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EDITORIAL



What Is Abortion ?

On July 11th of 1987 the world's population crossed 500 Crore mark. With the growing population, governments of our world are getting concerned about the problem of feeding so many mouths and about providing jobs and other basic necessities. Especially the problem of growing population in our own country is of a great concern, where it is predicted that in a few more years India will be the largest populated country in the whole world, because more children are born in India every year than in any other country of the world! It sure is a matter of concern. But what can be done ? What is the solution to the problem ? With the present day concern about over population many are trying to justify abortion as expedient to keep the earth from over populating. But what is abortion ?

Abortion means forcible extraction of a foetus, or expelling the unborn from the womb of the mother. To abort something

means to stop something that has already come into existence. Just as my physician told me the other day that I need to abort my migraine by taking certain medicine as soon as it sets! When the conception takes place, God gives life. But in abortion an intrusion comes into the plan of God for human life. Thus, abortion means a planned destruction of innocent human life. Abortion is the intentional interference with a live human foetus. It is intending to bring about destruction to a human life. Yet, this is the solution, many believe, to the problem of growing population! Just kill those innocent and defenceless babies before they are able to see the sun light of the world, they suggest!

Even today several thousand babies will be killed in this way, throughout the world and this is accomplished every day in our civilised world in the name of abortion! There are legalised abortions, that is, the governments have given permission to their doctors and nurses to kill babies. It is shocking to see abortion clinics being advertized everywhere through magazines and newspapers and in public places so boldly and explicitly, as though people are advertising an insect extermination service! However, just because some thing is legalised does not necessarily means that that thing is right before God. There are some countries where prostitution is legalised, but the Bible says, fornicators and adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6 : 9, 10), but they will find their place in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. (Revelation 21 : 8). With more and more mothers deciding in favour of abortion under different circumstances, most hospitals and clinics are turning into slaughter houses where legalised induced abortions are performed daily. These are the places where innocent babies with little heads and little legs and hands, and with little eyes which are not yet opened, are seen in a pile, just as slaughtered animals or chopped vegetables. The little human bodies are put in plastic bags and are thrown into a burning incinerator or left in the garbage bin where dogs and cats feed on them!

In our society where the most ugly social evil of dowry prevails, many parents are inclined to prevent the birth of a daughter.

They dread having a daughter, because that means accumulating a big dowry for her marriage. The birth of a daughter is not celebrated but rather mourned. She is considered a curse to the family in which she is born. There was a time when girls were born they were immediately killed. If that was taking place openly today in our society, it would be called murder and such people would have to face the law and would be condemned for such an act. But today the modern method of sex determination and abortion has come to their rescue! As soon as they learn that the conception has taken place, they get anxious to know if its going to be a boy or a girl. So to ascertain they go to a clinic where the mother go through a sex determination test. There if they are told that their future child is going to be a girl, then they decide in favour of an abortion, and the foetus is aborted. If it is not murder, than what is it?

Selfishness is the main cause in most cases of abortions. There are unmarried couples who indulge in sexual pleasure and when the pregnancy occurs they decide to kill the innocent life that would embarrass them. Then there are married women who want to pursue their professional career and don't want to have another baby. So when they learn that they are expecting, the easy way they find is to get the innocent baby aborted. According to man it is abortion, but in the eyes of God it is murder. Plain murder! Most people today believe that abortion is a matter of "mother's rights." But the question is : Is it right before God? Has God given parents and doctors and nurses the authority to take innocent life? God, the Bible says, hates those who shed innocent blood. (Proverbs 6 : 17). "Thou shalt not kill," God's law declares. (Romans 13 : 9). "No murderer has eternal life abiding in him", says I John 3 : 15. And all murderers shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. (Revelation 21 : 8). Married couples should use their "right" when they choose to have sex. At that time they should decide whether they want to have a baby or not. For any reason, if they don't want to have a baby, then they are free to use any method of birth control to prevent conception. But if conception occurs they have no right or authority to kill the baby through abortion. There is a

basic difference between preconception birth control and the destruction of conceived and existing life through abortion. Birth control and abortion are entirely two different things. While birth control keeps conception from occurring, abortion kills the life after it is conceived or has come into existence. The foetus in mother's womb is a living human being. The only difference in an unborn child and a new born child is the way he or she feeds and obtain oxygen. Both have life in them. The unborn child lives in the mother's womb. The new born child lives on earth. That's the only difference. If one kills a child on earth, and another kills a child in a mother's womb, both are murderer in the eyes of God. No one can escape killing a human being by calling it "Abortion." Hebrews 10 : 31 says "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad," says the apostle Paul at 2 Corinthians 5 : 10. If you have been guilty of committing this heinous sin, deliberately or ignorantly listen to the apostle Paul again as he says, in Acts 17 : 30 & 31, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom he has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." It is never too late. You can repent and obey God to come back to Him.

A Personal Examination

J.C. Choate

The Apostle Paul said, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13 : 5). He also said in partaking of the Lord's Supper that before we take the bread and cup that we should

examine ourselves to be sure that we do not eat and drink them unworthily. (1 Corinthians 11 : 28, 29). In other words, if we have sin in our lives that has not been forgiven, or if we have impure motives, then we should correct that before we partake of the Lord's Supper. In the long ago, the Psalmist David said, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart." (Psalm 26 : 2).

So we need to examine ourselves from time to time to see where we stand before the Lord, to see if we are what we should be, to see if we are true and faithful to Him. This can be a safeguard for us in that it can be the means of seeing where we are, the corrections that need to be made, if any, and for us to re-dedicate and re-commit ourselves to the Lord.

A number of questions will follow, and you are encouraged to answer them. No one need to know but you, so be honest with yourself and with God. The correct answers will appear at the close of this examination. If you find that you need to make some changes in your life for better, then please do. Remember that this examination has not been prepared to hurt you or to embarrass you but to help you and to make you more useful to the Lord.

Please answer the following questions :

1. What is the gospel ?-----
2. Can you list the facts of the gospel ?-----
3. Give the commands of the gospel-----
4. What must one do to be saved ?-----
5. Why is baptism important ?-----
6. What is the church ?-----
7. How many churches does Christ have ?-----
8. Are you a member of the Church ?-----
9. Must one be a member of Christ's church to be saved and to go to heaven?-----

10. Who adds the saved to the church?-----
11. What is the scriptural name of the church?-----
12. Should we ever speak of "my church", "our church", or "going to church"?-----
13. On what day of the week are Christians to meet for worship?-----
14. How often do you go to worship?-----
15. Do you read or study the Bible daily?-----
16. Do you give at least ten per cent of your earnings to the Lord?-----
17. What would your weekly salary be if God gave to you as you give to him?-----
18. What kind of music does the Lord want in worship?-----
19. Why do we not say "the Lord's prayer" in our assemblies?-----
20. Is the Law of Moses binding on Christians today?-----
21. What does it mean to live the Christian life?-----
22. What does love mean to you?-----
23. Do you help with the work of the church?-----
24. Do you ever try to teach your friends the gospel?-----
25. Are you a faithful Christian?-----

Now if you know God's will enough to be a Christian and a member of the church, then the foregoing questions should be easy to answer. Let's take a look just now at what the answers perhaps should be.

1. The word gospel means glad tidings or good news. (Romans 10 : 15).
2. The gospel is based on the facts of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (1 Corinthians 15 : 1-4)..

3. The commands of the gospel are faith, repentance, confession of Christ as being the Son of God, and baptism. (Mark 16 : 15, 16; Matthew 10 : 32; Acts 2 : 38).
4. One must obey the commands of the gospel. (Mark 16 : 15, 16).
5. Baptism is one of the commands of the gospel, and once one believes, repents, confesses Christ, then baptism puts one into Christ and his church. (Romans 6 : 3, 4, 1 Corinthians 12 : 13). Also, in obeying the Lord, one dies to his sins, is buried in the waters of baptism, and is resurrected from that watery grave. This pictures the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection. Read Romans 6. Finally, in baptism, and coming forth from the water, that makes possible the new birth that we read of in John 3 : 3-5.
6. The church is a called-out group of people, called out of the world to follow Christ, a saved group of people. (John 15 : 19; Acts 2 : 41, 47; Ephesians 5 : 23).
7. Christ has but one church. (Ephesians 4 : 5; Colossians 1 : 18; Ephesians 1 : 22, 23).
8. You are a member of Christ's church if you are saved, since he adds the saved to his church. (Acts 2 : 47).
9. Yes. The church is not the saviour, but Christ is the saviour of the church, and that means that we must be members of that church to be saved and to go to heaven. (Acts 2 : 47; Ephesians 5 : 23; Acts 20 : 28).
10. Christ adds the saved to the church. (Acts 2 : 47).
11. The church wears the name of Christ since salvation is in that name. (Acts 4 : 12). It is called "churches of Christ", referring to a number of congregations, and a local congregation would be church of Christ. (Romans 16 : 16). It is also called church of God. (Acts 20 : 28). The church may be scripturally called by any name that is given to the church in God's word.

12. No, since it is not our church, and we don't go to church but we go to a place where the church meets for worship. We should use scriptural language. (1 Peter 4 : 11).
13. The first day of the week, the Lord's Day, or Sunday. (Acts 20 : 7).
14. How often is there a first day of the week ? That is how often we should meet for worship. We are not to forsake the assemblies. (Hebrews 10 : 25).
15. We should let the Lord speak to us each day through his word. (2 Timothy 2 : 15; Hebrews 1 : 1, 2; Romans 10 : 17).
16. We should give each first day of the week as we have been prospered, (1 Corinthians 13 : 2; 2 Corinthians 9 : 7). That would probably be more than 10 per cent.
17. If the Lord gave to us as we give to him, we might not receive much. Suppose we are making Rs. 500 a week and we give to God Rs. 10 each week. Now that would not be ten per cent, would it ? But suppose the Lord begins to bless us as though we are giving ten per cent. That would mean that instead of earning Rs. 500 a week, we would be receiving Rs. 100 a week. So what if the Lord gave to you as you give to him ? Would it be that you should try to give more than you are giving ?
18. He wants us to sing praises to him, which means vocal music only. (Ephesians 5 : 19; Colosians 3 : 16). No where does he authorize mechanical music.
19. We don't have "the Lord's prayer" because what is called "the Lord's prayer" is not his prayer. In Matthew 6 : 9-13 Christ gave a prayer of example to his disciples. We cannot use that prayer because since then the kingdom or church has been established. Also, we are to pray in the name of Christ.
20. The Law of Moses ceased to be binding when Christ died on the cross to give a new and better law. It was not taken away until it was all fulfilled. (Matthew

5 : 17, 18; Hebrews 10 : 9, 10; Hebrews 9 : 16, 17; Hebrews 1 : 1, 2).

21. It means to deny one's self, to take up his cross daily, to follow Christ. (Luke 9 : 23). It means to present one's body as a living sacrifice to the Lord (Romans 12 : 1, 2), to be faithful to him unto death. (Revelation 2 : 10).
22. It should be to think of the welfare of others and do what is best for them. (Matthew 22 : 37-39).
23. You should and must if you are going to be a Christian and a faithful member of the church. There is something that you can do and you should do that. Paul said, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15 : 58).
24. You should teach your friends, as well as your family members, the gospel of Christ. If you don't, no one may teach them. You may not be a preacher, but you can still teach them and influence them for the Lord, if you will.
25. We pray that you are a faithful Christian. (Revelation 2 : 10). You probably know if you are, or not. If you are not, please make the necessary corrections, and be determined that you are going to live as Jesus would have you to, and that every day of your life. If you will, the Lord will bless you for it, and above all, you'll have the hope of eternal life with God.

Now, are you a Christian ? No, Christ does not expect you to live a perfect life. He knows that you are human, but he does expect you to do the best you can and his grace and mercy will cover the rest. Most of us can do far better than we are doing, and this examination is an effort to help us to see where we are and to encourage us to try to do better. This is an appeal therefore to each one of us to do just that.

Salvation

Lindell Mitchell

One of the least recognized and yet one of the most serious problems of modern times is an improper understanding of what is involved in man's salvation. Incorrect or partial information concerning a business investment may destroy a man's entire fortune. Incorrect or partial information concerning one's health may cost a man his life. Also, incorrect or partial information concerning salvation will cost a man his eternal home in heaven.

A discussion of salvation presupposes that all men are sinners. Unless a man recognizes that he is a sinner and that he is lost, it is pointless to discuss salvation. The presupposition that all are sinners has solid scriptural support. Paul said, "There is none righteous, no, not one; ... for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3 : 10, 23). John also makes such a statement in his writings, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1 : 8, 10). There is no doubt about it—all men who have lived long enough to be accountable (to be old enough to choose meaningfully between right and wrong) have committed sin. When this is fully realized, the subject of salvation becomes a live issue.

Salvation is unquestionably obtained by God's grace. It is a gift from God, prompted by his matchless love for us, and is provided through the Christ. A short definition of grace is "unmerited favor." Salvation is an undeserved, unearned blessing, freely offered to all mankind, and made possible by the Lord's sacrificial death on the cross. To put in plainly, there was no way that sinful men could earn or merit salvation, so God motivated by his great love provided it for him as a gift. This is the good news of the gospel.

Paul clearly states this theme in Ephesians 2 : 8-9, "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of your-

selves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory." He made a similar statement in Romans 5 : 8, "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." These passages stress that salvation is a gift of God.

As beautiful as grace is, there is an element about it that men do not like. Instead of admitting their complete dependance upon God for making salvation possible, they would prefer to feel that they do it by themselves. Men enjoy glorying in the fact that they are "self-made," in business, politics, or their professions. They would much prefer to feel that they earn their own salvation. The simple fact is that this is totally impossible. All who are saved will be admitted to heaven because of grace.

When this is understood, salvation becomes much more precious. Religion becomes a joy. It becomes not a question of "How much is required for salvation?": but rather a question of "How much can I do to show my gratitude for the priceless gift of salvation?"

It may seem strange, but the gift of grace, as it relates to salvation, is one of the most misunderstood things God does for us. For centuries there have been disagreements regarding how grace is appropriated and to whom it is given. Some have argued that God, before the foundation of the world, determined who would receive the gift. The truth is that man is given a choice of accepting or rejecting God's gift. His grace through christ has appeared to all.

"Prepare To Meet Thy God"

G.F. Raines

The prophet Amos, knowing that, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10 : 31), said : "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." (Amos 4 : 12).

One of the greatest passages in the Old Testament is Ecclesiastes 12 : 13, 14 : "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : Fear God, and keep his commandments : for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

One of the fundamental facts of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17 : 31; cf. 2 Corinthians 5 : 10; Revelation 20 : 11-15.) In that great day, "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14 : 12).

To prepare to meet God, you must be reconciled to him through Christ by obedience to the gospel. Please read John 14 : 6; Romans 1 : 16, 17; Mark 16 : 16; Acts 2 : 38.

Those who have been reconciled to God are "in one body" (Ephesians 2 : 16) which is the church (Colossians 1 : 18); and all who have believed and obeyed the gospel as the people did on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus by repenting and being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2 : 1-47) have been added to the same church to which penitent baptized believers were added by the Lord in apostolic times; for, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10 : 34, 35).

All members of the body of Christ must make their calling and election sure by living "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2 : 11-14.)

The apostle Peter very clearly and specifically explains how it is that we live "soberly, righteously, and godly" in the following.

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue: and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1 : 5-11).

“The only real way to ‘prepare to meet thy God’ is to live with thy God, so that to meet him shall be nothing strange.” (Phillips Brooks).

You should begin to prepare to meet God TODAY; “for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” (Proverbs 27 : 1).

“Go to now, ye that say, Today, or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” (James 4 : 13, 14).

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness: but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” (2 Peter 3 : 9, 10).

Leslie G. Thomas has well said: “To treat with contempt the judge on the bench in whose hands our life is held would be very unwise; but that does not compare with the senselessness of

treating with contempt the judge of all the earth in whose hands is held our eternal destiny."

Our Lord Jesus Christ, being "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14 : 6), says : "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11 : 28).

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7 : 25).

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22 : 17).

What Is Expected Of Me?

W.C. Anderson

"A certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them." (Acts 3 : 2-5).

Just as that man expected to receive something from the preachers, we can be sure that God expects to receive sincere obedience from us.

HE EXPECTS US TO HEAR HIM

Jesus said to the church at Smyrna, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that over-

cometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (Revelation 2 : 11).

The only way we can hear what the Holy Spirit has said to the churches is to read the New Testament. What the Spirit says to the churches of today is in the New Testament. We will not hear the Holy Spirit saying anything to us by reading the books of human origin. There are books called church manuals, confessions of faith, disciplines, etc. When we read, believe, and obey these books, we hear man, not God.

HE EXPECTS US TO BELIEVE IN HIM

The author of the book of Hebrews said, "But without faith it is impossible to please him : for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11 : 6.) We must also believe in his Son. Jesus said, "... if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8 : 24.) We must show that we believe in God by obeying the commands of his Son. James said, "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works : shew me thy faith, without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." (James 2 : 18).

Whatever we do must be done by faith. We cannot do anything by faith if we cannot find it taught in the Bible. "... whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Romans 14 : 23).

GOD EXPECTS US TO WORSHIP HIM

Jesus told a woman in Samaria that God wants to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. He said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit : and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth". (John 4 : 23, 24). We must worship God respectfully by doing his will.

God wants us to meet on the first day of each week to sing,

pray, study, partake of the Lord's Supper, and give according as we have prospered.

HE EXPECTS US TO CONTROL OUR TONGUES

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." (Ephesians 4 : 29). Whatever we say must be something that will build us up in the faith. If what we are about to say will not make others better people, it should not be said. James wrote, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. (James 1 : 26).

HE EXPECTS US TO BE HONEST

"Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said. It is not reason that ye should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 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." (Acts 6 : 2, 3.) We are sure that these seven men were deacons. If deacons are to be honest men, the rest of us must be honest too. Christians are admonished to : "Provide things honest in the sight of all men." (Romans 12 : 17).

WE MUST SEEK THE KINGDOM FIRST

In one of his sermons Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6 : 33.) The kingdom of heaven is the church of Christ. God expects us to put things concerning church work ahead of other considerations.

On Sunday we must go to the assembly of the church, not to the lake of fish all day. We should read the Bible often instead of reading filthy stories.

Our first concern every day should be to do our best to be holy. This is written : "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Hebrews 12 : 14).

“Love Covers A Multitude Of Sins”

Perry D. Taylor

We read in 1 Peter 4 : 8, “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves : for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” What does God mean when he said “charity (or love) shall cover or (covers) a multitude of sins ?” Does it mean that love from God causes him to pardon our sins without obedience ? No. If that was so God would not have sacrificed his only Son to die for us. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10 : 34) and he loves the whole world. (John 3 : 16). However, Jesus said most people will be lost. Why ? They are unwilling to repent and obey the gospel of Christ. (Matthew 7 : 13, 14, 21-23).

The statement “love covers a multitude of sins” has to do with the relationship between us and others, not between others and God. James 5 : 19, 20 deals with the “others and God relationship.” There the Spirit-filled writer wrote, “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” It is clear in this context that the sinner which needs converting, is a wayward Christian. He has turned from the truth unto either false doctrine or false living. The one who helps to bring him back is certainly doing a great work, as James indicated.

The alien sinner (one who has never obeyed the gospel) also needs converting for the salvation of his soul and the hiding of his sin. Not long after the church was established on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), Peter boldly spoke in Acts 3 : 19, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out...” In the previous chapter three thousand souls were converted to Christ after expressing their faith with the question, “What shall we do ?” They were told by Peter, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2 : 37, 38).

What a glorious day that was when so many received the word and were baptized. (Acts 2 : 41.) Their sins were "remitted" or "covered over" or "erased" by the blood of Jesus. This occurs today as well when a person is immersed into the death of Christ. Paul explained in Romans 6 : 3, 4, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" We "get into" Christ at the same time we "get into" his death. The next verse says we are "buried with him in baptism" and raised to walk a new life. (Romans 6 : 4.) Jesus called this being "born again," "born of water and the Spirit." (John 3 : 3-5.) Other verses also bear witness to this beautiful conversion process. (Acts 8 : 35-39; Galatians 3 : 26, 27).

In 1 Peter 4 : 8 Peter is dealing with our attitude toward others and their faults. Because of our love, the sins or faults of the other person are covered over or overlooked, as far as we are concerned. We will be kind about their imperfections and flaws and give them the benefit of the doubt. This is being charitable and loving. There will be occasions when we need their love in return.

Love keeps one from criticizing and condemning his fellow-man. "Love covers a multitude of sins." Peter may have gotten this principle by way of Proverbs 10 : 12. The wise man Solomon wrote, "Hatred stirreth up strifes : but love covereth all sins." The source of strife and division is not God or love, but the opposite. He said that hatred is behind it. On the other hand love covers up the sins of others. When we love we stand up for our brethren. We do not condone their sins, but we certainly do not magnify them.

Albert Barnes wrote that true love makes us not only charitable toward someone's faults but often blind even to the existence of faults. We do not want to see the imperfections of those we love. And even though we may see them, we desire to cover them. The poet wrote, "Tis gentle, delicate and kind, To faults compassionate and blind."

Brethren, do we love one another like this? This brotherly love is in spite of weaknesses, not taking note of them, and not

broadcasting them. Peter does not mean to prevent brother going to brother or even to the church, when such becomes necessary. (Matthew 18 : 15-17.) He emphasized the charitable attitude which does not enlarge the mistakes but seeks to hide them. What are some things one should overlook in his brethren, because of one's love ?

DISAGREEMENTS WE MIGHT HAVE

If there are not disagreements in a church, the church must be dead. Human beings who are doing things and are active, all have disagreements. This occurs because people have different ideas, opinions, and judgments. For example, whether to have a church building, what kind, how much to spend for it, etc. are questions to be decided by someone. Churches have problems over these areas of judgment. One mission point is still having repercussions from a disagreement over the location of the building. Love should overlook this type of disagreement. True love covers a multitude of these situations.

A good Bible example is the contention that took place between Paul and Barnabas, over whether John Mark should go with them on the second missionary journey. (Acts 15 : 36-41.) They solved the problem with Paul taking Silas, and Barnabas taking John Mark. Their efforts were multiplied with this solution. Paul did not hold a grudge or start another congregation. Later he wrote, "Bring him (John Mark) with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry." (2 Timothy 4 : 11).

Love overlooks disagreements. The great chapter of love says love "is not easily provoked." (1 Corinthians 13 : 5.) Love is not soon angered over something with which one disagrees. What else does love overlook or cover ?

THINGS THAT "RUB ME THE WRONG WAY"

This expression may not be from the dictionary, but it should convey the message well. All humans have characteristics and personality traits. Some of these are good, and some not so good. Some things irritate others, whether they are right or wrong.

When one knows about it, he might change in order to avoid these irritations. Most often the one who is irritated needs to overlook. Love causes one to cover or forget about the things that "rub him the wrong way."

What is a Bible example of this principle? The fact that Jesus took twelve apostles and ate, traveled, and lived together, suggests that patience was needed as they blended into a loyal band. Simon the Canaanite was also called "Simon the Zealot." (Luke 6:15.) A zealot was a member of a radical party of Jews who did everything they could against the Roman domination. On the other hand Matthew, the tax collector was also called by Jesus to follow him. These collectors were usually hated because they were siding with the Romans and gathering their tax money. How could these men—Simon and Matthew—have traveled together without "rubbing one another the wrong way?" Just their existence would have been obnoxious to one another, but Jesus taught them to love. Love covers these instances or irritations. The "love chapter" says that love "suffereth long and is kind." (1 Corinthians 13:4.) Love "puts up" with a lot because it is unselfish and desires the best for the other person.

LOVE OVERLOOKS ACTIONS I DO NOT LIKE

Some people act in ways that are strange or ways that "turn us off". Some appear unfriendly when they are not really like that at all. Some brethren fellowship very little around the "church building" but may be very talkative at home. Some come on strong to people and cause brethren to shrink back. In some countries they stand and talk a lot closer together. Some act like they "know it all" or like they "own the world." Others may act just the opposite. Humans act in different ways because God made them different. Would not this world be strange if we all were like clones or robots, acting the same? Because of various peculiarities love recognizes these differences with the likes and dislikes, and overlooks them.

What is a Bible example that might fit in here? What about Elijah and Elisha? Elijah was a strange eccentric-type of prophet

—most prophets were. He lived in the wilderness like a hermit. He was probably strange looking and possibly acted strangely. However, Elisha respected and loved old Elijah, and wanted to “take up the mantle” when Elijah was called home. If there were any actions or peculiarities that he did not like, he overlooked—because love covers a multitude of actions I do not like. I Corinthians 13 says love “seeketh not her own” (vs. 5) or is not self-seeking. It does not demand that others please us. We love regardless of their ways.

LOVE OVERLOOKS WORDS THAT DO NOT “SET WELL WITH US”

It is not only actions that one might easily find fault with, but also and especially words. Have you heard phrases like these; “I do not like so and so telling me what to do?” “I am tired of people questioning me.” We do have to be careful with our words. Colossians 4 : 6 says, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” That is not easy ! On the other hand it is so easy to “stick your foot in your mouth.” Simon Peter was quick to speak, and it often caused him trouble and grief. However, Jesus overlooked these instances and saw in Peter great faith, determination, and leadership.

Another example is found in the occasion where James, John, and their mother asked Christ for the right and left hand seats in the coming kingdom. (Matthew 20 : 21.) The other apostles heard about it and were angry with them. Jesus quickly stepped in and taught a lesson to both sides. He told them that in his kingdom greatness would be determined by service. An unselfish service and love overlooks the words of brethren. They can say things and get by with it, because love overlooks those things. Love on their part will cause them to try not to say those things—but love on our part will cover up for their weakness or lack of tact. The love chapter teaches that love is not rude or “doth not behave itself unseemly.” (1 Corinthians 13 : 5.) Love also overlooks the rudeness of others—love covers a host of sins.

LOVE OVERLOOKS FAULTS OF VARIOUS KINDS

The more you are around certain people, the more faults you will see. The closer members of the church are to one another, the more problems surface between brethren. Why? The more time spent together brings more opportunities to disagree, and to "rub others the wrong way," to say things that do not "set well with them," etc. This is why husbands and wives have their fusses. Brothers and sisters have their arguments as well. They are with one another a lot. This must not cause a couple to separate or a family not to speak to one another. It should not cause us not to get close to others. With fellowship and closeness come problems at times, but we must not be discouraged and "throw the baby out with the bath water." Overlook the faults of others and minimize problems.

In the Bible we read of two sisters who had a confrontation. In Luke 10 Martha complained to Jesus that Mary was not doing her share. Jesus defended Mary with the words, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." (See Luke 10 : 38-42.) It is so easy to criticize others, when we have a lack of love. 1 Corinthians 13 : 5 says, "love thinketh no evil." Some versions say that "love keeps no record of wrongs." Yes, love covers a multitude of sins.

One could continue with other instances of problem situations often seen in our lives. Love overlooks those who talk too much. Job is a great Bible example of patience in suffering and also patience with his three talkative friends. (James 5 : 10, 11; Job 4-31.) Love is patient or "long-suffering." (1 Corinthians 13 : 4.) Love also rejects feelings of jealousy. Saul was extremely jealous of David but Jonathan loved David so much, he rejected any feelings of envy. The Bible says that love "envieth not." (1 Corinthians 13 : 4.) Paul continued that love "rejoiceth not in iniquity (not in the sins of others), but rejoiceth in the truth. (1 Corinthians 13 : 6.) Love does not gossip and find fault and spread tales. Why? Because love covers a multitude of sins. In the church we need more of this kind of love. When you have

attitude problems between you and your brother or sister in Christ, please take an extra large dose of charity. Yes, "charity shall cover a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4 : 8).

The Grace of God

Kenneth L. Randolph

There is no grander theme than the grace of God; it is marvelous in its manifestation and glorious in its power. The wonder of it is that "His grace reaches me." Titus 2 : 11-14 is a passage that answers three questions about grace.

I. WHAT HAS GRACE BROUGHT? "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men . . ." (vs. 11.) Grace brought salvation in promise of the Old Testament: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. . . ." (1 Peter 1 : 10.) Grace brought salvation in person when Christ came into the world. Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and said, "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation . . ." (Luke 2 : 30.) When Christ died, was buried, arose from the dead, and ascended back to the Father, and when the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to preach the gospel (Acts 2), it was then that grace brought salvation in perfection. "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. . ." (Romans 1 : 16.) Wherever the gospel is heard, believed and obeyed, grace brings salvation.

II. WHAT HAS GRACE TAUGHT? Grace teaches us how to live and where to live. Regarding how we are to live, grace teaches that there are negative and positive poles to Christianity. Negatively, we must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. (vs. 12.) Christians cannot be conformed to this world. Our associations, alliances and actions must be such as to keep us separate. (Romans 12 : 1, 2; 2 Corinthians 6 : 17.) We are to abstain from

fleshly lusts that war against the soul. (1 Peter 2 : 11.) Positively, grace teaches us to live soberly, righteously and godly. (vs. 12.) Our lives say more than our words. Christianity is a life lived in moderation regarding things acceptable and in abstention from things sinful. It is a life that is governed by the two great commandments—love to neighbour and love to God; righteously and godly.

Grace also teaches us where to live. God designed Christianity to be lived "in this present world" (vs. 12), which is this present evil world. (Galatians 1 : 4). But the world never gets too wicked for God's grace to be manifested and for the Christian life to be lived. Christianity was born into a world filled with idolatry, inequity, and iniquity. Practically every known "god" was worshipped. Society was made up of the exceedingly rich and exceedingly poor, and of slaves and free. "Immorality was openly displayed. Divorce multiplied so rapidly that eventually family life decayed. Suicide and infanticide became so common as to cause no comment. One writer says that baby skeletons by the cartload could be taken from the bottom of the Tiber River." (Hester).

Yet Christianity flourished in that evil world. It taught God incarnated in Christ to abolish idolatry; oneness in the body of Christ to abolish inequity; and cleansing in the blood of Christ to abolish iniquity. The preaching and practice of the gospel will do the same today. But just as surely as grace teaches us how to live in this present world, it does so by setting our affections on the world to come. (Colossians 3 : 1-4.) It makes us always aware and keeps us ever expectant of "the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (vs. 13).

Although we live on earth our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for our Saviour who shall change this earthly body into the likeness of his glorious body. (Philippians 3 : 20, 21.) God's grace is never designed simply to make this world a better place to live; its aim is to make the inhabitants of this world fit to live in a better place. It keeps our hearts turned homeward and heavenward.

III. WHAT HAS GRACE WROUGHT? The grace of God satisfies the needs of mankind. Man was lost in sin and needed a vicarious sacrifice; he needed to be ransomed from sin and the grave, and he belonged to Satan and not to God. He was Christless, countryless, covenantless, hopeless and Godless. (Ephesians 2 : 12). So what did God's grace accomplish? (1) Christ gave himself for us; (2) in order that he might redeem us from all iniquity; and (3) that we might become his people, purified and zealous. (vs. 14.) No wonder we sing :

“Marvelous grace, infinite grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within,
Marvelous grace, infinite grace,
Grace that is greater than all my sin.”

Rivers of Living Water

Perry B. Cotham

“Jssus stood and cried, saying. If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive : for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7 : 37-39).

Jesus connects this promise with his glorification. The Lord said to his apostles, “It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you” (John 16 : 7).

He also promised them, “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth : for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these

shall he speak : and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come" (John 16 : 13).

Jesus baptized the apostles in the Holy Spirit. They revealed and confirmed all truth in the first century. The apostles could lay their hands on some saved people, and give them spiritual gifts (Acts 8 : 18; 1 Cor. 12 : 1-31). The spiritual gifts were to guide the disciples until the word was written and confirmed (1 Cor. 14 : 1-32).

The apostles gave the world all the truth it is necessary for man to know in order for man to be saved. Disciples of the first century received special assistance, until this truth was put into the permanent form of a book. Today the teaching of the book directs people, and not an immediate action of the Spirit.

The word of God is not the Holy Spirit, but it is the medium through which the Holy Spirit guides and dwells within us today. The Spirit inspired holy men to write the holy scriptures (2 Tim. 3 : 16-17; 2 Peter 1 : 21). When the holy scriptures influence us, the Holy Spirit is influencing us.

The Bible is the words of the Spirit. That Book can make the obedient believer perfect in the holy eyes of God. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3 : 16-17). The Bible is sufficient. It is all-sufficient. It is alone sufficient.

To imply, by seeking some direct guidance of the Spirit apart from the word of truth, that the Bible is not sufficient to make sinful man right with God is to accuse God the Spirit of being impotent. The Word of God is all powerful to accomplish the divine purpose for man. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel : for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1 : 16). To deny the power of the gospel by seeking for some direction outside the gospel is to be ashamed of the gospel, and a shame to the gospel.

The living water flowing from within the believer was the

preaching of the gospel. The preaching was done, at first, by inspired men who were told audibly what to say by the Spirit of God. Faithful servants of Christ today preach that same perfect, powerful gospel as they are guided by the Spirit through the written word of God. Whether the word is spoken, as in the case of the Spirit to the apostles (John 16 : 13), or the word is written, as in the case of the Spirit to people today, the message is the same. In either case, it is the word of God. God's word is living and active (Heb. 4 : 13). By the living word, living waters flow from within the saints, and offer spiritual blessings to the world.

The thirsty may come to Christ and drink from the life giving stream. Jesus promised, "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life" (John 4 : 14).

Jesus blesses his disciples so they may be a blessing to others. We receive to give. We are conduits through which may pass the gospel of salvation. The saved have in themselves a "well of water springing up unto eternal life," and "from within shall flow (to others) rivers of living water."

ARE YOU?

Are you an active member,
The kind that would be missed?
Or are you just contented
That your name is on the list?
Do you attend the meetings
And mingle with the flock,
Or do you stay at home
And criticize and knock?
Do you ever go and visit
A member that is sick
Or leave the work for just a few
And talk about the clique?
Come to the meeting often
And help with hand and heart!
Don't be just a member.
But take an active part.
Think this over, member,
You do know right from wrong;
Are you an active member,
Or do you just belong?

Anonymous

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(See Rule 8)

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