



REUNION



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ANTICIPATION OF CHRISTMAS IS ANTICIPATION OF THE ULTIMATE IN VALUE But, why anticipate Christmas?

Christmas really is the celebration of the real historical and factual birth of Jesus Christ.

Prior to His Incarnation, prior to the Annunciation during which the Blessed Ever Virgin Mary agreed to be His mother provided she would "no not man" - that is, remain a virgin - and that her motherhood would be through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit - which in itself is an awesome factual concept - prior to this He Whom we call by the name Jesus Christ was the Word. His nature was Divine Nature, and in the workings of God best known and comprehended only by God He was as He remains, God, and What we reverently refer to as The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

The Incarnation itself is astounding. In the Incarnation the purely Divine Word remained totally Divine and also became flesh, a true and complete human being.

Then, after the normal human period of gestation, this one Person of not-created eternal Divine Nature *and* created totally human nature, was born. This birth was the birth of the Son of God, Son of Man, Jesus Christ.

A family which is desperate for the birth of a child anticipates that event with great focus, preparation, and

perhaps some anxiety. Whether it was aware of it or not, the material world was desperate for this the birth of the Saviour. Without the Saviour there was no complete access to God. Those who had died in holiness probably had a pleasant enough existence in the afterlife, but no union with God. The difficulty of living in holiness without the access to Grace which we have through the Sacrifice of God to God, through Divine Liturgy - Mass, is something no person of today should wish to experience.

The Angelic world anticipated the Birth of God whom these very Angels had known since the instant of their own creation. The Angels at the very least knew God desired this birth and this Person's life in the material world which would follow. Perhaps some of them, or most or all of them, grasped the importance to humankind and not just the material world but all of creation - material and spiritual. Whatever the extent of their knowledge and comprehension, underlying their joy and anticipation was the knowledge this was the will of God Whom they all loved and served.

We focus on the event of the Birth of Jesus Christ, as it were, reminiscing our envisioning of the event in focus on Baby Jesus and the events which occurred at the time of His birth and shortly thereafter.

We do this with knowledge of His life, teachings, Passion, Sacrificial death, and Resurrection which made holiness accessible to us.

By His birth, Jesus began that which is the only means by which we are able to attain true peace, love, and that which is truly of value.

Ref: 1Cor:4:1-5; Luke 3:1-6

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WINNING THE BATTLE

Have you ever wondered how Simeon or Anna obtained the necessities of life? How did they procure food, clothing, and shelter - just the basics? There were traditions of the Jewish faith which assisted those in their situations who lived within the Temple precincts; but the thought is applicable to our day and time as well.

Over five percent of our countrymen who desire to be employed are unemployed without any realistic prospects of obtaining gainful employment in the foreseeable future. Many times more than that are underemployed, barely able to sustain life.

And there is nothing the average citizen is able to do about these situations even if they desire so-to-do, primarily because the other average citizens are concerned with grabbing as much as they possibly can grab and not with the welfare of anyone - not even their own welfare.

God knew this when He became Incarnate - when He took on a human nature, was born, taught, and embraced His Passion and Death as Supreme Sacrificial Victim.

In these we must find the comfort of Hope. Yes, we are able to find Hope for the eternal salvation of those who are grabbers. But it is difficult to find Hope for those in worldly or physical world necessitous circumstances.

The only Hope for those who are not able to obtain the necessities of physical life is the true Christianization of our society and of our entire world.

In the time since the Resurrection mankind had come close to true Christianization of a large majority of the people

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The sole purpose of this publication is to comply with the teachings and instructions of Jesus Christ, second person of the Trinity God, and to further His kingdom; or, in plain language, to get as many of our sorry selves to heaven as is possible.

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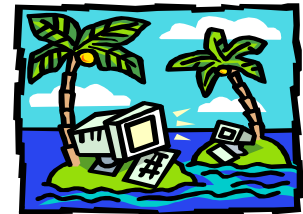
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LETTERS



(The Editors reserve the right to reject any submissions, and to edit as necessary. Letters must be typed, single space, signed, and include the sender's name address, and day and evening telephone numbers - If your typed letter is accompanied by an ASCII DOS Text copy on a floppy, we will thank you with extra prayers - Ed.)

SUGGESTIONS REGARD-

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ING SELECTING A SPIRITUAL ADVISOR / CONFESSOR and considerations regarding means of discussions

(Dear) Fr. Paul,

. . . my wife and I are very tired from decades of excruciating confusion and mutual anathemas hurled in every direction . . . protestant, Latin and Orthodox . . . I was protestant . . . years a Roman Catholic, revolving through the Vatican II, Traditionalist, "conservative" camps ad nauseum, and then baptized into the Orthodox Church (Russian) . . . my wife and I (are) tired and 'undone', but needing quietude and honest reflection right now. (Can you help?)

Txxxxxxx

(Dear) Txxxxxxx,

. . .

Neither e-mail nor telephone are good mediums for serious or in depth discussions. Even video conferencing falls far short of the face to face, physical presence. Body language, attitude evident only in physical presence, and even smell, all of the senses, are of extreme importance in serious communication.

It therefore may be most beneficial to you if you are able to find a good confessor / spiritual advisor.

In considering a Confessor / Spiritual Advisor:

You may wish to avoid:

Avoid, anyone with an attitude which seems to say, "I am so holy I walk on water";

Avoid the charismatic;

Avoid those who seem to always be so serious they apparently are unable to enjoy the wonderfulness God has provided for and to us;

Avoid a Priest who does not at least occasionally smile for no apparent reason;

Avoid one who is not happy at least occasionally; (Remember, if you do not know how to smile, you will not be allowed into Heaven, for there are no frowns in Heaven. Just be sure you are smiling about something which God says is OK.)

Avoid those who condemn or ridicule Priests / Clergy of Jurisdictions of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church other

than their own. Examples: Orthodox who ridicule or condemn Rome; Romans who ridicule or condemn Orthodox. From the Orthodox perspective regarding Rome: in the 1600's the Russian Synod asked the Russian Patriarch to examine the validity of Roman Holy Orders and Sacraments. After exhaustive and extensive study and consideration, the Patriarch informed the Synod that Roman Sacraments and Holy Orders were valid. This upset the Synod, but after their own consideration the Synod also acknowledged the validity of Rome's Priesthood and Sacraments. Also, in this vein, remember, Anglicans / Episcopalians are not part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. They abdicated and renounced their

membership under King Henry VIII for they did not schism from Rome but rather started a new religion and renounced all of the Sacraments, including the Priesthood (Holy Orders) except for the Eucharist. Shortly after the Death of Henry VIII the Church of England also renounced the Eucharist.

You may be best served by and therefore may find desirable:

Desirable: a validly ordained Priest;

Desirable: one who, while he is obviously aware of and acknowledges the awesomeness of the Sacraments, also is aware of, experiences, and expresses joy and happiness in their administration. A Penitent is not best served by either the doom and gloom "damn you to Hell" approach, nor by the glib, do not worry about it, God loves you and

will therefore let you into Heaven approach. God loves everyone in Hell, that is why He sends them to Hell . . . the alternative being to have them cease existing . . . for they can not be allowed into Heaven / into eternal union with Him. Hell therefore is the only alternative. But a Priest who expresses awareness of the relief and the experience of Grace - Divine Essence - which accompanies

Confession, or reception of the Sacred Eucharist, will usually also have an inclination to being happy, and to smile.

You may find it necessary to consider a Priest who is not in your particular Jurisdiction. Some Parish Pastors are great at Divine Liturgy, sermons, generalized public discussions, making a Parish function; and absolutely horrible when it comes to spiritual direction or Sacramental Confession.

If your Confessor has Parish scheduled times for Confessions try to not seek extensive spiritual advice during those times unless he indicates that is OK. Often those periods are limited in duration and he may have many people seeking assistance. Ask him if he is able to or inclined to schedule an appointment for more time consuming needs. Also, remember a Priest is not able to function without rest - he is not a machine.

I do not know if there are many Orthodox Churches near you. This factor may make these suggestions difficult to implement.

If you focus on your own attaining holiness, maintaining holiness, and increasing in holiness, without being a "pious snob", even though you likely will constantly experience failure in the endeavor to attain holiness you will have success and will in the endeavor provide good example. You will teach The Way by following The Way.

Christ's Peace,

Fr. Paul

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(Continued **BATTLE** from page 1)

in various regions and countries. But never all at the same time, and it never seemed to last for very many years.

The United States of America seems to have sustained its Christian "flavor" - if you will - for almost two hundred years. But it too is melting into Paganism even while pretending to be Christian.

But those who would be Godly do have a very strong, even a very mighty, tool with which they are able to force the un-Godly into at least acting in a moral manner even if they are not moral and are not and do not intend to act morally. That tool is the control of one of the Pagan gods - money.

When Phil Robertson, of the popular TV show Duck Dynasty, was asked about his views regarding homosexuality, his answer and comments were generally in accordance with Biblical teachings. Homosexual activities are a sin. A&E, the network that carries the show, suspended him. Cracker Barrel, a restaurant and store chain, immediately removed all of the Duck Dynasty products from its stores. The network and the stores basically stated they would have nothing to do with anyone who did not support homosexual activities - in effect the network and the restaurant - store chain held the position they would not have anything to do with anyone who did not support one of the most disgusting and deviant of sexual perversion and sins.

The Christian community responded by in effect stating, that it has a right to make its position of supporting Biblical morality known, and that those who support Biblical morality have the right to express their support, **AND** that they would not support those who discriminate against those who support Biblical morality.

Viewer ship on A&E dropped off dramatically.

Cracker Barrel restaurants, usually so crowded on Sundays that a fifteen minute wait for a table is considered a short wait, by visual assessment had less than ten percent of its normal customers.

There was absolutely no waiting period for a table.

And the customers of both A&E and Cracker Barrel made known that the reason for their withholding patronage from the two businesses was because they support Biblical morality and oppose anyone and any organization or company which discriminates against those who support Biblical morality.

It required less than a week for Duck Dynasty, with Phil Robertson, to be placed back on the A&E schedule, and for Duck Dynasty products to be returned to the shelves at Cracker Barrel.

When you get "down to it" the homosexual / lesbian / sexual pervert / pro abortion / advocates of overt sins communities really are a minority. They do pool their money and thereby exert influence much greater than their actual numbers or percentage of the population.

We recently were informed the government can force those who would be moral to purchase that which is immoral - health insurance which provides abortions. Obviously the government can therefore also force those who would be moral to purchase meals at a pro homosexuality and pro sexual perversion Cracker Barrel.

But until that happens, we are able to cram morality down their evil throats by withholding our dollars from their coffers and thereby forcing them to change.

We won the Cracker Barrel battle. Let's win the next one the same way.

Ref: Gal 4:1-7; Luke 2:33-40

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PART OF BEING HUMAN IS THAT SOME ASSEMBLY IS REQUIRED

A radio announcer recently termed this time of the year as, "The Season Of Some Assembly Required".

This was rather astute on his part. However, the concept should not be limited to the assembly of toys and gifts, but, rather, should be applied to life. Life, or the period of time between birth and death, is the season of some assembly required.

God gives us all the essentials. Our future depends on what we do with those essentials.

Some people proceed through life grabbing as much as possible with both hands. When they die their hands relax, all that they have grabbed falls from their hands, and other people grab what the decedent once held on to so tightly. This appears to be, and is, rather useless.

Other people attempt to utilize that with which God has endowed them to make themselves into someone whom God values and of whom God approves. To the extent this is accomplished at the time of each such person's death the accomplishment is not lost by death.

In the past it was accurate to state that **most people engaged in digging a deep pit to hell and at the same time building a tower to heaven.**

At the time of their death, if the tower was swallowed up by the pit, they went to hell. If a portion of the tower rose above the lip of the pit, they went to heaven.

But today it seems that most people either dig the pit or build the tower - or attempt to build the tower.

While the focus of these activities appears to be each individual human, or some of humankind, or all of

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humankind (chose whichever you wish) the focus actually is on God and one's personal relationship with God.

Humans find approaching The Blessed Trinity through Jesus Christ to be both easier and more simple than approaching and establishing a good relationship directly with the Triune God primarily because Jesus is both totally God and totally human. It is not necessarily easier but it is more simple to relate to someone who shares the same human nature innate to one's self.

Far too often we humans perceive but do not truly comprehend what we perceive. Surprisingly, there is a lesson to be learned in something as simple, or seemingly simple, as liturgical colors. The Priest wears violet or purple during Great Lent and Advent, and on specific feasts. This color is often thought of as a reminder to be somber, to have and to do penance, and similar concepts. But one is well served if one remembers that purple also is known as Royal Purple - sometimes it is named Royal Blue.

Therefore, Great Lent and Advent must be remembered not only as somber times of penance and preparation, but also as times which announce the approach, coming, and arrival of the King of Kings.

Pay attention to assembling yourself into one of whom God will approve, one whom God will value. Make sure your tabs and slots are properly joined, your nuts and bolts properly tightened, and do not wait until the last minute to begin the assembly because if you attempt to do a "rushed job" you will most assuredly make a mistake and you might not have sufficient time to correct the error.

Oh, and try to not lose any of the parts - any of your parts.

Ref: 1Cor:4:1-5; Luke 3:1-6

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INDUCING TO BE HOLY WORKS BUT FORCING "GOOD" CONDUCT IS OF TEMPORARY EFFECT AT BEST

Saint John the Forerunner, John the Baptist, could have easily lead a political movement and gained earthly power and earthly influence either on his own or in collaboration with the existing political structure - Roman, Jew, or both. And by so doing he might have been able to exercise an influence that would have resulted in positive social changes. But in all likelihood such efforts and such changes would not have resulted in the salvation of a single soul. Such efforts also would not have been in harmony with the vocation God had offered to him and which he had accepted.

Saint John sought to alert people to the reality that each person's spiritual health was - and remains to this day - more important than anything else. He sought to alert people to the pending revelation that the Saviour - a unique Person who is both God and man, of the Divine Nature and of human nature combined in one Person - was amongst us and beginning to teach and to prove His identity, and that the Saviour would offer Himself as the Supreme Sacrifice in accordance with the prophecies of Sacred Scripture.

Which, of course, Christ did do.

Our Saviour could have imposed His will and teachings upon all of mankind, forcing people to be good, forcing people to not harm each other, but that would not have resulted in those people who were forced becoming holy or attempting to become holy. Attempting to become holy and becoming holy and maintaining holiness are acts of free will which include being good and avoiding evil as means and methods. Forcing people to be good and to avoid evil does not impose holiness but merely imposes conduct and to the extent free will is impeded, imposed, or even destroyed, to that extent the person so effected becomes more and more like a pre-programmed lamb, or lion, or broccoli - all of which have no quality or characteristic even remotely

approaching human free will.

People become holy, or attempt to become holy, or consider holiness as a potential objective or as being desirable, individually - one by one. People do not so do as a group or association, though individual members of a group or association may be influenced so to do by a common experience or all at the same time. But the actual effect is individual.

Also, while a class of people or a selection of individual people who share common qualities or characteristics, may seem to share desirable or undesirable attributes or to engage in desirable or undesirable activities, each individual must be considered as that, as an individual.

By way of example: It is tempting to state that all rich people obtained their money without working for it, or by improperly using the efforts of other people, and that therefore it is proper to tax rich people and redistribute their wealth to those people who do not have as much money. But such statements about how the rich became rich are not true. An appreciably large percentage of those who are often classified as rich became wealthy through their own diligent hard work, severe sacrifice, often at the risk of losing all their material possessions. To tax such a person's wealth and redistribute it to those who are less wealthy is nothing more than organized theft utilizing government agencies and supported by those who anticipate receiving a portion of the loot.

Inducing the wealthy to utilize their wealth for the good of others must be based in inducing the wealthy to utilize their wealth to establish and to maintain holiness in themselves and in those who benefit from their wealth if there is to be any lasting, positive effect.

Similarly, it is tempting to state that all labor union officials are corrupt and utilize member's dues to influence political campaigns which corrupt both the labor union officials and the politicians. It is tempting to state that labor union contributions to political campaigns corrupt the politicians and induce the politicians to create useless jobs by which

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members of the unions benefit. And, of course, it is viable to substitute the term corporations or businesses for labor unions.

But what if a politician is induced to perceive the health of his or her immortal soul as being of paramount importance, and to starkly and objectively assess their spiritual health? What if the same happens to the labor union official and to the corporate or business official? Would there not be a greater potential for a lasting good effect for all involved and effected - the officials, employees, workers, tax payers, citizens? Of course there would.

For so long as sinful methods are utilized in an attempt to attain social justice, good conduct, good behavior, and fairness, the attempts will not only be without success but will be assured of inculcating evil and varying levels of anarchy as character traits in every individual and group touched in any manner by such attempts.

It is only through holy methods that there is the potential for any success in improving the human status; and holy methods, as shown by the example given by God Himself, exclude force and coercion.

Of course, the reward to the evil is, yes, imposed by God. So one might state God does use force. But in actuality God simply enacts His will upon the evil in accordance with the desires of the evil as expressed through their thoughts and deeds. Similar in manner to the enactment of His will upon those who have expressed their desire to be holy through their thoughts and acts.

Ref: Philipp 4:4-7; John 1:19-28

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ACKNOWLEDGING GOD

The Jews as a people awaited the coming of the Messiah. But for the most part, the Jews, as a people, refused to acknowledge Him when He was born, refused to acknowledge Him during His life and His time of active teaching in Person on Earth, refused to acknowledge Him in His Passion and death, and refused to acknowledge Him in and after His resurrection.

So what is so unusual?

Christ's birth was announced by a bunch of angels singing in the Heavens and in the sky. A lot of people saw and experienced this, and ignored it. As though it were a common occurrence, which it was not. It was a unique, one time, occurrence. His birth was also announced by a star, a unique star never seen before or since. A lot of people saw it, and ignored it. As though it were a common occurrence, which it was not. It was a unique, one time, occurrence.

Christ spent three years engaged in intensive teaching. He gave testimony and proof of the viability and authority of His teaching and actions such as forgiving sins, by working miracles of every type and nature including: restoring the dead to life, curing every disease including the incurable, restoring limbs and body parts which had been severed or withered, creating food out of nothing, making storms stop, walking on water, disappearing from the midsts of crowds, knowing everything about every person He met. When He was murdered He rose again from the dead and stayed alive appearing to thousands of people over a period of forty days, and then ascended into Heaven in the presence of a multitude of witnesses. A lot of people witnessed

these things and ignored them, as though these occurrences were not unusual even though they were unusual, and are and remain rare and unusual; even though the only times any of these miracles were repeated - and not all of them were repeated - it was done by followers of Christ - and then very rarely.

But very many people have faked such things pretending they were working miracles.

One of the "conceptual" reasons people ignore the true Christ, is the same "conceptual" reason people accept the fakes who pretend they are followers of Christ and ignore the true followers of Christ. It is the same "conceptual" reason people become followers of various charlatans. That reason is that God did not present Himself in a manner which such people found acceptable. He did not present Himself in a manner which they expected. He also did not focus on what these people desired, but, rather, focused on what He,

God, desired and desires.

He was not and is not the God they desired. They therefore ignore Him, or attempt to re-make Him into the image and likeness they desire.

Why does not God do something about this? Well, God does do something about this. But just as we do not possess the ability to know or to comprehend God's criteria for intervention in the affairs of mankind, so too are we unable to know or to comprehend God's

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criteria for reacting to people's ignoring Him or ignoring His instructions. What we do know about how God reacts to people ignoring Him and His desires is that the un-repentant do not spend eternity with God; they spend eternity separated from God.

God actually is very easy to comprehend as regards the responsibility of each human in that person's relationship with God. Ascertain the true God, not something you dream up; ascertain what He desires of you, and not what you wish He would allow; attempt your best to comply with what God wants even if, actually especially if, it is grossly different from what you wish.

Yes, it would be nice if God forced those who hold temporal power and authority to behave themselves. He has done this on occasion, but only rarely, and then, apparently and probably, as a means of identifying Himself to mankind as the one, only, and true, God; as a means of rewarding and of punishing; but mostly, probably, for reasons which we lack the ability to comprehend or appreciate.

But God gave the holders of temporal power and authority the same quality He has given to every human being. The quality of free will. Within the abilities of those who possess free will is the ability to accept God as He really is, and His teachings and desires as they really are; or to create their own god who really does not exist, and impute teachings and desires which are false to either the real God or their own imaginary god.

We celebrate the birth of our Saviour at a set time and prepare for that celebration during a special season. But we really should prepare for His coming every instant of our respective lives. We should approach every instant of our respective lives as though we were seeing and meeting Christ for the first time in our life and for the first time He physically appeared to mankind as God Incarnate.

If we attempt to do this, we will

naturally seek to continually be on our "best behavior" so that we will receive the smile of welcome from the Divine new born baby Who also is the resurrected Christ sitting in judgment at the right hand of the Father.

Ref: Romans 15:4-13; Mat.. 11:2-10

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**THE WEALTHY ARE NOT THE PROBLEM
THOSE WHO SEEK PRIVILEGE ARE THE PROBLEM**

For the Jews the Law of Moses was the Law of God or the applied Law of God which, with the Ten Commandments, the covenants God made with Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the Judges, rulers, and Prophets who came after them, constituted that to which all life - religious, government, commerce, personal relationships, and everything - was subject and governed.

There was no individual or group which was exempt. There were privileges and duties associated with various positions or "offices" but those privileges were designed to assist the incumbents in fulfilling the duties associated with their position or office.

Not even the Ever Virgin Theotokos was exempt from the after childbirth laws and rituals which governed the chosen people. Not even God, once incarnate, Jesus Christ, Who remained completely Divine concurrent with being completely human, not even the Messiah was exempt from the laws which governed the Jews.

Jews of all ranks followed the law, and Jews of all ranks picked and chose which laws they would follow, and Jews of all ranks ignored some or all of the laws. People continue to so do today, not just with God's laws but also with government laws and regulations and social conventions.

There was no Jewish law commanding wealth be spread around. The wealthy were not forced to give to the poor - though the Jewish laws did require the

giving of alms, but not to the extent of making all individuals equally impoverished. We use the term impoverished because when all are of equal wealth all are impoverished except for those in charge of spreading the wealth around. Those in charge of spreading the wealth around always seem to get their "extra" "cut" or "portion".

During Our Lord's time on Earth and in the years immediately following His Resurrection and Ascension, there were a few fake Christians who used His Name or pretended to be His followers, who so did for pecuniary gain or worldly acclaim. The frauds were quickly exposed for what they were and shunned by true Christians.

But those who sought approval of their favorite sins, or of sinful lives, or sought worldly gain or acclaim, under the auspices of Christianity, in the early ears of Christianity as well as today, readily found and find Charlatans who will lead them for a fee, for the famous "seed money".

During Our Lord's time on earth, His only true follower who made any money from being His follower made it through a form of insider trading. And look at what happened to him, at what happened to Judas the Iscariot. Judas simply ignored the law, and suffered horribly for ignoring the law.

The societal and economic woes which have insidiously contaminated humankind mainly result from insider privileged exemption from the laws, regulations, and rules which are supposed to and are designed to be applied equally to all, and from modification of the Natural Law - which follows Divine Law - to accommodate sins which the influential desire to commit.

Let us follow a simple to comprehend example of this form of immorality from Twentieth Century history.

Around the year 1920, the Coroner of New York City examined multiple instances of disability, death, and instances of the development of insanity, in workers in a New Jersey oil refinery.

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After extensive testing the Coroner found tetraethyllead (Tetraethyl lead), produced by the Bayway Refinery in New Jersey, to be the cause. The lead, even in small amounts, effected and destroyed portions of the brain, muscles, nervous system, and adversely effected all bodily functions. New Jersey and several other States immediately restricted the production and use of tetraethyl lead.

But the lead was used in car engines to reduce knocking, boost octane ratings, and as a lubricant to reduce wear of engine valve seats.

The oil companies and automobile executives quickly met with United States President Calvin Coolidge, various members of Congress, and other government officials, and through them blocked the regulation and prohibition of the use of lead in gasoline. This was done despite the findings of the Coroner, and continued for another forty years despite the overwhelming evidence and true scientific proof - not consensus but actual scientific proof - that leaded gasoline, and lead in paint, and more than minute levels of lead, always, **ALWAYS**, causes damage to the brain and body: even insanity, and even death.

Incidentally, recent studies establish a direct link to an increase in violence in humans and in animals after nominal exposure to the fumes from leaded gasoline. The effects apparently are permanent. Most of the world stopped using leaded gasoline during the period between 1924 and the 1970's. But the Middle East - Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and other countries - continued to use leaded gasoline into the late 1990's. It was not banned for on-road vehicles in the USA until 1995. Perhaps this is a factor in the propensity for violent terrorism, and apparently irrational behavior detrimental to everyone, which seems to be prevalent in the Middle East. It may also be a factor in the apparent insanity which seems to have fumigated Washington D. C.

It is immoral envy or some other form

of immorality to begrudge the owners of Standard Oil and its successors, and of General Motors, the wealth they honestly earned. They should be able to do with it what they wish, provided what they wish is not the seeking of privilege or exemption from the laws, regulations, and rules which are to apply to everyone.

It is not just the wealthy who seek the enactment of special laws and regulations for themselves; or exemption from various laws, regulations, and rules; or from the Natural Law; or from God's instructions. Some people in every social and economic class seek privilege, just as people in every social and economic class attempt to follow God's instructions, the Natural Law, and proper societal and government laws, regulations, rules, and norms.

But those who seek to follow propriety do not cause problems. Only those who seek exemption from or modification of propriety cause problems.

In so doing they in actually state in mind, heart, voice, and deed, "I will not serve." In his lamentations, Jeremiah informs us the people of Israel expressed their rejection of God by stating, "I will not serve." Our Lord, when the Apostles showed pride in being able to command demons and to heal, said, "I watched Satan fall like lightning from Heaven," (*Luke 10:18*), thus giving us warning against not just pride but against seeking privilege, seeking to be like or greater than God. Indeed, the very first sin of humankind was to seek to be like God, to be gods.

No, it is not being wealthy which causes problems. Nor should the wealthy be penalized for being wealthy, or for not doing with their wealth what other humans would like them to do.

It is those who will not serve, those who will not follow what is established under God's direction for the good of all, those who seek exemption from what all are supposed to do, those who seek privilege, which causes problems. And the most commonly sought privilege is that of making other people do what the privilege seeker desires.

Ref: Mal. 3:1-4; Luke 2:22-32

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JUST MAKE SURE YOU ARE SMILING ABOUT SOMETHING OF WHICH GOD APPROVES

Our Lord knew there were many Jews and many leaders of the Jews who rejected Him as the Messiah, and would continue to reject Him as the Messiah. He knew there were many who gave lip service to the Law of Moses, the Ten Commandments, and the instructions for moral living given by God the Father, but who really did not follow those Laws, Commandments, and instructions. He knew what would befall these people, and the entire Jewish nation, because of these failures. Yet Our Lord continued with His mission. And, He was happy and filled with joy. People seem to attempt to avoid "sour pussess".

We should likewise realize many people will reject or otherwise ignore our teaching The Way by our example, and by our attempts to live The Way. Many people will ignore or reject our moral conversations and suggestions. Just as Our Lord continued with His mission, so too should we continue with our mission of attempting to be holy, of attempting to live lives of holiness, and of making moral suggestions as appropriate - despite those rejections.

While we should avoid any sense of false pride, or of complacency, there also is **NO NEED** that we constantly exhibit a feverish fervor of morality and holiness. Simply living our lives in a moral manner seeking personal holiness is much more effective than living a life of feverish fervor. It is usually much more effective for our own personal salvation, and in influencing others into the path of eternal salvation.

Some who seek to attain eternal salvation appear to have forgotten that God created the various delights of this

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world, that we might partake thereof as appropriate to our station in life and within His rules of propriety. They proceed through life with long faces. When a smile attempts to exist on their face it is as though granite were splitting asunder and attempting to reform its shape. If happy laughter were to attempt to be conceived within them, and actually attempt to be born, an observer would be under the impression these people believe the results would be disastrous in unimaginable proportions.

What a sorry condition - it is just as sorry a condition as that condition wherein sin is the main goal, focus, and purpose in someone's life.

Everyone should welcome every proper opportunity for happiness, laughter, joy, and their siblings. In this life, even for those who do not dwell in adversity, such opportunities are infrequent.

But in the next life, if you do not know how to smile, you might not be allowed into Heaven because frowns and disgruntledness are not only not allowed in Heaven, they can not exist in Heaven.

Just make sure that if you are smiling in this life, that you are smiling about something which meets with God's approval, or at least is not something which He has prohibited.

Provided one maintains Divine parameters, humor, joy, laughter, comfort, and happiness are without other boundaries.

An adolescent - ten or twelve year old - may find the inadvertent flatulation of a stodgy elderly prudish person in Church to be extremely humorous. One would expect, and hope, a thirty-five year old who finds the situation to also be humorous, would express that appreciation in a more reserved manner than the adolescent.

One who has completed a day of hard physical labor may properly find peace and relaxation in a cleansing hot shower

followed by the leisurely consumption of a spirituous beverage - peace and relaxation being elements of happiness.

A homeless and destitute person may find a measure of comfort in the inside corner of a wall down an unfrequented alley, under a cardboard box.

if you do not know how to smile, you might not be allowed into Heaven

A newly wed couple has the potential for years of joyful adventures just in their relationship.

Accept the potentials for joy which God

places in your daily path. He places them there because He really does wish you to be happy. It is the other one, the one who is not God but who often pretends to be, who does not want you to laugh.

Ref: 1 Cor. 10:6-13; Luke 19:41-47

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LIFE IN DEATH

One of the most difficult tasks a true Christian faces is to be dead to this world while yet living in this world. It is very difficult to be dead to this world yet remain in it and function in it, both of which we must do. We must supply ourselves and those dependant upon us with food, clothing, shelter, and the necessities of life. We must also discover that which God has created and the nature and interactions of creation for our own use and benefit, and also thereby better learn the intricacies of God's creation that we may not only better comprehend and appreciate God and His works but also more completely and properly worship and glorify God through that increased comprehension and appreciation.

While doing these things we must always remain focused on God, not as the Devil is focused on God, but as the Angels in Heaven are focused on God.

. . . we must always remain focused on God, not as the Devil is focused on God, but as the Angels in Heaven are focused on God.

We are not limited to seeking and obtaining just the necessities of life. Not only is there nothing immoral in seeking and obtaining that which is beyond the bare necessities of life, there is also nothing immoral in seeking and obtaining the luxuries which this life affords. But it is immoral, possibly dammingly immoral, to neglect those who are in need and without the wherewithal to provide that which they need if we are in a position to assist them, especially if we are able assist them out of our surplus. And it is dammingly immoral to loose the Angels' focus on God and replace it with a focus on the things of this life be they necessities, that which is beyond the necessities, or luxuries.

We must exercise great care in training focus on the necessities of life, for in the same course in which each necessity runs lies sinful excess, sometimes so subtle in nature as to be oblique. Proper cleanliness, grooming, and physical fitness can easily become an obsessive focus on health supplements, physical appearance, clothes, biceps, a "six pack abs" appearance, fake breasts, fake buttocks, tush tucks, and face lifts. The need for nourishment is in the same course in which lies gluttony and drunkenness. Even the inability to obtain necessities lies in a highway of excess: the excessive absence of perception and focus on God, and often

the excessive perception of being abandoned, which dead ends in despair.

And so it is with every aspect of life, that the approach to that which is necessitous lies in but one course. But each individual may focus in that course on that which will bring eternal damnation or on that which will bring eternal glorified union with God.

We die to this world not by ignoring this world. We die to this world, to creation, to the creature, to the created, by keeping it in proper perspective. One method of obtaining that proper perspective is to stand the created along

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CHILDREN'S PAGE

CHILD'S BIBLE HISTORY



BIBLE HISTORY FOR CHILDREN

(Continued)

21. The Birth of Moses

THE descendants of Jacob became very numerous in Egypt. They were called Israelites because God had given to Jacob the name of Israel. They were also known by the name of Hebrews.

2. Now there arose a new king of Egypt, who knew not Joseph. He oppressed the Israelites with burdens and hard labor. At last Pharaoh said to the Egyptians: "Cast into the river all the male children that are born of Hebrew parents!"

3. Then it came to pass that a Hebrew mother bore a son; and seeing that he was very beautiful, she hid him for three months. But not being able to keep him any longer, she laid the babe in a basket of reeds, and placed it in the sedges of the river. The boy's sister stood a little way off, to see what would happen.

4. But behold! the daughter of Pharaoh came down to the river. When she saw the basket among the bulrushes, she sent one of her maids to fetch it. On opening the basket she saw a lovely child that was crying piteously. She had compassion on the infant, and said:



FINDING OF MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES

"Alas! This is one of the Hebrew babes."

5. The child's sister then came up to her and asked: "May I call a Hebrew mother to nurse the babe?"

6. The princess answered: "Yes, go!"

Full of joy, the girl went and called her mother. When the mother of the babe had come, Pharaoh's daughter said to her: "Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will give thee thy wages."

7. So she took the child and nursed him. And when he had grown up, she brought him to the king's daughter, who adopted him as her son, and said: "His name shall be Moses, for I have rescued him from the waters."

QUESTIONS

1. *By what two names were the descendants of Jacob called?*

2. *What did the new king do to the Israelites?*

3. *Who gave birth to a man-child? Where did she place the basket?*

4. *Who came to the river and saw the basket?*

5. *What did the sister of the child say?*

6. *What did the princess say to the mother of the child?*

7. *Who adopted the child when he had grown up?*

How did she call him?

22. The Flight of Moses The Burning Bush

MOSES was reared at the court of Pharaoh, and instructed in all the learning of Egypt. But when he was grown up, and saw the misery of the Israelites, he resolved to help them. So he left the palace of the king, and openly declared himself as the friend of his countrymen. Pharaoh therefore sought to kill him; but Moses fled into the land of Madian. In this country he came to a priest, called Jethro. He lived

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CHILDREN'S PAGE

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 with Jethro for forty years, and fed his flocks.

2 One day he drove his sheep to the inner parts of the desert. There the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire, which was in the midst of a bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire, and yet was not burnt. He wondered at it, and went nearer to see why the bush was not burnt. But the Lord called to him: "Come not nigh hither. Put off the shoes from thy feet; for the ground upon which thou standest is holy. I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, Issac and Jacob." Moses hid his face, and durst not look at God.

3. Thereupon God said to him: "I have seen the affliction of My people in Egypt, and have heard their crying. I will deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians, and bring them into the land of Chanaan. I will send thee to Pharao, and thou shalt lead My people out of Egypt. I will be with thee.

4. Moses answered: "The Israelites will not believe me. They will say: The Lord has not appeared to thee." Then God said to Moses: "Take thy rod and cast it down upon the ground." Moses did so; and the rod was turned into a serpent, so that Moses fled from it in terror. And the Lord said: "Put out thy hand, and take it by the tail." Moses did so; and the serpent became again a rod. Then the Lord spoke again: "Show this sign to the Israelites, and they will believe thee."

5. So Moses returned to Egypt; and Aaron his brother, sent by God, came to meet him. They went together to assemble the people of Israel. Aaron related to them all the words of the Lord; while Moses wrought the sign of the rod and other miracles. Then the people believed, and falling down they adored God.

QUESTIONS

1. *Why did Moses leave the palace of*

the king?

Who sought to kill him?

Who was Jethro?

2. Whither did Moses drive his sheep one day?

What did he see?

What did he heart

3. What did God purpose to do by the hand of Moses?

4. Was Moses willing to go to the Israelites?

Why?

What happened to his rod?

5. Whom did Moses meet on his return to Egypt?

Did the people believe?

(To be continued)

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MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH

(Continued **DEATH** from page 9)

side its Creator, God, where the created is overwhelmed into comparative nothingness. Only a stupid individual would then chose the created in preference to the Creator. Unfortunately, empirical evidence proves there are innumerable stupid individuals, chief amongst them being the Devil.

But just because creation pales in comparison to the Creator does not mean we ignore creation. Creation is the work of the Creator and therefore is of great importance, of great significance.

Creation, the world, is a manifestation of the ultimate, total, absolute magnificence of God. But it is only a manifestation, an indication, a sign, an example, a result.

We die to this world but we do not ignore it; we keep it in proper perspective. We die to this world because we realize it is but a tool by which we achieve the ultimate goal of union with God. We die to this world because we realize any goal other than God, even if it is ourselves, not only is incapable of being attained, but also is worthless.

Ref: Rom 6:3-11; Mark 8:1-9

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SCANDAL

Which sins did God say it is OK to commit?

The Ten Commandments are not just a list of that which we are not to do; it also is a list of that which we are supposed to do. But neither list is all inclusive nor all exclusionary: not everything we are *not* supposed to do is included, nor is everything we *are* supposed to do included.

Spiritual life and a functional mankind rest on the foundation of The Two Great Commandments. The Ten Commandments provide a framework which rests on that foundation. Covering that framework with functionality as well as "fleshing it out" are the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, divine and corporal virtues, beatitudes, Sacraments, and similar divine aids.

Spiritual life is attacked and made weak, and even killed, by the Seven Deadly Sins, the host of venial sins, sin in general, *and* by failure to engage in that which is holy.

But you, we, already know these things.

We also know, but often fail to appreciate the effect our failure to be holy, and the effect our commission of sins, have on others.

When we sin, or fail to be holy, we give bad example and that bad example is the sin of scandal. It is one of the most severe and potentially damning of sins.

It is actually teaching how to commit sin and that the commission of those sins is permissible.

We not only give scandal by our own acts and omissions, but also by failing to condemn sin. We give scandal when we give excuses for the publicly committed sins of others. We give scandal when we fail to oppose the institutionalization of sins. We give scandal when we fail to oppose government sponsored sin. We do not have to be nasty to someone whose life includes sinning in

a manner which throws the sin into the face of the public - such as homosexuals who live together and expect everyone to accept their perverted sexual behavior, or celebrities who live together and have children outside of marriage. No, we do not have to be nasty to these people, and we actually are not supposed to be nasty to them if we wish to act in a manner which is in harmony with holiness. But we must make it abundantly clear we neither condone nor approve of their sinful conduct and also that we oppose their sinful conduct.

God has clearly stated what is sin and what is sinful.

Therefore, anyone who wishes to give or to receive a free pass on the divine prohibition against sin, or an *exemption* from not sinning, must answer two questions. Name a sin, or the sins, which God says it is OK to commit. Identify where God explicitly states it is OK to commit that sin or those sins.

Then explain why God said those matters were sins, that we are not to engage in them, and then gave the OK to commit them anyway.

If you find something which supports this irrationality, on examination you will discover you were not dealing with God - for God is always consistent, and is never self-contradictory.

In our human imperfection in this life, unlike God, we are allowed a small measure of being self-contradictory in

the reality which is the sins we commit and the holy works we perform. We may and often do experience difficulties in avoiding

committing sin. But we are always able to engage in at least the most simple of holy works.

Even the most slight contemplation of being holy and engaging in holy works reveals this truth: that every sin, no matter how slight, no matter how private, no matter how unknown to others - of course except to God and the sinner

(Continued **SCANDAL** on page 13)

Name a sin, or the sins, which God says it is OK to commit.

(Continued SCANDAL from page 12)

- to some measure prevents and precludes the sinner from being and engaging in holiness.

This ties in to scandal, for we give scandal not only when we sin and thereby give bad example and teach others the lie that evil is acceptable. We also give scandal by failing to be holy and to do that which is holy.

Simple observation informs the observer that the entertainment sector engages in scandal as a regular practice. Not only do actors and actresses in their personal lives engage in every form of sexual promiscuity and general abhorrent behavior, but the characters they portray do the same. Simple observation informs us the same is true regarding government officials - elected and appointed - and that it also is true for all of humankind. Jesus advised us to expect this when He said, "Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come: but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh. (Mat. 18:7)"

We are able to lessen the effect of the scandal we give by endeavoring to be holy, and actually being holy in at least some measure. We need not walk around with what we think is a pious attitude and demeanor. We need but endeavor to follow the Two Great Commandments, and that which is built upon that foundation. If we make the endeavor we will achieve the goal for God will assist us in the endeavor. Then we will become holy, with the ability to increase in holiness. And we will not have to do the impossible, we will not have to try to answer the question, "Which sins did God say it is OK to commit?"

Ref: Eph. 4:1-6; Mat. 22:35-46; 18:1-10

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BEING IN DEBT FOR SERVICES RENDERED Focusing on Divine Services, A Debt of Honor

Because the number of people on the shores of the lake of Genesareth was very large, Jesus went into Simon's (Peter's) boat, had him draw off a little from the shore, where Jesus taught the multitude. Then, even though Peter, James and John, with two boats, had caught nothing the night before, Jesus had Saint Peter go into deeper water, cast his net, and Peter caught fish so that the net was breaking. Saints James and John had to assist him with the other boat. And Peter, James, and John joined the first called, Saint Andrew, leaving all things.

Undoubtedly, Saint Zebedee, the father of James and John, brought the fish to market.

Consider this situation in a manner different from the traditional concept that it is a proof of Our Lord's Divinity and therefore validates His teachings. Think of it as payment for services rendered. Jesus used Peter's boat and even had Peter row Him to and maintain a good position just off the shore. Peter and his partners had just completed an unsuccessful night of fishing, so Jesus paid for use of the boat and Peter's rowing by giving Peter and his partners a large catch of fish. Without a doubt this is not what actually transpired, or is it? Could this be a part of what transpired, and another part be the working of a miracle to validate Christ's authority and that which He taught?

Focus on the concept of payment for services rendered. We have all heard the statement, there is no such thing as a free lunch. It is based in the fact that eventually, at some point, someone has to pay for the lunch. Even in the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, someone had to, as it were, "pay" for the lunch. Who paid for the loaves and fishes lunch? God did.

What else has God provided - provided to everyone? He has provided

existence, and the continuation of existence, and everything about each of us, everything we have, do, and that by which we do anything and everything whether it be holy good or evil sin.

Given this truth, it reasonable to expect there is payment due by each of us to God. Some will advise you quite correctly that all we receive from God, existence, life, salvation, and everything, is a gift from God or are gifts from God. But if someone gives you a super spectacular gift that is far beyond anything for which you have ever had even an inkling of desire, and it is not your birthday or some special occasion, if you have no sense of appreciation and at the minimum the sense of an obligation to at least be nice to that person and in some manner express your appreciation, then your sense of entitlement is unreasonably excessive. Or, succinctly, you are a jerk, a cad.

At the very least we each should have a sense of obligation born in appreciation to God for having been brought into and being maintained in existence. But if we are wise we will also have a sense of being indebted to God for our existence, and a desire to fulfill the obligation arising from that indebtedness. Very wise people will advise you that we can never pay any debt we owe to God. But are they correct? Can we?

Well, yes we can. Only each individual person is able to pay the debt that person owes to God. It is paid by giving to God all that He has given to you, plus that which only you can give to Him: your unreserved love, which requires you bring your will, thoughts, desires, actions, contemplations and every aspect of yourself into harmony with the Gospel of Christ.

This can be done. To be accomplished it must first be attempted, and the attempt sustained for your lifetime.

But we should not simply sense a debt born in appreciation for our having been created. There is much more substance than simple indebtedness to

(Continued DEBT on page 14)

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God for His having brought each of us into existence.

For each of us it is a debt of honor to God. Those who have never contemplated their existence as creating a debt of honor must study this concept and in study will acknowledge its reality. Unless, of course, they are without honor.

Ref: Rom. 8:18-23; Luke 5:1-11

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WHAT DOES TURKEY BACON HAVE TO DO WITH ETERNAL SALVATION

Can you count the sins using the "Turkey Bacon Standard"?

If you would be with God for all eternity, keep your tongue from evil, let your lips speak no guile, make your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees.

Keep this in mind and think about turkey bacon.

Turkey bacon is touted as being more healthful than regular pork bacon. Read the label on turkey bacon and regular bacon and you will be informed that two slices of the low sodium regular bacon often contain less sodium and cholesterol than one slice of turkey bacon, and that the same generally is true for regular sodium real bacon.

Obviously there is some "misinformation" being promulgated regarding the healthful nature of turkey bacon. Is the promulgation of that "misinformation" a sin?

Remember that two slices of real bacon usually contain less sodium and cholesterol than turkey bacon. That means one who really likes bacon, and consumes turkey bacon under the mistaken belief it is more healthful than real bacon, and consumes but one slice when they could have enjoyed two slices or real bacon, has been deprived of the enjoyment of two slices of real bacon. Does being deprived of the

permissible enjoyment of two slices of bacon by being restricted to one slice, constitute a sin on the part of those who have engaged in conduct which deprived the consumer of that enjoyment?

Regular sliced bacon is usually rather uniform in thickness. But turkey bacon regularly varies in thickness. This means the consumer quite regularly consumes more product than intended, with a corresponding increase in sodium and cholesterol consumption. This will have a negative effect on the individual who consumes turkey bacon in an attempt to maintain and improve their health by pursuing a healthful diet. Does the increase in sodium and cholesterol due to lack of sufficient quality control, and the resultant lack of benefit and the actual causing of harm to the consumer, constitute a sin?

When turkey bacon slices are very thick, which often is the reality, they can not be properly microwave cooked, and are unusable waste. Does this constitute a sin?

Just to leave no doubt, the answer to each question as to whether or not an activity given above constitutes a sin is, the activity in question is sinful, but only God can judge whether or not a sin has been committed. The prudent individual will also establish the principal that were they do engage in any of these activities they would commit sin.

Examine not just your own life using the "Turkey Bacon Standard," but also the lives of your family members, friends, and fellow employees; and also examine businesses, organizations, corporations, and governments. How do you and they rate in sinfulness using the "Turkey Bacon Standard"? Not too attractive a picture is it?

Yet, as individuals who really attempt to follow Christ, we have Hope that we will receive the reward of eternal salvation. And our Hope is well founded. It is well founded because we are aware of our faults *and* we attempt to correct them. Those who refuse to or fail to admit their faults and those who

presume they will or have already attained eternal salvation simply because they believe Christ is God are justifiably without Hope. Those who willfully engage in activities which fail the "Turkey Bacon Standard," as well as those who view the public as a source of money or as the trough at which they may feed at will, view Hope as a fruitless activity. In truth, for them, unless they change, it probably would be a fruitless activity.

We have Hope because we seek to acknowledge our sins and to correct them. We have an obligation to make the desirability and fruitfulness of this knowledge process known to those without Hope, whether they think they do not need Hope, or have abandoned Hope.

Very few people will listen to a lecture on their own sinfulness or on the sinfulness of the corporations and organization they manage.

But they will often give their attention to potential adverse consequences to them, or punishment such as incarceration, fines, and loss in litigation, for their wrongful acts, their omissions, and for the harm they cause others.

It seems logical that when one is warned of the adverse consequences which are likely to result from their sinfulness, especially if the adverse consequences will be suffered here and now as well as in the hereafter, that the one warned would consider the warning. Unfortunately the individuals in question often believe they will be able to do what they will and not suffer any adverse consequences; at least not in this world - and they often have no concern for the next world.

It would be much easier to assist people in attaining eternal salvation if they would acknowledge sin. But often the only viable avenue by which the topic may be approached is by exploring the positive and negative consequences of a particular activity.

Ref: 1 Peter 3:8-15; Mat. 5:20-24

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THE ONE WHO LOVES US

We have a tendency to view God as the Maker of Rules which we dare not transgress if we wish to avoid burning in Hell for all eternity. Often we only barely remember He is our Protector, Helper, Saviour, and Deliverer.

If we are both decent and fortunate, then we undoubtedly have one or more people about whose well-being we care very much, whom we have willingly and happily assisted as we are able, and with whom we have attempted to establish, or established or believe we have established meaningful relationships.

Being the most decent of all persons, God has the greatest concern possible for the well-being of each of us.

When one of those people about whom you care and whom you have assisted betrays that concern, attacks you, lies about you, steals from you, rejects you, you experience shock, bewilderment, distress, something which can only be described as hurt, and sorrow.

When we sin we betray God, attack God, often actually lie about God, steal from God, and reject God, all in varying measures depending on the nature of the sin.

As a result of our sins, God does not experience shock or bewilderment, but He does experience something which correlates to distress, and He does experience hurt and sorrow.

When we observe someone, especially someone for whom we care very greatly, harm themselves through their own activities, and we know we have no means of viably intervening, we experience frustration founded in love. We wish we could protect them from themselves but we know that we may only attempt to influence, in a holy manner, their exercise of their free will. We know we can not even begin to attempt to control them for that would be an attempt to violate their free will.

There is no reason to believe God

experiences anything different when we harm ourselves through our own activities. Except, since God is God, what God experiences is eternal and perfect.

When someone betrays our love for them it may be they have considered their activity which is a betrayal and knowingly and willfully engage in that activity fully comprehending their betrayal. But a full comprehension betrayal is not the most common betrayal. More common are those betrayals in which a certain activity is contemplated with a fleeting consideration of the betrayal, and most common, an activity which is impromptu or occurs with little or no consideration of even potential betrayal.

Even though we understand this aspect of reality the betrayal stands stark before us. How we respond to the betrayal and the betrayer is indicative of the strength of our love for the betrayer.

So too is it regarding the manner of our commission of sins, and God's reactions and responses to our sins which are betrayals of God.

But God has an ability in response to betrayal which we do not. We do not have the ability to infuse comprehension of the reality of our love into those who betray us. God does have this ability, and He does exercise this ability in every instance.

In prudence we are unable to take to our bosom those who have betrayed us until we know they not only do not hold a dagger with which they intend to strike us through the heart, but also know they have sorrow and regret for their betrayal and strongly desire to re-establish the love which once dominated our relationship with them.

Is there any reason to believe our re-establishing a relationship of love with God requires any more or any less? Other than that God knows what is in our hearts?

Let us strive to accept comprehension of, acceptance of, and positive response to God's love for each of us. Perhaps

then we will each also strive to be and be successful in the attempt to never again betray the One Who Loves Us.

Ref: 1 Cor. 10:6-13; Luke 19:41-47

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LABOUR IS INTRINSICALLY GOOD

And to Adam he (God) said: Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work: with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return. (Genesis 3:17-19)

Compared with life in the Paradise of the Garden of Eden, God's sentence upon mankind for its sins may seem harsh to some. But that is comparing life without sin with life because of and with sin.

Before sin was introduced to mankind God provided for man's physical sustenance. After sin was introduced to mankind and mankind accepted and partook of sin, God established labour as the means by which man would sustain physical life. By the very fact that labour was established by God, is established the basic goodness of labor. But like many things which are basically good, labour is subject to being used for good or for evil.

With a heart filled with devotion to God and thanksgiving to God, Abel offered the firstlings of his flock to God. His offering was accepted. His good heart in making offerings to God made his labour and what he did with the fruits of his labor good.

His older brother, Cain, offered of his

(Continued LABOUR on page 16)

(Continued LABOUR from page 15)

crops, fruits of the earth, to God, but he made the offering without devotion and without thanksgiving. He begrudged the labour, the offering, and making the offering.

His sour heart in his labour and in making offerings to God made his labour and what he did with the fruits of his labour to not be good - but it is not clear if that lack of goodness made them evil because of what God told Cain.

God rejected Cain's offering. Cain was angry that God accepted Abel's offering and rejected his own. In response to Cain's anger God reminded Cain that Cain had the ability to make labour with satisfaction and offerings with devotion and thanksgiving, and labour and offerings without begrudging. God reminded Cain that Cain had the ability to control his emotions regarding labour and making offerings to God.

Labour can be wearying but one must remember it is required because of sin and therefore possesses elements of punishment. But because it was created by God even the wearying effects of labour have the potential of being satisfying.

Saint Paul experienced great satisfaction in both successful preaching and teaching the Gospel of Christ, and in earning a living by making good tents, for he was a tent maker.

The deaf and dumb man whom Christ cured instantly became able to provide for himself and no longer was dependant upon the charity of others; his joy was a mixture of the cure, of the wonder of being touched by God, and the ability to provide for his own needs.

Even God Himself laboured and labours to this day: The Father, in creating the world, after which He rested; the Son, in earning His living as a carpenter, cabinet maker, furniture maker, as well as engaging in His labour of teaching, and for us, His most important labour, that of making

salvation available to mankind through His passion and death; the Holy Ghost, in His labour as Paraclete, Guide, and Protector of the Body of Christ on Earth, the Church.

Always remember labour can be a holy activity if we so make it.

Ref: 1 Cor. 15:1-10; Mark 7:31-37; Genesis 3:17-19

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FLOOD WALL AGAINST SIN

Make the natural desire for union with God an active part of our character

If we ever compare ourselves with the Apostles we perceive many differences, as we would were we to compare ourselves with any Saint in heaven. However, we should always remember there are more similarities than differences. We should also always remember that while the differences are striking - particularly their holiness in comparison with our holiness - all of their spiritual successes are within our grasp. We need simply desire to be with God and pursue that desire making everything we do conform to that pursuit.

Desiring God and pursuing union with God is part of our very nature. It is an essential aspect of our very nature, of our very essence. That is one of the reasons Hell is so terrible, because those in Hell know they will never achieve union with God. But to have that part of our nature which desires union with God become "activated" we must consciously make that desire part of our character.

There is an old story about a scorpion who asked a horse to carry it across the

river. The horse agreed and began to swim across the river with the scorpion on its back. Half-way across the scorpion stung the horse. As he began to die and sink, the horse asked the scorpion, "Why did you kill me? Now we both will drown." The scorpion answered, "Because it is in my nature."

Likewise, the desire for union with God is so strong in our nature as to override everything else, unless we make a conscious decision to pursue something else.

That conscious decision to pursue something else usually begins with a subtle decision to deviate from God's law in some minor manner, matter, or way. But once that wall is breached, the flood waters of sin erode the barricade blocking sin, and we soon find our feet immersed in various sins. The firm ground of morality which once supported us becomes sticky clay interspersed with pools of quicksand of varying depths. Only near the flood wall which once held back the waters of sin are there remnants of firm ground from which we are able to repair the breaches, and then be successful in pumping the waters of sin back over the flood wall.

That is exactly what Saint Matthew did, and he was no better nor worse, morally and spiritually stronger or weaker, than each of us.

Saint Matthew was a tax collector in the custom house. From the beginning of recorded history until the mid to late 1800's, it was customary for tax collectors to earn their income not by salary, but by receiving a percentage of the tax which they collected - usually by adding a surcharge tax or fee to the actual tax. Often tax collectors were authorized to charge whatever they desired, provided they sent a certain amount to the government. And it was not unusual for a tax collector to pay a

the desire for union with God is so strong in our nature as to override everything else, unless we make a conscious decision to pursue something else

(Continued FLOOD WALL on page 17)

(Continued **FLOOD WALL** from page 16)

flat fee to the government or to his superiors and in return be allowed to charge what ever taxes he desired.

It was in this general form of system open to all manners of corruption that Saint Matthew worked. Since it is stated specifically that he followed Christ into the company of known sinners and evil manipulators we must associate Saint Matthew's conduct prior to being called by Christ as being one of a sinning and evil manipulator.

But Saint Matthew responded in a positive manner to Christ's call. He activated that part of his nature which desired union with God, and began repairing the flood wall of his soul so that it could repel the torrents of sin.

That is what we must do if we are to attain union with God.

It does not mean we must abandon the delights of this world. Only that we engage in the delights of this world in the manner which God has directed. If we like or desire sex, we must consciously change that desire to a desire to express love to and for one specific individual of the opposite gender to whom we are married in accordance with God's instructions. If that is not possible, then express that same love without the sexual implications. If we desire food or alcohol, conform those desires to be in accordance with God's instructions. If we desire to always be right or correct or without error or mistake, we must learn a subject before we express our opinions on that subject, and we must learn the whole truth and not just those aspects which support our pre-conceptions or desires; and we must learn how to do those things we desire to do before we attempt to do them on our own - and not simply do what we suppose or presume needs to be done; for God did not imbue or endow any of us with instant knowledge but, rather, established in us the need to learn, the requirement that we learn.

If the natural desire for union with God has laid dormant it is difficult to activate or re-activate as a character

trait, as part of our character. And once it is part of our character, there always are the waves of temptation and sin which attempt to lap over the flood wall of holiness, which attempt to breach that wall, or to undermine it.

Always remember that it is possible for that flood wall which holds back temptation and sin to be weakened, breached, over topped, or undermined, if we do it, or if we fail to keep it in good repair.

Ref: Ezech. 1:10-14; Mat. 9:9-13

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AMERICAN VETERANS - UNIQUE IN HONOR

American military hold a unique position of honor in the history of mankind.

While it is true there have been some members of the military who have been despicable and without honor, these have been few in number, and of such a very small percentage so-as-to-be virtually impossible to measure.

Individuals such as Aaron Burr, members of the Red Leg Missouri Militia on the side of the North and of the Confederate guerillas such as Jesse James on the side of the South in the Civil War, Flag, Fleet, and General Staff officers who betray their office for dishonorable liaisons with the corporate world, and military of all ranks who function without honor and integrity, are the exceptions in the American military rather than the rule.

In every action on foreign soil, including those of Vietnam, both Iraqi wars, and even in Afghanistan, and especially those of World War I and World War II, civilian populations, even of the enemy, usually felt relief when they learned American military were present and in control. In virtually every instance after a brief period both the civilian and the government / military populations welcomed the

benefits of the American military presence.

The militaries of other countries have reputations of innate inefficiency, innate ineffectiveness, of bullying policies, intimidation of their native civilian populations, and even where effective in military campaigns, of being ineffective in in the long term and maniacally oppressive towards those whom they have conquered.

In general, from the earliest days of the American Revolution to this present day, none of those negative qualities can be validly applied to the American military. This is so because of the honor innate in American military personnel.

It is this honor innate in the American military which incites those without honor to belittle, ridicule, malign, discredit, and otherwise attack the American military. Closely examine those who attack the American military and the attacker's lack of honor will be exposed. Most often this lack of honor is manifested in some combination of sinful disregard of the sanctity of life, of God's Commandments, and in the case of government employees and elected officials disregard of the obligations, duties and responsibilities of office. Such individuals attack the most readily apparent manifestation of honor, and that most readily manifestation of honor is the American military.

Of course, like military people everywhere, American military grumble and gripe about a myriad of things. The grumble about stupid orders and ineffective policies - but they so do because of the waste, and the danger occasioned by such orders. They gripe about the food - but that is the prerogative of every member of every military organization. But in general they appreciate the honorable purpose and intent of their profession and the cohesion in honorable purpose.

And in the face of extreme hardship and danger they perform their duties to the best of their abilities for the most honorable of reasons.

(Continued **VETERANS** on page 18)

(Continued VETERANS from page 17)

Because of this, when a member of the American military betrays honor it causes the most severe of shocks to everyone else. Even to those who despise the American military.

If the example of honor manifested by American military personnel is followed and practiced by any individual seeking to attain holiness and union with God that individual will be successful in that endeavor. And like the American military, such a person will be ridiculed and attacked by those who disregard God and who embrace sin, evil, and eternal damnation.

It is a pity what can be said about the American military regarding those seeking to attain holiness, can not also be said about most elected, appointed, or hired government officials or bureaucrats, or most organizations - and one must contemplate including even parts of the true Church.

Ref: Phil. 1:6-11; Mat. 22:15-21
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TO THOSE WHO ADVOCATE GUN CONTROL AND RESTRICTION OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF WEAPONS TO THE POINT OF BEING VIRTUALLY NOT ALLOWED

1 Kings (also known as The First Book of Samuel)

13:19. Now there was no smith to be found in all the land of Israel, for the Philistines had taken this precaution, lest the Hebrews should make them swords or spears.

13:20. So all Israel went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his ploughshare, and his spade, and his axe, and his rake.

13:21. So that their shares, and their spades, and their forks, and their axes, were blunt, even to the goad, which was to be mended.

13:22. And when the day of battle was come, there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan, except Saul and Jonathan his son.

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THE LESSON TO LEARN FROM THE GOOD THIEF IS TO RESPOND TO GOD IMMEDIATELY

It requires but a glance from God, a glance, a brief less than a second look from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to change a wicked person into a good person, into a holy person, if that wicked person simply responds in a positive manner to that glance. Well, it is a little more complicated than that, but that is the basic.

Virtually every person who has attained the use of reason is a sinner. Most sinners have committed sins sufficiently evil to require extensive cleansing, and perhaps most sinners have committed sins sufficiently evil to result in eternal damnation in hell. True sorrow combined with Sacramental Confession and Absolution will remedy the eternal damnation, and it would seem reasonable to anticipate the rational sinner would embrace the opportunity to experience sorrow for the sinner's sins and engage in Sacramental Confession and receive Sacramental Absolution.

But that reasonable anticipation is not reality, for there are those who reject any fragrance of sorrow and refuse Sacramental Confession and Absolution, even when offered when the sinner is in the process of dying and knows their soul is laden with spiritual death.

Somewhere within this is wickedness. It may exist within the sinner who sins the slightest, and extends through the increasingly evil ranks blotting out the light of Grace with which God embraces each of us.

Most people think one must be like Adolph Hitler and the Nazis to be

considered evil or wicked. In truth, one need not go to such extremes.

The people who operate Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers are wicked, evil people destined for hell unless they respond in a positive manner to the glance from God. The politicians who enable abortion operations, and the judges and especially the Supreme Court justices who unconstitutionally approved abortion, are wicked to the point of eternal damnation. That is, unless full repentance is attained or there is some other factor considered by God of which we are not aware.

But such evil is obvious. There is wickedness which has become so commonplace that it has insidiously become acceptable or at the least not shocking.

Sexual intercourse without the benefit of marriage is one such activity which is directly in opposition to the stated will of God and is of such a serious nature as to warrant eternal damnation to its practitioners. Those who engage in this practice commit sin which earns them eternal damnation if they die

TV and movie writers who use the phrase, "Oh my God!" in a manner which is not invoking God's assistance, and especially where it is used merely as an exclamation, are wicked, for they take the name of the Lord our God in vain.

without repentance and the Sacraments - again unless there are factors known to God which mitigate the sin. If this is a part of a person's standard behavior, that person is wicked.

But sin need not be so obvious to attain true evil, to be in the realm of the wicked.

TV and movie writers who use the phrase, "Oh my God!" in a manner which is not invoking God's assistance, and especially where it is used merely as an exclamation, are wicked, for they take the name of the Lord our God in vain. They make calling on God a trivial matter where it is the most serious of matters. They express contempt for God and attempt to belittle

God. Does anyone think God will welcome these people into His home in eternal joy when they have spent their lives being nasty to God without repenting? The only place for them to go is to hell - again unless there are factors known to God which mitigate the sin.

Wickedness is not limited to people who commit heinous crimes against other people.

Wickedness has many faces, and many of them are very nice faces until one cleans off the makeup and sees what lies underneath.

The most evil of wicked people not only have developed the habit of sin or of a certain type of sin. They also share a certain quality. They plan to do what is evil. Note, it is not that they do evil, but that they plan to do evil. That plan may require but one or two seconds to formulate, and often it is the acceptance of an opportunity, but it is there in some form.

But one need not be at the depths of the most evil, of the most wicked, to go to hell. One need but be a sinner, and all of us are sinners.

We should heed the advice of the Good Thief and respond in a positive manner to that glance from Jesus Christ.

If we do not, we most surely will go to hell and anyone who does not believe this will in all probability wake up in hell where it is too late to change anything.

Ref: Is. 59:1-4; Luke 23:39-43

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REMEMBERING THE REMINDERS INTRINSIC TO ALL SAINTS DAY and TO ALL SOULS DAY

On All Saints Day, we honor and pray for the intercession of all the Saints, of each one who has attained eternal union with God - without regard as to whether we know their name or their life.

On All Souls Day, we pray for all the dead. In praying for all those who have died we emphasize praying for all those upon whom God did bestow the merit of Christian Faith, that they may receive the reward associated with true Christian Faith. We also pray for specific individuals, naming each of these individuals during the Prothesis, which is why the Prothesis is prayed several hours earlier than usual on All Souls Day.

Undoubtedly, many of those dead for whom we pray are either in hell or already in heaven. Other than those whom God has revealed to us as being saints, we have no means of knowing any soul's resting place or final disposition. We therefore should not presume anything about anyone who has died. We should simply pray for them, that God's eternal light will shine upon them; that our prayers will profit and benefit the dead for whom we pray. We should never even begin to even *think* that anyone will receive little if any effect or benefit from our prayers, for that is not being a Christian.

And if *we* wish to enter into eternal union with God we must truly *be* Christians.

To enter into eternal union with God one must be a true servant of God. It is very possible for one to, as it were, "stand tall" as a man or a woman, and yet be a true servant of God. A true and good servant of God, as is true for any good servant, studies his Master, anticipates his Master's wishes and directions based on the best knowledge of his Master it is possible for him to obtain, and functions within his Master's will. The servant does this, *for the sake of his Master, for love of his Master, out of devotion to his Master,*

at the instruction of his Master.

Our Master told us, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He did not say, "Blessed are the poor," but, "the poor in spirit." Blessed are those for whom riches, wealth, or their trappings, are not important; for whom wealth is but a tool to be used for the glory of God; for whom assisting those in need is done for the glory of God and any benefit to the needy is ancillary to that glorification of God.

And so it is with each of the Beatitudes and every Virtue. Enacted for their own intrinsic value, or for the beneficial effect on others, they are potent in and of themselves. But only when enacted or practiced as a servant following his or her Master, is the full potential and the full potential effect reached.

When we pray for the dead we are following the instructions God has given to us through His Church. When we pray to honor the Saints and seek their intercession and assistance, we again are following the instructions God has given to us through His Church. But only if we so do as servants of God, our Master, will there be the potential for maximum benefit to be achieved and result from our prayers.

And all of this is so only if we are servants of our own free will - as it were, voluntary servants.

If we are servants out of fear, or because of some form of pressure or coercion, we do not experience the pleasure which accompanies being a good and faithful servant. But if we desire to be servants of God simply because God is God, we will grow in desire to please God. We will find harmony with God to be the most delicious of experiences. We will strive to assist those who have gone before us who need our assistance We will also to honor those who have gone before us and reside with and in God as we one day hope so to do.

Ref: Apoc. 7:2-12; Mat. 5:1-12

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ARE YOU GOING TO GO STRAIGHT TO HEAVEN WHEN YOU DIE?

**If you are, you might not care
if anyone prays for you when
you are dead.**

During His life with us in this world Our Lord Jesus Christ continually expressed concern for the well being of each person with whom He came in contact. He made it very clear that spiritual needs were more important than physical needs, but He did not neglect tending to the physical needs. He simply set the physical needs in their proper place, as being secondary to the spiritual needs.

Society, and mankind in general, seems to have forgotten this lesson, this teaching, this God established principal. In any event, simple observation of society and mankind makes it obvious that individually and collectively people are more likely to be concerned with the physical world and their physical world successes, accumulations, and status, than they are with their spiritual status and needs. Obviously there are many exceptions to this generality, but as a generality it is valid.

One of the aspects and results of this self focus is the neglect of others. When someone is able to fend for themselves their being neglected is not as detrimental as it is to those who are not able to adequately fend for themselves. But even for those who are able to take care of themselves, being neglected is hurtful and often harmful, especially when there are others such as family and friends who in the more caring times of our very recent past, would have seen to it that no one suffered neglect.

There is one group or class of people for whom neglect always is, if not harmful, at the least is terribly unnecessary, and who by definition are incapable of doing anything to better their situation; who must run their prescribed course unless they receive assistance from us. These people are the dead who are in the process of

purification prior to their union with God in Heaven; the souls in Purgatory - and toss in those in Limbo. In neither of which is there very strong belief in most of humankind.

The situations of these people will be greatly improved by our prayers, alms, and sacrifices.

While we should remember them, by name if possible, in our daily prayers, it is impossible to know all of these people. Once those who knew them in life have joined them, there is no one living to remember them individually in prayer. This is the fate of all of us.

Every year the Church (Western Rite) sets aside All Souls Day, the day following All Saints Day, as a day of prayer for the dead who are in the process of being purified prior to union with God in Heaven.

Be of good service to those who have gone before you. Make a list of your deceased family and friends, even if some of them were very young or holy and you believe they are already in Heaven, and even if you think they were very evil and probably are damned in Hell. Keep a copy of that list and pray for those people yourself, and give a copy of that list to your Priest for inclusion in the All Souls Day Divine Liturgy.

Do this now, or as soon as possible. Even if it is too late for this year's All Souls Day, it is best to make this preparation now, while it is in your mind, than to neglect it and either make a "rushed" list, or forget it entirely.

While this is fresh in your mind, it might be to your benefit to mention this to others. Perhaps some of them will remember you in their list after you have died. Or, do you think you are going to go straight to Heaven when you die?

Ref: 1 Cor. 1:4-8; Mat. 9:1-8

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DIRECTIONS TO HEAVEN HUMOR

(Thanks Mike)

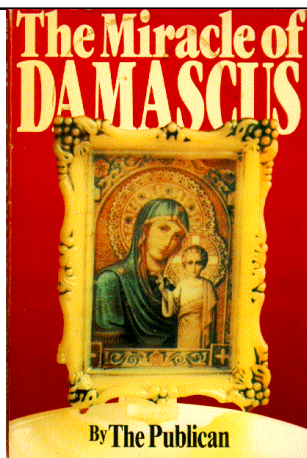
A little boy was waiting for his mother to come out of the grocery store. As he waited, he was approached by a man who asked, "Son, can you tell me where the Post Office is?"

The little boy replied, "Sure! Just go straight down this street a couple of blocks and turn to your right."

The man thanked the boy kindly and said, "I'm the new pastor in town. I'd like for you to come to church on Sunday...I'll show you how to get to Heaven."

The little boy replied with a chuckle. "You're kidding me, right? You don't even know the way to the Post Office!"

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**THE
MIRACLE
OF
DAMASCUS
by
the publican**

CHAPTER 4

(Continued)

Teach My Generation

The words "My generation" confused me at first. Thanks be to God, I have over the years been very dedicated to Mary, and I have studied a great deal. One thing I have learned is that this is the age of Mary. Not only that, but the age of Mary (Her final battle with Satan--the crushing of his head), started with the "Miraculous Medal," the same day of the start of the apparitions of Soufanich. This is also the age of Christ. In Scripture when Christ says, "This generation will not pass away. . .etc.," He is speaking of the sixth and final age of mankind. History is divided into seven days, or ages, the last being the day of rest, or eternity in Heaven. We are living in the sixth or last day or last generation of mankind, known as the age of Christ's Kingdom, or His Generation.

Mary and Christ are inseparable, and therefore, it is also the generation of Mary.

THROUGH YOU I WILL
CONSTRUCT MY GENERATION...
THROUGH YOU I WILL EDUCATE

MY GENERATION...I WANT YOU TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR MISSION, BECAUSE YOU CANNOT ENTER HEAVEN UNLESS YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED YOUR MISSION ON EARTH . . . MY PEACE, WHICH IS IN YOUR HEART, SHALL BE A BLESSING TO YOU AND TO THOSE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED WITH YOU. . . PRAY. "MAY YOU COME TO ME AND RELIEVE ME, AND RELEASE MY CHAINS, AND GRANT ME FREEDOM BECAUSE WITHOUT YOU MY JOY IS NOT COMPLETE. WITHOUT YOU MY TABLE IS EMPTY. THEN I SHALL COME TO SAY 'HERE I COME, BECAUSE YOU HAVE CALLED ME. . .' FORGIVENESS IS THE MOST PREFERABLE THING."

Nicol and Mirna have a mission on earth. God is asking that she completes it before she can leave it. This mission is to educate the world about unity. He is asking us to help her. You don't have to see or know her to help her. All you have to do is work for UNITY in your own way. In this way you will have contributed to her, and God will bless you for it. I'm sure all who have worked for unity in the past (even before Mirna was born) have been greatly rewarded by God. But it has been mostly the elders who have tried and those who have tried have failed. Now, we, the people, must help them. We must educate the elders (without being disobedient to them) that we want unity, that we demand unity, that we demand it of them. So say to God,

"Here I come." Say to the elders, "Here we come, the people of God. We are the Church, and we demand unity. We do not want to know who is at fault. We want to forgive."

Give To God

Mirna said to me, "God sacrificed His life on the Cross for our sake, while we only love Him when He gives us what we ask of Him. . .peace can only be through the one Christ. We must, therefore, pray with insistence to put peace in our hearts and to remove hatred and selfishness from the hearts

of His children, who are only His when in need and who sell Him off when He needs them." What can I add to that except God's own words?

GIVE, DO NOT DEPRIVE ANYONE WHO ASKS FOR HELP...MY PEACE I GAVE TO YOU, BUT YOU, **WHAT HAVE YOU GIVEN ME?...** I GIVE YOU ALL MY TIME. GIVE ME A PART OF YOURS...PRAY, PRAY, PRAY. . .MY FEAST IS WHEN I SEE ALL OF YOU GATHERED TOGETHER. YOUR PRAYER IS MY FEAST. YOUR FAITH IS MY FEAST. THE UNITY OF YOUR HEARTS IS MY FEAST. . . GO IN PEACE AND TELL MY CHILDREN TO COME TO ME AT ALL TIMES . . . IS EVERYTHING YOU DO FOR LOVE OF ME? . . . PRAY FOR THOSE WHO FORGOT THE PROMISE THEY MADE TO ME. BECAUSE, THEY WILL SAY: "WHY DIDN'T I FEEL YOUR PRESENCE, LORD, WHEN YOU WERE WITH ME." . . ALL

WANT IS TO GATHER TOGETHER ALL OF YOU IN ME AS I AM IN EACH ONE OF YOU.

This passage about "I didn't **feel** your presence" is very special to me. I have been fighting against some cults for years who think they are filled with the Holy Spirit because they "feel it."

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are very evident in the House of Soufanieh, and I never saw anyone get carried away in any sensualism. If we would stop thinking about what God can do for us and start thinking about what we can do for Him and His creatures. we would find true joy in life and in the life hereafter.

We would see how sweet is patience when compared with revenge, meekness compared with anger and

(Continued SOUFANIEH on page 22)

(Continued SOUFANIEH from page 21)

vexation, humility compared with arrogance and ambition, liberality compared with avarice, charity compared with envy, sobriety compared with dissipation. This is joy.

Regarding what people usually pray for? Think about it. He knows better than we do what we need before we ask. We should not only trust that He will take care of us, but trust that He will do it better than we could even imagine to ask.

Those (who want to "feel" God) had better be careful, for all the saints say that when we look for the miraculous, we find Satan, pretending to be an Angel of Light. Listen to the words of Padre Pio:

"You are mistaken, greatly mistaken, when you want to measure the soul's love for its Creator by the delightful **feelings** it experiences in loving God. This kind of love belongs to those who are still **spiritually immature**, and it could prove fatal to a soul that abandons itself too fully to it. On the other hand, the love of those who have left this spiritual infancy behind them is a love which experiences neither taste nor delight in what is called the sensitive part of the soul.

"We have a sure sign that these people really love God when we observe their readiness to keep God's holy law; their constant watchfulness so that they may not fall into sin; their habitual desire to see the heavenly Father glorified, while losing no chance to spread the **KINGDOM OF GOD** as far as lies in their power; when we see them praying continually to God the Father in the same words of our divine Master: Our Father. . . **Thy Kingdom come.**"

(Padre Pio)

Or Else

This little message, "OR ELSE," probably does not mean much to anyone but me. I am sure Mirna, in her simplicity, takes it very personal and only meant for her. I see it much differently. I have just finished a book on prophecy. I compared over 104

approved prophecies about a coming **chastisement**. In all of these messages the same theme was put forth. There will come a chastisement (by God) in order to bring about ONE FAITH ON EARTH, ONE KINGDOM ON EARTH, THY KINGDOM COME. I think of this miracle as one **last chance** to avert this chastisement. Some say that 75% of the world will die. The messages of Mirna must be given this **last chance** to prevent it.

GO AND PREACH TO THE WORLD
AND TELL
THEM WITHOUT FEAR, THAT
THEY HAVE TO
WORK FOR UNITY. . . GO FORTH
AND
A N N O U N C E T H I S
MESSAGE...WHEREVER YOU
GO I WILL BE WITH YOU. . . HE
WHO
A N N O U N C E D M Y S O N ,
EMMANUEL, IS SAVED.
HE WHO DOES NOT, HIS FAITH IS
IN VAIN. . . YOU
SHOULD SPEAK AT THE TOP OF
YOUR VOICE THE
WORD OF TRUTH ABOUT YOUR
CREATOR SO MY
POWER WILL BE SEEN IN YOU.

As Mirna suffered the agony of the crucified Christ, she said these words as she watched Christ be Crucified:

"We are playing a comedy between each other. . . He is patient toward us...He wants to unify us by His Will . . . He can make it over our head. . . but He wants it to come from us."

"Announce" means to teach. Teach Christ. The gospel is the truth of Christ. If we don't teach the truth of Christ, (at least by example) our faith is in vain. If we just stay at home our faith is in vain. If we teach a false Christ, our faith is in vain. If we don't, God will. If God does, we will not like it.

All the messages since 1988 have become more urgent.

CHAPTER 5

History of Divisions

There have always been those who have tried to divide the Kingdom of God, in spite of Christ's prayer:

"that they also may be sanctified in **TRUTH**. Yet not for these only do I pray, but for those also who through their word are to believe in me, that **ALL MAY BE ONE** . . . that they may be perfected in **UNITY**, and that **THE WORLD MAY KNOW** that You have sent me..."

Without these divisions we, as one mind and one faith, would have already converted the world. These divisions came about in two ways: by teaching a different Christ than the Apostles taught, a false Christ, a false Word of God; and by not showing love for each other.

Almost all the false Christs of the first 200 years were concerning the understanding of the Trinity of God. These false teachings were even at the time of the Apostles. The Apostles did not take lightly a teaching that was not exactly as they taught. You would think that slight differences wouldn't be a big thing, but this wasn't the case. This understanding of the Trinity was not easy. Unity of faith demanded that all believe the same, especially regarding God, Himself.

The second major reason for divisions was not showing compassion and love, which is forgiveness and understanding. Love comes from humility, which places all others' feelings before your own. You must hate error but love those who err. If the two sides of the divisions had only looked at their own mistakes, divisions would have faded away.

My personal belief is that unity will never be achieved unless we **forget the past**. Therefore, I am hardpressed not even to mention the mistakes of the past. However, I recognize that most people, whether Catholics or Orthodox, don't know (or care about) the reasons for divisions. All they know is that they are Catholic or Orthodox because their fathers were. It may seem prudent to

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forget the reasons. I have decided not to forget them for this one last time.

Let me explain why. As you, the people, work towards unity, this Catholic or that Orthodox or this Protestant will say, "But they did this" or "They did that." It will be better if we, the people, can say,

"Yes, I know, and I don't care. Those were the mistakes of our fathers, not ours."

If we don't know the mistakes of our fathers, they will come up sooner or later. I don't want us to be surprised, and I don't want us to make the same mistakes. The great thing about history is to learn from the mistakes. If we don't learn, we will repeat them.

So let us look at these mistakes of our fathers for the last time, and then forget them. There is plenty of blame to go around. As we look at it, let us remember the Lord's prayer, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Divisions are from pride and power. Power is the goal of the divider. A priest or a bishop has a new idea. The idea itself isn't so important as the pride that goes with it.

People admire the man's idea, his head gets puffed up, he defends it against his superiors, and finally he breaks his oath of obedience. He becomes his own judge in the matter because he doesn't want to be told he is wrong. It is pride, pride and power. Of course, he needs political support for the power.

And so most all divisions end up political or national in origin. Political in that whenever a King or an Emperor gained enough power he decided he should have control over the spiritual lives of people as well as the physical.

National because people of different backgrounds and languages wanted local control over their churches. Communication wasn't so good in those days anyway. Sometimes disputes took years to resolve. Nationalism became

more of a religion than the Church. People started to think of themselves as Italian or Greek before being Christian. This nationalistic spirit gave power to political leaders, power over the souls of people as well as the body.

If you want to see if you are in a truly Universal Church, look around the next time you are there. Do you see Chinese, Philippinos, Africans, Spaniards, Greeks, Italians all praying together? If not, why not? If you are more concerned with what color your future son-in-law is than what faith he has, you are not Christian.

Dividing the Faith

Paul constantly had this problem as he went about teaching the Word. He warned the bishops, "and from among your own selves men will rise speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." Every person who taught different from the Apostles, he condemned. He condemned the teachings of Demetrius, Phigelus, Hermogenes, Hymeneus, Philetus and Alexander. And these people were Christians.

He warned us to avoid those who opposed the teaching of the Apostles. (2 Tim. 4:15). The Apostles had to call together the first Council of Jerusalem to condemn Judaizers, who taught that Christians had to obey the Mosaic Law.

This was only the first of many who taught a different Christ or Word of God. Then came Gnosticism, the secret knowledge principle; Modalism, a denial of the Trinity; Marcionism, a denial of the Old Testament; Montanism, a denial of the divine nature of the Church; Novatianism, a denial of confession after baptism; Subordinationism; Arianism; Macedonianism; Nestorianism; Monophysitism; Monothelitism; Donatism; and Pelagianism; all these in the first four hundred years of the Kingdom.

They were all put down and condemned. They faded away, but parts of these ideas still exist today. Many of the new splits, new ideas, new faiths are

nothing but repeats of these old ideas that were put to rest in the first years of the Kingdom.

If people would study the early Church (most of these writings still exist), the mistakes of the past would not repeat themselves.

Some divisions were not a matter of faith but of Church discipline: fasting or not fasting, marriage or not marriage, beards or no beards, etc. These disciplines in themselves aren't important, but the breakdown of authority in these matters is important. When disobedience in small things is allowed, it will grow to larger things.

Iconoclasm

The real lasting splits came with political power and not from the religious leaders themselves. Mohammed came into the world and tied his religion to government law. His was a religion of the state, a religion by force.

Leo the Isaurian became Emperor of the East. Driven by the taunts of the Moslems, who accused the Christians of being idolaters for having images, he made up his mind that it was wrong to have statues and pictures in the Church.

First he ordered the Pope to have the images placed very high so that they would be out of the reach of the faithful. The Pope refused to obey him. Leo ordered the Synod of Hieria in 754, which issued a decree forbidding the veneration of images, relics, and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

He ordered that all images be destroyed. During these persecutions, Leo took the lands of Sicily, South Italy and the Balkans from the Roman Emperor.

The Holy See at Rome condemned him; the people rose up in rebellion, and there were riots everywhere when the images were destroyed. John of **Damascus** came to the defense of the veneration of images. The Iconoclasts

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were excommunicated by a council at Rome and at the Council of Nicaea II in 787 A.D. under the leadership of Patriarch Tarasius.

The Council of Nicaea clarified the theology of the Blessed Virgin, the saints and Icons. Rome was happy, but wanted the Balkans returned. Constantinople was happy and never mentioned the Balkans.

The Monarch

However, the Emperors who followed Leo continued to attack the veneration of images. They persecuted those who opposed them, demolished monasteries, destroyed libraries, and resorted to every form of violence.

The Pope, unable to control the Eastern Monarch, declared Pepin the Holy Roman Emperor. From then on the East would be at odds with the West for Political power of the Empire. This, more than the Icons, made a lasting division.

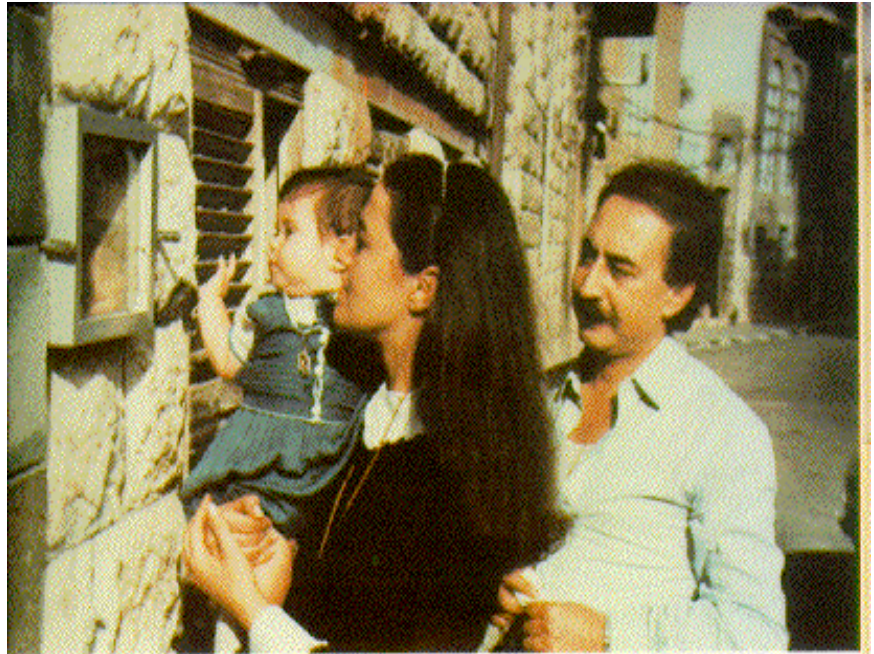
As a result of the opposition of the Pope to the Emperor, the Eastern Church (which had become more and more a state church) had become further separated from the Western Church. Other reasons were language (the East used Greek and the West used Latin) and the Pope's alliance with the Frankish Emperor, Pepin, and then Charlemagne.

Constantinople was the most powerful city in the world, and yet, the Pope made another man Holy Roman Emperor. To make matters worse, Ignatius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, upbraided the Eastern Emperor for his deeds of violence and his unworthy life and refused him Holy Communion.

Angered, the Emperor exiled Ignatius and put Photius in his place. Photius went from a layman to a bishop in one day. He was consecrated bishop by a suspended bishop, Gregory Asbestos.

Photius charged that the Church of

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Upper: Nicholas and Mirna Nazour, with their son John Emmanuel, inspect a copy of the Icon displayed in a windowed "box" near the door of their house. Occasionally, this icon too exudes oil, as does the miraculous Icon enshrined in their house. 104-15
Lower: Nicholas, Mirna, son John Emmanuel and daughter Myrtam pose before the miraculous Icon in 1990.



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Rome was spreading false doctrines among the Bulgarians. What he called false doctrines (fasts of Saturday, shortening Lent by one week, allowing people to drink milk on fast day, and forbidding priests to marry) were really Church practices, not doctrine.

One of Photius' charges **was** doctrine, however. He charged Rome with teaching the false doctrine of "Filioque," that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and not from the Father only.

Mistakes of Rome

All this would have come to nothing in the long run, but Rome made a bad mistake. In 880 A.D., Pope John VIII, in order to appease the Eastern Church, recognized the consecration of Photius as bishop.

This almost destroyed those who had resisted the Emperor and who had so many friends and relatives who died for their faith. This was the start of the drift away from the Pope of Rome.

All this came to nothing in the end. Photius was excommunicated and died in exile in 891 A.D. In 899 a Synod of Union was signed by Rome and Patriarch Anthony II Cauleas. This would have been the end of the division, except Rome made another major mistake.

In 913 Emperor Leo took his mistress, Zoe, as his fourth wife and had a son. Patriarch Nicholas I Mysticus baptized the infant with the condition that Leo and Zoe separate at once. However, Leo crowned her queen, and they were married by a priest. Nicholas forbade them the Sacraments. Leo appealed to Rome.

Pope Sergius III stated that a fourth marriage was against Byzantine Canon Law and propriety; however, the dispensation was granted out of consideration for the good of the state. From then on the Orthodox of the East lost all respect for Rome, especially amongst the people.

To make matters worse in the relation between the Pope and the people of the East, Emperor Romanus requested that his 16 year old son, Theophylactus, be made patriarch of Constantinople.

Believe it or not, the Pope allowed this, over much opposition in the East. This incident was the final break between the people of the East and the Roman Pontiff. After this incident, any excuse to make a break would have been okay with the people. Within the next 75 years, the excuse came.

The Bulgarian Question

In 1054, Leo, the Byzantine Archbishop of Bulgaria, wrote to Rome and stated that only Constantinople had the true faith and the true sacrifice of the altar (because Rome used unleavened bread) and that being Orthodox was equivalent to being infallible.

Patriarch Michael Cerularius repeated the old charges of Photius against the Roman Church. He closed all the Latin churches in Constantinople and desecrated all the hosts in the tabernacles to demonstrate that they were invalidly consecrated.

The Pope sent Cardinal Humbert to Constantinople to negotiate with the Patriarch. Cerularius refused to meet them, except in the patriarchal place surrounded by the synod.

Humbert laid a document of excommunication on the high altar of Hagia Sophia. Michael Cerularius excommunicated the Pope, and the final break came, and there has been no reunion to this day.

In 1176 Emperor Manuel Comnenus tried to get the primacy of the pope acknowledged again, but Patriarch Michael III of Anchialus replied that

"it was impossible to have communion with heretics. The primacy had been lost to Rome when the pope had become a heretic [Filioque!] and had been transferred to Constantinople; the pope is nothing but a layman."

The First Crusade

Then came the Crusades. Peter the Hermit looted his way across Europe and the East. Bohemund seized Antioch and established the Normans (the deadliest enemies of the Byzantines) as rulers.

In the second and third crusades, the Venicians took Hagia Sophia and the patriarchate. A Roman was put in the place of the Greek Patriarch. This angered the Byzantines even more.

In the fourth crusade, Constantinople was sacked. A decree went out that only Latin rite bishops would be consecrated in the future. The Byzantine hierarchy would be doomed to die out at the end of the generation.

This made no new friends with Rome. The Byzantines negotiated with Rome, and Pope Innocent III sent a new legate, Cardinal Pelagius, to Constantinople in 1212. Instead of negotiating as the Pope wanted, Pelagius persecuted, menaced and imprisoned those who refused an oath of obedience. As you can see by this review of history, there are no innocent parties.

The Council of Lyons

In 1244 Patriarch Manuel II suggested a compromise formula: "The Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father through the Son," instead of "and the Son." This was acceptable to the Latins. He won over the Greek Church. He made the following compromise:

If the Pope yielded the throne of Constantinople to the Greek emperor and its see to the Greek patriarch, the Greek Church would acknowledge the primacy by restoring his name to the diptyches and would take the oath of canonical obedience.

Innocent accepted these terms and also consented to a general council on Greek territory to ratify the agreement. But all the principal personalities died-- Innocent IV, John III Vatatzes, and Patriarch Manuel. John's successor, Theodore II Lascaris, rejected the whole plan and it died.

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In 1274 Patriarch John XI Beccus converted to the Latin position on "through the Son" and a new Council was called in Lyons. Union was sealed between the two churches on July 6, 1274. This would have been the end of the split, but Michael VIII blinded the legitimate ruler, John IV Lascaris. Patriarch Arsenius Autorianus rightfully excommunicated him.

Michael VIII was a main figure in the Union of 1274, and his excommunication was disastrous, but Pope Martin IV could do nothing else but follow the Patriarch in his excommunication for it was the proper thing to do. The Pope excommunicated him also. The Union of Lyons died.

The Council of Florence

In 1369 a new opportunity came with the conversion of Byzantine Emperor, John V Palaeologus. Gregory XI, a true friend of the Greeks, made a ringing appeal to Europe to come to the aid of Orthodox people against the Turks. His plea fell on deaf ears. The Byzantine people became convinced that even if they changed their religion they would get no effective military help from the West. Had the West helped the East at this point, the division would have been over. They did not.

In 1448 John VIII Palaeologus and Pope Eugene IV met at the Council of Florence. Agreement was reached on filioque, azymes, purgatory, the enjoyment of the beatific vision, the primacy, and the order of the patriarches, Constantinople being named second after Rome. Almost everyone signed the agreement. Patriarch Joseph II died before the end of the Council, but his dying statement helped a great deal. On the night of his death he left a note professing his faith in the filioque, purgatory and the primacy of the pope.

Upon their return to Constantinople, many of the prelates, who had agreed to the union, revoked their assent due to the hostile atmosphere of the people. Nevertheless, it was proclaimed in

Hagia Sophia on Dec. 12, 1452. But six months later, on May 29, 1453, Constantinople fell to Mohammed, the Conqueror. The West did not come to their aid.

Communism

Again when the Catholic world of France, Italy, Spain, South America, etc., and the Protestant world of Germany, England and America had the opportunity to show their Christian love by protecting Eastern Europe from the anti-Christian Communists, they turned their backs. When we face the final judgment (Matt. 25), what will Christ say? What will we say? "They were not my problem, not my nationality." Only one man stood up for all Eastern Christians, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant, and he was Charles von Habsburg. How was he rewarded by us good Catholics? We jailed him on an island and starved him to death. Now, we want the Orthodox people to love us.

Well! They will, because Christ commanded them to love even those who persecute them. They will love me, even though I turned my back on them. Now, it's my turn to make it up to them.

We have faced up to the faults on both sides of the question. We have seen that a lack of love prevailed on both sides. We have seen vacillation of faith. Now let us give all these hatreds a good and final burial. Say a good prayer over them and forgive and forget the mistakes of the past. Let us hold hands and pray together as one.

Church-State Religion

There is one other mistake the Kingdom has made in the past and still makes today that we must face in order to not repeat them. That is the idea of a Kingdom of God composed of a union of Church and State. The Empire which Charlemagne dreamed would have had to be universal and include all the peoples of the world. But no king has ever been strong enough or good enough after Charlemagne. Every King and every Emperor since him has tried to become a part of the Church. If he

didn't get his way, he fought the Church.

Probably nothing the Church ever did in history caused more damage to unity than her acceptance of State control or pressure in Church matters. Maybe because of the state controlled Moslems, or maybe because she felt she needed

a sword against outside enemies. I don't know. But from the time of Photius in 890 A.D. until Martin Luther, both the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches became entangled in State controls.

The Emperors of the West, particularly if they were strong men, were unwilling to admit that their authority came from the Church, and they were anxious to establish a system like that which had existed in the East under the Emperor of Constantinople where the Emperor controlled the Church.

The result was years of conflict between the Western Church and the Emperors. No one questioned the authority of the Church in spiritual affairs. The point at issue was how much authority the Church had in temporal affairs, and how much authority the Emperor had in Church affairs.

These battles went on for hundreds of years. Many a bad bishop was put in power simply to appease some King or to gain the King's favor. The East and the West were equally at fault. And as kingdoms became smaller and smaller and developed into nations, this became a bigger and bigger problem because there were more and more Kings to appease.

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THE CHURCH HISTORY OF EUSEBIUS

(Continued)

BOOK V

INTRODUCTION.

SOTER, bishop of the church of Rome, died after an episcopate of eight years, and was succeeded by Eleutherus, the twelfth from the apostles. In the seventeenth year of the Emperor Antoninus Verus, the persecution of our people was rekindled more fiercely in certain districts on account of an insurrection of the masses in the cities; and judging by the number in a single nation, myriads suffered martyrdom throughout the world. A record of this was written for posterity, and in truth it is worthy of perpetual remembrance. A full account, containing the most reliable information on the subject, is given in our Collection of Martyrdoms, which constitutes a narrative instructive as well as historical. I will repeat here such portions of this account as may be needful for the present purpose. Other writers of history record the victories of war and trophies won from enemies, the skill of generals, and the manly bravery of soldiers, defiled with blood and with innumerable slaughters for the sake of children and country and other possessions. But our narrative of the government of God will record in ineffaceable letters the most peaceful wars waged in behalf of the peace of the soul, and will tell of men doing brave deeds for truth rather than country, and for piety rather than dearest friends. It will hand down to imperishable remembrance the discipline and the much-tried fortitude of the athletes of religion, the trophies won from demons, the victories over invisible enemies, and the crowns placed upon all their heads.

CHAPTER I.

The Number of those who fought for Religion in Gaul under Verus and the Nature of their Conflicts.

The country in which the arena was prepared for them was Gaul, of which

Lyons and Vienne are the principal and most celebrated cities. The Rhone passes through both of them, flowing in a broad stream through the entire region. The most celebrated churches in that country sent an account of the witnesses to the churches in Asia and Phrygia, relating in the following manner what was done among them. I will give their own words.

"The servants of Christ residing at Vienne and Lyons, in Gaul, to the brethren through out Asia and Phrygia, who hold the same faith and hope of redemption, peace and grace and glory from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

Then, having related some other matters they begin their account in this manner: "The greatness of the tribulation in this region, and the fury of the heathen against the saints, and the sufferings of the blessed witnesses we cannot recount accurately, nor indeed could they possibly be recorded. For with all his might the adversary fell upon us, giving us a foretaste of his unbridled activity at his future coming. He endeavored in every manner to practice and exercise his servants against the servants of God, not only shutting us out from houses and baths and markets, but forbidding any of us to be seen in any place whatever. But the grace of God led the conflict against him, and delivered the weak, and set them as firm pillars, able through patience to endure all the wrath of the Evil One. And they joined battle with him, undergoing all kinds of shame and injury; and regarding their great sufferings as little, they hastened to Christ, manifesting truly that 'the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.' First of all, they endured nobly the injuries heaped upon them by the populace; clamors and blows and draggings and robberies and stonings and imprisonments, and all things which an infuriated mob delight in inflicting on enemies and adversaries. Then, being taken to the forum by the chiliarch and the authorities of the city, they were examined in the presence of the whole multitude, and having confessed, they were imprisoned until the arrival of the gov-

ernor. When, afterwards, they were brought before him, and he treated us with the utmost cruelty, Vettius Epagathus, one of the brethren, and a man filled with love for God and his neighbor, interfered. His life was so consistent that, although young, he had attained a reputation equal to that of the elder Zacharias: for he 'walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless,' and was untiring in every good work for his neighbor, zealous for God and fervent in spirit. Such being his character, he could not endure the unreasonable judgment against us, but was filled with indignation, and asked to be permitted to testify in behalf of his brethren, that there is among us nothing ungodly or impious. But those about the judgment seat cried out against him, for he was a man of distinction; and the governor refused to grant his just request, and merely asked if he also were a Christian. And he, confessing this with a loud voice, was himself taken into the order of the witnesses, being called the Advocate of the Christians, but having the Advocate in himself, the Spirit more abundantly than Zacharias. He showed this by the fullness of his love, being well pleased even to lay down his life in defense of the brethren. For he was and is a true disciple of Christ, 'following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.'

"Then the others were divided, and the proto-witnesses were manifestly ready, and finished their confession with all eagerness. But some appeared unprepared and untrained, weak as yet, and unable to endure so great a conflict. About ten of these proved abortions, causing us great grief and sorrow beyond measure, and impairing the zeal of the others who had not yet been seized, but who, though suffering all kinds of affliction, continued constantly with the witnesses and did not forsake them. Then all of us feared greatly on account of uncertainty as to their confession not because we dreaded the sufferings to be endured, but because we looked to the end, and were afraid that some of them might fall away. But those who were worthy were seized day by day, filling up their number, so that all the zealous persons, and those through whom espe-

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cially our affairs had been established, were collected together out of the two churches. And some of our heathen searants also were seized, as the governor had commanded that all of us should be examined publicly. These, being ensnared by Satan, and fearing for themselves the tortures which they beheld the saints endure, and being also urged on by the soldiers, accused us falsely of Thyestean banquets and Edipodean intercourse, and of deeds which are not only unlawful for us to speak of or to think, but which we cannot believe were ever done by men.

When these accusations were reported, all the people raged like wild beasts against us, so that even if any had before been moderate on account of friendship, they were now exceedingly furious and gnashed their teeth against us. And that which was spoken by our Lord was fulfilled: 'The time will come when whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.' Then finally the holy witnesses endured sufferings beyond description, Satan striving earnestly that some of the slanders might be uttered by them also? "But the whole wrath of the populace, and governor, and soldiers was aroused exceedingly against Sanctus, the deacon from Vienne, and Maturus, a late convert, yet a noble combatant, and against Attalus, a native of Pergamos where he had always been a pillar and foundation, and Blandina, through whom Christ showed that things which appear mean and obscure and despicable to men are with God of great glory, through love toward him manifested in power, and not boasting in appearance. For while we all trembled, and her earthly mistress, who was herself also one of the witnesses, feared that on account of the weakness of her body, she would be unable to make bold confession, Blandina was filled with such power as to be delivered and raised above those who were torturing her by turns from morning till evening in every manner, so that they acknowledged that they were conquered, and could do nothing more to her. And they were astonished at her endurance, as her entire body was mangled and broken; and they testified that one of these forms of torture was suffi-

cient to destroy life, not to speak of so many and so great sufferings. But the blessed woman, like a noble athlete, renewed her strength in her confession; and her comfort and recreation and relief from the pain of her sufferings was in exclaiming, 'I am a Christian, and there is nothing vile done by US.' "But Sanctus also endured marvelously and superhumanly all the outrages which he suffered. While the wicked men hoped, by the continuance and severity of his tortures to wring something from him which he ought not to say, he girded himself against them with such firmness that he would not even tell his name, or the nation or city to which he belonged, or whether he was bond or free, but answered in the Roman tongue to all their questions, 'I am a Christian.' He confessed this instead of name and city and race and everything besides, and the people heard from him no other word. There arose therefore on the part of the governor and his tormentors a great desire to conquer him but having nothing more that they could do to him, they finally fastened red-hot brazen plates to the most tender parts of his body. And these indeed were burned, but he continued unbending and unyielding, firm in his confession, and refreshed and strengthened by the heavenly fountain of the water of life, flowing from the bowels of Christ. And his body was a witness of his sufferings, being one complete wound and bruise, drawn: out of shape, and altogether unlike a human form. Christ, suffering in him, manifested his glory, delivering him from his adversary, and making him an example for the others, showing that nothing is fearful where the love of the Father is, and nothing painful where there is the glory of Christ. For when the wicked men tortured him a second time after some days, supposing that with his body swollen and inflamed to such a degree that he could not bear the touch of a hand, if they should again apply the same instruments, they would overcome him, or at least by his death under his sufferings others would be made afraid, not only did not this occur, but, contrary to all human expectation, his body arose and stood erect in the midst of the subsequent torments, and resumed its original appearance and the use of its limbs - so that, through the

grace of Christ, these second sufferings became to him, not torture, but healing.

"But the devil, thinking that he had already consumed Biblias, who was one of those who had denied Christ, desiring to increase her condemnation through the utterance of blasphemy, brought her again to the torture, to compel her, as already feeble and weak, to report impious things concerning us But she recovered herself under the suffering, and as if awaking from a deep sleep, and reminded by the present anguish of the eternal punishment in hell, she contradicted the blasphemers. 'How,' she said, 'could those eat children who do not think it lawful to taste the blood even of irrational animals?' And thenceforward she confessed herself a Christian, and was given a place in the order of the witnesses.

"But as the tyrannical tortures were made by Christ of none effect through the patience of the blessed, the devil invented other contrivances, -- confinement in the dark and most loathsome parts of the prison, stretching of the feet to the fifth hole in the stocks, and the other outrages which his servants are accustomed to inflict upon the prisoners when furious and filled with the devil. A great many were suffocated in prison, being chosen by the Lord for this manner of death, that he might manifest in them his glory. For some, though they had been tortured so cruelly that it seemed impossible that they could live, even with the most careful nursing, yet, destitute of human attention, remained in the prison, being strengthened by the Lord, and invigorated both in body and soul; and they exhorted and encouraged the rest. But such as were young, and arrested recently, so that their bodies had not become accustomed to torture, were unable to endure the severity of their confinement, and died in prison.

"The blessed Pothinus, who had been entrusted with the bishopric of Lyons, was dragged to the judgment seat. He was more than ninety years of age, and very infirm, scarcely indeed able to breathe because of physical weakness; but he was strengthened by spiritual zeal through his earnest desire for mar-

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tyrdom. Though his body was worn out by old age and disease, his life was preserved that Christ might triumph in it. When he was brought by the soldiers to the tribunal, accompanied by the civil magistrates and a multitude who shouted against him in every manner as if he were Christ himself, he bore noble witness. Being asked by the governor, Who was the God of the Christians, he replied, 'If thou art worthy, thou shalt know.' Then he was dragged away harshly, and received blows of every kind. Those near him struck him with their hands and feet, regardless of his age; and those at a distance hurled, at him whatever they could seize; all of them thinking that they would be guilty of great wickedness and impiety if any possible abuse were omitted.

For thus they thought to avenge their own deities. Scarcely able to breathe, he was cast into prison and died after two days. "Then a certain great dispensation of God occurred, and the compassion of Jesus appeared beyond measure, in a manner rarely seen among the brotherhood, but not beyond the power of Christ. For those who had recanted at their first arrest were imprisoned with the others, and endured terrible sufferings, so that their denial was of no profit to them even for the present. But those who confessed what they were imprisoned as Christians, no other accusation being brought against them. But the first were treated afterwards as murderers and defiled, and were punished twice as severely as the others. For the joy of martyrdom, and the hope of the promises, and love for Christ, and the Spirit of the Father supported the latter; but their consciences so greatly distressed the former that they were easily distinguishable from all the rest by their very countenances when they were led forth. For the first went out rejoicing, glory and grace being blended in their faces, so that even their bonds seemed like beautiful ornaments, as those of a bride adorned with variegated golden fringes; and they were perfumed with the sweet savor of Christ, so that some supposed they had been anointed with earthly ointment. But the others were downcast and humble and dejected and filled with every kind of disgrace, and

they were reproached by the heathen as ignoble and weak, bearing the accusation of murderers, and having lost the one honorable and glorious and life-giving Name. The rest, beholding this, were strengthened, and when apprehended, they confessed without hesitation, paying no attention to the persuasions of the devil." After certain other words they continue: "After these things, finally, their martyrdoms were divided into every form.

For plaiting a crown of various colors and of all kinds of flowers, they presented it to the Father. It was proper therefore that the noble athletes, having endured a manifold strife, and conquered grandly, should receive the crown, great and incorruptible. "Maturus, therefore, and Sanctus and Blandina and Attalus were led to the amphitheater to be exposed to the wild beasts, and to give to the heathen public a spectacle of cruelty, a day for fighting with wild beasts being specially appointed on account of our people. Both Maturus and Sanctus passed again through every torment in the amphitheater, as if they had suffered nothing before, or rather, as if, having already conquered their antagonist in many contests, they were now striving for the crown itself. They endured again the customary running of the gauntlet and the violence of the wild beasts, and everything which the furious people called for or desired, and at last, the iron chair in which their bodies being roasted, tormented them with the fumes. And not with this did the persecutors cease, but were yet more mad against them, determined to overcome their patience. But even thus they did not hear a word from Sanctus except the confession which he had uttered from the beginning. These, then, after their life had continued for a long time through the great conflict, were at last sacrificed, having been made throughout that day a spectacle to the world, in place of the usual variety of combats. "But Blandina was suspended on a stake, and exposed to be devoured by the wild beasts who should attack her. And because she appeared as if hanging on a cross, and because of her earnest prayers, she inspired the combatants with great zeal.

For they looked on her in her conflict, and beheld with their outward eyes, in the form of their sister, him who was crucified for them, that he might persuade those who believe on him, that every one who suffers for the glory of Christ has fellowship always with the living God. As none of the wild beasts at that time touched her, she was taken down from the stake, and cast again into prison. She was preserved thus for another contest, that, being victorious in more conflicts, she might make the punishment of the crooked serpent irrevocable; and, though small and weak and despised, yet clothed with Christ the mighty and conquering Athlete, she might arouse the zeal of the brethren, and, having overcome the adversary many times might receive, through her conflict, the crown incorruptible.

"But Attalus was called for loudly by! the people, because he was a person of distinction. He entered the contest readily on account of a good conscience and his genuine practice in Christian discipline, and as he had always been a witness for the truth among us. He was led around the amphitheater, a tablet being carried before him on which was written in the Roman language 'This is Attalus the Christian,' and the people were filled with indignation against him. But when the governor learned that he was a Roman, he commanded him to be taken back with the rest of those who were in prison concerning whom he had written to Caesar, and whose answer he was awaiting.

"But the intervening time was not wasted nor fruitless to them; for by their patience the measureless compassion of Christ was manifested. For through their continued life the dead were made alive, and the witnesses showed favor to those who had failed to witness. And the virgin mother had much joy in receiving alive those whom she had brought forth as dead. For through their influence many who had denied were restored, and re-begotten, and rekindled with life, and learned to confess. And being made alive and strengthened, they went to the judgment seat to be again interrogated by the governor; God, who desires not the death of

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the sinner, but mercifully invites to repentance, treating them with kindness. For Caesar commanded that they should be put to death, but that any who might deny should be set free. Therefore, at the beginning of the public festival which took place there, and which was attended by crowds of men from all nations, the governor brought the blessed ones to the judgment seat, to make of them a show and spectacle for the multitude. Wherefore also he examined them again, and beheaded those who appeared to possess Roman citizenship, but he sent the others to the wild beasts.

"And Christ was glorified greatly in those who had formerly denied him, for, contrary to the expectation of the heathen, they confessed. For they, were examined by themselves, as about to be set free; but confessing, they were added to the order of the witnesses. But some continued without, who had never possessed a trace of faith, nor any apprehension of the wedding garment, nor an understanding of the fear of God; but, as sons of perdition, they blasphemed the Way through their apostasy. But all the others were added to the Church. While these were being examined, a certain Alexander, a Phrygian by birth, and physician by profession, who had resided in Gaul for many years, and was well known to all on account of his love to God and boldness of speech (for he was not without a share of apostolic grace), standing before the judgment seat, and by signs encouraging them to confess, appeared to those standing by as if in travail. But the people being enraged because those who formerly denied now confessed, cried out against Alexander as if he were the cause of this. Then the governor summoned him and inquired who he was. And when he answered that he was a Christian, being very angry he condemned him to the wild beasts. And on the next day he entered along with Attalus. For to please the people, the governor had ordered Attalus again to the wild beasts. And they were tortured in the amphitheater with all the instruments contrived for that purpose, and having endured a very great conflict, were at last sacrificed. Alexander nei-

ther groaned nor murmured in any manner, but communed in his heart with God. But when Attalus was placed in the iron seat, and the fumes arose from his burning body, he said to the people in the Roman language: 'Lo! this which ye do is devouring men; but we do not devour men; nor do any other wicked thing.' And being asked, what name God has, he replied, 'God has not a name as man has.'

"After all these, on the last day of the contests, Blandina was again brought in, with Ponticus, a boy about fifteen years old. They had been brought every day to witness the sufferings of the others, and had been pressed to swear by the idols. But because they remained steadfast and despised them, the multitude became furious, so that they had no compassion for the youth of the boy nor respect for the sex of the woman. Therefore they exposed them to all the terrible sufferings and took them through the entire round of torture, repeatedly urging them to swear, but being unable to effect this; for Ponticus, encouraged by his sister so that even the heathen could see that she was confirming and strengthening him, having nobly endured every torture, gave up the ghost.

But the blessed Blandina, last of all, having, as a noble mother, encouraged her children and sent them before her victorious to the King, endured herself all their conflicts and hastened after them, glad and rejoicing in her departure as if called to a marriage supper, rather than east to wild beasts. And, after the scourging, after the wild beasts, after the roasting seat, she was finally enclosed in a net, and thrown before a bull. And having been tossed about by the animal, but feeling none of the things which were happening to her, on account of her hope and firm hold upon what had been entrusted to her, and her communion with Christ, she also was sacrificed. And the heathen themselves confessed that never among them had a woman endured so many and such terrible tortures. "But not even thus was their madness and cruelty toward the saints satisfied. For incited by the Wild Beast, wild and barbarous tribes were not easily appeased, and their violence found another peculiar opportunity in the dead bodies. For, through their lack of manly reason, the fact that they had been conquered did not put them to shame, but rather the more enkindled

their wrath as that of a wild beast, and aroused alike the hatred of governor and people to treat us unjustly; that the Scripture might be fulfilled: 'He that is lawless, let him be lawless still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still.' For they cast to the dogs those who had died of suffocation in the prison, carefully guarding them by night and day, lest any one should be buried by us. And they exposed the remains left by the wild beasts and by fire, mangled and charred, and placed the heads of the others by their bodies, and guarded them in like manner from burial by a watch of soldiers for many days.

And some raged and gnashed their teeth against them, desiring to execute more severe vengeance upon them; but others laughed and mocked at them, magnifying their own idols, and imputed to them the punishment of the Christians. Even the more reasonable, and those who had seemed to sympathize somewhat, reproached them often, saying, 'Where is their God, and what has their religion, which they have chosen rather than life, profited them?' So various was their conduct toward us; but we were in deep affliction because we could not bury the bodies.

For neither did night avail us for this purpose, nor did money persuade, nor entreaty move to compassion; but they kept watch in every way, as if the prevention of the burial would be of some great advantage to them." In addition, they say after other things: "The bodies of the martyrs, having thus in every manner been exhibited and exposed for six days, were afterward burned and reduced to ashes, and swept into the Rhone by the wicked men, so that no trace of them might appear on the earth. And this they did, as if able to conquer God, and prevent their new birth; 'that,' as they said, 'they may have no hope of a resurrection, through trust in which they bring to us this foreign and new religion, and despise terrible things, and are ready even to go to death with joy. Now let us see if they will rise again, and if their God is able to help them, and to deliver them out of our hands.'"

(To be continued)

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traditional concept that it is a proof of Our Lord's Divinity and therefore validates His teachings. Think of it as payment for services rendered. Jesus used Peter's boat and even had Peter row Him to and maintain a good position just off the shore. Peter and his partners had just completed an unsuccessful night of fishing, so Jesus paid for use of the boat and Peter's rowing by giving Peter and his partners a large catch of fish. Page 13

WHAT DOES TURKEY BACON HAVE TO DO WITH ETERNAL SALVATION Can you count the sins using the "Turkey Bacon Standard"? If you would be with God for all eternity, keep your tongue from evil, let your lips speak no guile, make your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees. Keep this in mind and think about turkey bacon. Page 14

THE ONE WHO LOVES US We have a tendency to view God as the Maker of Rules which we dare not transgress if we wish to avoid burning in Hell for all eternity. Often we only barely remember He is our Protector, Helper, Saviour, and Deliverer. Page 15

LABOUR IS INTRINSICALLY GOOD Page 15

FLOOD WALL AGAINST SIN Make the natural desire for union with God an active part of our character the desire for union with God is so strong in our nature as to override everything else, unless we make a conscious decision to pursue something else Page 16

AMERICAN VETERANS - UNIQUE IN HONOR In every action on foreign soil . . . civilian populations, even of the enemy, usually felt relief when they learned American military were present and in control . . . both the civilian and the government / military populations welcomed the benefits of the American military presence. Page 17

TO THOSE WHO ADVOCATE GUN CONTROL AND RESTRICTION OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF WEAPONS TO THE POINT OF

BEING VIRTUALLY NOT ALLOWED 1 Kings (also known as The First Book of Samuel) Page 18

THE LESSON TO LEARN FROM THE GOOD THIEF IS TO RESPOND TO GOD IMMEDIATELY TV and movie writers who use the phrase, "Oh my God!" in a manner which is not invoking God's assistance, and especially where it is used merely as an exclamation, are wicked, for they take the name of the Lord our God in vein. Page 18

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TWO BEGGARS (Humor)

(thanks Mike)

(OK, it is politically incorrect . . . but it IS funny)

Two beggars are sitting side by side on a street in Rome, Italy. One has a Cross in front of him; the other one is holding the

Star of David. Many people go by, look at both beggars, but only put money into the hat of the beggar sitting behind the Cross.

The Pope comes by. He stops to watch the throngs of people giving money to the beggar who holds the Cross while none give to the beggar holding the Star of David.

Finally, the Pope approaches the beggar with the Star of David and says, "My poor fellow, don't you understand? This is a Catholic country; this city is the seat of Catholicism. People aren't going to give you money if you sit there with a Star of David in front of you, especially when you're sitting beside a beggar who is holding a Cross. In fact, they would probably give more money to him just out of spite."

The beggar with the Star of David listened to the Pope, smiled, and turned to the beggar with the Cross and said, "Moishe, look who's trying to teach the Goldstein brothers about marketing!"

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ANTICIPATION OF CHRISTMAS IS ANTICIPATION OF THE ULTIMATE IN VALUE But, why anticipate Christmas? Christmas really is the celebration of the real historical and factual birth of Jesus Christ. . . The Angelic world anticipated the Birth of God whom these very Angels had known since the instant of their own creation. Page 1

WINNING THE BATTLE Have you ever wondered how Simeon or Anna obtained the necessities of life? How did they procure food, clothing, and shelter - just the basics? . . . Over five percent of our countrymen who desire to be employed are unemployed without any realistic prospects of obtaining gainful employment in the foreseeable future. . . The only Hope for those who are not able to obtain the necessities of physical life is the true Christianization of our society and of our entire world. Page 1

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ACKNOWLEDGING GOD He was not and is not the God they desired. They therefore ignore Him, or attempt to re-make Him into the image and likeness they desire. Page 6

THE WEALTHY ARE NOT THE PROBLEM THOSE WHO SEEK PRIVILEGE ARE THE PROBLEM During Our Lord's time on earth, His only true follower who made any

money from being His follower made it through a form of insider trading. And look at what happened to him, at what happened to Judas the Iscariot. Page 7

JUST MAKE SURE YOU ARE SMILING ABOUT SOMETHING OF WHICH GOD APPROVES if you do not know how to smile, you might not be allowed into Heaven Page 8

LIFE IN DEATH One of the most difficult tasks a true Christian faces is to be dead to this world while yet living in this world. . . . we must always remain focused on God, not as the Devil is focused on God, but as the Angels in Heaven are focused on God. Page 9

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Due to current economic conditions the light at the end of the tunnel has been turned off.

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