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ABORTION AND BIRTH CONTROL

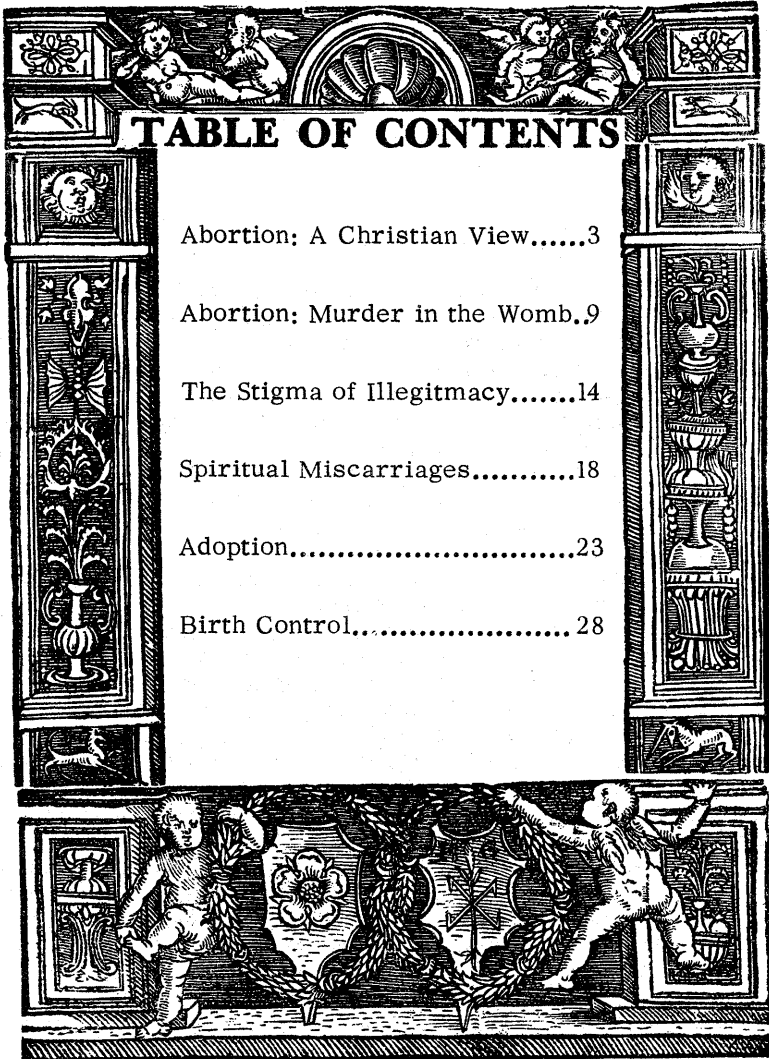


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GOD'S NEWS ..BEHIND THE NEWS
RADIO BROADCAST
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- FORWARD -

What should be the Christian's attitude toward Abortion and Birth Control?

This is one of the most timely booklets we have ever prepared. For these are serious questions posed by families desirous of having their lives governed by the Word of God.

We have quoted many sources to give a well-rounded view of the subject, believing there are questions that each individual must resolve when it comes to marriage and related topics. Without being dogmatic and firm on all particulars there are times when we must give Scriptural guidelines and allow the Holy Spirit to interpret the Word to our own hearts. However, where the Bible is clear and its message plain, we would adhere without reservation to its teaching.

Of more fascination and interest are the chapters paralleling the natural birth to spiritual rebirth. Whereas, the question is constantly being asked, "Can a saved person be lost?" and Calvinists give one answer, and Arminians take a different view, we believe the Scriptures harmonize both views. For instance, be sure to read the chapter on SPIRITUAL MIS-CARRIAGES which we feel will be of tremendous interest.

In the chapter on ADOPTION, we have sought to show the relationship between adopted children and those who are born into the family, believing the Scripture likewise uses these terms to define spiritual relationships.

The chapter on the STIGMA OF ILLEGITIMACY relates to the label attached to our Lord throughout His life.

We have certainly not exhausted the subject discussed, but hope we have whetted your appetite.

These chapters were prepared in connection with the radio broadcast and therefore are not a thorough treatise on any of the subjects under discussion. Eventually we hope to put into booklet form a series of articles entitled, UNDERSTANDING DIFFICULT PASSAGES. If you would like to reserve your copy, we suggest you write for a complimentary edition.

Abortion:



A Christian View

CHRISTIANITY TODAY magazine comments: "It is curious that a society which expresses such great tenderness of conscience about the fate of those condemned to death for first-degree murder....is so complacent about the forcible taking of life of the innocent unborn."

That is strange, isn't it, that we should be opposed so vehemently to capital punishment of the murderer and criminal

ANTI-ABORTION DEMONSTRATORS IN ANAHEIM, CALIF.



JULIAN WASSER

because it is inhumane, but feel rightly justified in the taking the life of an infant in abortion.

And sadly enough, in America, upwards to 2 million abortions are now performed annually!

The DIDACHE, or the teaching of the early Christian Church was this, that abortion was murder.

Tertullian wrote: "To prevent a birth is only an acceleration of murder, and it changes nothing, whether you snatch away an already-born life or destroy one in the process of being born." (Apology, Ch.9)

Gratian, in the twelfth century, declared: "He is not yet a murderer who brings about abortion before the soul is infused into the body."

So, to some, the question of abortion relates to just when human life begins, and to this there are a variety of answers.

The Roman Church argues that the fetus is a human being with a soul from the moment of conception. Catholic theologians believe further that the fertilized egg has rights equal to the rights of the mother and must never be sacrificed to save the mother.

On the other hand, Jewish rabbis may confidently assert that the soul does not enter the fetus until the time of birth. (Dr. S.I.McMillen, M.D.)

Dr. Herbert Richardson of the Harvard Divinity School, contends: "Human life begins at conception, or at least no later than eight days after conception." An, abortion, if performed, should be carried out only in exceptional cases.

Dr. Nelson Bell, says: "As a physician I well know that there are times when an abortion is necessary but the reasons are basically medical and it is physicians in consultation who alone are competent to determine this matter."

Appalled by the tens of thousands of mothers who are destroying unwanted babies in abortion mills, Dr. Bell declared he was "shaken" by the callous indifference to the implications of abortions on demand and the commercialization of this destruction of life.

And what is most upsetting is that those advocating the abolition of capital punishment on grounds that this is inhumane treatment, are often the same individuals who are in favor of abortions on demand. "Has the willful murderer more rights than the unwanted child?" asks Dr. Bell.

"What is the Christian solution to an unwanted pregnancy? We do not believe that it is abortion! As a physician and a Christian, one who can well understand the emotional agonies involved for parents and daughters, I would urge all concerned not to accept what seems to be the easy way out but to face the fact that a human life is involved, a life which cannot defend itself and which is not responsible in any way."

NOWHERE in the Scripture is there any argument in favor of abortion unless you accept the reasoning of one clergyman who contended Jesus endorsed abortion in the case of Judas; for our Lord said of him, "It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." Matt. 26:24. (Dr. Carl F. Reuss writing in THE LUTHERAN STANDARD.)

Western pagan teachers as the physician, Hippocrates, the jurist, Cicero, and the philosopher, Seneca, condemned abortion. Plato and Aristotle would have permitted an abortion up to the fortieth day, when they thought that the fetus, if a boy, received its soul.

On the other hand, the Romans of our Lord's time, practiced widespread abortion as well as its corollary, infanticide. Remember how when Jesus was born, King Herod ordered all babies destroyed two years and under. After all, if abortion were permissible, why not the killing of infants.

And here again is where our society is developing an unhealthy attitude toward life. We are becoming like the Nazis of Germany who went so far as to look with approval upon the mass execution of six million Jews.

So, as one irate citizen writes: "If government can give almost blanket approval to the destruction of an as yet unborn human being...can it also, on some future occasion, give its blessing to the destruction of very old or very ill human beings, who, like the unborn child, may be unwanted by those around them?"

Did you hear it?

Those who favor abortion say it is a moral decision between a woman and her doctor and not the jurisdiction of the state. However, to follow this line of reasoning might also permit her to get rid of her husband in the same way if she followed the same logic.

No, my friends, our responsibility is not to man, nor to government, but to God. To Him we are responsible for these decisions affecting life.

That God is cognizant of life in the womb of a mother with child is evident from several Scriptures. For instance, the Psalmist writes: "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

According to these verses the Lord is aware of the development of the embryo from its earliest stages.

The Psalmist continues: "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret....Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect." (or being in the fetal stage.) Psalm 139:15,16.

Concerning Jeremiah, the Lord hath said: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

We fear lest in our sex-ridden, divorce-conscious, pill-taking society we have lost respect for holy matrimony and consider lightly these sacred involvements that relate to life.

Does not the Constitution guarantee the "pursuit of happiness" and yet to abort life ends this guarantee which is also the privilege of the unborn.

In our series of broadcasts we have been asking the question--What if Mary believed in abortion like the pagan Romans who practiced it freely along with their other perversions? There would not have been a Christchild born that Christmas day, and hence no Saviour of mankind.

And, let's suppose your parents believed and practiced abortion and you would never have been born, with the right to enjoy the privileges of eternal life which come only to those so blest with life and birth. Beloved, what a responsibility to prevent birth even though we might know it to be an untimely birth, or one which might find the child malformed. Yet, this life is a drop in the bucket compared to all eternity, for many children born handicapped become the finest recruits for the kingdom of God. Have you ever thought about that? Therefore, is it not a serious mistake to prevent anyone from being born by aborting life and thus keeping that person from ever coming to a knowledge of salvation with all of the glorious future that comes with eternal life?

Would it not be better to be a misfit in society, blind, lame, retarded...and yet be saved, knowing when Christ comes we'll receive a glorified body to enjoy the presence of God and all the holy angels?

The story is told by Bill Slade, teen youth director, of his acquaintance with a godly woman whose deformed 41-year old son was born completely helpless, the result of a forcible rape that had taken place during pregnancy. Seeing this helpless cripple lying upon his bed, Bill asked this mother if she felt that abortion would have been a better solution. "No," she replied, "You see God used my boy to show me how to deal with people. They come here for counselling and after seeing my son they don't feel they really have any problem. Although her boy could smile, and respond feebly with a few elementary words, she replied, "He has given me more than I have ever given him."

Oh, my friends, if we would only learn the lesson that Paul sought to give us when he said, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Rom. 8:18-19.

Wouldn't it be better to be born deformed and go to Heaven than to be born perfectly whole and spend eternity separated from God in hell?

Oh, hear me, while there may be good arguments in favor of terminating a pregnancy as in the case of rape or incest, which accounts for a small percentage of desirable abortions, yet to deprive a soul from experiencing the right to eternal life is a decision that should not be left in our hands but in God's hands.

In 1 Timothy 2:15, Paul speaks of a woman professing godliness, saying "she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith, in charity and holiness with sobriety."

What this means to me may be different from its meaning in the theology books. But I believe we can so live from day to day as parents so as to trust the number of our offspring to God in all of our human relationships, seeking to be guided by God in the number of children He would ordain that we have, and then to accept their preservation in birth. This is what this Scripture implies. We are not the evolutionary offspring of misfortunate mating, but if we have prayerfully entered the marriage relationship we can likewise believe God for the number of children He gives us, and trust their care to Him as well.

Now this may not always mean our children are perfectly healthy, for neither are they sinless. Sin and disease are both the byproducts of the Fall. Yet, how thankful we are for a God whom the Psalmist blesses, saying: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Psalm 103:3.

What a promise! God forgives even performing that act of abortion if you sense guilt today as a result of this message. Think of it! Through Christ's death on the cross you can be forgiven of all of the sins you have ever committed, and the slate washed clean. For we read, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin! ALL sin!

Likewise, He healeth all thy diseases. Believe it or not, God doesn't know anything about incurable diseases. He has said in His Word, "Whatever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive, and ye shall have!"

I had a man visit my office who had been cut open and found to be full of cancer with a team of doctors working on him. They sewed him back up to die. This man took a rope and tied some knots in it. Everytime he felt a certain knot he would quote a certain Scripture using one of God's promises, and he walked off from that death bed and is alive today.

You see, prayer isn't calling upon God in desperation as much as it is reminding the Lord of what He said in His Word--quoting back to Him His own promises. And God can't lie, so that He will keep His Word unless you have sinned unto death.

After prayer for a young man with cancer, he was healed; but then he continued smoking, and later that cancer became active and he died. Jesus would say: "Sin no more lest a worse thing come upon you!"

Finally, in view of the coming of the Lord we read in 1 Thess. 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, do you think that's possible? Can He preserve your body, soul and spirit unto the coming of our Lord?

In meetings held in Atlanta, the dear mother of Governor Maddox has been in attendance at most of our radio rallies conducted in that city. And near her eighties, she whispered to me, "Brother Ray, the Lord told me I'd still be here when He comes!"

Hallelujah! Why not believe the Lord can keep us 'til He comes, and keep us ready when He comes! For the next verse says: "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it!"

Yes, I believe if you want to be ready you can be ready by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour from sin, and then living for Him such a devoted and dedicated life, witnessing for Him, and supporting His work, and praying...that He can't afford to take you home--you're too desperately needed. But when He does come for you it will be a joyous and abundant entrance into His kingdom! And any sacrifice, sorrow or separation will surely be worth it all when Jesus comes and He says to you, Well done, faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

Indeed, be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh!

ABORTION

Murder in the Womb

In New York City, Cardinal Cook, Roman Catholic archbishop, hearing of babies being born alive in the act of abortion only to be tossed, kicking, into surgical trash cans, referred to such practices as an "unspeakable crime." And he warned Catholics that the "church disowns by immediate excommunication anyone who has or helps anyone have an abortion."

In Roman Catholic countries the church's position has been that not only is it a mortal sin to destroy life by abortion, but that a doctor must save a child's life in preference to its mother's.

What should be the reaction of Christians to such practices as abortion and birth control? Does the Bible condone abortion? These are some of the questions raised by Bible-believing Christians that deserve an answer.

David Nicholas and George Howe, in an article in MOODY MONTHLY magazine declare: "Where conception has taken place in willful sexual union, no man has a right to deliberately interfere with the development of that human embryo." "The expulsion of a human fetus from the uterus prematurely, with the stoppage of its life, is known as ABORTION."

Nurses are reported sickened over sights of little tiny babies cut in pieces in order to remove them from their mother's womb. Or some fetus specimens are kept in refrigerators to await collection for research purposes -- "a sickening sight confronting you each time you need to open the door," testifies a nurse.

At only 26 days in the formation of a baby, the little body already has a heart and the making of limbs and muscle; and after 40 days possesses eyes, ears and minute hands. At 56 days, an unmistakable human physical structure is present, complete with fingers, toes and ribs.

A Canadian physician declares: "Once you permit the killing of the unborn child there will be no stopping. There will be no age limit. You are setting off a chain reaction that will eventually make you the victim.

He continues: "Your children will kill you because you permitted the killing of their brothers and sisters. Your children will kill you because they will not want to support you in your old age. Your children will kill you for your homes and estates."

Our Lord in talking to His disciples, said: "...the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16:2.

Again He says: "And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death." Matt. 10:21-22.

Did you hear it?

Another who comments on the practice of abortion suggests: "If an innocent human being can be killed because he is too young, that is, he has not lived nine months from his conception, there is no reason in principle why he cannot be killed because he is too old....or too retarded....or too black....or too politically undesirable! He adds: "The philosophy is Nazi Germany's, and this nation is adopting it."

So what's the explanation? Is abortion legalized murder?

Dr. R.A. Torrey, said: "If there is any hand in the world that is scarlet with the blood of murder, it is that of the woman who murders her own unborn babe." And he noted, "There are men who call themselves physicians who will act as helpers in this devilish business. Such a one ought not to put "M.D." after his name, but "D.M." -- damnable murderer."

The controversy over abortion hinges on such questions as: "When does human life really begin? When does the unborn child become a person?" And, "If the young unborn child has life, is it murder to end that life?"

The Rev. Curtis Lehman, writing in the GOOD NEWS BROADCASTER, says: "Some people say life begins at the moment of conception. Others claim it does not begin until the moment of birth. Some say it starts at an intermediate stage of development." Lehman's view is that God gives a person life at the moment of conception. He concludes, in the light of the Word of God, that intentional abortion is murder.

But what about therapeutic abortions which are performed for the welfare of the mother or sometimes for the child, as in the case of forcible rape or incest?

One Christian family that had to face this question consulted with their minister who told them the life within the mother's body was certainly not there with the blessing of God. Therefore it was wrong--all wrong--to permit the continuation of life caused by an evil deed, done by a person in the clutches of lust, Satan and the flesh.

The family carefully considered their responsibility before God and decided abortion was their answer. A shocking 4.86 per cent of abortions today are performed as a result of rape or incest.

Finally, the attitude of Christians should be one of respect for human life, and yet one of tolerance and love for those who may not share our point of view when it comes to some of the more complex and trying problems facing our society.

Bill Slade, Youth Director, notes: "The new liberalized laws concerning abortion are another step toward allowing individuals unlimited sexual license without penalizing them with the responsibility of childbirth."

This license to sin we must vigorously oppose, along with the liberalization of laws which permit practices we find not in harmony with the Word of God.

However, our campaign is not confined solely to working for the changing of the law, but to see men's hearts and lives changed. And we know this is possible only through the redemptive gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, declares: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 6:9-10)

Did you hear it?

But, notice in the next verse that there is hope for these sinners; for Christ came into the world to save sinners.

Thus, Paul writes: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

We should shout "Hallelujah, there's hope!" for the sinner who recognizes his wrong doing and repents of sin to trust the Saviour. There is forgiveness and cleansing to those who confess their sins to the Lord. For we read, "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7.

However, there must be a forsaking of sin, made possible through the victory of Calvary, and through the help of the Holy Spirit.

Victory over the flesh is assured the believer who mortifies, or puts to death the lower passions, and degrading deeds, and who finds the ability to face temptation through the help of the indwelling Spirit.

It is in view of our Lord's coming that we sound a warning concerning sins of the flesh being committed by Christians today who think they are automatically forgiven by saying a prayer, or confessing their misdeeds, but not truly repenting of these sins.

Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says: "Fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as cometh saints."

Did you hear it?

And he goes on: "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

Now, lest some suppose a person who calls himself a Christian wouldn't be found guilty of these evils, Paul goes on to say to these Ephesians: "Be not ye therefore partakers with them." And he warns them that it is on account of these sins that the wrath of God abideth upon the children of disobedience." Chap. 5:1-7.

May we explain that when a person comes to Christ, he is saved and freed from the wrath of God.

We could quote many Scriptures as John 3:36, which reminds us: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the WRATH of God abideth on him."

Did you notice, God's wrath abides on the wicked. Thus, by partaking of these evil deeds, a person may incur the wrath of God that was ordained for the wicked.

How I remember a gruesome looking character, illkempt, teeth missing, with a devilish grin. He was hobbling, walking with a cane, toward a church when I was holding a meeting in Georgia. With each step he took he kept repeating: "The wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience."

His testimony as much as we were able to hear it, was that he once knew the Lord but departed from His ways, refusing to obey His Word, and choosing to follow the path of lust and sin. Now he was reaping the rewards of unrighteousness, and declaring bitterly--"the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience."

Thus, while it is clearly taught that God's wrath is never intended on the believer, to partake of these immoral practices is to invoke the wrath of God which comes as chastening to our lives.

That is why I believe many will miss the rapture, for they were not living pure and holy lives. Whereas, the Scriptures make it clear that we are to follow peace and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord!

We are saved by grace, through faith, for the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. But then walking on the pathway of life we are warned not to yield to the enticements of passion, lust and sin and be beguiled by Satan to incur the wrath of God.

Peter puts it this way, saying: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

Think of it!

In fact, Peter goes on to declare: "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But is it happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

Whatever interpretations you give this Scripture, it is clear that what Peter is saying is this--that it is better not to begin the Christian life without having every intention to live it. In fact, he says it would be better never to have known the "way of righteousness" than having known it to turn from the holy commandment, or the commandment which says: "Be ye holy!"

Or, as Paul writes: "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." 1 Thess. 4:7.

So it is clearly explained that the life of immorality, impurity, and uncleanness is all opposite to that purity and holiness that God requires of us at His coming. Remember, it is the pure in heart that shall see God....without holiness no man shall see Him.

Through the blood of Christ cleansing our sins away, we can be made pure, and by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit we can be made ready for the coming of our Blessed Lord.

For, remember our Lord hath said, "Be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh!"

THE STIGMA OF ILLEGITIMACY

In Jerusalem, two weddings were consummated recently, after one of the most intense religious disputes in all of Israel's recent history.

The argument was whether or not Hanoch and Mariam Langer, brother and sister, should be allowed to marry since they were considered to be the illegitimate offspring of parents who were not properly wed according to Jewish religious ceremony.

Apparently their father had divorced his first wife in a civil suit in Poland. But in orthodox eyes he was still a bigamist and his two children fell into the category of "mamzerim", or of those "who shall not enter the congregation of the Lord." (Deut. 23:2)

In fact, so severe was the law that God gave to Moses for the children of Israel, that children born illegitimately were not permitted entrance into the congregation of the Lord unto the tenth generation. So, Orthodox Jews refuse to accept as converts to Judaism any illegitimate person, so strict is the marriage law in Israel today.

Thus, it was a change from the old traditional pattern when the newly-elected Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren, a former army general, gave permission for the wedding to be consummated.



When the news was announced over the radio, many Jews were jubilant, while the Orthodox Jews were utterly dismayed. As one Israeli explains: "The whole concept of a mamzer being an outcast is to prevent bigamy and illegitimacy. The sins of the father are visited upon the sons as a warning to preserve the unity and purity of the family."

It can readily be understood the stigma on Mary and Joseph in view of modern Jewish law based on ancient orthodox practice. God did give commandment concerning fornication, adultery and resultant illegitimacy that found those guilty severely punished.

Thus, it can be imagined the stigma on Jesus when His own town's people observed the relationship of Joseph and Mary when He was born. Joseph, you'll remember, was minded to put Mary away when she was found to be with child. It was then that an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying that Mary was the one chosen by God to bring forth the Saviour, and that her conception was of the Holy Ghost.

Recall, on one occasion, when our Lord spoke to those who claimed to be Abraham's seed, saying: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."

His listeners replied: "We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." (John 8:41)

So you see, the stigma that Jesus had attached to Him in a day when adulterers and fornicators were stoned, and those who were considered their offspring through illegitimate relationships were not permitted to minister, let alone to enter the sanctuary.

The virgin birth of Christ is one of the most misunderstood doctrines of the Bible, rejected by those who cannot understand it. Yet it explains so perfectly the plan of God in providing redemption to a fallen race through One Who was totally without sin.

You see, Adam's sin contaminated the whole race so that it must be stated categorically, that "all have sinned!" and "there is none righteous, no, not one." But this cannot be said of our Lord Who was born sinless, being conceived of the Holy Ghost.

The angel, Gabriel, appearing to Mary, said: "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest (the Son of God.)"

Then Mary said unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

The angel replies: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (see Luke 1:26-35)

Indeed, how great is our salvation!

By Jesus being virgin born, there was no transmission of sin, for Mary's conception was of the Holy Ghost.

Thus, Christ could come as man's Redeemer. For He was God in the flesh! He could say to His disciples, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And He could declare, "I and my Father are one!"

C.S.Lovett, well-known author of many Christian books, asks a very interesting question. "Did baby Jesus know He was God?" His reply, "Of course not. Like the rest of us, He was born with His mind a BLANK. He couldn't even talk. He had to 'grow in knowledge and wisdom' like anyone else (Luke 2:52)."

Lovett then asks: "How could Jesus come into the world a helpless, blank-minded infant and be the Almighty God at the same time?"

He replies, "That is one of the most fascinating mysteries of the WORD" and goes on to quote Philippians 2:6-7, which reminds us that our Lord stripped Himself of divine privileges by becoming human.

Quoting the Phillips translation, we read concerning our Lord: "For He, Who had always been God by nature, did not cling to His prerogatives as God's equal, but STRIPPED HIMSELF of all privilege by consenting to become a slave by nature and being born as a mortal man."

Did you hear it?

Lovett goes on to explain: "The instant Jesus allowed Himself to be placed in that body born to Mary, He simultaneously LIMITED HIMSELF to the capacities of that body. He was still God. There's no way to change that. Jesus couldn't strip Himself of Deity, for then He'd cease to exist. By accepting the limitations of a human body, His majesty and might were no longer available to Him. He was then like us. The Child in the manger was God stripped to His essential being--plus nothing!"

Lightfoot, the Greek Scholar, would clarify this by saying of our Lord, "He emptied, stripped Himself of the insignia of Majesty," and yet this does not mean our Lord emptied Himself of either His divine nature or attributes, but only of the outward and visible manifestation of the Godhead.

And as Moorehead notes, concerning our Saviour: "When occasion demanded, He exercised His divine attributes."

In other words, when our Lord returned to Nazareth and entered into the synagogue and read from the book of Isaiah where it says: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Closing the book, he began to relate to those present: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Imagine the consternation--the stone silence! Here was our Lord coming back to His home town where all of the gossip surrounding His birth was well known and where He grew up in Joseph's carpenter shop. The Scriptures relate how the people said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" They did not recognize Him as the Son of God!

We read how they that were in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath and rose up and thrust him out of the city, leading him to the brow of a hill, intending to cast Him down headlong. But we read: "He passing through the midst of them went his way." Lu.4:16-30.

So you see, our Lord here exercised supernatural authority by disappearing from this angry mob which fully intended to kill Him. But He knew He had to die the death of the cross and so miraculously disappeared from their midst.

Have you ever thought about it--Jesus, who was the Son of God became the son of man so that we who are sons of men might become sons of God?

As we read in John 1:12, "But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God!"

It was Augustine who asserted it was truly a great miracle when Mary gave birth to Jesus; for the virgin birth of Christ is a wonderful miracle. But he inferred it is a still greater miracle when we give Him birth within our hearts.

May we ask you, Have you received Christ as your Saviour and Lord? Has He been born in your heart? Have you allowed the seed of faith to be implanted through the Word you heard today? And do you believe the miracle can take place the moment you ask Christ to be your Saviour?

I dare you to try it. The transformation will be unbelievable the moment you truly surrender your life to the Saviour. Invite Him now to come into your heart--not the fleshly organ we call the heart, but that inner part of you where you make eternal commitments.

You may not understand it all, but try it and see that it works. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!"

Kindly remember that the radio broadcast is a work of faith, dependent upon your prayers and needed support. You can help us send forth these needed messages by writing and enclosing a gift for this ministry. All contributions will be acknowledged along with a tax-deductible receipt. Thank you.

SPIRITUAL MISCARRIAGES

The only security of a believer is the day by day believing, and living his life to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only evidence of a new birth is the man who goes on with God.—Alan Redpath.

TIME magazine estimates upwards to 1,000,000 American women per year were undergoing illegal abortions before 1970.

Now, according to more recent statistics, the number of abortions per year has doubled since the liberalization of laws in states where abortions are legal.

In New York state during 1971 a record 262,807 abortions were performed.

President Nixon rescinded a Pentagon order which had permitted liberal abortion policies in military hospitals. Said the president, "I cannot square with my personal belief in the sanctity of human life - including the life of the yet unborn. From personal and religious beliefs I consider abortion an unacceptable form of population control."

And recently the National Association of Evangelicals went on record as opposing abortion on demand for reasons of personal convenience, social adjustment or economic advantage as morally wrong, and expressed firm opposition to any legislation designed to make abortion possible for these reasons.



Tom Mosler—Miami Herald

Abortion pro and con: An airborne ad Newsweek

Now the Bible does have something to say about a penalty imposed when a miscarriage results from physical harm done to a mother with child.

As we read in Exod. 21:22-23, "If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow; he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life."

Dr. Bruce K. Waltke, professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, points out that this verse describes a case in which a woman suffered a miscarriage with the death of the fetus. He concludes that God did not impose the death penalty if only the fetus died with no harm to the mother, but exacted instead a money compensation to indemnify the father for the loss.

However, in the event the blow caused the woman to deliver her child, resulting in death to the mother or child, then a life was to be given for a life.

Similarly in the code of Hammurabi, a miscarriage caused by a man other than the husband always carried an accompanying penalty from death to a fine.

Today we might ask - What about the unborn child? In the event of a miscarriage, what happens to the child? Let's look at Job for an example.

Job, in his despair, regrets being born. His lament is recorded in chapter 10 and verses 18-19 when he says: "Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me." Then declares Job: "I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave." The Berkley translation reads: "Why was I not a miscarriage..."

What Job seems to be saying here is that in the event of a miscarriage, he would also have been entering once again a state of non-existence. He says: "I should have been as though I had not been."

Have you ever wondered where you were before you were born? You have no recollection of that period. So what Job seems to infer is that before actual birth there is no consciousness of life, of memory, or of existence.

My wife suffered a miscarriage during our early years of marriage. The question arose - Will I see this child in Heaven? The answer apparently, according to Job, is that as long as the child did not come to birth, it was really not a recognizable individual.

If this is so, it explains a lot in the spiritual realm. There are what we might call - "spiritual miscarriages."

As far as we are concerned, this is the only explanation for those who seem to start out in the Christian life but somewhere along the line they fail to mature spiritually. We might refer to these as "spiritual miscarriages."

Would we do an injustice to the conversion experience to parallel the spiritual birth to the natural birth? First there is conception - the beginning of life. And then many months later there follows birth.

Similarly, it would appear that some who receive the life-giving Word of God never go on to actually come to birth.

Jesus Himself referred in the parable of the sower to the seed which fell upon the rock, and as soon as it sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. Now you must recognize that the seed did not lie dormant, but it actually gave all of the signs of life. It produced a stem and began to grow only in time to wither and die.

Our Lord declared: "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." (Luke 8:13)

Did you hear it?

This is what Dr. R. A. Torrey, well-known Bible expositor and once the president of the Moody Bible Institute, referred to as a "quickeningshort of regeneration."

How many today profess faith in Christ and the personal worker may tell that person, "You are born again!" and proceeds to assure him of his salvation.

While we believe the Bible gives assurance of salvation, we do not believe a person is truly born-again until He has made an eternal declaration of his faith in Christ and is henceforth sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption.

So in this initial stage of believing a person can fall away in times of temptation, according to Jesus Himself.

Take a child, for instance, that makes a decision for Christ. And we firmly believe in child evangelism, for at five years of age I personally received Christ as my Saviour. However, how many similarly make professions of faith who when they grow older find the temptations of life so strong that they soon are found falling away, even as the Scripture asserts.

Now, isn't this true? There are some individuals who begin the Christian life and give every evidence of conversion, but who become what we refer to as "spiritual miscarriages."

For this reason we believe it is proper to bring such verses into focus as these which use the word "if" in connection with salvation.

For example, in I Cor. 15 we read where Paul writes... "Ye are saved IF ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." The possibility of believing in vain is ever a condition in salvation.

Again, the writer of Hebrews reminds us of this conditional security that may characterize the lives of Christians.

Heb. 3:6 reads: "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we IF we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

And in Heb. 3:14 he repeats: "For we are made partakers of Christ IF we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."

While I believe we can have assurance of salvation, that assurance must come through the Word and by the Spirit. Paul, in I Thes. 1:5, says his gospel was with "much assurance," and believers want to be assured of their salvation and not wait until they die to find out if they're saved. From the Scriptures we believe it is possible to make our calling and election sure. Eternal life is assured all who truly place faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and have determined to serve Him come what may!

On the other hand, to prevent careless living so evident among Christians in this Laodicean age of looseness and lukewarmness, we find we must give such Scriptures as we are giving you today to indicate the real need of following the Lord in salvation.

I recall in a practice preaching class in Bible School, I spoke on the text: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." This is a wonderful verse found in John 10:28.

However, in my message while emphasizing we are given eternal life and shall not perish if we are one of the Lord's sheep, I took time to also emphasize that concerning his sheep, the Lord said: "THEY FOLLOW ME!"

Immediately I was criticized by some who believe a person is saved and assured of salvation even if they don't follow. To me this is to improperly divide the Word of truth.

Again returning to the book of Hebrews, our Lord is referred to as the author of eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY Him. (Heb. 5:9)

Did you hear it?

Now, some don't believe in eternal salvation and they're wrong because the Bible teaches you can be saved and know that you're saved. On the other hand, eternal salvation is not only linked to "faith" but to "obedience." We repeat - it says in Heb. 5:9 that Christ is the author of eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY Him."

You see, my friends, obedience is one way of knowing we mean business. If we say we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and continue living in sin, and disobey the Word of God, what right do we have to call ourselves Christians?

Some of you will write me to declare emphatically that it is by grace that we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves...and I will accept that declaration. In fact, I will go further to declare that before we are even born, God knows our spiritual status, for our names are written down in the Lamb's Book of Life before the worlds were framed. God knows before you are born whether you will accept or reject His grace, and how your life will be lived - as a vessel to honor or dishonor.

This does not destroy the motivation to live softly and walk closely with God in a life of obedience, love and service. For we live for God, not by compulsion or by forced keeping of commandments, but because His Spirit in our heart produces such a love and such joy that we cannot live otherwise. We don't ask - what sins can I commit and still be saved, or what commandments must I keep? For if we are truly saved, we want to do the total will of God. And as you'll find it recorded on Moody's tombstone - "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever!" (I John 2:17)

So assurance results from obedience, and by doing the will of God. Otherwise these Scriptures would be meaningless.

A few more verses which use the word IF in relation to our salvation which indicates something of the conditional security which is taught in the Word of God:

For instance, there is Col. 1:23 which explains how we are reconciled to Christ, who through His death would present us holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight IF we continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.

Again in I Thes. 3:8 notice the IF, where we read: "For now we live, IF we stand fast in the Lord."

Too many verses would indicate the possibility of our coming short in salvation, of not coming to actual birth in Christian experience, of perhaps having experienced some sort of joyous quickening but not really of being born again.

Some young men came to me and related having had such an experience, of going forward in a mass evangelistic campaign, of sensing a change coming over their lives, but now it has all gone - they lamented.

Well, this is bound to happen if we do not continue in the faith, if we fail to read our Bible and pray, if we don't seek the daily guidance and help of the Holy Spirit.

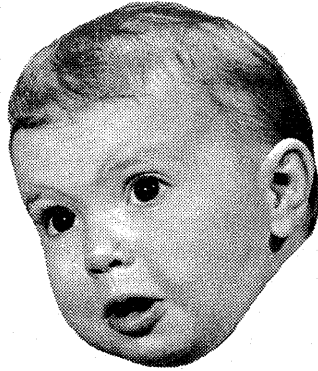
The important thing to do if you find you have lost that feeling of assurance you once had is to realize, first of all, that you're not saved by feeling. Isaac felt the hands of his sons, Jacob and Esau, and got fooled. And you'll be fooled if you go on your feelings.

Rather, trust Christ as your Saviour and then each day seek to live for Him. Read His Word and seek to obey His precepts, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit who has promised to direct you into all truth. And you'll find it a glorious and profitable Christian walk that will find you looking with joyous anticipation for the greatest of all coming events - the return of our Lord Jesus Christ for His own.

He who is the author of your faith is also the 'finisher' of your salvation. Having begun a good work in you, He will continue it until the day of His coming. So at His return all the praise, honor and glory will be to His name and any crowns won will be cast at His feet.

Our Lord would have us live for Him each day, and live in anticipation for His coming, saying, "Be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh!"

Adoption



It was just before Christmas in 1933, that Mary Milani was advised by her doctor to have an abortion for he felt it would be fatal for her to have the child.

That night she had the most unusual dream. "A brilliant blue angel," she recalls, "stood before me holding a most beautiful child. The angel made a gesture indicating the child was for me and he handed the infant into my eager outstretched arms. At the same time I heard heavenly celestial music."

On the strength of this dream she proceeded to have her baby. It was the boy whose smiling face she had seen before.

Well, it would appear that divorce, easy sex, the pill, along with legalized abortion are symptoms of our time, reflecting upon our moral and spiritual decay.

Surely, these days were prophesied for our Lord reminded us, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of man," Luke 17:26.

A description of Noah's day is found in the book of Jasher which was in common use in early Christian Churches. We read: "In those days the sons of men began to trespass against God, and to transgress the commandments which he had commanded to Adam, to be fruitful and multiply in the earth. And some of the sons of men caused their wives to drink a draught that would render them barren, in order that they might retain their figures and whereby their beautiful appearance might not fade." Jasher II:19,20 (See also 2 Sam. 1:18 and Joshua 10:13)

Is this not a picture of our day!

Dr. L. Nelson Bell, relates how he encountered a young couple who had been married for six years but were childless. Yet they held a precious baby with a cherubic smile on its face, sleeping peacefully in one of those "punkin' seats." What great joy this baby had brought into this home, having been adopted when only 12 days old through an adoption agency.

Relates Dr. Bell: "As I walked away there swept over me the feeling that here is the answer for those unwanted babies now being wantonly destroyed in the burgeoning abortion mills of our land! Tens of thousands of couples would gladly welcome these babies into their hearts and homes."

According to a special report in NEWSWEEK there is a shortage of white babies believed due to legal abortion and the Pill. (Sept. 13, 1971)

In the United States a Federal government report says at least 60,000 children need homes. Of those, 40,000 are non-white.

However, no one knows for sure, says NEWSWEEK. "Americans keep computerized tabs on credit ratings and airline seats; they publish nationwide litter lists describing the age, sex and physical characteristics of thoroughbred puppies. But no one keeps comprehensive count of this hidden nation of children who need permanent homes and parents."

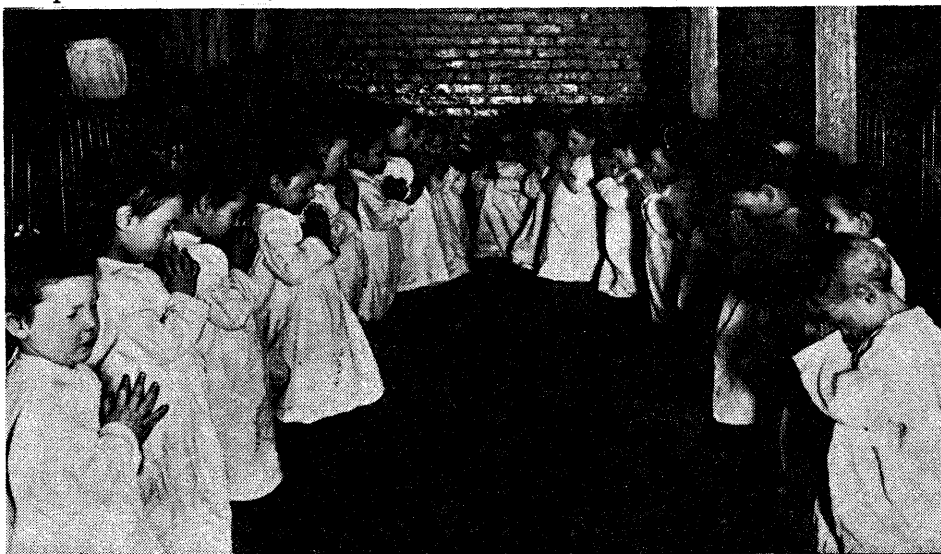
What is known is that there are nearly 2.5 million children under 18 in the United States who are adopted.

And, in some states, like Michigan and California there are stories of couples offering doctors and lawyers as much as \$1,000 and upwards to \$10,000 cash for babies. There is a campaign on to outlaw such non-agency adoptions.

Testifies an adoption specialist in the state of Michigan: "We've reached the point where the term 'easily placed' extends to almost any normal, healthy child of any race up to school age."

Interestingly enough, the Bible speaks of adoption at least five times in the New Testament, and in three different epistles, with the writer being the Apostle Paul.

The word "adoption" is a greek word which means to "place as a son".



Bettmann Archive

Institutional life, past: Prayer time for children Newsweek

Ralph Mahoney, editor of WORLD MAP DIGEST points out, "Sonship is not an automatic gift that accompanies justification. Justification is just the beginning of our great salvation." Then he quotes John 1:12 which says: "But to as many as received Him, (meaning Christ) to them gave He power (authority, the right, or privilege) to become the sons of God." (TEKNA, Greek word for 'sons')

Did you hear it?

This Scripture does not promise that we immediately become the offspring of God...or "born-ones" as the Greek word TEKNA here implies. But, we are given the right, or privilege of eventually becoming actual members of the family of God.

As Mahoney illustrates: "When the traffic signal turns green, you have the "exousia" (Greek word for right, permission or privilege) to proceed forward. If your motor runs out of gas and stalls at that instant, you do not have the POWER to go even though you have the authority (right, permission) to go. So, when we receive Christ (he notes) we are given the right, permission or authority to become the sons of God."

Now listen closely because I feel this clears up much of the misunderstanding of both Calvinism and Arminianism.

For instance, in the initial stage of salvation it might appear that our relationship is likened unto adoption. It's a probationary stage where we can decide to remain in the family, or we can withdraw from the family of God.

Look at Moses for an example. The Scriptures remind us that when Moses became of age he refused any longer to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. That is, he withdrew from the family of Pharaoh.

Similarly, it must be admitted that there are those who start out in the Christian life who, sorry to say, never make it. You can't say that these individuals who fall away were actually born again for the Scriptures indicate once a person is born into God's family he is always a member of that family. In fact, John writes: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit (practice) sin; for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot (practice) sin, because he is born of God."(Greek) 1 John 3:9.

My friends, if you believe the Bible you must believe there is an experience we can have that is so definite and real that we know we have been born again. We have God's seed, His very nature, within us. And because we have His nature, we do not want to sin. We loathe sin as He hates it. Now this does not mean we will never sin, but it does mean that we will want that sin quickly confessed and forgiven so our fellowship with Him is restored.

On the other hand, we admit that there are some who profess to be saved and who struggle with their bad habits and continually confess their sins to God. According to 1 John 1:9 they find forgiveness but never find that state of victory until Christ who is Saviour becomes Lord and Master, and the Holy Spirit comes in to take control of the life. For the Bible reminds us, "No man can say that Jesus is Lord save by the Holy Ghost."

Did you hear it?

And, while Christ is received by faith, we read in Acts 5:32 that the Holy Ghost is given to them that obey Him.

Why are some Christians living in defeat? Could it be that they have never surrendered wholly to God? They have not prayed, "Lord, not my will but thine be done." For when we allow God to have His way in our lives, having died to sin and self, the Holy Spirit rules in making Christ real to the believer. And, although there is this once-for-all yieldedness there is also the day-to-day walk with God. For no experience replaces our prayer and meditation on God's Word which we need each day as Christians.

Now, we repeat...when we receive Christ as Saviour we also receive the Holy Spirit Who leads us in our Christian life. He is called in the Greek the "paracletos"---the one called alongside to help us. But Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." So, the Holy Spirit, Who is also resident in the life of the believer, wants to be president.

As we see it, when we come to Christ we may not know all that there is to know about salvation. I was five years of age when I first trusted Christ and asked Him to save me. As I grew older I had to come to some serious decisions. Faced with grievous temptations, the Lord enabled me to make the right choices because I heard the still, small voice of the Spirit of God, saying: "This is the way, walk ye in it." Some of my acquaintances who similarly made professions of faith early in life are today out serving the devil, loving the world, and make no claim to salvation. What is the explanation?

Some would say they are still saved but don't know it. But I believe that our Lord, in the parable of the sower, explains how it is possible to hear the Word, even to hide it in our hearts, but still be lost. For He declares: "Then cometh the devil, and taketh away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." So we see it's possible to hear the Word, and even receive it, but still be lost.

On the other hand, Peter reminds us we are born again by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. (1 Pet. 1:23)

Our conclusion, then, is found in Romans 8:14-16 where we read: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (UIOI) of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Then we're told, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children (TEKNA) of God."

While these greek words may be used interchangeably, the word UIOS (or sons) is always used when referring to adoption, or that relationship where God accepts us into His family the moment we believe in simple faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God and our Saviour.

Salvation is so simple. In fact, it is a gift for the taking. "For the wages of sin is death, but the GIFT of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It's like going to the jewelry store and buying a diamond ring. Nothing needs to be paid down, just take it. But then there are the monthly payments to make.

So, salvation is a gift which cannot be bought or earned. Nevertheless, through Christ coming into our life there must be the evidence of good works and righteous deeds that accompany salvation. If this isn't true we have never been genuinely saved. For faith without works is dead. (We've become "spiritual miscarriages". We'll be commenting on this in a later broadcast.)

Briefly, in summation, we might point out that by receiving Christ as Saviour we are adopted into the family of God, with all of the rights and privileges of born sons. However, in this initial stage it is possible to "fall away."

Whereas, upon surrender to Christ as Lord, through the blessed Holy Spirit, we are born again, sealed to the day of redemption.

As we see it, adopted sons can withdraw from the family, while those who are truly born again, are sealed to the day of redemption.

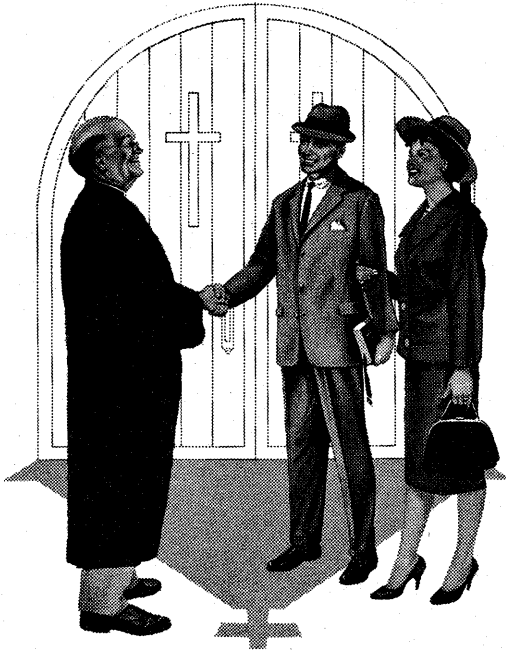
Does this not show us the need of receiving Christ, not only as Saviour but as Lord and Master?

In view of the coming of our Lord, we need to heed this message of surrender to the Lordship of Christ. Remember, if He is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all.

So, know the thrill of new life. Receive Christ as Saviour and Lord. And be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT

BIRTH CONTROL



Pope Paul VI startled many Roman Catholics with his pronouncement that any artificial interference with procreation is sinful. He declared further that artificial birth control can lead to infidelity, immorality, loss of respect for women, even political dangers.

Liberal elements within the church were emphatically opposed to the papal encyclical. They declared the decree was "an almost total disregard for the dignity of millions of human beings brought into the world without the slightest possibility of being fed and educated decently."

The WASHINGTON STAR called the encyclical "irrelevant" as though it were out-of-date. The London EVENING STANDARD condemned it as "the most negative and arguably dangerous doctrine of this century." Commented the NATIONAL OBSERVER: "Never in recent history has a papal statement caused such widespread opposition within the church."

Scientists, too, showed dismay over the ruling, saying: "It is a tragedy...a crime against humanity!"

Robert C. Cook, director of the POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU, has warned: "Unless some acceptable way is found to curb the too-rapid population growth, our children will inherit world problems far more acute than those we now find well-nigh insurmountable." Overpopulation, according to Cook, could in the long run be as destructive to modern industrial society as nuclear war.

Well, what should be the Christian's attitude toward Birth Control? Perhaps this question, more than any other, is being asked by sincere people who desire to have their lives governed by the Word of God.

The number of such dedicated Christians is admittedly few. We are living in Laodicean times when many refuse to have their lives regulated by the Scriptures. Since it will be Laodicean Christians who will be spued out at the coming of Christ, we do well to consider this all-important subject. If "readiness for rapture" is in part dependent upon obedience as well as belief, we do well to give heed to this message. It must be remembered Christ comes - "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Those who know not God are the heathen. Those who obey not the gospel might very well represent those who have heard the gospel but refuse to obey its precepts.

Some 70% of Roman Catholic couples interviewed said that they practiced birth control. Many indicated they intend to reject the papal pronouncement even though it is sin.

Protestants, for the most part, have paid little attention to the papal edict. After all, they reason, it does not apply to them.

The SATURDAY EVENING POST noted: "Nearly all religious denominations opposed birth control until a few decades ago, when one after another began to modify their positions." Observed the Post, "The Roman Catholic Church alone, remained firm in its opposition."

Today the position of the World Council of Churches is that Birth Control measures should be taken to slow down the population explosion. Whereas, the position of the Catholic Church is "not to decrease the number of people, but to decrease the supply of food."

Those who advocate Birth Control or Family Planning call attention to the fact that every hour of the day the world population grows by at least 5,000 souls. This is an increase of 120,000 a day, or 43 million a year.

Thus, Donald Straus, former chairman of Planned Parenthood, maintains that through proper Birth Control practices, "We can achieve a reverence for life which assures that every baby shall be a wanted baby and shall have room in the family for love."

Edward Ericson, leader of the Washington Ethical Society, comments: "Those who argue that birth control is unnatural should recognize that the preservation of life through medicine is equally unnatural." He further asserts, "We cannot control the death rate without also controlling the birth rate."

In our evaluation of this important subject, we would do well to get the opinion of some of the early Church Fathers. For it is supposed that the thinking of these scholars was based upon their interpretations of the Word of God.

We are told Pope Paul based his Birth Control ban on the writings of Thomas Aquinas, who is largely responsible for much of Catholic theology. This is what Aquinas wrote back in the 13th century: "Insofar as the generation of offspring is impeded, it is a vice against nature which happens in every carnal act from which a generation cannot flow."

Augustine, well known in theological circles, similarly maintained that the only legitimate motive for the marital act was procreation. He indicated, "Intercourse even with one's legitimate wife is unlawful and wicked where the conception of the offspring is prevented. Onan, the son of Juda, did this and the Lord killed him for it." (Gen. 38:10)

As might be expected, the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, defended the stand on Birth Control. And, Archbishop Athenagoras of the Greek Orthodox Church sided with the pope whom he said was "strictly following the path drawn up by our Holy Bible."

Well, what does the Bible say about this very important subject?

In matters pertaining to matrimony you would have thought the Lord would have entrusted to the Apostle Peter, the responsibility of giving advice, for Peter was a married man. Peter does speak of husband-wife relationships, urging husbands to love their wives and wives to reverence or obey their husbands. Indeed, if this principle were followed, it would make for the most wonderful relationship. For if a husband loved his wife, he would never ask of her anything but that she gladly and willingly would want to do. And if the wife obeyed, she would ever be rewarded by his continuing love and admiration.

When it comes to the subject of Birth Control, we would be reminded that when God created Adam and Eve, He blessed them, saying: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." After He sent a flood and destroyed earth's inhabitants, He again said to Noah and his sons, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth."

Now some will argue that this command was given at a time when the earth was barely populated, and declare that it does not apply today. Yet, if you will examine carefully the Scriptures, you will discover this commandment was given in the form of an everlasting covenant. It was to be for perpetual generations. (Gen. 9:1-12)

Incidentally, one reason why God destroys the earth in the Endtime is because man has broken God's covenant. (Isa. 24:5)

We realize there are those who argue that Birth Control is necessary to prevent an overpopulation of the earth. By 2000 A.D. we are told, barring unforeseen developments, our population will be double that of today, or close to 6 billion that must be clothed and fed.

Much of this talk is a by-product of our evolutionary minded age which likes to believe that we are here by accident, and that we don't know where we are going. These individuals fail to recognize that we have an all-wise Heavenly Father who is concerned about His creatures. Surely God knows when the earth has reached a stage of mass population which would necessitate the bringing to an end our present social order and establishing His divine order forecast in the Scriptures. The day is near, we believe, when the kingdoms of this earth will become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When it comes to regulation of births in our families, there is no Scripture that we know of which prevents careful planning so as to avoid conception so long as love and not lust is the motivating factor. As we read, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." (Heb. 13:4) The fact that God so constituted woman so as to have her fertile periods, and then again there are times when conception could not occur, indicates physical union without actual birth is possible.

In the Old Testament, again and again we read how the Lord opened the womb, or closed the womb, to permit children or prevent them from being born. It is uppermost in our consideration to recognize that God is the author of life. And though we may be ignorant about the laws of nature which govern the birth of a child, we can rest assured He will guide us in our physical relationships as well as in our spiritual relationships if we will trust Him.

That is why every home should have a family altar. Husbands and wives should pray for wisdom and guidance, and for control of their affections by the Holy Spirit, so that the Lord will give them children as He pleases - children that will be godly men and women. How much better it is for the Lord to plan our families for He knows exactly how many children we should have.

It's time we realize even as the Psalmist has testified, "Children are an heritage from the Lord." Even Eve, when she gave birth to Cain, did not say her child resulted from her relationship with Adam. Rather she declared: "I have got a manchild from the Lord."

As we have trusted the Lord for our salvation, let us trust Him to direct our lives, even to give us children as He chooses, and the number He wants us to have.

Susanna Wesley had 19 children. Charles Wesley was the 18th, and John Wesley was the 19th. Suppose she had been influenced to stop having children earlier in her life. There would not have been a Methodist Church and no great revival such as was experienced under the Wesleys.

A Scripture comes to mind concerning Christian mothers which reads, "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness and sobriety." (I Tim. 2:15)

Although the implication might be that the mother will be able to claim God's protection and preservation during childbirth, it must also imply that the Lord shares the responsibility of planning the families of all who seek His perfect will for their lives.

In this lust-ridden, sex-crazed age in which we live, we cannot be a part of a lustful relationship and not reap offspring that may not be planned by God. For this reason we should live holy lives, not motivated by animal instincts or evil passions. As we read in I Thess. 4:4 - "that each man among you should learn to take his own wife out of pure and honourable motives, not out of evil passion." (Williams Translation)

Another translation reads, "God's plan is to make you holy, and that entails first of all a clean cut with immorality. Every one of you should learn to control his body, keeping it pure, and treating it with respect, and never regarding it as an instrument for self-gratification, as do pagans with no knowledge of God...The calling of God is not to impurity but to the most thorough purity, and anyone who makes light of the matter is not making light of a man's ruling but of God's command." (Phillips Translation)

In view of the Lord's soon return, it might be relevant to quote one more passage indicating the need of temperance in the marriage relationship. For wrote Paul, "But this I say, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none." (I Cor. 7:29) In other words, let us not become possessed with the spirit of this age that glorifies sex, but ever realize that we belong to Christ and seek to live lives pleasing to Him.

In the parable of the Marriage Feast one of those invited excused himself, saying, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." How sad for many to miss the rapture simply because they failed to make preparation for this glorious event. In this age that glorifies sex, let us seek to glorify the Saviour in all of our relationships, and be ready when He comes. For He admonishes us, saying: "Be ye therefore ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."