocating "that the act of any one church, whether Scriptural or not, (Note these words) binds the action of every other church." He is dealing with a church wrongfully excluding a member. He goes on to say "I do not discuss here what would be the policy or comity in a case where the church (he speaks of the church that receives an excluded member) was knowing to the fact that the applicant had been excluded for unchristian conduct from a sister church." I believe that a member can be unscripturally and improperly excluded. I believe that such a person can, after sincere and thorough investigation of the case, after consulting with the excluding church, be received by a sister church - but a church must be very careful, very prayerful, very sure of the rightness of its action before doing such. This is the matter with which Graves is dealing. He does go too far in his statement in dealing with it, but I think we should consider all he says on the subject.

Now, there are a very few who hold that the excluded member is still a member, a member under discipline. Almost, I think, the sole reason for holding this is to guard against the position that; if the person is not still a member, another church can receive such without showing lack of respect for the authority of a sister church. I think there is a better and more Scriptural guard against this, and one that does not hold the dangers this one does.

I have long been opposed to a church having two classes of members. Churches used to have active and inactive rolls; some probably still do this. I have

never approved of this. I knew of one church who had members who could not receive the Lord's Supper, and members who could. Some churches have members who can vote and members who cannot vote. Of course, some of these hold that women cannot vote, and some hold that children cannot vote. I greatly disapprove of this, but I am now referring to situations where, because of some church stated discipline, some members cannot vote and some can. Again, I have never approve, of having two membership rolls; or even where there is only one roll, having some members who cannot have church privileges that other members have.

I believe that it is the inalienable right of every church member to: 1. Vote. 2. Observe the Lord's Supper. I do not believe that these rights can be taken away from a member, while still considering such to be a member. Now, this position that an excluded member is still a member of the excluding church makes for two kind of church members: some can vote and take the Lord's Supper, and others cannot. I do not believe in this. Let all who hold the position I am opposing consider the truth of what I am now saying. I ask such, do you believe in two kinds of church members, in two membership rolls, in some members having church privileges that others do not have?

The excluded member is no longer a member of the excluding church. "...let him (the excluded church member) be unto thee as a heaven man and a publican" (Matt.18:17). Surely, Jesus is not saying that this person is still a member of the church. We would not receive unconverted heathen and publicans into the church; we are to regard the excluded member in the same way.

"...mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom.16:17). I do not see how this word "avoid" can consist with the individual still being a church member.

"...Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor.5:13). Surely, it cannot be a church puts away from itself a person, and that person is still a member of the church. Also read v.5 of this chapter and see if you think it is consistent with the idea that an excluded person is still a member of the excluding church.

"A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject" (Tit.3:10). "Reject" is a strong word that I do not believe is con-

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EVERY CHRISTIAN'S DUTY IS TO BE A WITNESS FOR CHRIST

by Roy Mason

Whose business is it to win people to Christ? Is this a duty that devolves upon preachers, and perhaps upon Sunday School teachers? Certainly it is their task--but it is also the duty of every saved person on the face of this earth. The average church member not only never wins anybody else to the Lord--he never even tries to do so! There is no sense of obligation whatsoever on the part of the average church member as regards the reaching of the lost. "That's what I help hire the preacher for," is the attitude. This failure on the part of church members in general to talk their religion to others, is back behind the comparatively few people saved. Churches that engage in real soul-winning effort with numbers of persons participating, always reach many people.

What Does the Bible Say?

What obligation does the Lord lay upon saved people along the line of witnessing for Christ and the winning of souls?

1. What is our obligation to our own kinfolk? To the converted Gadarene who wanted to accompany Him, Jesus said, **"...Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee..."** (Mark 5:19). What did the man do in obedience to that command? The answer is found in verse 20. But note! Another good example is found in John 1:41-42, **"He first findeth his own brother...And he brought him to Jesus..."**

It is the prime business of every Christian to win his own close of kin to the Lord. Very often people live in such a way that they don't have the nerve to talk to their close kin, for they know that they have no confidence in them. Then often people as regards their own children, have no real interest in their salvation. During a revival meeting for instance, they find excuses for staying away, instead of planning to be with their lost children in the services every night. We have known instances in which parents actually resented people talking to their children about their salvation. In many instances the trouble probably is that such parents, though church members, are utterly lost and just a breath removed from hell.

2. What is our obligation towards our own people? The Apostle Paul set us a good example along this line. Read Romans 10:1 and 9:1-2. He simply says that such was his desire to see his own people, the Jews, saved that he would gladly

have doomed his own soul to hell if that could have accomplished the salvation of his people. He did everything in his power to reach the Jews, suffering hate and misrepresentation and abuse of every description.

We have an obligation to our own people, of our own locality and nation that we do not have toward anybody else. That is, our first obligation is to them. Some people have a glamorous conception of what they call "foreign missions." They are terribly interested, so they think, in the heathen far away, but they would not speak a word to a heathen here at home for anything. We ought to be interested in foreign missions, but at the same time we should have even a greater interest in the lost right at our doors. Our own church preaches the gospel over more than a dozen radio stations every week. We have in 20 years taken a gospel message in this way into nearly every home in Tampa, and into homes over most of the entire state. Doubtless some regard this as inferior to foreign mission work--or maybe they don't regard this as mission work at all. It certainly is mission work of the most important kind.

3. What is our first obligation as a church? We are speaking now to church members particularly. The Great Commission was given by Jesus to the church He started. What does that commission say? Read Matthew 28:19-20. The first thing commanded is to teach or disciple the people of all nations. To "disciple" is to make a believer--a Christian. The command is not to amuse, feed and entertain. It is not to promote some kind of a program. It is to give the gospel to the world. Mark states it, **"...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."** This comes absolutely first.

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sistent with such person still being a member of the excluding church.

"...that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly..." (II Thess. 3:7). I think that the word "withdraw" and its connotations are too strong to refer to the person still being a member of the church.

But, if the excluded person is no longer a member of the excluding church, does that church have any further authority over

him? No. Then, cannot another church receive the excluded member without showing lack of respect for the excluding church? No, most assuredly, no. How can this be? Note carefully the following Scripture, **"But if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"** (Matt. 18:16-18). Note especially the words "heaven," "earth" and "bound." The Scriptural action of a church is bound in heaven and in earth. It is not (the operative word is "not") just bound in the excluding church. It is bound in and as to every true church on the face of the earth.

Now, hear this, you despisers of church authority. Hear this, the pastor and church that used one of our excluded members. Hear this, the two pastors and churches that received our excluded members. Hear this: to use or receive the excluded member of a true church is not only to despise and show lack of respect for the excluding church (it is that, but is also much more than that); it is to despise and show lack of respect for the authority of heaven. Is that what the above Scripture teaches? Of course it is. If you despise the authority of our church, there is not much we can do about it; we can break fellowship with you, but that is all. But wait a minute; you do not have to only deal with us; you have to deal with God. You might laugh about our church authority, but what are you going to do about heaven's authority. Some day the pastors and churches who despise the authority of sister churches will have to face the God who gave and honors that authority--some day.

So, you see, we do not have to adopt the doctrine that the excluded member is still a member of the church. This is mostly a new doctrine which is held by very, very few. We don't have to say this in order to show and state that the church who uses or receives our excluded member is despising the authority of our church. The fact that the proper and Scriptural decision of a true church is bound on earth (over all the earth, in every true church on earth) and in heaven will show this even more strongly and effectively.

I believe that the doctrine that an excluded person is still a member of the excluding church has been adopted so that churches who use or receive such cannot get away from the fact and charge of despising church authority. I believe that this doctrine opens

the door to many things that are not Scriptural, such as having two rolls of members and two classes of members, and such as denying a church member some of the inalienable rights of church membership. I think the Scripture language used to apply to exclusion and excluded members is too strong to apply to those who are still members of the church. I think that Matthew 18:16-18 gives far stronger grounds for stating that a church who will use or receive the excluded member of a sister church is despising church authority; and not only church authority, but also the authority of heaven.

I would urge you to give much thought to this matter. Be very careful before you adopt a doctrine that is mostly new and that is held by very few true Baptists. I believe that I have given a good, better, and Scriptural position herein. Comments welcome.

AN IMAGINARY CONVERSATION WITH A PREACHER

by Joe Wilson

Dear Brother preacher, do you believe in church authority?

I most certainly do.

Do you believe that one church should show respect for the authority of a sister church? Surely, I do believe this.

If a pastor and his church would publicly and in a special way use an excluded member of your church, would you have that pastor preach for you, or would you preach or hold a revival for him?

I most certainly would not.

If he used in this way an excluded member of another church, would you have him preach for you, or you preach for him.

Yes, I would do this and I do this often.

Then you really do not believe in the truth of respect for church authority, you just believe in showing respect for the authority of your church; isn't this true?

But this pastor who used the excluded member of a sister church told me that he had good reasons for doing this, and that he did nothing wrong in this.

Did you check with the pastor of the excluding church?

Well, no, I just took the word of the pastor who used the excluded member. Again I say that you believe in others showing respect for the authority of your church,

but you do not care what disrespect they show for the authority of other churches; isn't this true?

(angrily) Well, I just don't care to discuss the matter further.

WHAT'S THE WORLD COMING TO?

(It may come to the following fictitious story if the Lord doesn't come soon!)

Dear Mom,

Can you believe it's 2023 already? I'm still writing '22 on everything. Seems like yesterday I was sitting in first grade celebrating the century change.

I know we haven't chatted since Christmas. Sorry. Anyway, I have some difficult news and I really didn't want to call and talk face to face.

Ted's had a promotion, and I should be up for a hefty raise this year if I keep putting in those crazy hours. You know how hard I work. Yes, we're still really struggling with all the bills.

Joey's been OK at kindergarten although he still complains about going. But then he wasn't happy about day care either, so what can we do?

He's become a real problem, Mom. He's a good kid, but quite honestly, he's an unfair burden at this time in our lives. Ted and I have talked this through had finally made a choice. Plenty of other families have made it and are so much better off.

Our pastor is supportive and says hard decisions sometimes are necessary. The family is a system and the demands of one member shouldn't be allowed to ruin the whole. He told us to be prayerful, consider all the factors, and do what is right to make the family work. He says the decision is ours, and was kind enough to refer us to children's clinic right here in town, so at least I know that part is easy.

I'm not an uncaring mother. I do feel sorry for the little guy. I think he heard Ted and me talking about "it" the other night. I turned around and saw him standing on the bottom step in his pj's with the little bear you gave him under his arm and his eyes sort of wetting up.

Mom, the way he looked at me just broke my heart. But I honestly believe this is the best for all of us. It's not fair to force him to live with a family that can't give him the time and attention he deserves. And please don't give me the kind of grief Grandma gave you over your abortions. It's the same, you know.

We've told him he's just going in for a vaccination. Anyway they say the whole termination procedure is painless.

I guess it's just as well you haven't seen that much of him.

Love to Dad, Jane.

HOW TO IDENTIFY A BAPTIST CHURCH

by Jack L. Green

"Which Glove Fits The Hand?" The following true story illustrates our distinctive Baptist tenets. (Written by A Baptist Pastor, Gene Nowlin in 1893 -- They were Baptists in those days!)

BAPTIST CHURCHES IDENTIFIED AS NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES

Now it is the peculiar glory of Baptist church not only to hold these outstanding, distinctive and vital principles and practices which are set out in the New Testament, but to see how readily and easily the people of other faiths and no faith recognize and identify Baptist church with the New Testament churches. A forceful illustration of this truth came to me while a young man and pastor of the old historic Baptist church of Hickman, Kentucky. While in this pastorate I conceived the idea of trying to identify the New Testament faith, or system of doctrines, with some existing religious organization. I felt sure that the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints had been kept; that it was in the world; that it could be recognized, and that it could be determined, too, which church, or churches, if any, now hold and practice this faith. Accordingly I adopted the following plan of identification: In November, 1893, I undertook the preparation of a sermon on the text "Contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Very naturally the following questions came up: "Has this faith been kept? Is this faith in the world today? If so, who has it? How can the New Testament faith be identified?" To make the case concrete and real to me I wrote the following letter to myself:

Canton, Mo., No. 1893.
My Dear Brother Nowlin:

"Our church being assembled with one accord, decided to send our brethren, T.M. Jackson and J.H. Jones -- men who have hazarded their lives for the cause of Christ -- to Morley to preach unto them the things recorded in the word of God. Since they left us, no church has communicated with them concerning giving and receiving but ours. But we have sent twice unto their necessities by the hands of our agent, Brother William Smith. We are rejoiced to learn that they have made many disciples, and buried them with Christ in baptism. But we regret to tell you that the first time they met to observe the

Lord's Supper one brother was found to be guilty of unbecoming conduct, and not in fellowship with the body. The church, therefore, excluded him by the majority vote, after which the one body observed the Supper.

"We rejoice greatly in God, knowing that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him, and that there is no power in Heaven or earth able to separate us from the Love of God, but that we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last time.

"Yours in Christ,
J.D. Brown."

To make the matter still more real and concrete, I took this letter and started to town, determined to test out the matter thoroughly. The first person I met was a judge who was a Methodist. The judge was sitting in a grocery store, where a number of people were sitting around a large heater. "Judge," said the writer, "I have a letter here from some man over in Missouri concerning some church work which his church has even carrying on, but he says nothing about what church he is a member of and I don't know him, so I can't identify him." He replied: "If the party says anything about church doctrines or policy you can tell from that." "Well," I replied, "I will read the letter and let you see if you can tell." So the letter as above was read aloud. "Why," said the Judge at once, "He is a Missionary Baptist!" "How do you know?" I asked. "I know from these points" said the Judge. "I know he is missionary because he says they sent out two men as missionaries and paid them for their services. 2. They believe in baptism by immersion for he said they buried their candidates in baptism. 3. They practiced close communion, for they excluded the member, for unchristian conduct, before observing the Supper. 4. They believe in the security of the believers, for they emphasize the fact that God is able to keep that which they have committed to Him, and that no power is able to separate them from the Lord. These are all Baptist doctrines," said the Judge. "But Judge," I said, "you have convicted yourself, for this letter is made up of quotations from Scripture with only the names of persons and places changed." With a smile the Judge said: "Well, I cannot help that; I recognize every point as Baptist doctrine."

Next, I went to see a big, jolly fellow who was an ardent disciple of Alexander Campbell. "Uncle Bob," as he was called, was great on argument. "Uncle Bob," said

the writer, "I have a letter here from a brother in Missouri. I don't know about him. He is writing about some church work, but he failed to tell me to what church he belongs." The reply of "Uncle Bob" was as quick as a flash, "Read the letter, and I'll tell you what he is," showing great faith in his discriminating powers. The letter was read very carefully and deliberately. "Why, he's a Baptist," said "Uncle Bob." But how do you know he is a Baptist?" said the writer. "I know because very point of doctrine mentioned is Baptist doctrine. One thing which they did they had no right to do," said he, "that is, exclude the member from the church and from the Supper."

After this, I went to see an old Baptist deacon, E. Case, who had been an infidel until forty years of age. This man Case had been converted and became a great leader in the Baptist church of Hickman, Kentucky. When the writer called, he said: "Brother Case, I have a puzzle for you to solve." I read the letter and said: "Now I want you to tell me what this man is, religiously." "Why, I am surprised at you, my brother," said he, "that you can't tell what that man is: He's a Baptist. Every point of doctrine is the old doctrine once for all delivered to the saints." Many others were seen and questioned with the same results. So I had succeeded in identifying the New Testament faith with the faith held by Baptists.

All well-informed Christians recognized Baptist doctrine and Bible doctrine to be one and the same.

1.) The church believed in missions. The scriptural quotations used in the letter were taken from the following references: Acts 15:23, 26, where the church sent out Judas and Silas with Paul and Barnabas; the church supported her missionary through her agent named Epaphroditus; Philippians 4:15-19.

2.) Baptism by immersion. Disciples are said to be buried with Christ in baptism; Romans 6:4-5; Colossians 2:12.

3.) Church discipline; the church is commanded to exclude a wicked person; I Cor. 15:3; the punishment was inflicted by the many, the majority.

4.) Eternal security; I Peter 1:5; II Timothy 1:12.

NOTE -- The remarkable thing about it to me was that although every word of it was taken from the Scriptures, save only the names, It was instantly recognized by persons of all faiths as Baptist doctrine.

LORD OF THE FLICKS

Question: How does uncontrolled television viewing affect

our minds?

Answer: "Television is a teacher and a motivator," states Donald Wildmon of the National Federation for Decency.

Although TV sometimes provides a positive learning experience, Wildmon stresses that more often TV is a destructive teacher and motivator, especially when it becomes enshrined -- an idol that mesmerizes.

One mother reports, "My 5-year-old goes into a trance when he watches TV. He's totally absorbed." This trance-like state is due in part to "sensory overkill," caused by incessant changes of scenes and themes.

TV can become a plug-in drug, causing increased inability to function normally without it. TV, however, does not satisfy as promised. One addicted viewer says, "It was like eating cotton candy: TV promised so much richness, I couldn't wait for it; and then it just evaporated into air."

Programs containing the greatest shock value usually draw the largest audiences. This quote from Time magazine explains the results: "Programmers will actually be competing with each other to trace the largest number of touchy -- and heretofore forbidden -- themes... wife swapping, etc." Programs teaching such destructive values consequently become more bizarre and degrading.

In Taming the TV Habit," author Kevin Perrotta says, "The greater problems lie in the ways television nourishes non-Christian patterns of thinking about the world."

Most TV characters do not wrestle with moral issues. Thus, roughly 8 out of 10 prime time allusions to sex occur outside marriage. Characters slip in and out of affairs without dealing with their tragic consequences. The barrage of violence degenerates human worth. Happiness is being beautiful or owning a flashy car. Christians are often portrayed as buffoons or perverts.

Boundaries between reality and fantasy consequently become blurred, making all of life dream-like. People are conditioned to be spectators, viewing and reacting to others as if they are on a TV screen. Sensitivities are dulled to real events and people.

Inherent is this flight from reality is a proliferation of non-active, non-verbal thinking, harming one's ability to reason and relate.

All of this destroys family life. Turning on the TV indiscrimi-

nately turns off family festivities, games, and talks -- the process required for being a functional, unique family. TV, therefore, must be controlled with great caution and wisdom.

THE PASSION AND EXALTATION OF CHRIST

Come, all harmonious tongues,
Your noblest music bring.
'Tis Christ the everlasting God,
And Christ the Man, we sing.

Tell how he took our flesh,
To take away our guilt;
Sing the dear drops of sacred blood,
That hellish monsters split.

(Alas! the cruel spear
Went deep into his side;
And the rich flood of purple gore
Their murderous weapons dyed.)

(The waves of swelling grief
Did o'er his bosom roll,
And mountains of almighty wrath,
Lay heavy on his soul.)

Down to the shades of death
He bowed his awful head;
Yet he arose to live and reign,
When death itself is dead.

No more the bloody spear;
The cross and nails no more;
For hell itself shakes at his name,
And all the heavens adore.

There the Redeemer sits,
High on his Father's throne;
The Father lays his vengeance by,
And smiles upon his Son.

(There his full glories shine,
With uncreated rays;
And bless his saints' and angels' eyes,
To everlasting days.)
--Isaac Watts

LET'S GET THE TRUTH OUT THIS YEAR!
SUBSCRIPTIONS
NEW OR ONE RENEWAL
\$1 EACH