

Expository Files



Jon W. Quinn, Warren E. Berkley - Editors

July, 2006

Warning Against “That First Instinct” **Warren E. Berkley**

“Check your moral compass frequently. I have seen it both in combat and in peace. If you do not know who you are walking into a situation, you may not like who you are when you're done. When I was a lieutenant in Vietnam, I lost Lance Corporal Guido Ferranaro from Bethpage, New York, a 19-year-old Marine, to a sniper—the first Marine I'd ever lost in combat. I was filled with rage, and I called in an artillery strike on the village from which the sniper fired. Between the time that I called in the strike and the rounds were fired, my platoon sergeant didn't say a word, he just looked at me. And I realized I was doing the wrong thing, and I called off the artillery strike, and we did what we should've done, which was to sweep through the village. And all we found in that village were women and children.

I do not know how I could live with myself today if I had carried that first instinct forward. The time to decide who you are and what you will let yourself do is not when somebody gets shot, it is not when your wingman gets shot down, it is before you get in that situation so you have an anchor to hold on to. This applies elsewhere.”

Commencement address - The Citadel, Military College of South Carolina
6 May 2006, McAlister Field House
General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Though many of us have never experienced the combat situation General Pace describes, most of us know what he means about **“that first instinct.”** We can recall specific circumstances where our first reaction was not the best. It may have been temptation to react with vengeance. It could have been some powerful seduction into other sins of passion or gratification. Or maybe someone in a group offended you, and your impulse was to denounce

or destroy the entire group. Often, the devil puts before us some temptation and his hope is, we will not think through the consequences. His purpose is to provoke that first instinct.

God wants us to know we are capable of better things. Building on commitment and attitude and with training from the Word, we can prepare ourselves for right responses.

I can *prepare my mind for action* (1 Pet. 1:13). I can live my life “under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt” me “at the proper time,” (1 Pet. 5:6). I am able now to “draw near to God,” knowing that “He will draw near to me,” (Jas. 4:8). There is no reason for me to despair or assume I am defeated, for I can “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,” (2 Tim. 2:1). I can use the time I have now to “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus,” (Phil. 3:14) and I can “do all things through Him who strengthens me,” (Phil. 4:13).

There is no excuse. And there is no need to be a victim of your own instincts! “And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God,” (Gal. 6:16).

Self-Discipline
(1 Cor. 9:24-27)
Warren E. Berkley

There is a unifying theme the student will observe in 1 Cor. 8, 9 & 10. The theme is self-discipline. The problem that led into this (in the Corinthian church) was the awkward and selfish treatment of each other respecting the issue of “things offered to idols.” Some in the church were asserting their knowledge about things sacrificed to idols, but without love that edifies and without regard to wounding the weak conscience of a brother (1 Cor. 8).

That topic is introduced in chapter eight where Paul warns: “...beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak,” (8:9). Reading these three chapters it is easy to picture brethren acting impulsively, asserting their answers without any sensitivity toward the weak. Paul is responding to that ugly spectacle.

In chapter nine, Paul's life shows the pattern of self-discipline. He was willing to forego various "rights" in the greater interests of the cause of Christ. Chapter ten applies the matter of self-discipline to the general issue of temptation, then Paul re-introduces the original topic of meats sacrificed to idols. Thus, the entire section of three chapters can be studied as connected by this theme of self-discipline. At the heart of this is the last paragraph of chapter nine.

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." (1 Cor. 9:24-27)

In illustrative material (like parables), not every detail can be pressed into interpretive conclusion. Paul is not recommending that Christians compete against each other; we know from other passages, we are to help each other (Phil. 2:1-4, etc.). Further, we cannot see any implication that of all the Christians, only one will be rewarded (see 2 Tim. 4:8). Those two elements of the race imagery do not apply.



The emphasis of the illustration is how runners prepare and how they run. "Run in such a way..." etc. Not everything about running a race applies. Not everything about sports and competition applies. This is about the discipline indispensable in running a race.

This appears very well in Philipps' translation: "...you ought to run with your minds fixed on winning the prize." The competitive element (beating others) has no place in Paul's teaching. He is talking about self-discipline (just as he did in the chapter previous to this, and the chapter after this.) To study this further, ask yourself ...

When you witness a good runner, what do you see?

You see the result of training. You see undistracted effort. And you see arrival at the destination. This is all about self-discipline.

Christians need training. You cannot come up from the waters of baptism into a state of final maturity, keen knowledge, appropriate zeal with a healthy set of attitudes! You must read, study and apply the Word of God. This is why Jesus said, after baptizing people, teach them “to observe all things that I have commanded you,” (Matt. 28:20). Christians are trained for service all their lives by the inspired Word of God (see 2 Tim. 3:16,17). Quit training and you can no longer run. Our “running” depends on our training.

Christians must exert undistracted effort. Once-in-a-while effort doesn't fulfill this. We must “lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us,” and “run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus...,” (Heb. 12:1,2). When a runner in a track event starts watching other racers or pays attention to the audience, precious time is lost. Daily effort is essential, in self-examination, prayer, obedience and watchfulness against temptation. (Compare the words “disciple” and “discipline.”)

Christians (who have accepting divine training and have put in the effort) will arrive at the destination. We can look forward to what Paul anticipated: “...there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing,” (2 Tim. 4:8). The self-discipline will pay this great dividend. It would be enough to have the privilege of living your life here morally right, honoring Christ and glorifying God. But there is something for us at the end, granted by a gracious God. “And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.” Discipline develops excellence, and that excellence is rewarded, though the reward is far beyond the merit of our best efforts.

Paul lived his life as a Christian, exemplifying this self-discipline he taught. “Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

It's all about the self-discipline we can develop by trusting and obeying the Lord. That's the unifying theme of these three chapters in First Corinthians. And this can be the unifying energy and fullness of your life. Forgetting the things that are behind, Paul urges us to stretch forward to the things which are before. He said, I PRESS ON (see Phil. 3:13,14).

ARE THERE ANY BEREANS TODAY?

Acts 17:11

Bobby K. Thompson

Concerning the people in the Macedonian city of Berea, Luke relates a very refreshing evaluation: “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.” (Acts 17:11-12). When the word of the Lord was preached to these people, they manifested outstanding characteristics that all individuals would do well to practice. There are various and sundry reactions to the preaching of God’s word. The Bereans demonstrated the proper attitude that hearers should have. Consider the outstanding qualities that they evidenced by their actions and then ask yourself if there are any Bereans today. **THEY WERE:**

Free of Prejudice. “they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Hearers filled with prejudice would not have done this. How different the Bereans were as compared to some of the Lord’s own countrymen: “For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their ears they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.” (Matthew 13:15). Jesus quoted from the prophecy of Isaiah 6:9-10 which applied to the reaction of these people to His teaching. Prejudice involves folly and shame! The wise man wrote: “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.” (Proverbs 18:13). Prejudice is the lock on the door of the closed mind; the ignorance we usually mistake for reason; the first enemy of information and progress; it is intellectual stigmatism; a perfect combination of conceit and ignorance. Prejudice never saved a soul, nor settled any question in the light of truth and justice. It is the defense of the devil, the shell of a petrified mind and the ceiling on understanding. There is a principle which is a bar against all information and proof against argument. It cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance. **That principle is condemnation before investigation.** This the Bereans did not practice! Are there any Bereans today? How about ourselves? Do we have a readiness of mind to investigate or are we motivated by prejudice?

Not Gullible. This was another quality of the Bereans that was outstanding. Gullible is defined: “easily cheated or tricked; credulous”. While some people are not prejudice, they are gullible to the extent of accepting almost anything that is taught them. We should be of a mind to investigate and then make the proper investigation as the Bereans did. “and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” So many today are content to accept most anything and in so doing they are not like the Bereans. We are admonished to: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” (I Thessalonians 5:21). Again, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (I John 4:1). Anyone who is sincere does not object to his teaching being examined by the scriptures as to whether those things are so. It is an element of insincerity when preachers object to what they teach being “tried” by the word of God.

Energetic. These people evidence an energetic spirit by searching the scriptures daily. The scriptures that were available to them doubtlessly involved the Old Testament scriptures that were available in the synagogues. These scriptures were written on material that constituted considerable effort in searching. Yet, they did this daily! The lazy, indolent type would have been weighed in the balances and found wanting when confronted with this rather tedious work. Are there any Bereans today? In a day when the scriptures are so conveniently arranged in books, chapters and verses and when Bibles are available that abound in concordances and other types of helps to locate various passages, surely Bereans should exist on every hand! But the pathetic thing is that there is a lack of them. Even members of the church do not qualify at times. They are so lazy in studying the word of God that they neglect preparing the Bible lessons themselves or taking the time to help their children do the same. If they had the spirit of the Bereans, somewhere along the line, they lost it. We need to heed Paul’s admonition: “not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.” (Romans 12:11).

The Bereans were not willingly ignorant. (II Peter 3:3-7). They were receptive to the will of God. They were more than hearers. Whatever may be our attitude in hearing God’s word, we must be obedient to the truth. “therefore many of them believed”. May the Lord help all of us today to have the spirit of the Bereans.

The Battle is Not Yours, But God's

(2 Chronicles 20:1-29)
By Jon W. Quinn

Sometimes, if we are to succeed and win victory, the Lord has to be the One to fight the battle. This is the way it must be to win the victory over sins. Only through what God has done can we win the victory. We cannot redeem ourselves from our sins. We have no price we can offer. That battle must be the Lord's! There are many examples of this principle throughout the pages of Scripture.

Jumpin' Jehoshaphat

“So Judah gathered together to seek help from the LORD; they even came from all the cities of Judah to seek the LORD. Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD before the new court, and he said, 'O LORD, the God of our fathers, are You not God in the heavens? And are You not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand so that no one can stand against You.'” (2 Chronicles 20:4-6).

An alliance of Moab, Ammon and others had invaded Judah. It was a matter of mathematics; the enemy by far outnumbered the people of Judah. There seemed to be only one possible outcome; the defeat of Judah.

Jumping up, Jehoshaphat stood in the temple and prayed. There was only one place to turn. Sometimes life is like that. And with reference to death, and eternity, God is the only One who can make a difference!

The Lord responded through His prophet, Jahaziel. “...and he said, "Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the LORD to you, "Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's.” (2 Chronicles 20:15).

Yes, here was a case where the battle had to be the Lord's, or it would be lost. However, that the battle was the Lord's did not mean that the people of Judah were to sit and do nothing. They were instructed: "You need not fight in this battle; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for the LORD is with you." (2 Chronicles 20:17). They went out and faced their enemy, and the Lord gave them

victory as they watched their enemy's alliance fall apart and the former allies attack one another.

The Lord's Strong Arm

“Get yourself up on a high mountain,
O Zion, bearer of good news,
Lift up your voice mightily,
O Jerusalem, bearer of good news;
Lift it up, do not fear.
Say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God!"
Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might,
With His arm ruling for Him.
Behold, His reward is with Him
And His recompense before Him.
Like a shepherd He will tend His flock,
In His arm He will gather the lambs
And carry them in His bosom;
He will gently lead the nursing ewes.”
(Isaiah 40:9-11)

This is what is known as a Messianic prophecy because it speaks of events having to do with the coming of the Messiah, all of which were fulfilled during the incarnation of the Word of God; Jesus of Nazareth, some seven centuries later.

One cannot help but think of Jesus as these verses are read. Isaiah is talking about “good news” and in fact the word “gospel” as in “the gospel of Jesus Christ” means “good news”.

Also, to be announced to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!” We are again reminded of Thomas' statement of belief made to Jesus following the resurrection, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28; cf. John 1:1-3;14).

And who can miss the figure of the Shepherd? Indeed, Jesus is the “good shepherd” who “lays down His life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

Previously in the text, Isaiah had also predicted the work of John the Baptist as he prepared the way for the Lord doing his preaching in the wilderness area of the Jordan valley; “A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for

the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.” (Isaiah 40:3).

But note especially the appeal to depend on the might of the Lord and His ruling arm (Isaiah 40:10). Our salvation is by what the Lord's might has brought to us through the sacrifice of the “Good Shepherd”! Like Jehoshaphat of old, as we face the overwhelming temporal and eternal consequences of sin, we have no where to turn but to the Lord. Note the optimistic conclusion of trusting in the Lord's power:

“Do you not know? Have you not heard?
The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth
Does not become weary or tired.
His understanding is inscrutable.
He gives strength to the weary,
And to him who lacks might He increases power.
Though youths grow weary and tired,
And vigorous young men stumble badly,
Yet those who wait for the LORD
Will gain new strength;
They will mount up with wings like eagles,
They will run and not get tired,
They will walk and not become weary.
(Isaiah 40:28-31)

When We Fully Place Our Confidence in God

Can a God with that kind of power make a difference in my life? Consider that His power is directed by His love, and what His love motivated Him to give for us (John 3:16). Understand and comprehend that He is a God with whom all things are possible (Matthew 19:25-26). Recognize that He is a God who is able to know our needs even beyond what we know ourselves! (Ephesians 3:14-21) He is not limited by our lack of imagination, creativity, vision or power as we are.

Do you recall the ancient nation of Israel, after witnessing God's power in many ways; the ten plagues on their Egyptian masters, their deliverance at the Red Sea; water from the rocks of the wilderness and food from the sky; how that nation still, tragically, lacked confidence in God's power as they stood on the brink of the promised land of Canaan (Numbers

13-14)? God was able, but they were unwilling to believe. God would have given them whatever they needed to win the victory, if only they had believed.

That was then, now is now. We find ourselves in a very similar circumstance, and that is not by accident. The Lord caused the account of Israel's failure of faith to be recorded and preserved so that we might learn not to do likewise; "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." (1 Corinthians 10:11). God would have blessed them with whatever strength they would need. He will us as well. We are yet in the wilderness, and God will bring us home if we have the trust and humility to submit to Him (1 Peter 5:6-7).

Gideon's "Tunnel Vision"
(Judges 6:1-32)
By Ethan R. Longhenry

In the book of Judges we find an individual named Gideon, who in later times will gain the testimony of being one of the great "men of faith" of the Old Testament (Hebrews 11:32). Gideon represents an interesting example of faith, a man who continually needed signs from God to be assured of His will, yet when he did act, he did so mightily in the LORD.

Even though Gideon often hesitates and has his doubts, when God first approaches Gideon, Gideon seems to show no compunction in bringing forth an accusation against God.

And Gideon said unto him, "Oh, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' but now the LORD hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Midian," (Judges 6:13).

Why is Gideon saying such things?

And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel; and because of Midian the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and the caves, and the strongholds. And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the

Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east; they came up against them; and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance in Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents; they came in as locusts for multitude; both they and their camels were without number: and they came into the land to destroy it. And Israel was brought very low because of Midian; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, (Judges 6:2-6).

Israel was having a hard time. The Midianites, Arabian nomads, along with their allies, were continually destroying all of their crops, and therefore Israel was in a really bad position. When God sends His angel to announce to Gideon that God will raise him up to deliver Israel, Gideon charges God with wrong on the basis of how Midian has been able to treat Israel.

One can certainly understand Gideon's viewpoint. After all, did he not hear all the stories of how God delivered his fathers from the hands of the Egyptians, a far more powerful people than the Midianites? And yet, as it seemed to Gideon, God had completely forsaken His people, for He had not delivered them from Midian. Gideon, therefore, certainly believes that he has a case for his beef with God.

Yet what do we hear from the viewpoint of the inspired author of Judges?

And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of Midian, that the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel: and he said unto them, "Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drove them out from before you, and gave you their land; and I said unto you, "I am the LORD your God; ye shall not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell." But ye have not hearkened unto my voice,'" (Judges 6:7-10).

Furthermore, in the next act of Gideon, we see a powerful demonstration of this very matter:

Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had spoken unto him: and it came to pass, because he feared his father's household and

the men of the city, so that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. And they said one to another, "Who hath done this thing?" And when they inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing."

Then the men of the city said unto Joash, "Bring out thy son, that he may die, because he hath broken down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the Asherah that was by it." And Joash said unto all that stood against him, "Will ye contend for Baal? Or will ye save him? he that will contend for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him contend for himself, because one hath broken down his altar." Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal contend against him," because he hath broken down his altar, (Judges 6:27-32).

The act of Gideon and the response of the people could not more clearly show why God had delivered the Israelites into the hand of Midian. As opposed to doing as the Law would have it, to stone those who worshipped the foreign gods, the people would stone the one who removed the foreign gods and destroyed them! The people had determined evil to be good, and good evil.

What, then, shall we say in regards to these matters?

It's always easy to remain locked in one's own viewpoint and have a case of "tunnel vision". In this tunnel vision, you neglect your own difficulties and sins, and instead see yourself as entirely justified, and then presume to charge a wrong to another. Gideon certainly did this...if he were a bit more circumspect, he would surely understand why God had delivered Israel into the hand of Midian. On the basis of his own narrow perspective, and not taking into account the sin of Israel, he presumed to charge God with having forsaken His people...when, in reality, the opposite was the case.

How often do we see God being charged with wrong when the problem tends to lay more with those charging God with the wrong? How often do we hear of people asking how God could allow the tsunami, or the hurricane, or a fire, or an illness, to strike, and people seem to never chalk such things up to either happenstance or the presence of sin! People are always quick to

charge God with wrongs, but never thank God for blessings. The focus is always on what is wrong, and never on what is right.

Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that we in Christ are immune from this thinking; we often betray such by how we handle one another. We often suffer from the same tunnel vision in regards to our own brethren. How often do we overlook our own shortcomings and faults and go after our brethren for theirs? It's always easier to point the finger at someone else-- it's never comfortable to return it to yourself.

Consider the example of Paul. How many letters did he write in which he had the need to rebuke and chastise brethren for their shortcomings and faults? And yet it is difficult to find a letter in which Paul does not have at least something through which he can commend those brethren. The Corinthians, if nothing else, did have a generous heart. Notice also that he always did make commendation where appropriate-- for, in the end, no matter how many difficulties our brethren may have, they remain our brethren, the elect of God, those for whom Christ died. That ought to count for something when we consider how we are going to treat them!

Let us all consider this example of Gideon and his "tunnel vision" and strive to have a more perspicacious perspective, taking into consideration not only ourselves but how God would perceive the matter (as we can understand from His revealed word), and how others are perceiving the matter. Such reflects the attitudes enjoined upon Christians in 2 Corinthians 13:5, Romans 15:1, and 1 Corinthians 10:24. Let us not be chastised or condemned for having "tunnel vision"!

disciple_of_iesus@hotmail.com

Topic Page

THE EVERLASTING FIRE Harold Fite

Fire in the domestic realm is beneficial. By it we cook our meals and warm ourselves. Fire also destroys our possessions and our lives. Fire can inflict intense pain upon the human body, disfigure it and destroy it. One has only to go to the burn center in Galveston, Texas, to witness the horrible results of fire on flesh.

God frequently used fire to punish the disobedient. He rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 19:24. He brought hail mingled with fire upon the Egyptians, Ex. 9:23. By fire, God destroyed 250 men who were in rebellion, Num. 16:35. God sent fire upon Nadab and Abihu to devour them because they acted without His authority, Lev. 10:2. Someday the heavens will be dissolved by fire and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, 2 Pet. 3:12.

I have observed flaming fire consuming industrial buildings and felt the scorching heat two blocks away. I have seen huge furnaces in which fire generated incredibly high temperatures. In both instances I thought, “This must be, in a small measure, what hell is like.”

People fear fire, and respect it. Yell “fire!” in a crowded room and people panic and rush madly for the exits. In their hysteria some have crushed others to death fleeing from the searching and searing flames bent on engulfing them. Here we have a paradox: while people will flee from fire, millions are racing toward the fire of hell – actually inviting it.

Hell is a place of fire. The Scriptures describe hell as a “lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14); “furnace of fire” (Matt. 13:42); and “hell fire” (Matt. 18:9). It is into this fire that the ungodly will be cast. How terribly frightening to contemplate being thrown into a lake consumed by fire, or into a suffocating, searing furnace of fire. This is just a hint of what the fire of hell will be like.

Whatever the nature of that fire, God used the word that would best describe hell. If it is a metaphor it is a “likeness or similarity set forth as reality.” The punishment of fire is far worse than anything we have seen, heard, or imagined.

Fire produces pain. Those who go to hell will be tormented by fire. Jesus said, “There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:42). The rich man died and was buried, “and being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame...’” (Luke 16:23-24).

The nature of this fire is “everlasting.” Jesus will ultimately say to those on His left hand, “Depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). Jude describes it as “eternal” (Jude 7).

Jesus warns us that if we place our members at the disposal of sinful desires we shall be cast into hell fire, “where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For everyone shall be salted by fire” (Mark 9:48-49). There are two destructive forces: the worm and fire. Both suggest to us the permanence of retribution. The word dieth not, therefore the gnawing anguish never ceases. Those in hell are “salted with fire” (preserved); therefore, the results remain constant. “The smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night” (Rev. 14:11). Just think, to be in constant agony forever, with no hope of escaping the horrors of hell. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Cor. 5:11).

- Harold Fite

The Plan of Salvation ***By Jon W. Quinn***

Plan #1

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

"Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
(ACTS 2:38)

Plan #2

On the back page of a tract, sinners were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

The Sinner's Prayer:

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

Final Page 13.7

Women of the Cloth
2 Timothy 2:11-14
By Jon W. Quinn

In 1853, the United Church of Christ ordained the first American woman to become a clergy-person. Her name was Antoinette Brown Blackwell.

In 1880, the Methodist Protestant Church ordained Anna Howard Shaw. Later, through a merger, that denomination would become the United Methodist Church.

The Bible says:

"A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." (1 Timothy 2:11-14).

In 1892, Anna Hanscombe was ordained by religious bodies that would eventually form the Church of the Nazarene.

In 1909 Anne Allebach was ordained as a Mennonite minister.

So, obviously there are ways around what the Scriptures teach for those who want it. There are some very ingenious ways of circumventing the plain intent of God's holy word, though one cannot be truly reverent and seek to do such.

Some will simply deny that the Scriptures are really the word of God (thus denying 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Others say that some Scriptures carry more weight than others. For example, the words of Jesus are said to be more authoritative than the words of His apostles (but this denies what Jesus Himself had said about the authority of His apostles (John 13:18-20; 14:25-26; Matthew 18:18). Or some will say that the teaching of Scripture in this regard is cultural in nature, meant only for the first century and not for disciples of all ages. As the role of women changed in society, so did their role in the church.

In 1914, the Assembly of God denomination is founded and immediately recognized women clergy.

In 1956 the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. ordained Margaret Towner.

Notice carefully the teachings of Scripture on this. Paul, by the inspiration of God's Spirit, not only instructed that a "woman not teach or exercise authority over a man", but also gave the reasons why this prohibitive commandment is given. It had nothing to do with culture. It had to do with two reasons and culture is not one of them. This commandment is given in Scripture because of the order of creation and because of the deception of Eve at the fall of man (see again 1 Timothy 2:11-14).

In 1964 Addie Davis became the first woman ordained as a Southern Baptist minister. In 2000, the Southern Baptist convention issued a statement that pastors must be men and that the church will no longer ordain women.

In 1974, Sandy Elsenberg Sasso became the first ordained Episcopalian minister.

In 1976 The Evangelical Covenant Church voted to allow women ministers, and ordained two in 1978.

Maybe it is time to have less reverence for what the culture and social mores and political correctness of man ordains, and more reverence for what the holy word of God says. We expect this kind of disrespect for the will of the Father from those in the world with no pretense of loyalty to God, but when religious leaders lack reverence for the commandment of God, it is time for people to show them the door. We will all one day appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and the words of His covenant will be the standard

by which we will be judged. Many simply want to have their ears tickled. It will be good for us not to be so shallow (2 Timothy 4:1-5).