

# the Baptist CHALLENGE

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## The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity

By Alvah Hovey

*“Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” — Mt. 28:19*

This text has been chosen, not because it speaks of Christian baptism, but because it speaks of a Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For my article will attempt to state the Biblical doctrine of a Trinity — a doctrine which is often denominated a *mystery*, though not always in the scriptural sense of this term. For the word “mystery” is used by the sacred writers to denote a fact or truth which could not have been discovered by the unassisted mind of man, but which has been revealed by the Savior or by the Holy Spirit. In this sense it was employed by Christ when He told His disciples why He was teaching them plainly, and the people in parables. “Because it is given unto you *to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, but to them it is not given” (Mt. 13:11). And in the same sense it was used by Paul when he informed the Colossians that he had been made a minister “to fulfil the word of God, even the *mystery* which hath been hid from

ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints” (Col. 1:25-26). A mystery, then, in its proper, biblical sense, is simply a fact or truth made known by revelation. It may, therefore, be plain or obscure, comprehensible or incomprehensible.

But many of the facts revealed by Christ, or by holy men who were enlightened by the Spirit of God, are “hard to be understood.” They do not fall within the range of our earthly experience. They belong to the world that is unseen and spiritual. They refer to modes of existence and of intercourse that puzzle the understanding. And so we have gradually come to apply the word to any fact or truth which is incomprehensible. In this sense the word is commonly used when we speak of the Divine Trinity.

We call the doctrine of the Triune God a mystery, not so much because it is a *revealed* truth as because it is an *obscure* truth. Doubtless it is both; for all our knowledge of it is derived from the Bible, and all that the Bible says fails to explain the amazing fact. It “half reveals and half conceals” a mode of the

divine existence which differs greatly from anything in our own. Obviously, then, we ought to listen with deep reverence to the testimony of Christ and of His Apostles while they utter “wondrous things” concerning “him whom no man hath seen or can see.”

The word “Trinity” is not applied by any sacred writer to the Supreme Being, but it has been used a long time by Christians to express what they suppose to be a doctrine of the New Testament in respect to God. Trinity, abbreviated from tri-unity, is formed of two words, which signify, respectively, “three” and “one,” and is affirmed of God because He is believed to be *three in one* — that is, in a certain respect three, and in another respect one. Thus Trinity and Unity are affirmed of the Godhead, but they are not both affirmed of the same thing in the Godhead.

In harmony with the great body of Christian teachers in the past, we believe that the Unity of God is *essential*, and the distinctions in God *personal*. But by the latter expression we do not mean that the Father is as separate and secluded in conscious-

ness from the Son as a human father is from his son; we only mean to say that whatever distinction there is between the Father and the Son is of a *personal nature*. For it seems to us very evident that the Scriptures teach three things, namely, that there is but one true God; that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are, each of them, truly Divine or God; and that these three are in a personal respect distinguishable from one another. Let us look at some of the evidence for each of these propositions.

### **I. The Scriptures teach that there is but one living and true God.**

This statement is rarely called in question by any person familiar with the sacred record; for it represents the prevailing tone and spirit of that record. It is the deep underlying assumption which supports every message of every prophet; and it is often expressed. With all the emphasis possible Moses cried: “Hear, O Israel, The LORD (Jehovah) our God is one LORD (Jehovah)” (Dt. 6:4).

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**The Book of Revelation -- Message #18****The Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes**

By M. L. Moser, Editor

[This message on "The Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" was preached April 29, 1979 and is being printed "as preached," and is one of a series of 113 messages on the Book of Revelation preached at the Central Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas over a period of two years, 1979-1981. It is our hope to complete transcribing all of them and to print them in the form of a verse-by-verse commentary. For those who might be interested, tapes of these messages are available from the editor.]

*"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my*

*name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou has there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and*

*in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."*  
— Rev. 2:12-17.

This morning, we found that the Lord had something to commend this church for and that He had some things for which He was going to rebuke the church. Also, this morning we talked about the doctrine of Balaam or Balak. This evening we want to notice what He says in verse 15 concerning this second major difference that they had. He says, "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate."

We do not know very much about the Nicolaitanes. We know a little about them, but all we really know is what we read about them here in this book, and to a certain extent, in some of the histories that were written about the first, second and third centuries.

We find here that the Nicolaitanes felt that they had a license to sin. They felt that because they were saved, and had eternal life, they could go out and live any way they wanted to, and they could not lose their salvation. We have some that are like that today. They try to hold on to the doctrine of the eternal security and yet live in sin. They say "I am saved for eternity. I cannot lose my salvation. Therefore that means I can go out and do whatever I want to and I'm still going to be saved." And they sort of act like that. I have known some like this, who felt that since they were saved and had eternal life, they could just go out and live like the devil, and they rather well tried to go out and live like the devil.

Now this is not true. The Lord tells us that this is not

true. There is an error that is prevalent among such people, and the error is that you can be saved and not have a change in your nature, and that simply is not true. When one is born again, and receives Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, they are changed, as Paul says in the book of Corinthians, "Behold all things have passed away, behold all things are become new." The reason is because there has been a change in their nature, and as one person expressed it some years ago, their "want-tos" were changed as well. They used to "want to" do this, and they "wanted to do that," and they "wanted to" do the other, but now since they have been saved they now want to serve the Lord. They want to go to church. They want to live for the Lord. Their "want tos" have been changed.

But what about that person who says that they are saved, and because they have eternal life and cannot lose their salvation, they can go out and live anyway they want to and not worry about it, and just really "live it up" so to speak. Well, the Apostle John tells us in another book that such people have never been saved, their nature has not been changed. All things have not really passed away because their desires and their love is still to enjoy the pleasures of sin. John tells us that since their desires have not changed, and their "want tos" have not changed, this shows that they have never been truly saved.

Turn with me to the Book of First John. I want you to note how John affirms these statements. He doesn't say *maybe* these are true; he

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doesn't say it *might* happen; but these are just plain statements of fact. He is dogmatic in the way that he says it. Beginning in verse 15, "*Love not the world.*" That is a command. You have no choice. He says, "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.*" Now notice the following statement, "*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*" Now that's the truth. This is God's word for us. "*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*" This says that person is not saved. Now let's go on. "*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world*" (2:16).

These are the three doors by which sin enters our being. These are the three methods or the three gates by which Satan tempts us and causes us to sin. He says, "*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world, and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time*" (1 Jn. 2:16-18). This shows us that those who claim to be saved but say that they can get along without the church, and you don't have to be a church member to be saved, or you don't have to be baptized to be saved, you don't have to go to church to be saved, and that you can do what you want and you'll still be saved are not really saved. Notice what John says, "*They*

*went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us*" (1 Jn. 2:19). So John tells us that those who say they are saved but continue to live in the world, and continue to show that their love is for the things of the world and not for the things of God, John says "*they went out from us because they were not all of us.*" They were not really saved to start with.

Notice one other thing he says in chapter three. He says "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is*" (1 Jn. 3:2). So he talks about the believer; that one that is a child of God and says, "*Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he (Christ) shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*"

Now notice a statement he makes in that very next verse. "*And every man that hath this hope in him,*" that is every saved man, every one that is born of God, every one that has received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, "*every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure*" (1 Jn. 3:4). The believer, the saved person, the child of God then is going to make an effort to purify his life. That means he's not going to live in sin. It doesn't mean that he's going to live a perfect life. It doesn't mean that he's going to be perfect while he is here on this earth, but it does mean that he is going to *try* to live perfect. He is going to make an effort to

live perfect. He is going to seek to purify his life even as God is pure and the Lord gives us a command to "be ye holy even as God is holy."

Now, the Nicolaitanes weren't this way. The Nicolaitanes taught that since they were saved, they now had a license to go out and live in sin and they couldn't lose their salvation. Chances are we don't have anybody here with us tonight that would say that, but I do believe, sometimes, that it is possible for people who would deny believing that, to act like that. They live like that, though they would deny the statement, but their actions indicate that they do not see any reason why they should try to live a clean, pure separated life. "After all, I'm saved, what more could you want? I can't lose my salvation." They act like it even though they would not say it.

Now the word Nicolaitanes, the Lord says, "*So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.*" Don't ever think God cannot hate. God hates sin! God does hate. In the Book of Proverbs, we find in chapter six that not only does God hate sin, but God hates certain people. Now that shocks some people because they just never had the idea that God could hate anybody, but God does. I want you to notice in Proverbs chapter six, there are some seven things that the Bible says God hates, and may I remind you that whatever God hates we ought to hate.

Notice beginning in verse 16, "*These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him.*" Now note these seven things, first "*A proud look.*" That's the person that goes around with a "better than thou" type of

spirit. That's the kind of person that is always looking down upon others and pointing a finger of accusation against them, and always making themselves out to be better than what they are. Sometimes I think they are not aware of it. I've had some people through the years of my ministry here at this church come to me, and they're always pointing out what somebody else is doing. They're critical. Now it may be what that somebody else is doing is wrong, but what they are doing indirectly is bragging upon themselves over the fact that they don't do those things. They have a superior attitude that they're more spiritual and that they're better than what these other people are. They're proud of themselves. They have a "better than thou" type of attitude, a "holier than thou" type of attitude. So the first thing we find is a proud look.

Secondly, "*A lying tongue.*" Thirdly, "*and hands that shed innocent blood.*" Fourthly, "*An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations.*" Fifthly, "*Feet that be swift in running to mischief.*" Now all of these are actions. All of these that we have read are deeds. God hates these deeds. God hates these attitudes. God hates these actions, but the last two are the people themselves. There are certain people that God says He hates. Who are they? Vs.e 19.

"*A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*" Anyone who claims to be a Christian, or perhaps doesn't, if they spend time in telling lies about a church, or about the pastor of that church, or if they spend their time trying to sow discord

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among the brethren, God says He hates that kind of person. He hates that person. So it becomes a very serious matter to sow discord among the brethren, for God says He hates a person who does that. The Bible says that we are to dwell together in unity, and God intends for His church to be a church that is in unity. But here is the man or woman that is seeking to sew discord and to break up the unity of the brethren. God says He hates that individual.

I mentioned to the men in our prayer meeting this morning that I had just come from Kansas at a Fellowship meeting, and while I was there, I learned of Baptist churches having some difficulties within their membership. I'll not take time to mention this individual by name, but his church supports our mission work in Mexico. It is not a very large church. It is in the Dallas area, and this year they lost 57 families out of that church, (and that's about all he had to start with), and he said he was just having to start all over again. You'd be surprised how many Baptist churches have experienced very serious difficulties this past year because of a man or a woman sewing discord among the brethren. Now we haven't had that but others have, and God says he hates that person who sews discord among the brethren.

Now here's the Nicolaitanes. These Nicolaitanes are here in this church at Pergamos. Remember that we find them mentioned once before in the 6th verse of this second chapter relative to the church at Ephesus. We find that the church at Ephesus was commended because it says, "*But this thou hast, that thou*

*hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.*" So we find that these Nicolaitanes were instigating problems there at Ephesus, but the Ephesus church didn't find any within them who would subscribe to it, or at least the Ephesus church must have taken care of it. But now we find, not only are there *deeds*, but here in the church at Pergamos it says there are those that hold the *doctrines* of the Nicolaitanes.

Now the word "Nicolaitanes" comes from two Greek words. Nearly all names and words in both the Hebrew and the Greek have meanings, and if you can ascertain the meaning, often time it gives you an additional insight into what it is talking about. So what you have to do is get a dictionary, a Greek dictionary called a Lexicon. Sometimes you can use a concordance, if it is an unabridged concordance, an exhaustive concordance, and you can look up the words and find out what they mean, and where they came from. The word Nicolaitan comes from the word "*Nikao*" which means "to have the upper hand, to dominate or to conquer," and the word "*laos*" means "the people or the laity." Together it means "the conquerors of the people," or the "rulers of the people." It is during this time that the "clergy" came into being whereby the "clergy" became a kind of caste that was over the membership of the church. This is a time when a priestly hierarchy, a religious hierarchy, sprang up to dominate the people. These preachers began to assume the title of a Bishop and began to assume the role of a dictator over the church. Finally, the one who was pastor of the most influential church in the city be-

came a ruler over all the other churches that were in his city, and began to classify themselves as a diocese. This was the beginnings of the hierarchy that developed into the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church.

Now this evil was rejected in Ephesus. They wouldn't have anything to do with it. But here in the church at Pergamos, we find that they tolerated it and allowed it to grow. This develops into the system of a hierarchy as exemplified in the Roman Catholic Church, and which is prevalent among most Protestant churches today in a slightly modified form. This is what led to the final corruption of this apostate church.

Now Baptists are not immune from this. I have here a book entitled "**The Southern Baptist Convention: A Study in the Development of Ecclesiology.**" The author of this book is Dr. William Wright Barnes. When he wrote this book in 1934 he was Professor of Church History in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, a seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention in Fort Worth, Texas. This book has since been republished in 1946 and it has since been republished again. It is available today. [It is not available in 1994.] It has not been changed at all. It could be updated, but it has not been changed.

Dr. William Wright Barnes, not only was the Professor of Church History at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, but he also was the Head of the Church History Department. When the Southern Baptist Convention decided to have written a history of the Southern Baptist Convention, the one man they turned to to write that history was Dr. William

Wright Barnes, so that the official history of the Southern Baptist Convention was written by Dr. Barnes. He is dead now, but when he wrote this book, he was one of the most respected and influential men in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Now I want to read just a part of the introduction to this book. I want you to think of it considering these Nicolaitanes that were there in the church at Pergamos. He says, "the effort has been made to show that there has been an ecclesiological development, a church development, in Southern Baptist life comparable to the development that took place in the first centuries of Christian history, a development that laid the foundation of the Medieval Catholic church out of which came the Roman Catholic Church of modern times. It is a far cry from the Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15) about A.D. 50 to the Council in the Vatican in A.D. 1870, but during those eighteen centuries, a development took place that completely changed the character and the form of the outward manifestation of Christianity. J. H. Newman in his book 'Essay On Development of Doctrine' claims that the development was the natural unfolding of the inner-spirit and life." Now listen to this statement. "The Southern Baptist Convention in 89 years, 31 years of Convention life preceding, has not made any such development, *but the first step has been taken. It remains to be seen how many more steps may be taken.*"

He continues, "*When a Southern Baptist of the twentieth century says 'convention' or 'denomination' he*

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*means just about what a second century Christian meant when he said 'catholic church' that is, universal church. There has developed a thinking in terms of a corporate consciousness comparable to that which pervades the Christian literature of the second and third centuries. The term Southern Baptist Church is not quite orthodox, but within another generation or two, it may attain wide popularity and perfect ecclesiastical respectability."*

Dr. Barnes didn't have to wait another generation, for when he wrote the "**History of the Southern Baptist Convention**," he subtitled it "A History of a Great Denomination." What Dr. Barnes says in this book is that the Southern Baptist Convention is already setting up a hierarchy following the same pattern as did the Roman Catholic Church. I don't have time to read all these things, but this book is just filled with this. And what is true of the Southern Baptist Convention is true of every other organized work among Baptists, whether it be the American Baptist Association (ABA), the Baptist Missionary Association (BMA), the Baptist Bible Fellowship (BBF) with their headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, or the World Baptist Fellowship (WBF) with their headquarters in Arlington, Texas, or the General Association of Regular Baptists (GARB), or any of these others. Every one of them is setting up according to the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes which says that the people are to be ruled over by their hierarchy. And that's exactly what you have. Now if you want to know why Central Baptist Church is an independen-

dent Baptist church, that's why, because God is not the author of any of these organizations. Everyone of them is a man-made organization. They are following the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes and God says "whose deeds I hate, which thing I hate." God did not intend for the preachers to get together and to form their hierarchy and then dominate and control the churches.

The Baptist Bible Fellowship has done just this very thing even to a worse degree than the Southern Baptist Convention because the Baptist Bible Fellowship does not even have any churches in it at all. It is completely controlled by preachers. Preachers are the only ones that can be members of it. They are the only ones that can hold an office, and they elect these preachers in their annual meetings. The preachers elect the missionaries and they elect directors to control their missionaries, even as a bishop does in the churches that do have hierarchies. This is the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes and the Lord says that He hates such doctrines. The Lord intended that each Baptist church was to be an independent Baptist church with no hierarchy of any kind at all. Each church being an independent church, ruling, controlling themselves as a democratic body whereby they have nobody from the outside that can tell them anything that they are to do.

This same Dr. Barnes was asked to give testimony in Rocky Mount, North Carolina when a church, by a huge majority, sought to withdraw from the Southern Baptist Convention, but there was a small minority that wanted to stay with the Convention and they took it court in violation

of First Corinthians chapter six which says you're not to take your brother to court. But they did. In court, they put Dr. W. W. Barnes on the witness stand, and asked him about the authority of a Baptist church. You ask a Baptist, and they'll say "Why we're free to do what we want to, even if we're in the Convention. We do what we want to," even if they're in the Association. "We do what we want to. We are as independent as you are." But they are not. Dr. Barnes conceded this on the witness stand by stating it in this fashion, that though the Southern Baptist Convention does not have any *direct* authority over the churches, he says, "they have an *influence that borders on authority.*" And those are his words. They have an influence that *borders on authority.*

You talk about pressure. You let a preacher in the Southern Baptist Convention try to act independent and serve as he feels the Lord wants him to do, if it crosses the Convention, they can bring all kinds of pressure down upon him. My father used to be in the Convention. Ask him. He'll tell you. One of the first things he wanted to do was to use the Bible and study the Bible only in Sunday School, and the Convention brought all the pressure they could about that. And he said "What's the matter?" They said, "You've got to use Baptist literature if you're going to be a Standard Sunday School." So my Dad asked them, "Since when did the Bible cease to be Baptist literature?"

You see the literature is where they subtly bring in all of their "stuff." You ought to read this issue of the Quarterly, in fact, it'll be in **The**

**Baptist Challenge** next month. Did you know they have a statement in the Young People's Quarterly for January-February-March in which the writer says that the Baptists, the Methodists, the Lutherans, the Christian Scientists, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Roman Catholics are all brothers in Christ, and working toward the same thing. Now I can't quote it verbatim, but that is in the Quarterly.

Well, you ought to smell the stink that was raised all over the Southern Baptist Convention about that. So they did write a letter about that and said "We're sorry we goofed." But there's "goofs" like that all along the way. This is why they want to be sure the quarterlies are put in these churches for study rather than to study the Bible. This is the same reason that the Catholics did not use the Bible, because if they would study and read their Bible they would soon learn that much of what goes on is contrary to the Word of God and they do not want the people to know this. That's why the hierarchy was set up, to control and dominate the "laity" by the "clergy." Well, the Lord says He hates it. He still hates it, and what God hates, we ought to hate.

And now He gives a recommendation and a warning in verse 16. "*Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.*" As I pointed out to you this morning, the way the Lord does this by the "sword of His mouth" is through the pastor of the church. He's not going to use a Bishop out here. He's not going to use some official out here in a

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denomination like an Associational Missionary or somebody else. If the Lord has any instruction for a church, He's going to use the "sword" which is the Word of God, and He's going to deliver it to that church by means of their pastor, and this is what the Lord says right here. So He urges them to repentance. That means He urges them to purge themselves of these heresies.

Finally, let me point out one thing in verse 16. He says "repent," but if there is no repentance, then judgment. This judgment that He is talking about is not the Second Coming of the Lord, but it is a quick coming in judgment upon those individuals that are guilty. It's not really with the church that the Lord will fight, but with those who actually live these wicked lives and are guilty of these evil doctrines. The target, as He says here, is "I will fight against *them*." There's the target, against "them", meaning those who are teaching and who are practicing such doctrines. He doesn't say exactly what He will do, but He will.

Now verse 17, "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*" This says churches (plural), showing that these letters are meant for all churches, so that whatever is applicable, each church is to take that which is applicable to them. Next He says, "*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.*" Now manna was the sustenance and life of the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings. Here in this verse, it is a symbol of the life-giving food that is given to those who remain faithful

unto the Lord. It represents the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Jn. 6:35). And He says, "*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.*" You see, the sufficiency of Christ is hidden from the world, and it is in direct contrast to the allurements of the heathen world. Just as Israel received the manna from heaven as its food during their wilderness wanderings to replace the leeks, the onions, and the garlics of old Egypt (I couldn't ever be a Jew if they had to eat onions), He gave them manna to take the place of all of that, so that for the believer there is the offer of spiritual fellowship with Christ that the world knows nothing about. It's hidden from the world.

You see, the world doesn't understand how you can be a Christian and be happy. They don't understand how you can be a Christian and really enjoy Christianity. They think it's miserable because it's hidden from them. Can't you imagine what those Arabs thought about those Jews during the wilderness wanderings? Here they were in their cities and they were having to eat leeks, onions and garlics, and all this other stuff, and I guess they were feeling sorry for those Jews out there wandering around the wilderness and without anything to eat at all. Yet they were eating manna which was angel food. They were eating better than the Arabs or anyone else.

And that's the way it is with Christians. The world feels sorry for us. We can't go out in the world, and we can't drink, and dance, and booze it up and have a great old time as the world does, and they feel sorry for us because we can't do this. We can't go to the moving pic-

tures, and we can't do that, and we can't do the other, etc. and they feel sorry for us. Little do they know that God provides us "manna from heaven," our spiritual food. We're living lots better than what they are, they just don't know it. It's the "hidden" manna of the Lord. All they need to do is try it once, and they'd never go back to the other.

And then we have the "white stone," and really, I don't think very many people know what this white stone means. I was talking with one of our members recently, and he was studying in preparation for the lessons that he was teaching in the Training Union hour. He came to me about a little old knotty problem that was in one of the lessons, and he says, "You know, I've read all these commentaries, and they just plain skip over it and don't even mention it." And that's usually the way it is with these commentaries. When you find something that is very difficult to dig out and find an answer and you don't know, you can read all the commentaries, and you find out they don't know either. So they hardly say anything about it at all. This is one of those problem areas, right here, as far as really understanding what the Lord meant though I'm sure those people knew.

Now here's the only thing that I believe that I have come up with that I think this might mean, and I wouldn't be dogmatic at all. He says, "*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*" Now this stone is contrasted with the charms that were worn by the wor-

shippers of all these heathen gods, and they had inscribed on them the names of their deities. Many of them were considered "good luck" charms, and they'd wear them around their necks. St. Christopher is no longer a valid saint in the Roman Catholic Church, they've pushed him aside, but that's what they used to do. They'd take a little emblem or a little medal of St. Christopher and wear it around their neck and it was supposed to give them safety in traveling in their automobile, or things like that. Well, this is what the heathen used to do. They would take a stone and hang it around their neck and inscribe the name of their god on it, and that was supposed to put them under his supernatural protective care.

One other possibility in understanding this, and it's rather hard for us maybe to understand that they operated this way, but God could do it this way if He wanted to. This is supposed to have been a custom used in their courts in that day. The judges would have an urn, a large vessel with a small mouth on it, and they would put two marbles or something similar to marbles, a pebble, inside this urn. They put a white one and a black one in there, and then they would rattle them around on the inside, and then they would lean it over and let one pebble come out. If the white pebble came out, that signified that that person was innocent of whatever the crime was that they were charged with. If the black pebble came out first, it would indicate their guilt and therefore their condemnation. And they actually operated justice on those bases. Now don't think that operates on chance. God

(See **CHURCH** on page 16)

# 70 Bible References On Drinking

1. Gen. 9:20-26. The first drunkenness and the attendant immoral behavior.

2. Gen. 19:30-38. Drinking results in Lot's debauchery of his own daughters.

3. Gen. 27:25. Isaac was drinking when he mistakenly blessed Jacob.

4. Lev. 10:9. An express command not to drink.

5. Num. 6:3. The vow of the Nazarite.

6. Deut. 21:20. Drinking leads to stubbornness, rebellion, and gluttony and brings dishonor to parents.

7. Deut. 29:2-6. Abstinence assures a closer walk with God.

8. Judg. 13:4, 7, 14. Samson's mother, an example of all womanhood, was commanded not to drink. Was alcohol recognized even then as a protoplasmic poison, injuring posterity?

9. 1 Sam. 1:14-15. Hannah, an example of honored motherhood, was a total abstainer.

10. 1 Sam. 25:33; 36:38. Nabal, a rich but churlish man who opposed David, died after a drunken spree. He had already lost his wife's respect.

11. 2 Sam. 11:13. Only by strong drink could David lead Uriah into a fatal trap.

12. 2 Sam. 13:28-29. A man, in a drunken brawl, was murdered by his brother Absalom.

13. 1 Kings 16:8-10. While a king was "drinking himself drunk" in his own home, one of his captains conspired against him and slew him.

14. 1 Kings 20:13-21. Drink and war. While Ben Hadad and thirty-two other kings were drinking in their pavilions, a small band of Israel's men fell upon the Syrians and put them to flight.

15. Esther 1:5-22. Drink wrecks homes and separates man

and wife. At a week's feast of food and wine, King Ahasuerus drunkenly tried to subject his queen to the beastly gaze of inebriated nobles, causing separation of the royal husband and wife.

16. Job 1:18-19. The children of Job were feasting and drinking when blown away in a cyclone.

17. Pr. 4:17. Violence results from drinking.

18. Pr. 20:1. No wise men will indulge.

19. Pr. 21:17; 23:21. Drink leads to poverty.

20. Pr. 23:7-8. The body rebels after drinking.

21. Pr. 23:29-30. Strong drink produces sorrow, contentions, wounds without cause, babblings, redness of eyes.

22. Pr. 23:31. Do not be tempted by intoxicants.

23. Pr. 23:32. God's Word warns that liquor eventually harms all who drink.

24. Pr. 23:33. It produces willfulness and prevents reformation.

25. Pr. 23:33. It fills men's minds with adulterous and impure thoughts.

26. Pr. 23:34. It brings on insecurity.

27. Pr. 23:35. Insensibility follows drinking, rendering a man into a clod.

28. Pr. 23:35. Habit forming. One drink calls for another.

29. Pr. 31:4-5. Kings and all other rulers or officials with the weight of human lives in their control should not imbibe.

30. Pr. 31:6-7. The only sanctions for the use of strong drink was a medicine or anesthetic for those about to die. We now know better medicines and anesthetics than whiskey, wine or beer.

31. Eccl. 2:3. The writer of Ecclesiastes tried strong drink, but in the end was forced to

admit that it too is vanity (Eccl. 12:8).

32. Eccl. 10:17. Blessings are promised to the temperate and abstaining nations.

33. Isa. 5:11-12. Woe to the drunkards.

34. Isa. 5:22. More woes to them who drink.

35. Isa. 22:13. Drinking and carnality go together. Leaves men hopeless.

36. Isa. 24:9. Drink is bitter to them that drink it.

37. Isa. 28:1. Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim.

38. Isa. 28:3. The pride of drunkards will be trodden down.

39. Isa. 28:7. Prophets and priests erred through drink.

40. Isa. 28:7. Those who drink are set aside as useless.

41. Isa. 28:7. Prophets and priests finally swallowed up by drink.

42. Isa. 28:7. Drinking brings on spiritual blindness.

43. Isa. 56:9-12. Rebuke to drinking church members. His watchmen.

44. Jer. 35:5-6, 8, 14. Total abstinence of the Rechabites cited as example of obedience on the part of God's people.

45. Ezk. 44:21. Priests are not to drink wine.

46. Dan. 5:2, 23. A nation whose women drink.

47. Dan. 5:1. Belshazzar is exhibited as an example of a leader who drank and taught his people to drink.

48. Dan. 5:2, 23. A nation whose women drink.

49. Dan. 5:5-9, 25-28. Ruin and downfall for nations whose rulers and leaders cause them to drink.

50. Dan. 5:3. Belshazzar's sacrilege in using sacred temple vessels for liquor.

51. Hos. 3:1. Part of the degradation of Hosea's wife induced by drink.

52. Hos. 4:11. Strong drink and immorality go hand in hand.

53. Hos. 7:5. King and people reproved because of drinking.

54. Joel 1:5. Drunkards to awake from their drinking.

55. Joel 3:3. Young virtue sold for the price of drink.

56. Amos 2:8. Wine of the condemned.

57. Amos 2:12. Pollution of the innocent.

58. Amos 4:1. Dissolute women, oppressors of the poor, call for their liquor.

59. Amos 6:6. Drinkers not concerned about God nor the welfare of others.

60. Nah. 1:10. Drunkards to be destroyed.

61. Hab. 2:5. Arrogance inflamed by drink.

62. Hab. 2:15. Wrong to give one's neighbor drink. Social drinking.

63. Hab. 2:16. Drink leads to shame and humiliation.

64. Matt. 24:48-51. Drunkards warned about the return of Christ and His judgment.

65. Luke 1:15. Greatness of John the Baptist linked with his total abstinence.

66. Luke 12:45. Christ warns against being enmeshed in drink evils.

67. Luke 21:34. Warning against drunkenness and the cares of this life which follow, keeping one occupied to the exclusion of the Spirit.

68. Rom. 13:13. All are admonished to walk honestly, not in rioting and drunkenness. It is not honest to be less than men, created in the image of God.

69. Rom. 14:21. Drinking causes a brother to stumble. Importance of example.

70. 1 Cor. 6:10. No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God. (Therefore the preaching of the gospel must include alcohol education.)

soon as we get into our new facilities.—The Editor.

\* \* \*

**Apology To Our Readers.** We have received much correspondence in the last few months, and though we have tried to answer all of it, I am afraid that we have missed some. Presently, Challenge Press is located in temporary quarters without regular offices, and it is difficult to keep up with everything, so if you have written us a letter or sent us a book order and did not receive a response we apologize. Also, we have a new address, and some of our mail may have gone astray, so we are asking each of our readers to take note of our new addresses. All correspondence for **The Challenge Press, Central Baptist Church, or Latin American Baptist Missions** should be sent to:

**P. O. Box 25848,  
Little Rock, AR  
72221-5848  
Church (501) 868-7703  
Chal. Press: (501) 868-7622  
Fax: 1-501-594-7622**

All personal correspondence for the editor, **M. L. Moser** should be sent to:

**805 Winding Creek Trail  
Red Oak, TX 75154-3968  
(214) 755-7777  
mlmoser1@juno.com**

Again, we apologize if we have failed to get out any of the book orders on time or answer your letters, but we will try to become more efficient. I am sure things will improve as

**Oklahoma Defeats Lottery.** Oklahomans bucked a national trend and fought back a campaign by the state's governor when they resoundingly defeated a state lottery proposal May 10. With 60% of the vote against state-sponsored gambling, Oklahoma became only the second state in the nation to turn down a lottery in a statewide vote. The first was North Dakota. There currently are 38 states with lotteries.

\* \* \*

**Overheard Statement Worth Repeating.** Recently someone called in to the Rush Limbaugh show and said, "Isn't it interesting that Bill and Hillary Clinton are only half the age of Ronald and Nancy Reagan but twice as forgetful!" He was referring to the questions asked of the Clintons about Whitewater. They kept saying, "I don't remember... I cannot recall," and on and on and on. When President Reagan said he did not remember, the press always poked fun at him as being a senile old man. — *The Sword of the Lord*.

\* \* \*

**The Boomer Age.** A godly Florida pastor and I were discussing why worldly, compromising churches seem to be flourishing while some godly, soulwinning preach-

ers are struggling. He reminded me that the baby boomer children of the hippie era are now in their late thirties and forties. We are reaping what was sown then when drugs, free sex and rock-'n'-roll became the order of the day. "If it feels good, do it!" was their slogan. The Clintons and their friends came out of this age of rebellion. So did many of our lawyers, judges and politicians. Sadly, many preachers of today embraced that same philosophy of no restraint, no rules, no standards. So did many present-day educators. Does this explain why good churches today find it rough sledding when they preach the righteousness of the Bible? My friend who pastors a good church said, "Today there is no loyalty to anything but self. 'Please ME or I'll go elsewhere.' The flesh must be indulged, so he wants entertainment in church. This same boomer can walk out on a marriage of 20 years or walk away from a spiritual church with no explanation given." And for many boomer preachers today, it's "Anything to get a crowd!" Friends told me recently of a pastor who used to be considered a devoted fundamentalist. "We left," they said, "because now all the preacher is interested in is getting crowds and money." Sad! — Hugh Pyle in *The Sword of the Lord*.

\* \* \*

**Another Clinton For President?** A recent Associ-

ated Press article appearing in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* (5/23/94) says: "President Hillary Rodham Clinton? *The New Yorker* magazine reports in its May 30 issue that some friends of the first lady say she may be planning to succeed her husband in the White House. The magazine quoted Betsey Wright, President Clinton's chief of staff when he was Arkansas governor, as saying, "There are a great many people talking very seriously about her succeeding him. Their staff will say 'We have to do it this way and that way, and then we'll be here at least 12 years.' And it's not just the staff. Friends, Democrats, people out across the country think it is a very viable plan of action," Wright said in December, according to the magazine. However, at least one source for the story says the magazine misquoted her, and Hillary Clinton's spokesman denies any such conversations have occurred. Maurie Perl, a spokesman for *The New Yorker*, said the writer, Connie Bruck, is well known for her good reporting and that the magazine stands by its story." For those of us in Arkansas who know the Clinton's, there is no doubt in our minds that she is currently the acting-president, and no doubt she does have presidential ambitions.

\* \* \*

**Health Benefits Ruled Out For Gay Pairs.** The city of Minneapolis can't offer

health-care benefits to partners of its gay and lesbian employees, a judge ruled. State law does not recognize same-sex partners as dependents or spouses, and the City Council acted beyond its authority when it adopted the domestic partners ordinance in August 1993, Hennepin County District Judge Deborah Hedlund said. She ruled in a lawsuit led by a taxpayer, James A. Lilly. The suit argued that the city had no legal authority to extend health insurance benefits to same-sex partners, and that the domestic partners ordinance violated state public policy "favoring marriage of heterosexual couples." Lilly said earlier that he felt city-funded health benefits for partners of gay and lesbian employees was bad social policy. "I have no vendetta against homosexuals," he said. (AP)

\* \* \*

**ACLU Sues Over Creationism Lesson.** The American Civil Liberties Union is suing a suburban school district of Pittsburgh on behalf of two students who allege an employee taught the story of Adam and Eve and other parts of the Bible in biology class. ACLU attorneys filed the lawsuit to get area schools to curtail religious teachings, which have been on the rise in the last 18 months. The lawsuit says an employee of the suburban Moon Area School District told ninth-grade students March 16 that God created the world as re-

counted in the book of Genesis. He said the universe is only 6,000 years old and that death was unknown until Adam and Eve ate the forbidden Apple. Warren Kooi, technology coordinator for the school district, was a guest speaker in the biology class during his day off. School officials say students learned creationism after a lesson on evolution (AP).

\* \* \*

**Good Friday Holiday Unconstitutional.** An Illinois federal judge has declared Illinois' Good Friday school holiday unconstitutional. The state-mandated holiday for teachers and schoolchildren "was primarily motivated by a desire to endorse the Christian faith and conveys the impermissible message that Christianity is a favored religion within the state of Illinois," U.S. District Judge Ann C. Williams said in a ruling released Tuesday. "Unlike Christmas and Thanksgiving, which have both secular and religious connotations, Good Friday remains (a) wholly religious day." (AP)

\* \* \*

**California Court Allows Murder Charge For Killing of Fetus.** The California Supreme Court has held that a person can be convicted of murder for causing the death of a fetus, even though the fetus could have been legally aborted. The May 16 ruling, by a 6-1 majority, will allow

prosecutors to charge a defendant with murder for causing a pregnant woman to miscarry, even if her fetus is incapable of surviving outside the womb. The ruling will not directly affect abortion rights, which are protected under the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 Roe vs. Wade ruling. However, both pro-life and pro-choice groups monitored the case for its ruling on a legal definition of when life begins. (ABP)

\* \* \*

**Schools Can't Charge Churches More.** The Supreme Court turned away an appeal by a Virginia school district that sought to charge church congregations higher rents than other non-commercial groups for use of school buildings. The court without comment, let stand rulings that said the Fairfax County, Va., school board unlawfully discriminated against churches by charging them higher rents. School board lawyers had argued that churches holding worship services in public schools on weekends present church-state problems, and that the higher rents were intended to discourage churches from being long-term renters. Hundreds of church congregations across the nation don't have their own buildings and rent space from public schools.

\* \* \*

**Detention for Saying "Grace" At Mealtime.** An elementary public school stu-

dent was placed in a week-long detention for bowing his head and thanking God for his lunch in the school cafeteria. This has happened on at least three separate occasions and the principal himself physically removed the young student on one occasion. He has been given lengthy periods of detention time, segregated from other students and ridiculed for his religious beliefs and practices. The Rutherford Institute has filed a lawsuit against the principal and the school.

\* \* \*

**Dead Hero's Father Tears Into Clinton.** This headline appeared in *The Sunday Times* of London, England, May 29, 1994. The President had recently presented posthumously Congressional Medals of Honor to the widows of two soldiers killed in Somalia. *The Sunday Times* reported that the father of one of the soldiers said to the President after the medal was presented: "You sir, are not fit to be president of the United States. The blame for my son's death rests with the White House and with you. You are not fit to command!" Clinton was shocked and reeled back in stunned silence and said "It wasn't my fault. I didn't do anything about it." This was not reported in the American press though it ap-

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peared in *The Sunday Times* of London. A telephone call to the father confirmed the truth of the statement. — Rush Limbaugh TV program, June 11, 1994.

\* \* \*

**Homosexual Heads Hawaii Council of Churches.**

The Hawaii Council of Churches' new head is a homosexual minister. John Bullock, co-pastor of a Honolulu congregation of the pro-homosexual Metropolitan Community Church, was selected recently to become the first openly homosexual to head a state council of churches. However, Zimbabwe's council of churches is supporting a government crackdown against homosexuals, prompting the World Council of Churches (WCC) to consider moving its 1998 50th anniversary assembly, now scheduled for Zimbabwe, to another site. — CC

\* \* \*

**Disney Welcomes Homosexuals.**

The Walt Disney Co., the "family entertainment" company, welcomed thousands of homosexuals to its Magic Kingdom Park (Orlando) last month for their Forth Annual Gay and Lesbian Day celebration, called "A Day of Magic, A Night of Pleasure." Disney made lame excuses, but this is but the latest of many pro-homosexual actions it has taken in recent years as it helps push the homosexual agenda. Disney has also produced its most sexually explicit movie ever, which features "steamy sex scenes, a lesbian encounter and frontal nudity." — CC

**Holy Land Trip Planned.**

We have received a request from Bro. Jerry Locke asking us to inform our readers as follows: "All *Baptist Challenge* readers are invited to tour the Holy Lands with Dr. Jerry Locke for June 19-30, 1995. For information or brochure, write the address below, or call Lake Worth Baptist Church at 817-237-4163. Address: Dr. Jerry D. Locke, Lake Worth Baptist Church, 4445 Hodgkins Rd., Lake Worth, TX 76135-2136."

\* \* \*

**Kmart Boycott Effective.**

The boycott of Kmart by American Family Association continues to have a negative effect on the company. Kmart recently reported that their earnings for fiscal first quarter (1994) are expected to fall "well below" the year-ago period's 12 cents a share. It was the fifth quarter in a row of lower earnings. AFA has been promoting a boycott of Kmart since 1990 and says the effects of the boycott are now beginning to show. "One of the factors in the economic slump of Kmart has been the boycott of the company by the American Family Association," said Donald E. Wildmon, AFA president. "In 1990 we asked Kmart chairman Joseph Antonini to pull the pornography from their Waldenbooks stores. Mr. Antonini arrogantly refused and has refused many requests since then." When AFA began their boycott of Kmart, the company was the number two retailer in the country and was announcing they were going to be number one. Now they find themselves in serious trouble. Their stock has hit a new 52-week low, their investment ratings have been lowered, they have sold off parts of the company and want to sell off other parts. Antonini has publicly said that he expects

things to get better later this year and into 1995. Kmart is one of the leading retailers of pornography in America. The pornography is sold in Waldenbooks and Borders book stores, owned by Kmart. We urge the readers of **The Baptist Challenge** to participate in this boycott by refusing to make any purchases at Kmart stores until they remove the pornography from Waldenbooks, stores owned by Kmart.

\* \* \*

**Church With Woman Pastor Leaves SBC.**

Members of Prescott Memorial Church, Memphis, voted to sever the 78-year-old church's lifelong ties to the Southern Baptist Convention. "The present direction of the SBC is in direct opposition to our own understanding of our mission and vision as a Baptist church," Nancy Hastings Sehested, the church's pastor, said after the vote that followed morning worship. The 62-1 vote ends a stormy relationship between church and denomination that began in 1968 when Prescott became the first racially inclusive SBC congregation in the Memphis area. Conflicts continued over the years as Prescott displayed its Baptist independence by voting to ordain women as deacons, recognize Christian baptisms other than Baptist, allow non-Baptist Christians to share in communion, and hire a female pastor. Sunday's vote more or less formalized the church's and the denomination's gradual disassociation from each other. Prescott was kicked out of the Shelby Association in 1987 after becoming the first SBC church in Tennessee to hire a female pastor. The

church held on to its membership in the State and national conventions. — *Memphis Commercial Appeal*.

\* \* \*

**SBC Affirms Ecumenical Resolution.**

In a landmark resolution the Southern Baptist Convention, reaffirming its commitment to ecumenical relations, specifically encouraged the "ongoing Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic conversation." The 700-word resolution was approved by more than 90% of the 7,500 delegates at the annual national convention of the Southern Baptist Convention, held June 14-16 in Orlando. The resolution spelled out frankly those areas in which Baptists and Catholics share the same faith and areas in which their beliefs differ. The Baptist resolution noted a need for "cooperative efforts on the part of all Christian organizations" to address pressing moral and social concerns.

\* \* \*

**Democrats Refuse Major Cut In NEA Budget.**

A raucous House agreed to trim the National Endowment for the Arts budget by 2% after Democrats staved off Republican attempts to slash the agency's spending by even more. The 222-204 vote followed a stormy debate in which conservatives accused the endowment of distributing taxpayers' dollars to some artists who are "porno freaks." The fight marked a renewal of the annual battle over the endowment. It is now headed by actress Jane Alexander. "Today's vote confirms what I have witnessed across this country: Americans

(See WNR on page 11)

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**FELLOWSHIPS**

and

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**CONFERENCES**


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**RUSSELL SPRINGS, KY**

July 12-14, 1994, Grace Baptist Church, P.O. Box 98, Dowell Rd., Russell Springs, KY 42642, Paul H. Godby, Pastor.

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**HOMER, MI**

July 17-22, 1994, Countryside Baptist Church, 25090 "L" Dr. South, Homer, MI 49245, William Holbrook, Pastor.

\*\*\*

**GARLAND, TX**

July 25-28, 1994, Rodgers Baptist Church, 2822 Jupiter Rd., Garland, TX 75042, Ron Thomas, Pastor.

\*\*\*

**WILMINGTON, OH**

August 26-27, 1994, Wilmington Baptist Temple, 2873 S.R. 68, South, Wilmington, OH 45177, D. M. Ferrell, Pastor.

\*\*\*

**LIBERAL, KS**

September 19-21, 1994, Fellowship Baptist Church, 216 W. Wilson, Liberal, KS 67901, L. K. Landis, Pastor.

\*\*\*

**SIoux FALLS, SD**

October 3-5, 1994, Empire Baptist Temple, 412 S. Hawthorne Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57104, Ron Tottingham, Pastor.

**FORT WORTH, TX**

October 3-5, 1994, Lake Worth Baptist Church, 4445 Hodgkins Rd., Ft. Worth, TX 76135-2136, Jerry Locke, Pastor.

\*\*\*

**LITTLE ROCK, AR**

October 24-26, 1994, Central Baptist Church, P. O. Box 25848, Little Rock, AR 72221, B. Lawrence Jones, Pastor.

\*\*\*

**CINCINNATI, OH**

November 8-10, 1994, Central Baptist Church, 7645 Winton Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45224, James W. Love, Pastor

\*\*\*

**WESTCLIFFE, CO**

January 24-27, 1995, "Retreat In the Rockies", Wetmore Baptist Church, P. O. Box 84, Wetmore, CO 81253, (719) 284-4197, Brian Withrow, Pastor.

We shall be happy to list the dates of fellowship meetings of independent Baptist churches throughout the country. Please send the dates far enough in advance.

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**Voluntary Student Prayer Approved**

By Haven B. Gow

According to historian Dr. David Barton, "When the confusing Lee v. Weisman decision on school invocations/benedictions was handed down in June 1992, many incorrectly characterized that decision as a complete ban on all graduation prayers. Consequently, as graduation season drew near for 1993, legal groups began to issue clarifications either

urging or opposing the inclusion of prayers in this year's ceremonies. One group, the American Center for Law & Justice (ACLJ), issued a letter outline a procedure based on a recent federal ruling (Jones v. Clear Creek Independent School District) whereby schools *could* have prayers at graduation if a majority of the students voted for them and if they were student-led. However, several state ACLU organizations issued letters warning that there were no conditions which allowed for *any* prayer."

In point of fact, the U.S. Supreme Court, on June 7, 1993, buttressed the position of those who say student-initiated prayer in public schools is constitutional when it let stand a lower federal court decision permitting student-initiated, student-led prayers at graduation.

In this regard, in Fayetteville, Arkansas, Supt. of Public Schools Winston Simpson and members of the school board are attempting to write a policy on school prayer that faces head-on the question of whether student-initiated prayer at school functions are different from school-sponsored prayer which supposedly is outlawed by the U.S. Supreme Court because it violates the separation of Church and State. At a recent school board meeting, many expressed approval of student-initiated, student-led prayer in public schools, and said prayer and the wholesome influence of religious faith can help alleviate moral decline, atheistic, humanistic influences the proliferation of drugs, alcohol abuse and sexual immorality.

On the other hand, University of Arkansas

(Fayetteville) law professor Morton Gitelman says student-initiated prayer nevertheless violates the principle of separation of Church and State and transgresses the rights of students who are offended by school prayer. He states: "If a school allows it, they are endorsing it."

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**Take These Lines To Heart**

I dreamed death came to me  
one night  
and heaven's gates flew  
open wide.

With kindly grace St. Peter  
came and  
ushered me inside.

There to my astonishment  
were friends

I had known on Earth,  
Some I had labeled as unfit  
and some  
of little worth.

Indignant words flew to my  
lips:

Words I could not set free,  
For every face showed  
stunned surprise --

No one expected me!

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(Continued from page 10)

recognize the positive force of the arts in our neighborhoods, in our schools and in our communities," she said in a written statement. Opponents tried unsuccessfully to eliminate the endowment's entire \$171 million budget, and then half of its money. They next proposed shrinking it by 5%. Sponsor Cliff Stearns, R-Fla., cited a March 1993 NEA-financed performance in Minneapolis by Ron Athey, an HIV-infected artist who cut himself and an assistant, and then dangled bloodied towels over the audience. Rep. Robert Dornan, R-Calif., cited Athey and other NEA-backed artists and said, "I can't comprehend the mystery of how these porno freaks keep getting this money."

## TRINITY...

(Continued from page 1)

With no less assurance Malachi asks: "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" (Mal. 2:10). And the Most High declares by the pen of Isaiah: "I am the LORD (Jehovah), that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another" (Isa. 42:8). "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD (Jehovah), and beside me there is no Saviour" (Isa. 43:10-11). "I am the first and I am the last, and beside me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6).

If further evidence is needed, a large part of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah may be read; for it is a passage of wonderful majesty, asserting that Jehovah, in contrast with idols, is the only God, the Creator, the Preserver, and the Ruler of all things. And this doctrine of one God, so clearly announced by the prophets, became at last the settled creed of the Jews, and was made by them an excuse for rejecting Jesus Christ as a blasphemer, instead of receiving Him as the Son of God. Yet the Savior Himself taught that there is but one true God, (*e.g.* Mk. 10:18); and while He claimed to be strictly divine, He so identified Himself with the Father that the unity of God was maintained.

As to the nature of the divine unity, we hold that it is *essential*, or in other words, that the proper essence or substance of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is forever one and the same — a simple, indivisible, self-existent, everlasting principle of life, intelligence, wisdom, love and power. This language describes what is *implied* in the words of the sacred writers; it offers a key that will fit into all

the statements of Scripture and lay open to us their treasures of wisdom. Do the sacred writers lay great stress on the Unity of God, as if it were a fundamental characteristic of His being? This view accounts for their so doing, for by a law of our reason we attach even greater importance to being than to manifestation, even though that manifestation be personal. Do they represent the distinctions of the Godhead as personal? This view is consistent with the representation, for it has never been proved that unity of essence carries with it unity of person. Do they ascribe equal knowledge, goodness, wisdom, and right to the divine Father, Son and Spirit? This view explains their doctrine, for the same attributes ought naturally to inhere in personal beings whose underlying and essential nature is one and the same. Does the Savior say, "I and my Father are one" (Jn. 10:30); that is, one in guarding the flock, one in power, one thing, using a *neuter* form of the word *one*? This view accounts for the saying better than any other with which we are acquainted; for power, in the last analysis, belongs to essence, and if the essence of the Father and the Son is one and the same, their power may well be one. In the light of these facts it seems to us that the Unity of God is essential.

**II. The Scriptures plainly teach that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are, each of them, truly divine, or God.**

We are not now concerned about the agreement of this teaching with the doctrine that God is one, but are seeking to show that this teaching is to be found in the

New Testament. If found there, we may be sure that it agrees with the Unity of God, even though we should be unable to comprehend the mystery of the divine nature, and demonstrate this agreement. Taking one step at a time, let us search for the testimony of the inspired Word as to the Deity of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Christians of every name freely admit that the Father is often called God, and is always represented by the sacred writers as truly divine. That Christians are right in doing this may be proved by a single text; for in his Epistle to the Ephesians Paul declares there is "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:6). If we add to this the fact that, while there are several passages of the New Testament in which the term God may signify the Supreme Being, without any special reference to the Father, and a few in which it is applied to the Son or to the Holy Spirit, there are very many in which this term is applied to the Father — no further proof will be necessary. The proper Deity of the Father will be accepted as a certain truth of Scripture.

In regard to the Deity of the Son, we appeal, *first*, to the language of Thomas when Jesus appeared to him in the evening of the eighth day after His resurrection. For seeing Jesus before him, he said unto Him: "My Lord and my God" (Jn. 20:28). If this was not a definite acknowledgment of the Deity of Christ, I am at a loss to conceive how such an acknowledgment could have been made. And the Savior did not protest against it. He who had recently come from Paradise

with the awe of the unseen and holy father upon Him, did not rebuke the words of His disciples, though, if He was less than God, they were false and blasphemous.

We appeal *secondly* to the words of Paul, exhorting the Philippians: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation" etc. (Phil. 2:5-6). These words teach that equality with God was freely relinquished by Jesus Christ when he left His heavenly state or condition to become man. But no being can relinquish or forego that which is beyond his reach; no one can relinquish His equality with God whose nature does not qualify Him to be on a level with God, to share His condition and glory.

With this passage may be compared another in the Epistle to the Colossians, written about the same time, in which, speaking of Christ, he says that "All things were created by him, and for him," and that "by him all things consist" (Col. 1:16-17); while a little further on he declares that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). Or we may turn to one of his earlier epistles, namely, that sent to the Romans, and hear him say of the Israelites: "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever" (Rom. 9:5).

We appeal *thirdly* to the language of John in his prologue to the Fourth Gospel, who says that "the Word was God," that "all things were made by him," that "in him was life," and that "the life

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was the light of men" (Jn. 1:1-4). With these words of the disciple whom Jesus loved we may compare the sayings of Christ Himself: "The Son can do nothing of himself: or from himself; that is, so close is the union between the Father and Son that any action of the Son, separate from that of the Father, is impossible. Hence the full expression is this: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he (the Father) doeth, these also (in like manner) doeth the Son likewise... For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" (Jn. 5:19-21). "I am the light of the world" (Jn. 8:12). "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jn. 8:58). "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9). "I and my Father are one" (Jn. 10:30; 17:22). This last expression was twice used by the Lord — once to affirm the inseparable unity of His own action and His Father's, and once to affirm His moral unity with the Father.

We have here given but a small part of the biblical evidence that Christ is truly God, but enough to establish this proposition as a doctrine of the Christian religion. Our Savior is divine as well as human, and we are constrained to take account of His divinity in forming our conception of the Godhead.

But if the Son is truly God, so likewise is the Spirit. This might be inferred with some degree of probability from the designation itself; for as the spirit of man is that part of his being which is highest, freest, most intelligent, it is surely improbable that inspired men would apply such a name as Spirit of God, or Holy Spirit, to anything less high and holy than God Him-

self.

The same might be inferred with still greater confidence from the fact that divers acts, such as inspiration, regeneration, sanctification and the like are ascribed sometimes to God, sometimes to Christ, sometimes to the Spirit of God, sometimes to the Spirit of Christ, and sometimes to the Holy Spirit; while a careful examination and comparison of all these representations lead to the belief that it is the Holy Spirit who accomplishes, by direct agency, the divine will in human souls.

Moreover, the proper deity of the Holy Spirit appears to be assumed by Peter in his address to Ananias: "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? . . . Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-4). The same assumption is also made by Paul in these words: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). That is, God dwells in His temple, and ye are God's temple, because the Spirit of God dwells in you, for the Spirit is God. But we need not multiply citations, for there seems to be in fact no biblical ground for doubt as to the divinity of the Holy Spirit. It may be necessary to collect with some care the evidence that He is personal, but it is needless to prove that He is Divine.

**III. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinguishable in a personal respect from one another.**

Personality is selfhood, and by a personal being we mean a being that is intelligent, self-conscious, volun-

tary — a being that knows, feels, wills. Let us observe what the Scriptures teach in respect to a personal distinction between the Father and the Son.

(1) They make use of these terms as divine names, and these terms, Father and Son, point to distinctions of a personal nature. They are applicable to beings that know, love, plan and choose. Any other use of them is intensely figurative. Yet they are used very often by the Savior, when His language is otherwise plain, sober, didactic. And they are often accompanied by other expressions which rest on the idea of a personal distinction between the Father and the Son.

(2) The pronouns I, thou, he and we, are often employed by Jesus in speaking of Himself, of the Father, or of both, and they imply the personality of Himself and of His Father, as well as some distinction between the two. Thus: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Mt. 11:25). "Glorify thou me... with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (Jn. 17:5). "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (Jn. 17:21). If this use of the pronouns does not prove that there is some distinction of a personal nature between the Father and the Son, it is not easy to imagine any kind of evidence which would be accepted as proof of such distinction.

(3) Christ distinguishes between His own knowledge and the Father's. Thus: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Mt. 11:27). "For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all

things that himself doeth" (Jn. 5:20). Both these testimonies — one preserved in the Gospel of Matthew, and the other in the Gospel of John — imply that the intellect of the Son is, properly speaking, distinguishable from that of the Father. And the same may be said of nearly every passage in the New Testament which refers to the knowledge of either.

(4) Christ distinguishes between His own affection and His Father's; not indeed as to the moral character of that affection, but as to the heart that exercises it. "The Father loveth the Son" (Jn. 5:20), is a declaration of Jesus Himself, and it accords with the voice from Heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17). As to the Son's love of the Father, we find it expressed in such terms as these: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me" (Jn. 4:34). "I honor my Father" (Jn. 8:49). "I know him and keep his word" (Jn. 8:55). "I do always those things which please him" (Jn. 8:29).

It is then certain that the Father loves the Son, and the Son the Father; and it is no less certain that mutual affection implies distinctions of a personal nature.

(5) Christ distinguishes between His own will and His Father's will. "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me" (Jn. 8:54). "I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth" (Jn. 8:50). "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Lk. 22:42).

There is, of course, a sense in which the Father's will is the same as the Son's; for they agree in willing the

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same holy ends; but if the passages quoted by us are to have any natural interpretation, the faculty of will in the Father is in some way and measure distinct from the faculty of will in the Son, and this distinction is clearly personal.

Finally, it must be observed that every particle of evidence to be found in the New Testament for any kind of Trinity in the Godhead, goes to prove that the distinctions marked by the words Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are of a *personal* nature. All the Scriptural evidence, we say, looks towards this *kind* of a distinction, and not as some would have us believe, to something else which is utterly, and it may be forever, hidden from us in the depths of the Divine nature.

But, if we admit the personality of the Son to be distinguishable from that of the Father, is it necessary to take a similar view of the Holy Spirit? May we not think of the latter as being only a certain divine influence or operation by which the Father and the Son move upon the hearts of men?

In answer to these questions, it may be said: 1. That our appeal must still be made to biblical evidence. Where that leads, it is necessary for us to follow; for on this subject there is no other valid evidence within our reach. 2. That all the logical difficulties involved in the doctrine of a tri-personal God are encountered in the doctrine of a bi-personal God, the Father and the Son, and as we must accept the latter, there is no reason why we should not accept the former, if it is supported by preponderating evidence. 3. That the biblical

evidence for the personality of the Holy Spirit is amply sufficient to justify belief in the same. Recall the words of my text, "'Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'" Is it easy to suppose that the Lord Jesus here associates an influence or operation with Himself and the Father, binding them together by the word "name"? Can we believe that He intended to say, "Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy influence which is exercised by the Father and the Son?" Read the Apostle's benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14), and ask yourselves whether there is not in this case also strong reason to infer the personality of the Spirit from the personality of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the Father?

Recall, at the same time, the Apostle's account of the extraordinary gifts which were bestowed on certain members of the early church, concluding with the words, "But all these worketh the one and self-same Spirit, distributing to every one severally as he willeth" (1 Cor. 12:11) and his word of exhortation, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye were called unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). In these expressions, feeling, willing and doing are ascribed to the Spirit as unequivocally as they are ever ascribed to the Father or to the Son. Recall, too, the language of Christ when He promised the Comforter to His disciples: "He will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak of (or from) himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that will he speak; and

he will show you things to come. He will glorify me, for he will receive of mine and will show it unto you" (Jn. 16:13-14). Do not the words, "he will not speak from himself," imply that He could speak from Himself? Is it necessary to say that an influence or operation will not speak from itself? Or does an influence or mode of action "hear" and "receive". It is enough to read the last discourse of Jesus before He was betrayed, in order to be convinced that the Holy Spirit is as truly personal as the Father or the Son.

Thus the elements of the doctrine of the Trinity are found in the New Testament; the unity of God, the deity of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and the personal distinction between these three. And these elements readily unite in the received doctrine of the Trinity, which is, that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one and the same in essence, but distinguishable in a personal respect. This doctrine, I repeat, is not to be fully comprehended by us in the present life. It may be a mystery forever. For who can find out the deep things of God? (Job 11:7). No one can tell just how far unity of spiritual essence modifies and reduces the distinction involved in separate personalities as we know them. All we affirm is this: that, according to Scripture, the divine unity is essential, and the difference between the eternal Father, Son, and Spirit personal, or of a personal nature.

There is a vast mystery here. But it is not the only mystery that confronts us. There is no power or object in nature that does not rest in mystery, in the very bosom and sea of impenetrable ob-

scurity. Who of us ever expects to learn on the shores of time the secret of the union of body and soul, of matter and spirit, acting and reacting upon each other, and so related by vital forces as to be a single being, a complex unity, as proved by the witness of self-consciousness? Most truly did the Apostle say: "For now we know in part, and we prophesy in part."

But if we cannot comprehend the Trinity, why is anything said of it in the Bible? Would not the Scriptures have been more useful, because less obscure and perplexing, if they had contained no references to this mysterious truth? We think not. Be the subject what it may, our knowledge of it is only partial; yet this partial knowledge is found to produce wonder, curiosity, desire, effort and progress; yea, partial knowledge has often proved sufficient to smother vanity, beget reverence, warn of danger, and point out the way of life. Men knew how to use the compass, and, by its direction, how to cross the pathless deep in safety, long before they had any conception (if they have this now) of the power which held it with unseen hand, and made its trembling point a steady guide in cloud and storm. Men have known by the Word of God of a future life and a heavenly state, and have been animated to holy action by that knowledge, though quite unable to imagine the peculiarities of that life, and always baffled in their attempts to comprehend its glory.

In like manner our knowledge of the Trinity, though partial, is sufficient to awaken awe, reverence, gratitude and

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praise in our hearts. It is all we need for religious direction and improvement. It is all we need to prevent us from relapsing into the coldness of deism or the distraction of polytheism. If the *unity* of the Godhead were not plainly taught, we should be liable, in the interest of clear thought, to regard the Father and the Son and the Spirit as three separate beings, like ourselves. If the *deity* of the Son and the Spirit were not plainly taught, we should be liable, under the influence of gratitude, to pay religious homage to our Savior and our Sanctifier, even though they were not known to be truly divine. And if the *personal distinction* between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were not plainly taught, we should be in danger of rejecting the whole doctrine of grace through atonement, and of going back to Judaism or over to Islamism, where legal righteousness and despair are the sole alternatives.

In two particulars, especially, may a reverent belief of the Trinity prove helpful to our religious life. In the first place, it may help us to see how God can be forever both self-sufficient and benevolent. By saying that God is self-sufficient, we mean to say that His being and blessedness are complete in themselves, and therefore independent of any other being; and by saying that He is benevolent, we mean to say that He is love, that good will to others is natural to Him. For when we read, "Every one that loveth is born of God, for God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8), we feel that an affection really akin to Christian love, though infinite and eternal, must pervade and animate the life of the Godhead. And this is actually conceivable, if we can say

with the Apostle John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word was God" (Jn. 1:1). For the term *with* denotes fellowship, intimate communion; in this case, the fellowship of the divine Word with the divine Father. And it is easy to see that if there are different selves in the infinite Being, — however interpenetrant, transparent and perfectly known to one another they may be, — there must be mutual and perfect love; for in every one of them must be constantly revealed, in personal form and beauty, the infinite virtues of their common nature.

But, with any other view, we must believe, either that love is not an affection eternally active in God, or that he has had from eternity created objects on which to bestow his affection. By the former supposition, the innermost and highest activity of the Godhead is temporal instead of eternal, and mutable instead of permanent; and by the latter, the highest affection and blessedness of Jehovah depend upon the existence of created objects. But such a dependence of God upon creation is inconsistent with any proper idea of His self-sufficiency or perfection. I am, therefore, convinced that the doctrine of the Trinity is very helpful to us in forming a conception of God as both self-sufficing and loving.

In the *second* place, this doctrine is a help to us in thinking of the Atonement. As a matter of history, we know that a rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity has almost always led to a rejection of the Atonement, while a cordial belief in the Trinity has been almost always accompanied with a belief in the

Atonement. From this fact alone it would be safe to conclude that the two doctrines belong to the same system of truth.

But this is not all that should be said. The Scriptures link them together in many places, and the method of interpretation which finds or fails to find one of them will find or fail to find the other. He to whom the Scriptures represent Jesus Christ as the Son of God — strictly divine and strictly human — will see in Him a fit Mediator between God and men, and will receive the testimony of the Apostles to His atoning death. The mystery of a triune God accepted, a hundred passages of the New Testament, otherwise obscure, are made plain. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29). "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 Jn. 2:1-2). "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7). "Wherefore he is able also to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and

honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:12).

Though my principal object in this essay has been to set forth, as clearly as possible, what seems to me to be the plain teaching of the Scriptures concerning a triune God, I am fully aware of the objections which are sometimes made to it, and might attempt, if it was necessary, to point out their inconclusiveness. But I will only remark:

1. That the biblical doctrine of the Trinity, as believed by evangelical Christians, is *not self-contradictory*. This will be evident, if you recall the fact that it does not affirm God to be in *all* respects one, and in *all* respects three, but in a *certain* respect one and in *another* respect three. To illustrate my thought: there is no contradiction in saying that every man is three in essence, and one in person or consciousness. His being may comprise three distinct elements — a material body, a principle of life which pervades and animates that body, and a spirit which is united with both, but higher than either, rational, immortal, and fitted to "glorify God and enjoy him forever." I do not say that man has this triple nature; I only say that there is no contradiction in supposing that he has it.

So, on the other hand, there is no contradiction in supposing that the personality of God is triple, and His essence single. In either case, our only duty is to ask for the evidence and follow where it leads. In the one case, as well as in the other, we are brought face to face with a mystery which no man ever yet comprehended or explained. Let

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us not stumble at mysteries. The universe is full of them, and from youth to age we are encompassed by them as by an atmosphere. Let us not imagine that we can comprehend the Almighty, "He is higher than heaven, what canst thou know?" My brethren, this is not a theme for philosophy, but for revelation. On this subject, above most others, we need to be as little children, accepting the facts as they are declared to us by "holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2. That the biblical doctrine of the Trinity, as understood by evangelical Christians, *is not inconsistent with some kind of subordination* on the part of the Son to the Father. We may be unable to point out the kind or degree of that subordination, but two remarks will show the direction in which it is possible to look for light.

*First*, the second person of the Godhead is generally set before us by the sacred writers in His state of incarnation or humiliation. Both prophecy and history are chiefly occupied with Him as the Mediator, and in this office He took upon Himself the form, place and work of a servant of God, though He was Head over all things to the church. A certain subordination to the Father is therefore involved in His mediatorial work. But the relation of sonship and official subordination among men is consistent with that of equality in every natural and moral excellence; may we not believe that it is equally so in the Godhead, whose personal distinctions are rooted in a

common nature?

*Second*, to say that the distinction between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is of a personal nature, is to prepare the way for us to believe that some personal quality of the eternal Word rendered it divinely suitable that He should be the revealer of God and the Redeemer of mankind, and that some personal quality of the Holy Spirit rendered it divinely suitable that He should be the Sanctifier of men. Beyond this we need not attempt to go. We may be certain that there is an eternal fitness or decorum in all the acts of the triune God, but it is too much for us to expect to see and comprehend it in the present life.

3. That in prayer we should think of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as truly divine. We need not hesitate to address either of them in praise or petition. We need not, and we should not, fear to sing, "Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove." Though this is prayer and praise to the Spirit, the author of the new life is certainly God, since "every one that loveth is born of God" (1 Jn. 4:17), and those who "believe in the name" of Christ "have been born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jn. 1:13); that is to say, of God the Spirit; for "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is (it with) every one that is born of the Spirit" (Jn. 3:8).

We need not hesitate to offer praise or petition to Christ; for that is what the first Christians did, when they

called on the name of the Lord; that is what Stephen did, when he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59), and that is what the hosts of heaven were seen and heard doing by the Apostle John when banished to the isle of Patmos. And finally, we need not puzzle ourselves with any attempt to hold in our minds the unity and tri-personality of God at the same time. It is enough for us to come to God as sinners saved by grace, recognizing the work of Christ in our behalf, and ready to ascribe the glory of our salvation to the infinite God. It is enough if we honor God in the unseen Father, behold Him in the face of Jesus Christ, and gratefully welcome His presence in the working of the Holy Spirit.

**CHURCH...**

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can overrule and operate that way. Sometimes I think it might be better than some of our jury trials we have around here. This is just one possibility. If so, the white stone that the believer would have would express the believer's complete exoneration. He is no longer to be considered guilty. He has been accepted by the Lord. The white stone indicating that he has been totally forgiven by the Lord.

And then it says, "*and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*" That new name represents and indicates our Lord's granting a personal name for each believer, indicating that he belongs to the new creation. I don't know what that name is, but "There's a new name written down in glory and it's

mine." And if you're saved, "there's a new name written down in glory, and it's yours." But if you're not saved, you don't have a new name written down in glory. If you're not saved, you're going to die and you're going to spend an eternity in hell. You don't have a white stone, and you don't have a new name. You're lost.

Now God gives the white stone, and God gives the new name, not on the basis of who we are, or because of what we are, nor on the basis of what we do. God gives us that new name and that white stone on the basis of what Jesus Christ did for us upon the cross of Calvary. He has saved us, forgiven us, and now we have the promise that we have a new name that 's written down in glory. Do you? If you're not saved, you don't. If you're not saved, you have nothing. All that's in your future is hell. You're still under the black stone which means guilt and condemnation.