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The Jealousy of God

Chas. R. Keller

According to Exodus 34 and 14, the name of God is Jealous and the Lord is a Jealous God. There is much said in the Scriptures concerning jealousy. There are two words closely connected and they seem like the same words but their meaning is different; they are "Envy" and "Jealousy." Envy has to do with that which belongs to another; one could be envious of another's possession. Jealousy has to do with that which is one's own. Jealousy is spoken of in two different ways in the Scripture—the right and the wrong way. The wrong way is found in Song of Solomon (chapter 8:6): "Jealousy is as cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." Jealousy can put people in their grave. The right kind of Jealousy is that which defends the honor of another. An example of this was the Apostle Paul who could say concerning the Lord's people, "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband that I might present you a chaste virgin unto Christ." The Apostle was so jealous of the Lord's people that he was ready to defend them and fight for them against any that might lead them astray. There are a number of things God is jealous of and He will seek to defend the honor, of the same.

God is jealous of the Person and Name of Christ.

Read Matthew 17:1-5.

In Matthew 16, we have the universal aspect of the Church which began on the day of Pentecost. Read Acts 2. In the 18th chapter of Mat-

thew we have the local aspect of the church, that is an assembly gathered together unto the precious Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In between these two, in the 17th chapter, we have the Transfiguration scene. The Lord takes with Him Peter, James and John and goes up into the mount, and for a brief moment they got a glimpse of His glory. Peter was so entranced by the sight that he said, "Let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elias." How solemn to think that Peter was putting Christ on the same platform as the men—Moses and Elias—who had appeared unto them on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Immediately God showed that He was jealous of the Person and the Name of His Son and was going to defend the honor of that Person and Name and a voice spoke from heaven in audible tones, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him." Whether it was the church universal as seen in Matthew 16, or whether it was the local assembly as seen in Matthew 18—Christ's Person and Name alone were to be the ground of gathering and the theme and center worship—and not Man even though they may have been good men in their day and generation.

It is a blessed privilege to be associated with that Person and Name. Nothing needs to be added to it or taken from it. It is a Name that need not be dropped, but can be carried straight through to Heaven. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME" (Phil. 2:9).

God Is Jealous of His Word:

Read 1 Kings 13

Jeroboam had built an altar at Bethel and Dan. A man of God, cried out against the altar at Bethel. One cannot but help admire the man of God for his faithfulness in so doing. Jeroboam said, "Lay hold on Him." Those who cry out against departure from God's path will not be popular with the Jeroboams. He has

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many followers today among leaders. But God laid hold upon Jeroboam and withers his hand. The Man of God shows grace and prays for him and immediately his hand is restored to its normal condition. Jeroboam invites him to go home with him and receive a reward but the man of God declines as he had the direct Word of the Lord not to eat bread or drink water in that place. One can pray for those who have departed from God's path, but cannot fellowship with them.

There was an old prophet dwelling in Bethel. What he was doing there is a mystery—he must have departed with Jeroboam. He evidently knew what was the right path. No real man of God can remain with those that have departed from God's way and truth. The old prophet went after the man of God and found him sitting under an oak. He said to him, "Come home with me and eat bread." Again the man of God refused, reminding him that he had the direct Word of the Lord not to eat bread or drink in that place.

Then the old prophet resorted to craft stating that "An angel spake unto me by the Word of the Lord saying, 'Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water.'" But he lied unto him. It is wonderful the craft and lies those who are like this old prophet in the wrong place, will resort to in order to gain their ends to have men of God fellowship with them and approve of their departure.

So the man of God went back with him and did eat bread in his house and drank water. How solemn to think that the very man—the old prophet—who was responsible for the Man of God disobeying the direct Word of the Lord should foretell judgment that was coming on the man of God for his disobedience to the Word of God. And when the man of God was gone on his way a lion met him and slew him. God was jealous of His word and judgment fell on the man of God who disobeyed it. It is a very solemn thing to disobey the Word of the Lord. One might run well for years but God is no respecter of persons and where there is a direct transgression of the direct Word of God judgment will follow sooner or later.

God Is Jealous of His People:

Read Psalm 105:12-15

The people of God are very dear to the heart of God. Saul was persecuting God's people and was touching the apple of God's eye—a tender spot—when he was so doing. The Lord met Saul on the Damascus road and spoke to him from heaven saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" God's reproves Kings for Israel's sake, saying, "Touch not Mine anointed, do My prophets no harm." That is the reason why we should be careful in our attitude toward the Children of God. They are God's heritage and He is very jealous of them and will defend their honor.

God Is Jealous of His Work:

Read 1 Chron. 13:6

David was bringing back the Ark on a new cart. He had learned this from the Philistines. This was not God's way of carrying on His work for He had instructed Israel that the Ark was to be carried on the shoulders of the Levites. And they had singing and harps and psalteries and cymbals and trumpets.

When the oxen stumbled Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza and he smote him because he put his hand to the ark; and there he died.

God is very jealous as to how His work should be carried on. Many new carts are being introduced, each justified by the many. God does not wish his people to adopt worldly means or music to make the Gospel, as they say, more attractive. The Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation and it does not need these new embellishments.

God Is Jealous of The Assembly:

Read Numbers 25

One of the children of Israel introduced moral evil into the congregation of Israel. Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest saw it and used stringent means to stay the plague from the children of Israel. Twenty-four thousand died in the plague. But Phineas' act had the approval of God Who said, "He hath turned away My wrath from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for My sake among them that I consumed not the children

of Israel in my JEALOUSY."

There is not a more blessed place on earth than a gathering of the Lord's people unto the Name of Christ where they are seeking to continue according to God's Holy precious Word, but I don't know of a more solemn place on earth if sin is brought into the assembly of God: it will sooner or later be visited by the judgment of His Son for God is jealous of the Assembly and will surely defend the honor of the same.

WIS Nov 1941

Illustrative Men in Paul's Epistles

Joel Portman

Some "men" in Paul's epistles are used to represent spiritual truths or contrasts that are helpful to us as believers in the Lord Jesus. These are not always literal men, except in one case; the remainder are seen in symbolic ways that speak to us of spiritual truths that are vital for our understanding of fundamental principles that pertain to all men and especially to believers in Christ. Notice with me how these are seen:

Two "Head" Men

The interesting, but difficult, section of Romans 5:12-21 presents two men who are a definite contrast one with the other. Rom. 5:12 presents to us the "one man" who introduced sin into the world, namely Adam. He is a contrast to Christ, seen in 5:15 as the One who effected one righteous act that has resulted in the many being declared righteous in Him. Undoubtedly this is a portion that contains fundamental truth that begins the section dealing with the principle and power of sin in the world, and how God has dealt with it to effect both justification and sanctification for those who trust Christ.

Both of these men are seen as the head of a race, and what they have done has had its effect on all who are included in that race. Adam was the originator of physical life as God created him from the dust of the ground, but he introduced spiritual and physical death into

the race of mankind through his deliberate disobedience against the one command of God. Christ was also the originator of a race that is spiritual, and by means of His death, He brought "life and immortality to light through the gospel". Adam's act constituted all men as sinners, even though they had not sinned as he did, not having received the same prohibition from God. The righteous act of Christ constituted all who are His as righteous. It is literally "the many" who are affected by each one. The many with relation to Adam included all of mankind, for all descended from him; the many with relation to Christ includes all who are identified with Him by faith. The provision is of the widest nature possible, and while the many had no part in the act that brought them into the state of being sinners, the many with relation to Christ had the part of being brought into that relationship through faith in Him.

The proof of this state that has affected all descendants of Adam is clearly stated; it is "death" in all aspects, mentioned five times in this passage. Many have been born of Adam's race who have never had the same responsibility as he had, but the fact of universal death is what Paul uses to prove that all who are born of Adam have inherited a sin nature; they are sinners before they sinned even if they never have sinned as he did. The proof of the contrasting work of Christ that has affected all of His generation, those born again of the Spirit, is that they all possess life and a nature that tends toward obedience. What a contrast we observe in these two, very important men relative to man's state!

"Natural" or "Spiritual" Men

Paul speaks of the natural man in 1 Cor. 2:14 who is seen in contrast to "he that is spiritual." The natural man, by definition in this context, is the person who cannot know or understand the "wisdom of God" and who cannot receive it, since that wisdom, to him, is foolish. He doesn't have the Spirit indwelling him (v.11-12) and therefore is incapable of comprehending spiritual truths, regardless of the level of his education or intelligence.

The man who is spiritual is a person who is saved and to whom the Holy Spirit can reveal the hidden things that are not imparted nor

received by natural means. In v. 9, Paul quotes Isa. 64:4 to emphasize why the wise men of the world cannot understand the expression of divine wisdom. It is not received by the normal means by which people are made intelligent, by the eye seeing, the ear hearing, or the heart understanding. It is imparted by revelation through the Holy Spirit (v. 10). This is one mark of a genuine child of God; though possibly one is "unlearned or ignorant" so far as the religious world is concerned, he is wise regarding his capability to understand divine truth. We know that instruction in Bible truth is helpful and important, but the natural man cannot understand its true meaning unless and until he or she is born from above and has received the Holy Spirit within. Let us increasingly pursue, not only Bible knowledge of FACTS, but the spiritual meaning that can only be received by meditation and waiting on the Spirit of truth to reveal it to us. And He will, if we are willing!

We sometimes speak of a spiritual believer in contrast to one who is carnal, and there is truth that this expresses relative to our degree of submission to Spirit control as contrasted with allowing the flesh to express itself. I don't believe that this is the purpose of this section, but rather that it is a contrast between the natural, unsaved man and the one who is saved and seen by God to be in Spirit (similar to Rom. 8:5-9).

"Old" or "New" Men

In Eph. 4:24 we learn about the "new man" (also Col. 3:10), who is contrasted with the "old man" in Eph. 4:22, Col. 3:9. In both references, the old man is mentioned first, and then the new man. This order is significant and important to observe, because the old man is what we were as sinners, identified with Adam, under the sentence of death, and (emphasized in this passage), marked by practices that were consistent with its corrupt nature. The new man is what we are in Christ, and we are exhorted to "put off" the old man so far as those evidences of the old manner of life. It is a mistake that some saints make, when they speak of the old nature, though we understand what they mean. The residual expressions of the old man are seen in "the flesh", a term that embodies the entirety of the characteristics and practices that

were normal in our state as "old men". One man that I used to know tried to excuse his sinful actions by saying, when he was found out, that it was the old man who did it. Sad to say, he showed "old man" characteristics to the degree that one might wonder if he wasn't still in the "old man" state.

We are new men in Christ. We have been created as God's workmanship in Christ Jesus for the purpose of manifesting good works (Eph. 2:10), which have been God's purpose for us, prepared beforehand for us to express in practical living. Our state has been changed entirely, and all we can say about the old man is that it was judicially condemned and crucified by God when Christ died, because God cannot accomplish anything with it except to put it to death. We are to also reckon it dead and to act accordingly so that we manifest the characteristics of the life that we have received.

These two expressions indicate our standing before God and association with a head. We were the one prior to conversion, but now we are "new men" in salvation.

A Wretched Man

We see a person in Rom. 7:24, who Paul identifies as a "wretched man". If we are honest with regard to our Christian life, we can identify ourselves in some measure with this description. Primarily, Paul is teaching the condition of a believer who is striving to attain perfect obedience to the law's demands, but it is as if he did not possess or depend on the Holy Spirit to enable him. He desires innately and fervently to do what is right, and he knows what he should do, but he also recognizes the conflict that exists within that causes a sense of personal failure to attain the standard of holiness. The law is spiritual, but in that condition, he is carnal, and doesn't have the power to overcome sin (v. 12-14). He has come to realize that the law, while expressing what is holy and right in God's sight, has no ability to impart to its adherents the power or ability to accomplish what it demands. This argument is forceful against those who insist on attempting to accomplish God's purpose in sanctification by earnestly striving to do so on the principle of law-keeping.

Paul's ultimate conclusion is that such a person (possibly his own experience at some point), is truly wretched, torn between the strong desire to please God and the recognition of his own failure and inability to do so. No doubt many a believer has passed this way and can relate to this pathetic conclusion. The solution is clearly given in ch. 8, and it is that despite a believer's frustration with failures, he stands not condemned before God in virtue of Christ Jesus, and the essential power to live to please God (which is introduced in ch. 8), is the indwelling and enabling power of the Holy Spirit. How we should appreciate His work and depend on Him even more to enjoy the fullness of Christian living!

Two Men and Believer's Life

In an interesting way, Paul sees the two sides of a Christian's life in 2 Cor. 4:16 as the outward man and the inward man (also Rom. 7:22, or inner man in Eph. 3:16). It is an inevitable reality of physical life that the body weakens and ages with years, so that we reach our prime of physical and mental capacity with maturity, then begin to decline toward the end of life. In 2 Cor. 4, Paul speaks of his own experience, his body being buffeted by his life's service, under constant attack by enemies, and constantly in danger. The outward man was perishing (a progressive decay), but the inward man was constantly being renewed daily. The outward man is clearly our physical body, but the inner man represents our spiritual nature, that aspect that is being strengthened and should be increasing in ability each day. We might measure our decline in strength and health by various means, but how would we measure the increase of the inward person? It is more than knowledge of scripture truth or Bible facts; Paul's second prayer that we read in Eph. 3:16 is that the saints might be "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man". The verses following suggest the means by which this is accomplished and how it is measured. It is by Christ being at home in our hearts by faith, i.e., His having the heart as His dwelling place, with all things of one's life expressing His control and direction. It is seen in the consistency and faithfulness of life as one who is rooted and grounded (firmly estab-

lished) in the sphere of divine love, and knowing (by the reality of experience) the love of Christ. This is accomplished by His mighty power, freely at work in our lives to accomplish far more than we could possibly expect in human experience, so that He receives all the honor and glory as a result of what He has accomplished.

We place great emphasis on maintaining physical fitness and preventing, as much as possible, decay in our physical lives, and this is important. However, in God's eyes, an exercise unto godliness (1 Tim. 4:8) is far more valuable, having its results in our present and eternal enjoyment of divine things.

It would behoove us, as professing believers in Christ, to devote more time and attention to achieving a better fitness of the inner man than likely we do. I am sure that if we did, we would reflect God's purpose more clearly and enjoy Christian life more fully.

Two Men symbolic of the church

In Ephesians, Paul uses two metaphors to speak of the church, the body of Christ. In Eph. 2:15, it is "one new man" with reference to the removal of barriers between Jew and Gentile to produce a unified, new man in contrast to the old. In Ephesians 4:13, in the context of the purpose of the gifted men given by Christ to the church (v. 10-11), it is the complete maturity of the church that is the purpose for which these gifts operate in the universal church, and there it is the "perfect man".

The one new man is the result of God's work to save both Jew and Gentile, not maintaining the old wall of distinction and separation, but rather by acting toward both on the one ground of the work of Christ. In 2:2-3, Paul describes the condition of the Gentile world far from God, but then he also includes Jews, (v. 3), "we all. ..." so that both are seen before God as being dead in trespasses and sins. The separated and deprived state of Gentiles prior to Christ is described in v. 11, but now they have been brought near, not by virtue of their personal merit, but "in Christ Jesus". All that would separate the two has been abolished, and both Jew and Gentile are brought into fellowship in the "one new man". It would seem that it is "one" because there is no other, not

two, or more, separate "bodies of Christ" but only One. It is "new" because it is not a remaking of the old relationship of Jews to God, but it is the introduction of a new creation that is totally different.

The "perfect man" in ch. 4 is the full development of the church that is the purpose of the gifted men that have been given by Christ as a result of His victory and glorious resurrection. Gifts of this nature were essential for the establishment of His work in the church and apostles and prophets are emphasized, for they laid the foundation, gave the teachings, and established the truths and principles given to the church. Evangelists, pastors and teachers are those who continue to serve to fulfill the purposed development of the church to full maturity, which is "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fullness of (the) Christ." (v. 13). It anticipates the moment when the church will be brought into the complete expression of all that God has intended it to be in Christ and as a result of the on-going work of the Spirit.

These illustrative men are important to our understanding of the principles of a believer's position in Christ and illustrate for our purposes many blessed truths that are essential. May the Lord enable us to differentiate between them and to apprehend the greatness of the work of our God in Christ.

Our Risen Lord's Care for Spirit, Soul and Body

W. H. Ferguson

In the questions of our Lord after His resurrection as He came in contact with His own we see the thoughtfulness and care which He had for their welfare, and need we doubt that since He ascended up on high and entered upon His priestly work He enters into all the details of our lives and cares for each one of us,—spirit, soul and body? Our deceitful hearts often tell us that He may forget, Satan helps on with his base insinuations but let us with confidence look up and realize that our Great High Priest has a watchful eye upon His own and all their needs.

In John 20. 15 Jesus said unto Mary "Woman, why weepst thou? Whom seekest thou?" In this question we see our Lord's care for the sorrowing spirit of this loved one. "By sorrow of heart the spirit is broken" (Prov. 15:13), and how kind of the Lord here to reveal Himself thus and lift the broken spirit and bring cheer. He does the same today. Circumstances of life, sickness, bereavement, distress occasioned by lack of temporal necessities often produce the sorrowing spirit but the Word of the Lord brings cheer and helps through the dark night of trouble. Let us have more confidence in Him and His ability to reach the spirit of His own, which the most skillful physician is unable to reach or to cure.

In John 21, verse 5, "Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?" In this question we see our Lord's care for the bodies of His own. The disciples had been toiling all night and had caught nothing. They doubtless were tired and hungry. He was going to speak to them and to their hearts, but before doing this, with tender care, He realizes the temporal need and asks this question. In verse 12 He say "Come and dine," and in verse 13 "Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise." Our Lord cares for the bodies of His own. He realizes often what many may fail to apprehend, the distress. occasioned by lack of bodily necessity.

In this 21st chapter also in verse 15 "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" Here it was the condition of soul that His Lord was interested in and Peter as he felt the power of the questions realizes the importance of a right state of soul and he responds to the Lord's inquiry with earnestness, "Thou knowest that I love Thee," and then Jesus revealed to him the death by which he should glorify God and also in ver. 22 appeals to his personal loyalty to His Lord and the last word spoken to him directly is the word—"follow thou Me." Would that our souls were thus reached by the questions and word of our Lord and that we too would display the loyalty and obedience which was evidenced from this time by this honored disciple.

The same care for His own may be traced in the 24th chapter of Luke's Gospel. Notice v.

17—"What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" Here He seeks to "lift" the sorrowing spirit. In verses 25 and 26 He seeks to reach their souls and consciences and in verses 28 to 31 He acknowledges the need of their bodies and goes in to sit at meat with them. He needs it not, but they do, so after "He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them—He vanished out of their sight." Later as they were recounting their wonderful experience to the others at Jerusalem—v. 36 "As they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them." They were terrified and affrighted but His question calmed their troubled spirits. "Why are ye troubled and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself." His next question is in verse 41 "Have ye here any meat?" then later in the chapter he opens their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures and instructs their souls.

We may note, in dark contrast with this blessed ministry, the activities of Satan, seeking to blind man's spirit, corrupt his desires, and cause him to defile his body as in Romans 1.

May the Lord cause us to be more occupied with our Lord Jesus Christ and realize more of His tender care which extends to every part of our being, till the moment comes when, in spirit, soul and body, we shall be conformed to His image.

Postponing Obedience

A. W. Tozer

A notable heresy has come into being throughout our evangelical Christian circle—the widely accepted concept that we humans can choose to accept Christ only because we need Him as Savior, and that we have the right to postpone our obedience to Him as long as we want to! The truth is that salvation apart from obedience is unknown in the sacred Scriptures. Peter makes it plain that we are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience." It seems most important to me that Peter speaks of his fellow Christians as "obedient children." He knew their spirituality—he was not just giving them an exhortation to be

obedient. The entire Bible teaches that true obedience to God and His Christ is one of the toughest requirements in the Christian life. Actually, salvation without obedience is a self-contradicting impossibility! Humans do not want to admit it, but the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans long ago that "by one man's disobedience" came the downfall of the human race!

Turning from God to Man

Robert Surgenor

In AD 53, when the gospel first entered Europe it was preached in the City of Philippi. The next city that heard was Thessalonica. The response was tremendous, and the Scriptures tell us that they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered them from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:9-10). An idol is anything that replaces God in the heart. America was founded on the principles of God. Today, America is turning from God to idols.

As we look back on the history of this great nation, we read of "the good old days" when the founders of this great nation feared God and manifested a reverence to divine things. Consequently, many of our laws legislated were taken from the Holy Bible. There was a tendency toward uprightness and honesty. The Holy Bible was considered sacred, was taught in our school system, and preached weekly to crowded congregations. Divorce was a rarity, children obeyed their parents, mothers were home-keepers, not office workers, and murderers were put to death for their crimes. Law enforcement officers were highly respected and obeyed. Dope was unheard of, and pornography was greatly suppressed. The moral state of the nation was much higher than today.

Education

In America, the first law to require education of the masses was passed by the Puritans. The law was called "The Old Deluder Satan Act." This name was a reference to the devil, who Chris-

tians believed got his foothold into people's lives because of their ignorance of Scripture.

For the first 200 years in America, children's reading texts emphasized biblical literacy. The emphasis on literacy was so intense in colonial America, that John Quincy Adams said in the early 1800's that the illiteracy rate was only 4/10th of 1 percent. It is estimated that in America today, 40 million people are functionally illiterate.

All but one of the first 123 colleges in colonial America were Christian institutions. While these universities have lost their Christian identities, it is interesting to read the founding statements of these schools. Harvard, for example, was founded on this statement:

Let every student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life.

Noah Webster, educator and compiler of the 1828 "An American Dictionary of the English Language" wrote: "Education without the Bible is useless." Christian faith was integrated into every facet of education in early America.

Public schools today are basically liberal, humanistic, and antagonistic to Christian principles. Promiscuous behavior is encouraged, while Christian prayer and the Bible are banned.

Compassion and Mercy

The ancient world left little trace of any organized charitable effort. However, due to Christianity, our Western culture places emphasis on compassion, on helping the needy, and on alleviating distress, even in distant places. If there is a calamity in a foreign country most people in other cultures are unconcerned. Tell me, what foreign country helped America clean up and replace the twin towers in NYC? We have helped them in their crucial times, but they have never helped us. As the Chinese proverb has it, 'the tears of strangers are only water.' But here in the West we rush to help because mainly of our Christian background. The ancient Greeks and Romans did not believe this. They held a view quite commonly held in other cultures today: namely, "that's their problem, but not ours." Hospitals, orphanages, charitable organizations, and education for all,

as we know them today, namely had their roots in Christianity.

Marriage and Family

The family, a devoted husband and wife raising their children in the fear of God, is a powerful ideal and asset in America's society. Its roots can be traced to Christian teaching. Before the Christian era, pederasty and homosexuality were not considered wrong. America is sadly slipping back to the non-Christian era. Over 52% of all marriages end in divorce and over 72% of all black children are born through unmarried mothers. Cohabitation, once condemned, is now looked upon as the norm. Christian based family life in America is mostly lying in shambles. The purity and beauty of a well composed lovable home is fading rapidly. We are becoming heathenish as a nation. Wick- edness, lust, and lawlessness prevails.

Woman

In non-Christian countries, women occupy a low status in society. The church forbade its members to do so. Greco-Roman society considered an unmarried woman of no value. Thus it was illegal for a widow to go more than two years without remarrying. However, Christianity was the first religion to not force widows to marry. They were supported financially and honored within the community so that they were not under great pressure to remarry if they didn't want to. Pagan widows lost all control of their husband's estate when they remarried, but the church allowed widows to maintain their husband's estate. Christianity condemned cohabitation. No man had the right to live with woman outside of the marriage bond. Pagans allowed married men to have extramarital sex. Thus Christian women enjoyed far greater security and equality than did women in the surrounding culture.

Our Government

America's constitutional government has its roots in biblical doctrines. At least 50 of the 55 signers of the U.S. Constitution were professing Christians. The concept of our Constitutional checks and balances system is a direct result of the biblical doctrine of the sinfulness of mankind. All of our founders understood the impor-

tance of this doctrine to the social order. America's foundational idea of The Rule of Law rather than the authority of man traces back to the Old Testament, beginning with the Ten Commandments. Many aspects of our laws come directly from the Bible. The concept to our judicial, legislative and executive branches, and fair trials with witnesses can be traced to holy scripture. Regarding civil liberty, founding father John Adams (and others) emphasized the bible as the basis for American civil liberty. The slogan on the Liberty Bell is "Proclaim Liberty throughout the land unto all the Inhabitants Thereof" is from the Bible in Leviticus 15:10.

Free Enterprise

Our founding fathers saw the concept of free enterprise in the Bible, thus incorporated it into our system of government. What a contrast to communism, which is specifically an atheistic system that relies on the non-biblical notion that all men are good (thus will work for the common good). But communism has been an abject economic failure.

People fault capitalism. But, as put by D'Spouza, "The system of modern capitalism arose in the West. To some it is surprising that capitalism developed so easily in conjunction with a Christian ethic. But capitalism satisfied the Christian demand for an institution that channels selfish human desire toward the betterment of society. Some critics accuse capitalism of being a selfish system, but the selfishness is not in capitalism; it is in human nature....While profit remains the final goal, entrepreneurs spend the better part of each day figuring out how better to serve the needs of their actual and potential customers. They are operationally, if not intentionally, altruistic....One may say that capitalism civilizes greed in much the same way that marriage civilizes lust."

Music

Had it not been for Christianity, music would likely sound very different from what we're used to. There may never have developed the cantata, the concerto, or the symphony. Handel, Vivaldi, and Bach were professing Christians who worked to honor God with their work.

Bach, for example, signed all his works with "Soli Deo Gloria" ("Solely to the glory of God").

A renowned scholar on the literature of the Bible, Alistair McGrath notes, "Without the King James Bible, there would have been no Handel's Messiah", no Negro spirituals, and no Gettysburg Address. The works of Handel, Beethoven, Mozart, and Mendelssohn among others have greatly been influenced by the words of the Bible; oftentimes the music itself directly reflected that influence. History books are filled with the rich details of men and women whose lives were changed by Jesus Christ and impacted the world for the better through ideas found in Scripture in a wide array of disciplines. To deny the influence of Christianity on Western Civilization is to deny history altogether.

As our nation slides down the slippery slope of liberalism, its music is degenerating from sweet sounds to the sour notes of the rap beat. As a style, rap music is dominated by rhythm and specifically the backbeat; harmony and melody take a back seat. The sound of the backbeat inherently signifies the motion of the body during the act of sexual intercourse, as any rock musician will readily attest. The relative durations of the spoken rhythms are highly syncopated against the pulse, suggesting agitation and in louder instances, anger. Phrase structures (in terms of the groupings of spoken rhythms) are frequently irregular as well, again suggesting instability and a lack of respite. What harmony there is is extremely minimalistic and repetitive. Melody, for all intents and purposes, is non-existent. It may be claimed that the melody is single tone, but those tones are rarely sustained to the point of qualifying to be sung notes. It is rhymed, rhythmic speech, but not singing.

Rap music (a medium of communication) was birthed out of an ethos of violence, drugs, hatred, and sexuality, and naturally expresses those debased values. It is very noticeable, that when disturbed, debase people want to express rage, hatred, and violence, they are drawn to this form of music. America's once beautiful music is becoming more and more voodooish.

False Reports

In history atrocities have been committed in the

name of Christianity, specifically the Crusades, and the Inquisition. However, these people were acting contrary to the teachings of Christ, and were not genuine Christians, but mere professors of Christianity. The blame lies on these perverts, not on true Christianity, for Christ taught to love even your enemies! Many historians state, that in every case in which Christians are blamed for violence, a closer look largely exonerates them.

Generally speaking, when Christian restraints have been removed from a society, atrocities are magnified, as seen in the regimes of Hitler, Mao, Stalin, and Pol Pot which were essentially atheistic bloodbaths. These twentieth century despots alone account for well over 100 million murders. The evidence is strong that when the restraining influence of Christianity has been removed from a country or culture, unmitigated disaster will naturally follow. I fear that the United States is in for perilous times as we continue to drift from Christian principles. Christianity's theme to the world is the equality of human beings, and the preciousness and worth of every human life. As put by D'Souza, Christianity was the propelling force behind the campaign to end slavery, the movement for democracy and popular self-government, and human rights. If our country gives up Christianity, there will be a systematic erosion of values like equal dignity and equal rights that people cherish. Also, there will arise the restoration of infanticide, demands for the radical redefinition of the family, the suppression of freedoms of religion and expression, and political tyranny. What is the "age" like? It is like a mold that seeks to deform all who are in it. Actually, it is several molds or world views (interpretive framework), the standard by which we interpret reality, or one mold with several facets.

(continued)

To thank God is good, to obey God is better, but to be both thankful and obedient is best.