

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

A New Phobia

By Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.

A new phobia has developed among Christians in recent years. It has become rather pronounced among several younger Christians, egged on by a few older ones. It is the fear of being considered a “*traditionalist*” or a “*lockstep*” follower of generally accepted views among their brethren.

No Christian should BLINDLY accept any doctrine or practice, no matter how old or how new it may be to him. He should examine and even reexamine every position that comes across his path by the scriptures to see if it is so (Acts 17:11, “*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.*”). All need to learn to study for themselves.

However, one can foster such a phobic (excessive) fear of tradition and conformity to positions brethren may have held, with good reason, for years. In doing so he begins to pride himself in being an “*independent thinker*” and one who “*thinks outside the box.*” So, he must put a different twist on any subject that may be generally taught by his brethren—even if he has to borrow that twist from another, outside the box. Often he will scoff at those whom he perceives to be toeing the “*party line.*”

Paul wrote, “*Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle*” (2 Thess. 2:15). It does not seem to register with him that those who follow the apostolic “*traditions*” will have been following them for a long time and what he calls “*church of Christ tradition*” in many cases may actually be the apostolic traditions.

No one should BLINDLY accept any position because it may have been around for years among us. Nor should he BLINDLY reject any position that has been around for years in order to stroke his pride of independence. ■

A DESIRE FOR HEAVEN

By Wayne Coats

It is the truth that no normal person can live in heaven without having a strong desire to enter therein. It is said of the ancient Hebrews that, “*Now they desire a better country...*” (Heb. 11:16). The country in which we live is indeed a sorry place from several viewpoints. The law of Jehovah is spurned, rejected, denied and often laughed at. The morals of the country are scarcely above that of rats and rabbits. Political chicanery and dishonesty runs rampant. Faithful children of God often despair and long for better days. It matters not how wicked this old world gets, the Christian must continue to live and walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7).

We can have many desires but none can equal the desire for a better country. We can follow the example of these ancient Hebrews who desired a better country. Those faithful people were busy seeking a better country (Heb. 11:14). Almighty God does not force His abode on careless people.

Hebrews chapter 11 presents a portrait of those who offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice. Consider the great effort which the people expended. It was by faith that “*the elders obtained a good report*” (Heb. 11:2). God rewards those who, “*diligently seek him*” (v.6). Abraham desired the city which had foundations whose builder and maker is God (v.10). The walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days (v.30).

God hath prepared for His people a city which should be desired above all else. The city of God is a heavenly

place. It is the *“habitation of God.”* *“The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth”* (Psa. 33:13-14). God has provided some better thing for us (Heb. 11:40). Why will people refuse to live and walk by faith, rejecting the better things of God?

The provision of God holds in store a better resurrection (Heb. 11:35). Such will be a better place. There will be no pain nor sickness in that better place. Can we not think what it will be, and thus desire to live in heaven?

The peerless apostle not only wanted to be saved, but he wanted others to reap the reward. He declared, *“... my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God”* (Rom. 10:1-2).

The apostle wrote, *“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life”* (2 Cor. 5:2-4). We sincerely trust that each reader will earnestly desire to inherit life eternal with the Savior. Think of the alternative.

The apostle worked and prayed that others might be saved. He declared, *“And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises”* (Heb. 6:11-12). ■

THE TERRIBLE BLIGHT OF ABORTION

By Dennis Abernathy

A sad story appeared in the newspaper a number of years ago about a young mother who apparently killed her newborn child. After giving birth to a baby boy, the baby’s mother apparently wrapped a plastic bag around his head and put him in a garbage can to die. The fact that the young mother who did that was only 13-years-old helped get the story space in the newspapers. But let me tell you about thousands of similar stories that didn’t make the news. These stories were like the story of the young mother who killed her baby, except for a few details.

One difference is that those babies weren’t newborns. They were the unborn babies of thousands of mothers who decided to kill their babies by having abortions. Another difference is that those babies weren’t killed by suffocation in plastic bags. They were poisoned or cut into pieces in their mother’s wombs, or torn apart by suction devices. Another difference between the killing of the newborn, and the killing of thousands of unborn babies, is that the killing of the thousands of unborn babies was done by doctors, with the blessing of our nation’s highest court. While the young girl who killed her newborn was taken into custody, the doctors who killed those thousands of unborn babies were paid by the dead babies’ mothers!

But though there are some differences, there are basic similarities in those deaths. For example, a detective investigating the killing of the newborn baby said: “Basically she just didn’t want the baby.” Well, basically that’s why approximately 625,000 unborn babies are killed by abortions every year in the U. S, as reported by CDC. Their mothers just didn’t want them!

Second Timothy 3:1-4 warns of perilous times when people will be *“without natural affection.”* Is not abortion indicative of an absence of *“natural affection?”* When one knows, that within her body, she is carrying a tiny human being, her own son or daughter, how can she possibly conspire to have that child killed and the little body thrown away? Please think on these things. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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