

The Fifth Commandment

By Harold E. Warnke

I. The Introduction (72, 73, 74,75)¹

Before we begin the study of the Commandment itself, we ought to pause a moment to note the marvelous order in which God gave all Ten Commandments. Beginning with the three commandments of the First Table which all speak about God, He then continued with the Second Table that treats our obligation toward our neighbor. The Fourth Commandment provides the foundation for an orderly society. Then follow in rapid succession the Fifth Commandment that protects our life; our greatest earthly good; the Sixth which safeguards our spouse, our next greatest earthly good; the Seventh that preserves to us our earthly possessions and the Eighth that guards our good name. While the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Commandments stress sinful deeds; the Eighth is primarily concerned with words. The last two Commandments deal with a covetous heart; the seat of all sin. Surely no human being could ever have devised a more logical, orderly arrangement.

In order to understand properly what this Fifth Commandment requires, we must first review this all-important truth:

A. God is the Creator of all life.

We may live and act as if God had nothing to do with our creation; we may say that the beginning of life is a perfectly natural process that results when the male sperm fertilizes the female egg; we may even claim that father and mother are the ones who decide how many children they want. No matter, the eternal God alone creates life. Without Him there would not be a single living plant or creature anywhere on earth.

This truth that God gives us our life is clearly stated everywhere in Scripture from the first pages of Genesis through the entire New Testament. The Psalmist, for example, exclaimed for all to hear: “Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves” (Ps. 100:3). In Col. 1:16 we read: “For by Him (Christ) were all things created that are in heaven, and things in earth, visible and invisible...” Acts 17:25 tells us that God “giveth to all life and breath.”

Why did God give us our life? St. Paul provided the only true answer in his famous sermon on Mars Hill at Athens (Acts 17:24-27). After stating that God gives life to everyone, he also proclaimed God’s purpose in so doing: “That they should seek the Lord...and find Him,” with the idea of being saved by Him. Therefore, the first and greatest question that everyone on earth must ask himself is this: Who is the Lord? How can I be with Him in eternity? Or, as the trembling jailor at Philippi cried in terror before Paul and Silas, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul’s memorable answer rings out through the age for all to hear; “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:30,31). Thus our first and greatest purpose in life is to know and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior from sin.

Then, after we have been brought to faith in Jesus, our lives should be spent in serving Him out of gratitude for what He has done for us. St. Peter wrote about that (I Pet. 2:9): “Ye are a chosen generation...that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Our Lord expressed a similar thought in John 15:5, when He said that He is “the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit” (many good works). And King Solomon told us that these works of ours should never be lukewarm or halfhearted: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, wither thou goest” (Eccles. 9:10).

Since our God had a specific purpose in mind when He gave us our life, He also protects our life so that this purpose might be accomplished. If any one of us would shorten another’s life by even one minute, we would be interfering with God’s purpose in that person’s life. Perhaps that particular person has not yet been

¹ Numbers refer to the questions in the 1956 WELS edition of Dr. Martin Luther’s Small Catechism.

brought to faith in Christ so that he can be saved. Perhaps he has not done all of the work that Christ wants him to do. Whatever the reason, no one of us dare play God by taking or shortening another's life. That would interfere with or prevent the completion of God's plan for that particular person.

B. God alone can end our lives.

He not only knows the correct time for giving us life, but He alone knows the exact moment when He should end our lives. Normally He ends them with a natural death, as I Sam. 2:6 states: "The Lord killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." Generally He calls us out of this world at about age 70, as He said in Ps. 90:10: "Seventy years is the span of our life, 80 if our strength holds" (NEB). It is interesting to note that these figures state almost exactly the United States average life span in the 1970's; even though they were written some 3,500 years ago. Our average age at death for men is about 67 and for women about 75, or just a trifle more than the 70 mentioned by the Psalmist. (The great increase in life expectancy during the twentieth century is almost entirely the result of a reduction in infant mortality and the conquering of some diseases that previously were often fatal, not in the actual length of a mature person's life span.)

Of course, natural man may not agree with God's decision to end one's life at a certain time. Sometimes one may feel that God calls a person out of this world far too early in life; at other times one may be dissatisfied with God's delay.

Yet, God never ends our life without good reason for doing so. Our "Lord is righteous in all His ways" (Ps. 145:17). Frequently His "thoughts are not your thoughts...for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8,9). Therefore, when He decides to end our lives or that of one near to us, we humbly bow before His will, knowing that it is always perfect. We may not even think about sinning against His will by shortening or ending our own or neighbor's life.

C. In certain special cases God may end a life through His representatives, instead of doing it through a natural death.

1. For example, **God requires capital punishment by the government for proven murderers**, as He tells us in Gen. 9:6. In this noteworthy Bible passage, spoken to Noah and all his descendants immediately after the Flood, God renewed His Word regarding the sanctity of human life. He proclaimed loudly enough for everyone to hear that "Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man." That thought is repeated frequently in the Pentateuch (see Lev. 24:17 and the passages mentioned in the following paragraphs).

Rom. 13:1-4 and I Pet. 2:13,14 tell us how this capital punishment is to be carried out. That must never be done by individuals nor by a mob, for they may be putting an innocent person to death. Capital punishment must be inflicted by duly authorized government officials only, for they are "divinely appointed to inflict punishment upon evildoers" (Rom. 13:4, Phillips). St. Peter wrote in the previously cited Bible passage: The king and his governor "are sent by Him (God) for the punishment of evildoers."

Various Old Testament Bible passages tell us how this death sentence was to be carried out in Israel, the Old Testament theocracy. These Bible passages provide excellent principles for our contemporary government. For example, Exod. 21:12-15 accurately describes murder in the first degree ("He that smiteth a man, so that he dies"). The idea is that he smites a man after planning the murder. These verses show that there is also something like murder in the second degree or manslaughter ("if a man lie not in wait," if the murder is not premeditated, he is to have the opportunity to flee into a "city of refuge"). The passage even mentions a specific instance that requires capital punishment (murder of parents). Other Bible passages also require capital punishment for specific sins like kidnapping (Exod. 21:16), the refusal to provide safeguards against a dangerous animal who then kills someone (Exod. 21:29), and the committing of adultery (Lev. 20:10).

Num. 35:30-34 and Deut. 19:11-13 also state some clear and noteworthy principles regarding capital punishment. They tell us that at least two witnesses must testify against the murderer before he can be executed, that a proven murderer is to have no opportunity to run into a “city of refuge,” where he can be safe, and especially that the land can only be cleansed from its pollution by a murderer, if he is executed. The Deuteronomy passage emphasizes that the elders of the city are to have charge of the execution and that no one is to have a false pity for the murderer, “but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood.”

Granted, a number of these Bible passages apply specifically to the Old Testament theocracy, yet they are all based upon this great, fundamental command of our God that He only gives life, He only may take it, and no one may in any way interfere with His will in this matter at the peril of his life.

We should not be particularly surprised that millions of people oppose the clear Word of our God regarding capital punishment, for “natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God” (I Cor. 2:14). Some, for example, claim that capital punishment does not deter crime and murder, forgetting that this is not the point at all. The important thing is that the murderer be put to death to rid the land of its moral pollution and to protect innocent citizens from the danger of being killed. Others, the so-called “sob sisters,” including many church members, maintain that we should have pity upon the criminal and give him an opportunity to rehabilitate himself. They seemingly forget the victim in their so-called pity for the criminal. They remind us of the cartoon that pictured a victim lying on the sidewalk with a knife in his back. Earl Warren (then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court that often ruled in favor of the criminal) was ignoring the victim and running after the criminal to cry, “Are you all right?” These misguided people who oppose capital punishment also forget that a condemned murderer has an opportunity to repent of his fatal sin.

Our own Supreme Court followed this ungodly crowd when it ruled on June 29, 1972, that capital punishment, in most cases, constitutes “cruel and unusual punishment.” The 5-4 decision stated that capital punishment, consequently, is in conflict with the 8th and 14th Amendments to the United States Constitution. The majority that so ruled did not, of course, write that this decision violates the clear Word of our God, although Justice Rehnquist did say of this judgment that it “strikes down a penalty that our nation’s legislators have thought necessary since our country, was founded.” (The Court did leave the way open for an occasional execution, possibly in the case of killing a law officer or a president, but generally this decision forbids capital punishment. It is, therefore, the exact opposite of God’s will, as the Bible passages cited in this section clearly show.)

Strangely, just six months later, on January 22, 1973, the same Court completely reversed itself by deciding that the killing of unborn children is in most cases perfectly legal. Again, this decision is exactly the opposite of what God has said in His Word, as we shall show in a later portion of this paper. Isn’t it strange that the Supreme Court would refuse to let a guilty murderer be executed, in keeping with God’s will, and in almost the same breath authorize the killing of millions of unborn children who have never in any sense of the word violated the law of the land.

2. The waging of a just war is a second area in which God ends our lives through His representatives.

This really is no different from the point made in the previous section, except that in this case God is protecting us through the government from enemies outside of the country. Dr. Luther wrote: “What is war except punishment of injustice and evil?”

Various Bible passages tell us directly or indirectly that the government has the God-given responsibility to wage just wars. In such cases, we, the citizens, must fight to kill, if called upon. For example, Rom. 13:1-4 states that the government “beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” Any country that wages an unjust war against us “does evil,” and our government must then protect us from this harm, danger, theft, and death.

In support of this decision, Dr. Luther made much of the Bible passage Luke 3:14, the verse in which the repentant soldiers asked John the Baptist how they should conduct themselves in the future. John did not tell them to stop their soldiering, for an army career can be an honorable one, just like that of policeman. He did say, “Don’t bully people, do not bring false charges, and be content with your pay” (Phillips). No one in the

armed forces can use his power to abuse others, but he is to use it for protecting his country against all its enemies, especially those from without. Our Lord also sanctioned fighting in a just war: “My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight; that I should not be delivered to the Jews” (John 18:36).

That is exactly in keeping with the Old Testament accounts in which God at various times allowed or even commanded His people to wage just wars. Num. 21:13 tells us that God gave Israel the victory over the Canaanites. Deut. 20:16-18 says that the Israelites were to destroy utterly the Palestinian Hittites, Amorites, Jebusites, etc., so that they would not lead Israel into idolatry. Remember, too, the great men of God who repeatedly waged just wars, men like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, various Judges, and David.

It is true, of course, that wars are one of the most dreadful earthly calamities that can ever befall a nation. For example, it has been claimed that it took Germany, one hundred years to recover from the ravages of the Thirty-Year War. Therefore every nation must use all possible means to avoid war, as St. Paul wrote, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18). Our Lord too pronounced a blessing upon the peacemakers (Matt. 5:9).

Every Christian will thus work for peace and pray for it in keeping with his ability. Yet, when that is said, we must know also that we can expect more and more wars as the end of the world approaches. “Wars and rumors of wars...nation rising against nation” are one of the signs of the coming end (Matt. 24:3-8).

Therefore, our nation must be prepared to defend itself. It must wage war when the circumstances require it, and we cannot be conscientious objectors in a case like that. The only time that we must refuse, passively, to serve in the armed forces is in the case of an unjust war. For example, if the United States would decide to seize Mexico’s silver mines or to embark on any other war of conquest, this would no longer be protecting our citizens; it would be stealing, and then we must refuse to serve. Nor can we take part in a rebellion against our government. In all such cases, we must “obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29), no matter what the consequences may be.

In many, probably in most, cases it will be difficult or impossible for the average citizen to tell whether a certain war is righteous or unrighteous. Often we simply may not have sufficient information to make a positive judgment. In all such cases we must then take the word of our government, since our officials certainly know infinitely more about the need for a specific war than we do.

In view of all that has been said; one might well ask: “Did the Thirteen Colonies have a right to rebel against England in 1775?” Unless it can be shown that the Mother Country broke the charters that had been issued to the colonies; one would have a difficult time in proving that the Revolutionary War was just, at least in the beginning. Later, when the Continental Congress became the governing body, then, of course, the colonials had to obey it.

3. Two other cases may be briefly mentioned: accidental killing and killing in self-defense. Deut. 19:4-6 mentions a specific case of **accidental killing**: If a man and his neighbor are working in the woods and an axehead accidentally hits the neighbor so that he dies, the man who did it is not to be considered a murderer. “He hateth him not in time past”; this was purely an accident. On the other hand, the implication is also present that if the man knew the axehead was loose and did nothing about it, he would be considered a murderer, just as the owner of a dangerous ox would be responsible for its killing someone (Exod. 21:29). These laws, of course, applied only to Israel of old (called a theocracy, because it was governed by God’s laws), but they do establish these principles: If one kills someone purely by accident, he is not guilty of murder before God; if one kills someone through carelessness, he is guilty of sinning against the Fifth Commandment.

A contemporary example or two will help to clarify these principles: If someone drives 40 miles per hour in a 25 mile speed zone, and kills a child, or if he is under the influence of liquor, this is no accident; the careless or intoxicated driver is responsible for that death. If a deer hunter shoots someone because he mistakes him for a deer, that is undoubtedly carelessness also, and the hunter is responsible before God. If he cannot tell the difference between a man and a deer, he has no business handling a high-powered rifle.

On the other hand, if an automobile driver is using the proper precautions and someone steps directly in front of his car, the driver is surely not guilty of murder, if the person dies as a result of the accident. As far as the driver is concerned, this was purely an accident, although it undoubtedly was carelessness or inattention on the part of the person who was killed.

A final type of killing that is not murder is killing in **self-defense**. While Scripture seems to lack an example of this type, yet the very fact that God expects us to protect our lives may require hurting or even killing someone who threatens us. Granted, this will rarely, if ever, occur in our lifetimes; yet, if we are certain that someone means to kill us, we must defend ourselves with every possible means, even if it requires taking his life.

II. What does God forbid in the Fifth Commandment? (76, 77)

A. God forbids murder (76 A)

In the previous section of this paper we mentioned several kinds of killing that are not murder, since they are all methods whereby God ends someone's life for a specific sin. Every other kind of killing people is murder, strictly forbidden by the Fifth Commandment.

You will notice that we used the expression "killing people" in the last sentence, for the Commandment does not apply to the killing of animals. God gave all creatures to us for food, as He tells us in Gen. 9:3: "Every living thing that liveth shall be meat for you." That word was spoken immediately after the Flood, when life probably became much more difficult than it had been previous to this time. Before the Flood man was a vegetarian, in keeping with what God had said in Gen 1:29: "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." The permission to eat meat did not, of course, give us the license to unlimited destruction of God's creatures; we are to be stewards over God's creation, not wasters of it.

1. **God forbids killing our fellowman.** This includes everything that we today call **first degree or premeditated** murder, as Cain, the first child born on earth, planned to kill his brother Abel (Gen. 4). We remember also how the Jewish mob stoned Stephen, the first Christian martyr, after he had preached the truth to them (Acts 7).

Nor is premeditated murder at all unusual in the United States during the middle 1970's. On the average, two people are deliberately killed every hour of every day in the year, almost 20,000 annually. Indeed, some Massachusetts Institute of Technology mathematicians claimed in the middle 1970's that with our present rate of increase in homicides, out of every 100 babies then born, some 2-5 would eventually be killed. If the baby is a black male; the rate is approximately 30 times greater than that for a white female. What a ghastly prospect!

Premeditated murder also includes *active euthanasia*, the killing of the apparently hopelessly deformed or ill. For example, Madame Van de Put killed her eight-day old daughter, because she was born with no arms or shoulder structure and with deformed feet. (This was the result of the mother taking thalidomide during her pregnancy, a powerful drug that caused many deformities in the developing babies.) She was tried in France and acquitted of murder. Yet, in the eyes of God every instance of this type is murder, just as surely as if one used a rifle against his enemy. Physically deformed children are no less human beings than all the rest of us, and our reverence for human life dare never allow us to play God and to end such a life. God certainly had some good purpose in mind by letting such a child be born.. (We shall have more to say about this in later paragraphs of this paper.)

We should note also that one can be a **murderer without ever touching the person**. For example, King David ordered General Joab to place Uriah in the forefront of the battle and then to command the other troops to withdraw so that Uriah would be killed (II Sam. 11:14-17). That made King David a murderer, for in the very next chapter (12:9) we read that God Himself, speaking through His Prophet Nathan, said to David: "Thou hast killed Uriah."

In the same Bible story Joab, too, became a murderer for carrying out his king's wicked command; even though he surely must have known that he was sinning against God's great Fifth Commandment. King Saul's armorbearer furnishes us with the example that we must follow under any similar circumstances. When the battle was going against him, King Saul commanded, "Draw thy sword and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me thru and abuse me. But his armorbearer would not" (I Sam. 31:4). He knew and obeyed the Fifth Commandment, instead of obeying the wicked command of his king to commit murder.

A similar example of people who murder someone without actually doing the killing is the Jews whose mad cries of "Crucify Him" moved Pilate to accede to their demands. Later God told them plainly, "You killed the Prince of Life" (Acts 3:15). The Rich Man never bothered with poor Lazarus; he just did not give Lazarus anything to eat and thereby certainly contributed to his death (Luke 16:19-21).

Likewise today a drug pusher may never touch his victim, yet the dealer or pusher is just as certainly a murderer as if he had taken a rifle and shot him through the head. He is harming or destroying his neighbor's body. Our own refusal to help the hungry, our neglect to provide daily bread to our family, our callous passing by an accident victim (as did the priest and the Levite, Luke 10:30-32), all these and many other examples illustrate the way in which we become murderers also. By these acts of ours or our refusal to act in cases of need, we may contribute to our neighbor's death or at least to the shortening of his life, acts strictly forbidden by the Fifth Commandment. They place us into the same class with the hired killer.

Do you now understand how this Commandment makes all of us sinners? Dr. Luther said that just as we must protect ourselves against the murderous wild animals like lions and wolves, so everyone must guard against the murderous thoughts within his heart. If we have not hated our neighbor enough to wish him dead or to harm him, we have at least not loved him sufficiently to help him in every bodily need. That neglect is a sin also. May God have mercy upon us for, our sins of commission and omission!

2. In his explanation to the Fifth Commandment Dr. Luther stresses the sinfulness of destroying, hurting, or harming our neighbor's body. Nevertheless, **God also strictly forbids suicide**, the destruction of our own bodies, something not mentioned by Dr. Luther. (He was writing primarily for children.) In the first place, our bodies do not belong to us to pamper, to harm, or to destroy, as Scripture explicitly tells us: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (I Cor. 6:19)

One who intentionally commits suicide generally despairs of God's mercy and of His ability to help; he may wish to escape unpleasantness, pain, calamity, and the like; or he may feel that living is no longer worthwhile. King Saul, you will remember, committed suicide, because he was afraid of falling into the hands of the Philistines, who would surely abuse him (I Sam. 31:1-4). If we read Saul's previous acts aright, it seems that he had by this time completely lost his faith in God. In his despair he took his own life.

Judas, one of the Twelve, furnishes us with a similar example, for at the time of his suicide, he, too, had undoubtedly lost all faith in Christ, the Savior of sinners (Matt. 27:5). At least St. John (12:6) calls Judas a thief, while St. Peter (Acts 1:15-20) also indicated that Judas lost his soul. Jesus' stern words regarding Judas carried the most serious warning of all: "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. 26:24). If Judas had been a believer at the time of his death, he would have done what Peter did, when he sinned: He wept bitter tears of repentance (Luke 22:62). Then, like Peter, Judas would have been reinstated into the circle of the twelve Apostles (John 2 1:15-19); he, like Peter, might have become a pillar within the early Christian Church. Instead, Judas despaired, killed himself, and condemned his soul to eternal torment.

In the middle 1970's some 23,000 people in the United States annually follow the dreadful examples of Saul and Judas. One of the most shocking of all cases occurred in March, 1976, when the Rev. Henry T. Van Dusen and his wife carried out a suicide pact. She died quickly, while he lived for some time. Both apparently were in their right minds, if we are to judge by the suicide note which they left. It said among other things: "We are both increasingly weak and unwell and who wants to die in a nursing home?" They also claimed that suicide

“will become more usual and acceptable as the years pass.” Both had been members of the Euthanasia Society of America, although previously they had advocated only passive euthanasia. One would expect such frightful conduct of the unbeliever, but Van Dusen was the retired president of Union Theological Seminary in New York. The Devil, as this example plainly indicates, can persuade clergymen as well as laymen to lose their faith in God’s mercy, to commit suicide, and thus to destroy their souls.

A suicide may think that he is escaping from the world’s problems; in reality he is casting himself into eternal hellfire, for a deliberate suicide will not inherit heaven. He is despairing of God’s help, he is really an unbeliever in the last moment of his life.

Committing suicide is quite different from giving one’s life to protect his neighbor, for Jesus said, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). I John 3:16 tells us that, following the example of Christ, we ought, if necessary, be ready to “lay down our lives for the brethren.” A brave soldier probably comes under this classification. Samson probably does also. Even though Samson did kill himself (I Sam. 16:23-30), he was nevertheless called by God “to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (I Sam. 13:5). If this was the thought of his heart at the time of his death, he was not committing suicide, but carrying out the will of God.

Likewise, we believe that an insane person who commits suicide will be saved, if he had been a Christian before he lost his mind. In a situation like that, it may be the Devil or an evil spirit who drives one to suicide, just as the evil spirit often cast the boy “into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him” (Mark 9:22); Jesus saved him.

Yet, we must remember that suicides will not normally inherit heaven, and we must do everything possible to prevent this dreadful sin. Generally some one bent on destroying his own life will give warning to that effect; perhaps a number of times. Then we can apply the precious comfort of the Gospel, that Christ’s blood was shed for all sins, including the thoughts of killing oneself. Psalm passages, Romans 8, and many other Bible passages can be used to comfort, strengthen, and to help these despairing people.

3. God forbids active euthanasia, sometimes called mercy killing. Here we must define our terms carefully, so that everyone knows exactly what God has to say about this matter. The word “euthanasia” comes from the Greek, and it means “good death.” Active euthanasia means to put someone to death or to hasten his death in some manner. Almost everywhere in the world many voices are raised in favor of putting to death or hastening the death of those who, humanly speaking, are hopelessly ill, those who want to die, those whose bodies are hopelessly deformed, those suffering almost intolerable pain, etc..

Examples abound in our newspapers and magazines. Someone said, for example, “We kill our hopelessly ill dog; should we not be equally merciful to hopelessly ill human beings?” Many maintain that “every citizen should be allowed to choose the way he will die.” Uncounted others believe in “death with dignity,” meaning thereby that some people, possibly including doctors, psychiatrists, and clergymen, should have the right to declare when certain people are to be given a drug that causes death.

The October, 1973, *Lifeline* mentioned the following two examples: Dr. Walter Sackett, Florida anti-life legislator, has now proposed that mongoloid children be permitted to succumb to pneumonia, a disease to which they are particularly susceptible. His previous attempt along these lines was to urge a death warrant for 90 per cent of the 1,800 mentally retarded patients in Florida hospitals.

Rev. Warren Briggs, a minister in San Diego suburb, says that clinics should be established for the purpose of letting people who cannot be argued out of taking their own lives “to commit suicide in dignity.” Rev. Briggs adds that “reverence for life includes the right to die with dignity.” We’re speechless, how about you?

Of course, people who believe in such active euthanasia will never say, “Let’s murder grandfather.” They will attempt to use a better sounding term, but it is murder in God’s sight, no matter what one might call it. It results from the refusal of people to listen to God’s Word; it must be abhorred by every Christian.

Doctors, too, should know that such active euthanasia is morally wrong, even though they may not be Christians, for the Hippocratic Oath, which many of them take, states, “I will neither give a deadly drug to

anybody, if asked for, nor will I make a suggestion to that effect.” No one may shorten anyone’s time of grace on this earth; only God can do that.

Passive euthanasia is something much different. It is the refusal to keep a hopelessly ill (humanly speaking) patient alive by every mechanical means. *Christianity Today*, 5/26/72, p. 41, reported a case of a patient with irreversible brain damage. He was kept alive for eight years at a medical cost of nearly \$300,000. The doctor explained: “All you had to do was to pull out the tubes and stop feeding him. He would have died within 72 hours without any pain.” In the summer of 1975 newspapers carried the story of another patient, hopelessly ill with kidney disease, who finally decided that he would no longer take the costly, painful hospital treatments to cleanse his blood just to keep himself alive for a little while longer.

What does the Bible say about situations like that? It seems that there is nothing in Scripture which would require us to use many mechanical means to keep such a person alive, especially when the brain damage is irreversible and when the absence of even one mechanism would undoubtedly lead to his death. When all outward signs tell us that the machines are just keeping the patient alive, it is doubtful that our love toward our neighbor requires their constant use. However, generally these rare cases are not easy to decide. They certainly require the counsel of one or more good physicians plus that of our pastor. Most of us probably pray that we never experience the situation where we have to make a decision like that.

4. God forbids abortion.

a. Introduction.

Few social issues have ever stirred our country more than the United States Supreme Court’s January 22, 1973, decision to legalize most abortions. Probably more millions of people reacted in one way or another to this judgment than to almost any other Supreme Court pronouncement in recent times. Nor have the reactions decreased with the passage of time. This far-reaching decision has been called “enlightened, overdue, acceptable, tragic, appalling, legalization of murder,” and many other things, depending on who is speaking.

Approximately three years later West Germany’s Supreme Court decided that the government-sponsored measure legalizing abortion was unconstitutional, that West Germany’s Constitution gives the highest priority to the preservation of life (especially in view of the bitter experiences during the Nazi regime), and that abortions are constitutional only in certain definite instances (rape, health of the mother, etc.). No doubt, this decision was greeted with reactions similar to that in the United States, when our Supreme Court decided on the opposite course.

Who is correct? Which of all the many opinions on abortion is the right one? How can we know this certainly? Above all, what should our attitude be?

There is only one place where we can find the correct answer to this, as well as to every other important question. That is in the completely dependable, eternally true Word of our God. Of it our Lord Himself said, “Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17). St. Peter echoed the same thought, when he wrote (I Pet. 1:25): “The Word of the Lord endureth forever.” How fortunate we are that we have a place to go, where we can learn the truth amidst the many different and contradictory opinions of mankind!

If we go to God’s Word with our questions regarding abortion and learn that God permits it, then we can well close our ears to the many cries that arise against it on all sides. If, on the other hand, God in His infallible Word tells us that abortion is a sin, then none of us dare approve, condone, seek, or promote it. If God forbids abortion, then seven Supreme Court Justices, 25,000 psychiatrists, 50,000 clergymen, 75,000 physicians, and 100 million laymen can claim that it is good or acceptable, but they are, in this instance, liars, deceivers, and probably murderers as well. For their sin they will need to answer on Judgment Day to our God who hates even one unrepentant, unforgiven sin so fiercely that He pronounces an everlasting curse upon it.

You can see how frightfully urgent it is to pray earnestly that our God may guide all of us through His Word to a correct understanding of this burning issue. That is infinitely more important than knowing what the Supreme Court or any other organization may say concerning abortion, since it affects our soul’s welfare, possibly for all eternity.

This is exactly what many, perhaps most people never consider. Most people are more apt to follow the example of the mother who said that she consulted three physicians and psychiatrists regarding her unmarried daughter's pregnancy. Everyone of them advised an abortion. When the mother was asked whether she had consulted God about the matter, she replied that, well, no, she had not really done that. She was a member of a Christian church and had not consulted God regarding one of the most important decisions in anyone's life, a tragedy indeed!

The primary purpose of this section is then to learn what God says about this widespread, violently attacked and vehemently defended practice of abortion. We pray for the Spirit's guidance, as we seek the answer.

b. The traditional attitude toward abortion.

We need to remind ourselves of the traditional attitude toward abortion in order to understand the tremendous change in American attitudes toward it since 1967.

1) The teaching of the Old Testament. If we examine the Old Testament, we shall quickly learn that those children of God everywhere and at all times had the deepest respect and the highest regard for human life. God Himself wrote the Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," into the heart of every human being, and He repeated this charge to His people at Mt. Sinai as one of His great Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:13). God was so serious about this Commandment that everyone who disobeyed and deliberately killed anyone should surely be put to death. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man" (Gen. 9:6).

Just a few moments after His thunderous "Thou shalt not kill," our God spoke a specific word regarding the killing of unborn children: "If a man strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine" (Exod. 21:22). The word "depart" means "come out into the world." In other words, if a child was born prematurely as a result of a blow, without any harm to mother or child, then a fine was to be paid, since such a blow could injure mother or child or both. But, "if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Exod. 21:22,23). If the prematurely born child should die, the person who caused the death was regarded as a murderer, in exactly the same class with one who killed anyone else. He must be put to death.

To God's specific word regarding killing must be added the high regard from human life that Old Testament people placed upon children. Those ancient children of God regarded their sons and daughters as their greatest earthly blessing and expressed their thinking frequently with inspired statements like these: God makes "the barren woman...to be a joyful mother of children" (Ps. 113:9); "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Ps. 127:3); "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them (children)" (Ps. 127:5). An example of the high value that was placed upon children happened at the circumcision of John the Baptist, when relatives and indeed the entire neighborhood rejoiced with the parents at the birth of their child (Luke 1:57,58).

On the other hand, childlessness in Old Testament times was commonly regarded as a great misfortune. Examples like those of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 15-20), Elkanah and Hannah (I Sam. 1), and of the Shunamite Woman (II Kings 4:8-17) come to mind. When God finally gave these couples a child, their happiness knew no bounds.

Given all of these factors, it is not surprising at all to learn that abortion was generally unthinkable for the Old Testament child of God.

2) The teaching of Hippocrates, 400 B.C. The reader may wonder why the teaching of Hippocrates, who was a heathen doctor, is cited here. Well, Hippocrates was a Greek physician who did so much to advance the work of doctors that he is commonly called the "Father of Medicine." Not the last of his accomplishments was the

Hippocratic Oath which was “adopted as a pattern by medical men throughout the ages and is still used during ceremonies of graduation at many universities and schools of medicine” (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 15, 1969, p. 94). That encyclopedia article continues by stating that the Hippocratic Oath “in one or another of its many versions...has guided the practice of medicine for 2000 years.” It was meant particularly to govern the ethical conduct of doctors everywhere. It was for over 23 centuries one of the truly great documents in the history of medicine.

Among its various provisions, the Hippocratic Oath had this one, which for centuries was accepted by doctors everywhere: “I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception.” Consequently, until the late 1960’s and the early 1970’s very few legitimate doctors would ever perform an abortion, except for the most compelling reasons.

3) The teaching of the New Testament. The New Testament, like the Old, repeatedly stresses the sanctity of human life: In fact, our Lord not only cited the Old Testament commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” but He went much farther than that. He showed that even such a matter as unrighteous anger that can lead to harming or killing our neighbor was in itself a sin (Matt. 5:21,22). “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer,” proclaims St. John (I John 3:15). St. Paul writes that our lifetime is a period of grace in which we are to learn the way to heaven. He wrote: “Behold, now is the day of salvation” (II Cor. 6:2). Therefore, any thought of shortening or ending one’s time of grace on earth was strenuously forbidden to the child of God, except in that rare instance where God ended a life through His representative, like government execution for crime or a just war.

While there is no direct reference to abortion in the New Testament, the general horror at taking a life always extended to unborn children also. As early as about 100 years after the death of our Lord, the Church strictly forbade the killing of the unborn, as we know from the so-called Didache. That was a Christian manual, containing the teachings of the 12 Apostles; it condemned abortion.

This complete opposition to abortion under almost any circumstances was renewed at the Council of Elvira, about 306 A.D. Throughout all the ages since that time the visible Church in all of its various branches has until recent times almost without exception closely followed the teachings of Scripture in clearly forbidding abortion. Everywhere there has been almost total opposition, because abortion was a transgression of one of God’s great commandments, “Thou shalt not kill.”

4) The attitude in America before 1967. Through the influence of the Church, because of a desire to maintain the moral code, or simply because large families were economically desirable, abortion was rare during most of American history. In fact, the laws of almost every state had provisions similar to Wisconsin’s Statute 940.04: “Any person, other than the mother, who intentionally destroys the life of an unborn child may be fined no more than \$5,000 or imprisoned no more than three years or both.” Wisconsin State Law defined an unborn child as “a human being from the time of conception until it is born alive.” (Not until the late 1960’s and early 1970’s did various states begin to “liberalize” their laws regarding abortion.)

Those many laws that protected the life of the unborn reflected America’s high regard for children from the earliest days of our history. For many decades our birth rate was as much as three times more than it is during the early 1970’s. Families of six or more children were by no means unusual. Small wonder, then, that one may search American history in vain for any widespread movement in favor of abortion until the late 1960’s and 1970’s.

This does not mean that there were no abortions anywhere until comparatively recent times. There have always been some abortions, especially in ancient Greece and Rome, just as there have always been adulteries, robberies, and murders by criminals. Some countries, like Japan and many Communist lands legalized abortion as early as the 1950’s.

Yet, everyone who has studied the matter at all must admit these truths: For some 2300 and more years, ever since the days of Hippocrates, abortion was generally opposed by doctors everywhere. For a much longer time than that it was considered a sin by the Church. (The Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church did and do

condemn it; most Protestant churches condemned it until the 1960's.) And as recently as 1968 some 85% of Americans were opposed to abortion.

c. The American attitude toward abortion since 1967.

1) The drastic reversal in America's opposition toward abortion. An almost unbelievably great change in America's attitude toward abortion occurred during the five years from approximately 1967 through 1972. During these few short years, so the public opinion pollsters reliably report, America changed its opinion from some 80% or 90% opposing abortion to some 60% favoring it. That is truly amazing! How can such a revolution in opinion on this moral question take place so suddenly? How can an attitude held for more than 2,000 years be almost completely changed in five years?

Part or much of the answer certainly lies in the prevailing United States moral climate, which, by any standard, has deteriorated tremendously. The result is that many pressure groups, which formerly had little to say about abortion, now began to promote it more or less vigorously.

For example, the American Civil Liberties Union began, as early as 1968, to work for the repeal of all laws that impose criminal penalties for abortion, as long as it is done by a licensed physician. The Zero Population Growth movement is dedicated to preventing any increase in population; it consequently favors any successful birth control method, and it promotes abortion where birth control methods have not been successful. The Planned Parenthood movement at one time restricted its efforts to promoting birth control; in the early 1970's it began to promote abortion also to achieve its aims. Some, but not all by any means, physicians have joined the cry for liberalizing abortion laws. Dr. Alfred Kenman, for example, was hailed as a "frontier hero" for operating his abortion factory in Madison, Wisconsin, in the early 1970's. (Abortions cost from \$75 to \$500, with the average possibly about \$200, and a physician can easily perform 10 to 15 a day. At \$200 each, one will need to admit, that is not a bad day's wage.) Many a psychiatrist, too has advised his client. that the easiest way out of her difficulty is to have an abortion; counselors by the hundreds in both high schools and colleges offer the same advice; many groups within the government follow the same general trend.

Newspapers joined the cry by adopting as their editorial policy a statement to this effect: "Abortion is a private matter between a woman and her doctor." Many ecologists see the earth being polluted by people, and they therefore advocate various methods of population control, including abortion. Other groups of various kinds openly advertise their services as abortionists or as people who would aid women to obtain an abortion. WLFM, the Lawrence University station in Appleton, Wisconsin, broadcast commercials telling where abortions could be procured, although the station vigorously denied that they were commercials. Above all there were pressures from the unmarried who wanted to fornicate without having children and from the married people who do not want to be bothered with a family.

Churches, too, became pressure groups that promoted abortion for almost any reason. At one time some Presbyterians had a fund from which a woman could borrow money to fly to New York for a quick abortion; some Baptists determined to "work for legislation" that allowed abortion under various possibilities; in 1971 the United Church of Christ favored the abolition of all laws pertaining to abortion; groups of people within various Lutheran bodies, and to a greater extent within Methodist bodies favored abortion in the early 1970's, although no Lutheran body officially and unconditionally approved it before 1973.

At its 1974 convention the American Lutheran Church adopted a statement that among other things said, "the developing life may need to be terminated..." in some cases. The Lutheran Church in America also endorsed abortion.

As a result of these many different pressure groups and their influence, some 17 states "liberalized" their laws regarding abortion by 1972. They included Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, New York, Washington, and some eight or ten others. Among the most liberal of these laws were those in Alaska, Hawaii, New York, Washington, and Washington D.C. Almost any resident of these states could obtain an abortion for almost any reason, especially during the first sixteen or more weeks of pregnancy.

One of the most remarkable evidences of the changed attitude toward abortion occurred within the Medical Society of Wisconsin, which in 1968 endorsed the Wisconsin Statute forbidding abortion. Just two years later, in 1970, it completely reversed itself and decided that abortion was a matter for the patient and her physician. The American Medical Association likewise changed its attitude to allow its members to perform abortions.

The courts also often bowed to the pressures exerted in favor of killing the unborn. For example, a three judge federal panel in 1970 ruled Wisconsin's Statute 940.04 unconstitutional and vague. (One might wonder what is so vague about stating that an abortion will result in a fine up to \$5,000 and imprisonment up to three years. Nor does it seem to be unconstitutional to protect the life of the unborn, but so the federal panel ruled.)

The entire matter reached a climax on January 22, 1973, when the Supreme Court of the United States; by a seven to two majority, ruled that during the first three months of pregnancy the "abortion decision...must be left to the medical judgment of the woman's attending physician." A state may regulate abortion procedures "in ways that are reasonably related to maternal health," during the second three months of pregnancy. Finally, the states may regulate or even forbid abortion during the last three months of pregnancy, except when the health of the mother is endangered. In effect, this ruling gave the green light to almost any abortion performed during the first six months of pregnancy and, for that matter, also allowed many or most abortions up to the very last day before the child was actually born, unless a state specifically forbade it in the last weeks of pregnancy.

2) The continued opposition to abortion. The Supreme Court's January 22, 1973, decision by no means stopped the opposition to abortion. It probably stiffened the resistance of many. Unquestionably millions of American citizens are supremely unhappy, truly heartsick, at the Supreme Court's decision. They regard it as no less than a public disaster, comparable to the greatest tragedies that have ever befallen any nation. They wonder how in the world any seven justices could possibly arrive at their ruling in view of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, adopted as long ago as 1868. It states in part that no one may "deprive any person of life...without due process of law." Not even the President of the United States can order the death of anyone without a court trial. But who orders a court trial before an unborn child is put to death? Such a child, according to the Supreme Court's ruling, has no right whatsoever of deciding whether it wants to live or to die. The decision is made for it without ever considering the child.

The Supreme Court overcame this objection by stating that the unborn children are not persons under the United States Constitution and they consequently have no legal right to life, Anyone may legally kill such an unborn person or he may lawfully kill millions of such unborn children. That is what the court said, an inconceivably disastrous miscarriage of justice in the opinion of many millions of people and especially in God's sight.

Abortion's opponents include a huge majority of the members within the Roman Catholic Church, which has always opposed the practice. The Orthodox Church has had the same stand for the more than 900 years of its existence. The same holds true of many Lutherans, especially those within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The number of people who are unchangeably opposed to abortion includes tens of millions of other people within the United States. Many of them are completely convinced that it is no less than murder. This opposition was shown repeatedly by the emphatic rejection of referendums within various states that proposed to legalize abortion during the early 1970's. In addition there are groups within a number of states called Citizens Concerned for Life (or for the Unborn) and other organizations, which promote anti-abortion meetings to reach people with their message, movies and slide programs, and the like, all in one massive attempt to show the wickedness of abortion.

3) The continuing trend that favors abortion. Despite the great opposition of many people, the number of abortions in America during the late 1960's and 1970's increased tremendously. That truth can be demonstrated in a number of ways. For example, a Gallup poll showed 85% of Americans opposed to abortion in 1968; in 1972 the figure was 64% in favor, an almost unbelievable revolution in American thinking on this vexing social problem within just four years time.

In 1966 California had about 5,000 abortions, while in the early 1970's the figure was about 100,000, a twenty-fold increase in about six years. The University of Southern California Hospital had two abortions in 1966; in the early and mid 1970's the figure runs into the thousands annually. Many other hospitals that at one time had practically no abortions are now performing them on request by the thousands, sometimes during the women's lunch hour. During the same years, New York City's abortion rate increased so greatly that it approximates the number of live births. Even churches that at one time strenuously opposed abortion have now begun to endorse it. The American Lutheran Church, for example, at its 1974 convention adopted a statement favoring abortion in some instances, as was previously mentioned. Other churches that at one time were opposed to abortion have also softened their stand.

Various foreign countries have a similar record. For example, in Great Britain there was a 57% increase in abortions from 1970-71, with the greatest increase in girls sixteen years old or younger. One doctor said, "I have seen many gynecologists change from an attitude of strict conservatism to one of partial or complete liberalism." Japan has had an estimated 50 million abortions from 1948 to 1971, while Hungary has 1,300 for each 1,000 live births. World-wide about one-half of all women may now procure abortions legally, although many countries, particularly the Latin American ones, prohibit it. Indeed, abortion has been authoritatively called the most prevalent surgical procedure performed on women.

A rather striking example of the way in which the press continues to push for additional abortions is the example of the *New York Times*, often called one of the world's greatest newspapers. Dr. Edwin Palmer, Executive Secretary of the *New International Version* of the Bible, called attention to its editorial page of February 10, 1975, (as reported in *Christian News* March 10, 1975). One editorial denounced the extermination of starlings, black birds, and grackles at a military installation. It stated: "The poignant spectacle of millions of dead and dying birds ought to make the army and municipal officials reconsider their hideous project."

In another editorial the same day the same newspaper deplored the decision of a Boston jury to find Dr. Kenneth Edelin guilty of manslaughter for failing to save the life of an unborn child that he intended to kill by a hysterotomy. This court decision shocked the medical community, and it certainly will be appealed. The *Times* ridiculed the idea of calling the unborn a "baby." It uses the term "fetus."

To all of this Dr. Edwin Palmer wrote: "This is what the whole issue is about: Is the unborn a fetus or a baby, a glob or a human with an eternal destiny? Is it a little lower than the angels, or a little lower than the blackbird?"

The implications of this continuing trend in favor of abortion have been well stated by Dr. and Mrs. Wilke in the *Handbook on Abortion* (Hiltz Publishing Company, Cincinnati, 1971, 72) pp. 6 and 7:

For two millennia in our western culture, written into our Constitution and Bill of Rights, specifically protected by our laws, and deeply imprinted into the hearts of all men has existed the absolute value of honoring and protecting the right of each person to live. This has been an inalienable, and unequivocal right. The only exceptions have been that of balancing a life for a life in certain situations or by due process of law.

- Never in modern times, except by Hitler, has a nation put a price tag of economic or social usefulness on an individual human life as the price of its continued existence.
- Never in modern times, except by Hitler, has a nation demanded a certain physical perfection as a condition necessary for the continuation of that life.
- Never since the ancient law of paterfamilias in Rome, has a major nation granted to a father or mother total dominion over the life or death of their child.
- Never has our nation legally allowed innocent humans to be deprived of life without due process of law.

Yet our newly enacted permissive abortion laws do all of the above. They represent a complete about-face, a total rejection of one of the core values of western man, and an acceptance of a new ethic in which life has only a relative value. No longer will every human have an absolute right to live simply because he exists. Man will now be allowed to exist only if

he measures up to certain standards of independence, physical perfection, or utilitarian usefulness to others. This is a momentous change that strikes at the root of western civilization.

d. The methods of abortion.

1) Suction or Vacuum method. In this type of an operation performed under a local anesthetic, a hollow glass tube is attached to a powerful vacuum by means of a flexible hose. The tube is then inserted into the dilated cervix, the neck that leads to the womb. The suction is turned on and the developing child is literally sucked out of the womb, generally in many tiny pieces. Through the glass tube one can easily see the torn parts of the child being sucked out of the womb. This method is used only in the early stages of pregnancy, before the head becomes so large that it has to be broken into many parts in order to extract it from the body of the mother. The entire procedure may take five minutes.

2) Curettage. This is also known by the familiar name D and C (dilation or dilatation and curettage), although not all D and C's are abortions. It consists of dilating the cervix (this happens naturally when the babe is carried for the full term). Then the physician enters the womb with a curette, a small, sharp, scoop-like instrument, and simply scoops the unborn child out of the womb. It is not done as frequently as the suction method.

3) Salt or Saline Solution. In cases of longer pregnancy, from 12 or 14 weeks onward, the physician may insert a hollow needle through the wall of the abdomen into the amniotic sac in which the baby is developing. About five ounces of the fluid is then removed and this is replaced with about six ounces of a strong (20%) salt solution. The effect is about the same as if someone would hold your head in a pail filled with a strong brine. You would undoubtedly protest by kicking and fighting, but in a few moments you would be dead. This is exactly what happens to the unborn baby. It convulses, goes into a coma, and after an hour or longer it dies. Within 24-28 hours the mother delivers the baby naturally, but, of course, it is always born dead. It will probably be greatly discolored from the strong salt solution. If the body of the baby is not refrigerated for future experimentation, it probably then goes to the incinerator.

4) Hysterotomy. Hysterotomy is used only in case of a longer pregnancy, and it may be performed up to a very short time before the baby would be born. It is essentially a Caesarian section or operation, performed by cutting through the walls of the abdomen and the uterus, and then the child is removed. In these cases the baby is always born alive, but generally no effort is made to save its life—it is simply left to die, although there are cases on record of medical experiments with the living child that is removed in this way. We may conclude that any such experimentation is now just as legal as experimenting with an unborn animal, since an unborn child is not a person according to the Supreme Court ruling.

e. God's Word regarding unborn children.

1) Unborn children are unquestionably human beings according to Scripture. In His Holy Bible our God has told us repeatedly that He regards unborn children as truly human beings. He makes no distinction whatsoever between an unborn child and one who is born except, of course, for size and stage of development. Otherwise an unborn child has a body and a soul; it, too, has been redeemed by Christ the Crucified; it is infinitely precious in the sight of God; and if His will be done, it will spend eternity in the glories of heaven. In the following paragraphs we shall look briefly at a few of the Bible passages that clearly express this thought.

A thousand years before our Lord was born, King David wrote by inspiration: "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). Here the Bible tells us unmistakably that, like David, my mother conceived me also, a human being, not a blob, not a lump of flesh, or not an animal, but "**conceived me,**" a human being. Every true child of God will confess that same truth.

In Jer. 1:5 the Lord, in speaking to the great Prophet Jeremiah, said: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” Does this sound as if the unborn child is simply a bit of protoplasm to be discarded at will? From this Bible passage even a little child can understand that Jeremiah was a person, a valuable human being in God’s Kingdom, long before he was born. In exactly the same way every unborn child is a human being, a soul whom God wants to save for all eternity, as He says, He “will have all men to be saved” (I Tim. 2:4).

When we turn to the New Testament, the message is still louder and clearer, if that is possible. For example, when the angel Gabriel announced the birth of John the Baptist, he expressly stated that John “shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb” (Luke 1:15). Six months later, when Mary, the mother of our Lord, visited her cousin, Elizabeth (John the Baptist’s mother) said that her babe. (John) “leaped in her womb...for, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy” (Luke 1:41,44). Long before he was born, the great prophet John knew Mary, the mother of Christ. That would have been impossible if the unborn child were no human being. In view of this, would anyone dare to say that God did not regard the unborn John as a person?

And what shall we say about our Lord Himself, who is the “Word made flesh” (John 1:14)? If Christ, the everlasting God, took upon Himself a human nature within the body of His mother Mary, wasn’t He therefore a true human being from the time of His conception by the Holy Ghost (Matt. 1:20)? Would anyone be so irreverent as to claim that Christ was simply a wart, a tumor, or something similar within His mother’s body? The very thought is blasphemous. The very idea that Christ was anything less than a human being from the time of conception is a sin against our Lord who took our flesh upon Himself to save us from our sins. We too are truly human beings, even when we are only 1/32 of an inch or less in length.

A further, striking proof that an unborn child is a human being in God’s sight is the use of the same Greek word *brephos* for an unborn child, a new born babe, or a small child. In Luke 1:41 and 44 he word is used to denote a fetus or an unborn child (John); in Luke 2:12 it designates a newborn babe (Christ); and in II Tim. 3:15 it is applied to a young child (Timothy). In every case, born or unborn, newborn or somewhat older, it is a child in God’s eyes, a child with body and soul.

From everything that has been written in this section you can tell at once that Scripture regards an unborn child as truly human from the moment of conception. Never mind that some doctors, judges, or psychiatrists deny or ridicule this truth; never mind that the Supreme Court declared an unborn child no person—we are concerned with what God says, and His Word is clear and unmistakable: a child is a person with body and soul from the moment of conception.

Nor are we particularly concerned with such questions as these: If a child has a soul from the time of conception, what happens to that soul and the body in the case of a miscarriage, something that happens frequently everywhere in the world? If the miscarriage is the fault of some person, he or she, of course, will be held responsible to God for that act. If the miscarriage happens through no fault of anyone, then it is an act of God, and we can confidently leave the matter in His hands.

2) Scriptural truths regarding the unborn accepted by biology. Biology students everywhere know and accept without question the truth of Scripture, that a child is a living human being from the moment of conception. That is exactly what 60 major scientific authorities from the fields of medicine, ethics, law, and social sciences, concluded at an October, 1967, First International Conference on Abortion at Washington D.C. They said, “The majority of our group could find no point in time between the union of sperm and egg, or at least the blastocyst stage (one week after fertilization), and the birth of the infant at which point we could say that this was not a human life.”

One science or medical textbook and article after another has statements like these: “The unborn child,” “The human body begins its existence with the act of fertilization,” “Life begins with conception,” “The child grows within the uterus,” “The 23 male and 23 female chromosomes unite into a new individual with 46 chromosomes,” “Birth simply changes a child’s environment.” All of these frequently-occurring expressions and many more show that biologists everywhere regard the unborn children as truly human.

Indeed, at the moment of conception or shortly thereafter, a child has the beginnings of all the organs and the physical characteristics that he will ever have. A baby's heart begins beating on approximately the twentieth day after conception; his brain, his stomach, yes, all of his organs and members are present by the seventh week of pregnancy. Normally this is about the time that a pregnancy can be definitely determined. At this stage the unborn child often sucks its thumb. Most biologists and developmental psychologists will probably also agree that "from this point in the development until age 25-27, when full growth and development are complete, the only major changes will be in the size and sophistication of the functioning parts" of a human being.

If a scientist is honest, he will say, as did a Michigan scientist when he addressed a group of pastors: "I believe that a fetus is a human being from conception." Yet; inconceivably, he continued with, "But there are worse things than taking a human life." What, in heaven's name, is worse than taking a human life, destroying one's chances for a full life, and possibly making him lose his soul?

True, some people deny these facts and refuse to believe that an unborn child, especially in the early stages of the pregnancy, is a human being. If it isn't a human being, then pray tell what is it? A wart, a tumor, a blob, or a chunk of protoplasm? And, if he isn't a human being from conception, when does he become one? On the day of his birth or the day before? There is nothing in scientific literature, that would even indicate anything less than that one becomes a human being at the time of conception. Science accepts what Scripture teaches in this instance: A woman is a mother from the moment a child is conceived within her body.

3) No killing of the unborn. Since an unborn child is truly a human being in the eyes of God, no one dares to shorten or end its life. That would be a defiance of the living God, who declared in a mighty voice from Mt. Sinai, "Thou shalt not kill." He wrote those same words on the stone tablet, and they deserve to be written in huge, flaming letters and hung so that everyone everywhere can see them and live accordingly.

You will then ask, "Is any abortion ever justified?" Answer: "Yes, provided that God Himself has so indicated." For example, in the case of a tubular pregnancy, we know that such a babe has no possible chance of developing normally and that both mother and child will probably die, if nothing is done. That is purely an act of God. We don't know why He allowed it to happen, we do know that we must do something to save either mother or child, if at all possible: An abortion will probably need to be done.

Is there any other justifiable reason for an abortion? This author cannot conceive of any other. "But," someone will surely object, "How about a pregnancy resulting from rape? Hasn't that poor woman gone through enough suffering without the added burden of carrying an unwanted child for nine months and then making the difficult decision of what to do with it after its birth?" Answer: Doctors tell us that very few forcible rapes ever result in a pregnancy. The September, 1970, issue of the *Educator* reported that a ten-year study of 3,500 rape cases in the Minneapolis-St. Paul areas revealed zero cases of pregnancy. Assuming, however, that a rare pregnancy does result from a forcible rape, is the commission of a sin (the murder of the unborn) a God-pleasing way to overcome the consequences of the first sin? Certainly not!

Furthermore, how does one know what God has in mind for that particular illegitimate child? Wasn't James Smithson an illegitimate child? He became the donor of the Smithsonian Institution, one of the foremost institutions of its kind in all the world.

Other frequently advanced reasons for abortion are the physical or mental health of the mother. "Mental health of the mother" can cover almost every conceivable situation and can give almost every pregnant woman a handy excuse for having an abortion. But what about the mother's physical well-being? If it is a case of her life or the child, which should one choose? Answer: Has there ever been a case where several qualified doctors have known beyond any doubt that carrying a child to full term will unquestionably lead to the mother's death (except in the case of a tubular pregnancy)?

The guidance director of one of Appleton's (Wisconsin) high schools was told that his wife must have an abortion. If not, she and possibly the baby would surely die. Since they were practicing Catholics, they refused to have the abortion, and the child was born without its or its mother's health being affected in any way. After that happened, the doctors told her that she should never again have a child under any circumstances,

since either she or the child or both would die. She had more children, five in all, and in the middle 1970's both she and her children were in good health. Of course, this is only one case, but it helps to show that most people may make entirely too much of the danger to the mother's mental or physical health.

No one will, of course, deny that a nine-months pregnancy can be severely trying for the mental and physical health of the mother. Yet, how can anyone possibly justify murder to eliminate a mental or physical problem? Will a teacher whose class gives him mental problems suggest machine gunning the students to get rid of the problem?

For the comfort of our future mothers, we ought to remember that our Lord referred to the physical problems of pregnancy. He was talking especially of the pains of childbirth, when He said: "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world" (John 16:21). Uncounted numbers of mothers who had difficulties with their pregnancies have experienced the joy of which Christ spoke. One gynecologist wrote that of all the many women whom he attended at childbirth, not a single one spoke of her pain and trouble, but their first question was almost always: "How is my baby?" Since the Supreme Court ruling of January, 1973, about one and one-half million American mothers will annually never need to ask that question, because they will have killed their baby before it can be born.

What if the chances are great that the child will be born deformed? For example, we know that a mother who has German measles during some stage of her pregnancy has a good chance of bearing a deformed child. Is this a reason for an abortion? Answer: God can turn evil into good, as He has demonstrated a million times. Don't ever let anyone claim that the murder of the unborn is right, unless God Himself has clearly indicated that the child has no chance of ever developing, as in the case of a tubular pregnancy.

4) Facing the truth: Abortion kills a unique individual. In every abortion (except in the rare case when God Himself has indicated this necessity), every one of us must face this plain truth: A unique individual is being killed in defiance of God's decree.

The babe who is killed is indeed a unique individual. His like will never again be seen on earth, no matter how long this world lasts, for no two individuals are ever alike. How do we know what God had in mind for that particular individual? And how dare we defy the plans of the living God by murdering one of His children without inviting the direst punishment upon ourselves?

Dr. R. F. R. Gardner, in his *Abortion: The Personal Dilemma* mentioned an example that illustrates this uniqueness of an individual. He stated that Mrs. Lee was pregnant in 1806 and that she wrote a letter, stating that she just did not want this child under any circumstances. She would soon be leaving England for America, and she dreaded the idea of a long sea voyage when she was pregnant. Yet, since abortions were not easily obtainable in those days, she finally gave birth to her unwanted son in 1807. She named him Robert E., and he, as we well know, became one of the greatest generals in American history. He was certainly one of our outstanding Christian gentlemen as well. In later years Mrs. Lee wrote that she just didn't know what she would ever do without her Robert E., since he was both a son and a daughter to her.

A pastor had a similar experience in his parish ministry with a kind, old lady who was an invalid for many months. In ministering to her privately, she often said in tears: "I never wanted my daughter Florence; I was too old to have a child; but now, see who takes care of me—Florence. None of my family is here, but my unwanted daughter has given all these many months to take care of her mother who hated the thought of another child."

There are thousands of similar examples, for we do not know what our God has in mind for our unborn children. Therefore, who among us will dare to take a life that God has given us for some particular and possibly for some extremely important work? What if your mother had said, in your developing years, "I am just not going to have this child; therefore let the doctor kill him or her before he is born"?

5) No misleading anyone by fabricating excuses or substitute terms. Pro-abortionists love to make excuses for their foul deeds, some of which were mentioned in the previous sections. Others maintain that abortion is

necessary to control or to reduce the world's population, a contention that will be discussed at length in connection with the Sixth Commandment. Can we not, however, understand that about one-half of the counties in America lost population during the 1960's, a trend that was continuing into the 1970's? In 1975 the average American family had about two children or a little less, not sufficient to keep the population at its present level. In the same year some American families wanted children so desperately that they were ready to pay \$10,000 or more to lawyers who could illegitimately procure babies for them.

A closely related excuse for abortion is that the world will soon be so overpopulated that there will not be sufficient food for all, an error that has been repeatedly refuted.

Some say that a mother has the right over her own body and therefore can have an abortion, if she so wishes. Yet, an unborn child is not the mother's own body; it is a separate, living being whom God will have in eternity with Him. Therefore, when the pregnant mother goes to her doctor, he always has two patients to treat. (If a woman kills her unborn child, claiming that she has the right over her own body, does that also allow her to commit suicide, as Justice Blackmun asked?) A woman who kills her unborn child and remains unrepentant will surely forfeit her place in heaven; as Rev. 21:8 tells us.

Others claim that legal abortions are safe and that they will reduce the number of unsafe, illegal abortions, again a statement that is only a half truth. Legal abortions do not eliminate illegal ones by any means. One day the Chicago Tribune headed an article this way: "Girl, 14, having abortion: too young to have a baby." The story told of a 14-year old, pregnant girl, whose parents decided she must have her unborn baby killed, because she was too young to carry it full-term. Imagine! She was not too young to fornicate, but she was too young to have a baby. In her parent's eyes, she was old enough to follow the sin of fornication with another equally great transgression against God's clear "Thou shalt not kill."

In 1972 a man ran for political office in Wisconsin. He favored abortion because of the prevalence of child-beating. A telephone inquiry to him resulted in a conversation something like this:

Candidate: "Yes, Wisconsin had some 400 cases of child-beating in 1971. To avoid these serious crimes, I favor abortion so that only children are born who are truly wanted."

Telephone caller: "So there are child-beatings in Wisconsin, and your remedy for these crimes is to kill the child!"

Candidate: "Well, ah...possibly."

Telephone caller: "One day all of us must face God on Judgment Day, and you will need to answer before Him for your wickedness in favoring abortion."

Candidate: "That is my affair."

Telephone caller: "Yes, it is, but when you stand before God on that great day to answer to your sins against one of His clear Commandments, don't say that no one warned you."

The conversation ended on this mutual disagreement.

Someone else might claim: "The Supreme Court, the highest court in the land, has declared abortion legal in most instances. Therefore it surely must be good and right." Answer: "Yes, seven out of nine men on the Court have in 1973, following the unbelieving world's passion for murder, adopted the principle that is contrary to almost all American opinion before the late 1960's; they have declared invalid the laws that millions of people have enacted through their state legislatures over the course of many years; they have wiped out the consensus in much of the world for the past 2300 years; they have effectively eliminated all mercy for possibly one and one-half million unborn children annually; they have told hundreds of thousands of people who voted against abortion in various referendums that their vote was a cruel mistake; they have opened the way to mass extermination of any undesirable class of people; they have defied the living God, who thundered from Mt. Sinai, "Thou shalt not kill," and who will surely eternally condemn their souls unless they repent of their monumental, colossal miscarriage of judgment.

Many another excuse might be offered for having an abortion, but really there is, in almost every single case, only one reason for killing the unborn: the innate selfishness or self-interest of man and woman, which leads to open rebellion against God's clear command.

Years ago many of us shuddered at the thought of King Herod ordering the extermination of possibly 20 babies two years old and under at Bethlehem, shortly after Christ's birth (Matt. 2). We wondered how anyone could possibly be so bloodthirsty, so cruel, as to order a killing like that. Some nineteen hundred and forty-five years later, Hitler and his cohorts ordered the mass extermination of six million Jews in an atrocity that is almost too horrible to mention. But now, cruel King Herod and inhuman Hitler, please step aside for a new champion of wickedness: The majority of the justices on the United States Supreme Court. In one of the most dreadful rulings in world history, these men legalized the killing of more people in less than five years than Herod and Hitler killed in a lifetime. And every five years thereafter the prospects are good for continued legal killing of an equally great number of America's unborn children.

The matter of **substitute terms** is an equally dreadful evil. For example, no abortionist in a the world will ever tell a mother, "You come in next Thursday morning at 10:00 and I will kill your unborn baby." He knows well enough that the mother who hears this will run to the nearest exit, never to return: Instead, the Devil neatly suggests to the doctor a much better sounding sentence. Perhaps it is "You come in next Thursday, and we shall terminate this pregnancy," or, "scrape the uterus," or possibly, "remove the fetus," or some such mild sounding expression. Yet, if the doctor is honest and if the mother knows what is being done, both will necessarily admit that this is murdering a developing child, without, of course, any legal penalty. No substitute terms can erase this fact.

Yes, the number of excuses and substitute terms for killing the unborn is undoubtedly endless. It all reminds one of the saying of a well-known professor within the Lutheran church: "There are two reasons for everything: the reason that is given and the real reason." The real reason for abortion is undoubtedly the selfishness of men and women who just don't want to be bothered with the trouble and expense of having a child. In their passion to be rid of their unborn child, these people will defy the living God and His holy Word. Oh, what a judgment they are heaping upon themselves!

6) Answerable to God. Everyone who deliberately violates God's clear commandment will surely suffer the consequences of his sin, as Scripture says, "The wicked shall not be unpunished" (Prov. 11:21), and "He that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death" (Prov. 11:19). The punishment for abortion frequently begins in this life. For example, more evil effects follow abortions than doctors are often willing to recognize. Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke in their *Handbook on Abortion* (*op. cit.*, pp. 68ff) report that from 13-59% of women who had an abortion indicate that they suffered severe physical after effects. Many complained of sterility, miscarriage, tubular pregnancy, abdominal pains, pelvic infection, hemorrhages, etc.; exactly what one might expect from deliberately sinning against God's clear Commandment.

Much worse than any physical pain that one might have to endure are the pangs of a conscience stricken with grief at the sin that has been committed. If the woman and the man involved have any trace of Christianity in their hearts, their conscience may well be stricken for the rest of their lives, because of their extreme wickedness in killing their unborn child. (If there are no pangs of conscience after an abortion, then the woman's or the man's degradation is complete indeed.) Ann Dennen expressed some of those thoughts in the following poem that she wrote, as reproduced by the Livingston County Respect for Life Committee:

Never

They decided
Together
It was the only solution.
Any other was inconvenient.
That was all there was to it.

So she made the arrangements
Gave a name
Paid the money
Packed an overnight case
And generally made ready.

She was just a little
 Scared.
 He was too.
 In a few days it was all over.
 Everything was fine,
 Nothing to worry about NOW.
 Nothing to worry about
 Except

Somehow
 That little voice
 In her mind
 Which had begun to grow
 In her womb
 That little voice
 Kept crying
 In her mind.
 A tiny wail
 Woebegone it cried
 “Mommy, I might have been...
 I might have been...
 Your darling.
 Mommy, WHY?
 Why did you let them take my life away?
 I had a right to live
 Didn't I?

You talk about equal rights
 For all alive
 Black and white and red and yellow
 And I—I was alive
 Why didn't I have any rights?
 You talk about love
 YOU love
 Why couldn't I have my chance too?
 Is THAT love?
 Why can't I have
 Ever
 Any precious moments?
 Just think mommy,
 I might have been...
 I might have seen the snowflakes
 And the sunsets.

YOU didn't want me
 But I might have found some beauty
Some love in the world
 Despite suffering
 If only I'd had a chance

Why did you do it?
 Now I can never be.
 Never.”

Fay Clayton expressed similar thoughts in the following poem as published in *Christian News* February 5, 1973 and taken from *The New Zealand Tablet*.

My shining feet will never run
On early morning lawn;
My feet were crushed before they had
A chance to greet the dawn.

My eyes will never scan the sky
For my high-flying kite;
For when still blind, destroyed were they
In the black womb of night.

My fingers now will never stretch
To touch the winning tape;
My race was done before I learned
The smallest steps to take.

I'll never stand upon a hill
Spring's winds in my hair,
Aborted winds of thought closed in
On motherhood's despair.

My growing height will never be
Recorded on the wall;
My growth was stopped when I was still,
Unseen, and very small.

I'll never walk the shores of life
Or know the tides of time;
For I was coming but unloved,
And that my only crime.

My lips and tongue will never taste
The good fruits of the earth;
For I myself was judged to be
A fruit of little worth.

Nameless am I, a grain of sand
One of the countless dead,
But the deed that made me ashen grey
Floats on seas of red.

In addition to the punishment of the man and woman involved in abortion we must not forget that “righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34). You can make up your mind that just as certainly as there is a God in heaven, so certain it is that our beloved nation will pay dearly for heartlessly murdering perhaps one and one-half million unborn children annually. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

Yet, any punishment or chastisement that one may have to suffer in this lifetime because of his sin is as nothing in comparison with the unbelievably dreadful curse of eternal judgment upon unrepentant sinners. Everyone knows in his heart that he must stand before God on Judgment Day, as II Cor. 5:10 tells us: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (NIV).

On Judgment Day God will surely say to those who have proved their unbelief with their works: “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). They will be eternally lost souls, since in their unbelief they gave no food, drink, or clothing, etc., to the Lord. Our Lord will say to them, “Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me” (Matt. 25:45). What, then, will He say to those who in their unbelief went much farther than neglecting the needy and actually killed His own children before they could be born? The thought is almost too horrible to consider, for we know that “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31).

7) Our attitude. In view of everything that has been written in our Bibles, all true children of God can have only one attitude toward almost every form of abortion: We must regard it for what it truly is, a horrible, monstrous sin against God's clear Commandment; we must hate it with every fiber of our being even as we must also hate the fornication that frequently results in pregnancy and then the murdering of the unborn. Unrepentant and unforgiven fornication and murdering are a sure method of losing one's soul forever, as the Lord clearly states in Gal. 5:19-21: “...adultery, fornication...murders...they who do such things shall not

inherit the kingdom of God.” That’s what God says—never mind what a million people say. Only what God says will apply on Judgment Day.

If we have ever had anything to do with promoting abortion in anyway, there is again just one attitude for us to take: Follow the publican into the Temple of God and from the depths of your repentant heart cry with him, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13). Looking to Jesus Christ for help, you will then hear the sweetest words that any poor sinner can ever imagine upon this earth, “Son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee” (Matt. 9:2), and “Go and sin no more” (John 8:11).

What shall be our attitude toward the Supreme Court and toward all other pro-abortionists? Oh, there can be only one course for us to take: pity them in their godlessness; pray for them that they will see the light, even as Abraham prayed earnestly and repeatedly for the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:23-33); talk with them or write to them to show them the tragic error of their way and the possible loss of their souls. Thus you will be confessing the truth about the sin of abortion, and Christ specifically states that every one who confesses Him and His Word “before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32,33).

After they have recognized their horrible action for what it truly is (a sin great enough to shut them out of heaven forever), and repent of their gross wickedness, then be sure to point them to Christ, the Savior of sinners. As He forgave the adulterous woman (John 8:1-11), so His mercy is great enough to forgive even an abortionist and those who have had an abortion. Then be sure to warn them earnestly against continuing in their sin.

What should be our **attitude toward any children that the Lord may give unto us**? We can do nothing better than to follow the attitude of the ancient Psalmist who marveled at the way in which God formed him within his mother’s body. He wrote,

Thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them (Ps. 139:13-16).

Shouldn’t we, who know much more about the formation of a human being, also have the same awe, astonishment, and praise at the conception and development of our children? Just try to imagine the miracle that God works when He produces one female egg 1/250th of an inch long, unites it with a much smaller male sperm, and out of that union produces a lovely woman or a great man of God! That is something before which we can only stand in awe—how can anyone possibly say, “Away with it, kill it, send it to the incinerator”?

We who love God and believe in His Son can and must teach our family to have the same value for human life! God valued one human life so much that He gave Himself into death for it that it might live forever. How can anyone then treat that same human life as nothing but a little blob of disposable flesh, fit only for flushing down the drain?

Teaching our children the proper regard for human life means training them carefully at home. It also means, where possible, sending them to a Christian school where their faith in Christ is strengthened and their desire to do His will is promoted. Thus will God be glorified in this terribly serious matter of preserving the lives of our unborn children.

Long ago the Lord asked Isaiah, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Isaiah answered immediately, “Here am I; send me” (Isa. 6:8).

Today we can imagine our God asking many similar questions, including the following: “Who will speak for the unborn? Who will defend their right to life? Who will have mercy on these little ones, who never did a single evil in the sight of America’s laws? Who will protect, nourish, help, and train them in the way that

they are to go so that eventually they may live with God in heaven?" Please God, move all of us to say, "Here am I; use me for your purposes; use me in any possible way to save the life of the unborn."

B. God forbids hurting or harming our own or our neighbor's body (76 B).

In His memorable Sermon on the Mount our Lord showed us that the Fifth Commandment goes much farther than to forbid the act of murder. It surely also includes hurting or harming either our own or our neighbor's body. These actions are sins in themselves and they can result in either shortening a life or making it more difficult. Our love for our neighbor should move us to avoid such sins at all costs.

1. God forbids intentionally harming our neighbor's body.

Our Lord mentioned an example of this sin in His account of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). He said, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." It is altogether possible that this unfortunate man would have died, if the Good Samaritan had not come by to help him. Then the thieves would have been guilty both of harming and of killing him.

On the night when Jesus died, the Apostle Peter tried to defend Him against arrest. He, "having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear" (John 18:10). Jesus sternly rebuked this act, even though Peter had only the best of intentions. Jesus said: "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). Peter's action was a sin against the Fifth Commandment.

An Old Testament example of hurting one's body and embittering a life (also a sin against the Fifth Commandment) was the action of Pharaoh against Israel. Some years before the Exodus

they (the Egyptians) did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burden...and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour" (Exod. 1:11-14).

This slavery was so harsh and cruel that the Lord asked the Israelites to remember gratefully on every Sabbath day their release from it, when they and all theirs rested. Deut. 5:15 reads as follows: "Remember that thou wast a servant (slave) in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day."

Such hurting or harming someone's body is a widespread sin in our day. We shall mention several examples, some of which harm our neighbor, while others harm our own bodies.

a. God forbids polluting our water with harmful substances.

Some of the better-known, extremely dangerous examples in the middle 1970's are the discharge of various chemicals into the water, especially that of mercury. When this water is then used for drinking or for fishing, the effects upon the body can be devastating. The stories and pictures that came to us from Japan in those days was shocking indeed. They portrayed people who were completely crippled for life, people who would be dependent on others to satisfy their almost every need for as long as they lived, simply because they drank water or ate fish polluted by mercury far above acceptable levels. Probably the factories that caused the pollution did not at first truly understand the poisonous effects of dumping mercury into drinking water. They nevertheless are murderers in God's sight, just as surely as if they had bought machine guns and mowed down the population of the city.

Steel companies that discharged thousands of tons of taconite tailings into Lake Superior every day during the middle 1970's were, equally guilty before God of harming their neighbors' bodies. Tiny asbestos

fibers from those tailings entered the drinking water of cities that drew their water from Lake Superior. Doctors and judges condemned the practice, since it was harmful to the health of the people, but the steel company fought vigorously for permission to continue its dangerous practice. Any other company that does not protect the health of its people is equally guilty of sin against the Fifth Commandment.

b. God forbids child abuse (or wife abuse, or any other kind of physical abuse).

By child abuse we do not mean the kind of loving chastisement which God requires parents to inflict upon a disobedient or rebellious child. King Solomon several times wrote about using the rod in situations like that. For example, “He that spareth the rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes” (Prov. 13:24). For their welfare children may need to be spanked at times in the place that God has provided for this (not on the head or on some other part of the body where the child can be permanently harmed). However, a parent ought also to remember the good advice of Dr. Luther that the apple should lie alongside of the rod, when punishment must be inflicted.

This type of chastisement, required by God for the welfare of the child, is much different from the completely sadistic, almost insane child abuse that occurs regularly in our country. We think of cruelties like burning a child with a cigarette, using electric shock, breaking bones, permanently dislocating joints, smashing teeth, scaldings, slashing the body so as to leave permanent scars, and even killing the child.

All of these nearly inconceivable horrors are often inflicted by parents upon their defenseless children. *Education USA* stated that over 60,000 such cases were reported in 1973 (no one knows how many unreported cases there were). The matter had become so bad by the middle 1970’s that the federal government was allotting some fifteen million dollars annually to combat it. Yet, all such efforts were seemingly ineffectual, since the injuring and killing of children by such abuse continued unabated.

A particularly flagrant case was that of seven-year-old Johnny Lindquist, one that especially affected Wisconsin residents in March, 1972. Johnny was taken from a loving foster home at Tigerton, Wisconsin, by a judge who ordered him to be returned to his rightful parents. A great furor resulted, since many felt that his parents were unfit to have him. Not long after he was taken from his foster home, Johnny was beaten so badly by one or the other of his parents that he was in a coma for 35 days before his death. The mother pleaded guilty to aggravated battery; both parents were sent to prison, but Johnny was dead. Similar brutalities, though certainly not always with fatal results, may occur in our country as often as every five to eight minutes all year round.

c. God forbids sports whose major aim is to hurt or harm our neighbor.

One sport that comes to mind immediately is boxing. Of it Oliver Kuechle, formerly editor of the *Milwaukee Journal* sports section, wrote: “Boxing is the only sanctioned sport I know of, aside from bullfighting, in which the highest and most acclaimed purpose is to injure or destroy a man.” These words are all too true, as we know from the many deaths occurring in the ring or shortly after a boxing match. If death does not occur, then the brain may be so affected from repeated blows to the head that the boxer remains “punch-drunk” for the rest of his life. His mind will then be more or less seriously affected.

Yet, so many people love to see the blood and gore of two fighters battling each other in the ring that they paid some \$12-\$15 million for the privilege of seeing a boxing match between Muhammed Ali and George Foreman at Zaire in Africa. The bout was originally scheduled for September, 1974. Each fighter was to receive \$5 million for hurting his opponent, a clear sin against the Fifth Commandment.

Someone will probably ask, “What about football? Isn’t that also a sport in which many players are hurt?” True, all that one needs to do is to glance at the list of injured NFL players to understand that football is indeed a dangerous sport. Yet, one would hardly say that football’s major object is to hurt the opposing players, as is the case with boxing. If football or any other sport degenerates so far that its purpose is to hurt or harm the opposing team physically, then, of course, it is forbidden by the Fifth Commandment.

d. God forbids the use of drugs that harm or destroy our body.

We live in a drug-oriented culture, produced and promoted at least in part by the huge drug companies and their attractive advertising. We have drugs for almost every imaginable disease, pain, and problem. We take drugs to become drunk and to become sober, to put us to sleep and to awaken us, to escape reality and to keep up with the crowd, to “get high” and to have a peaceful feeling, to reduce weight and to “take a trip,” to escape stress and to quiet disorderly children. We have, in fact, so many prescriptive and non-prescriptive drugs available that no one even knows their number. It has been estimated that the number stands somewhere between 100,000 and 500,000.

Is it any wonder that people in our country consume drugs by the ton, often with a total disregard for any evil or even fatal results that may happen? We cite the following examples: In 1973 the House Select Committee on Crime stated that the drug crises in public schools “greatly exceeded our worst expectations...It is only the uniquely gifted and self-possessed child, who is capable of avoiding involvement with some form of drug use.” Hard-drug users alone may number 3/4 million in our country, while almost countless numbers regularly use some other form of non-prescriptive drug. A 1971 survey showed that about half of the women in America used dangerous drugs, amphetamines, tranquilizers, diet pills, and even narcotics.

The huge use of dangerous drugs by grade and high school students has in turn spawned a correspondingly large number of programs to combat such illegal use. Unfortunately, many of the programs and films are more or less totally unfit for such purpose. The one, truly effective antidote for drug addiction among Christians is the Word of our God who forbids us to harm our body, and the strength that comes from Him to overcome this devastating habit.

In order to understand what illicit drugs do to the body and to the mind, we shall say a few things about each major class. We shall not dispute the fact that doctors may legitimately prescribe one or the other of these drugs for certain specific ills for a certain period of time. Under such expert supervision a drug may prove to be highly beneficial, while otherwise it may be highly dangerous or even fatal. We shall, consequently, restrict ourselves in the following paragraphs to those major classes of drugs that are used indiscriminately by millions, drugs that may or will severely affect body and mind, drugs whose unsupervised use surely constitutes a sin against the Fifth Commandment. (Much additional information is available from law enforcement and from other agencies.)

1) Narcotics, called H, horse, Junk, snow, etc., include all opiates (derived from opium), like heroin, morphine, and codein. Cocaine and marijuana are also classified legally, not chemically, as narcotics, as is the synthetic demerol. They affect the nervous system, are sedatives and depressants of nearly every bodily function, reduce pain and give a sense of well-being, may produce fear or anxiety, cause mental deterioration, damage to the brain and to the liver, and drastically shorten the life span. One of the unfortunate characteristics of these drugs is the unusual speed with which they cause dependency among users. Once “hooked,” getting a new supply becomes the main object of one’s life. The cost in money may be as much as \$100 a day, since the dosage for an addict must constantly be increased. Normally these costs can be met only through a life of crime. (If the user is a thief, he must steal about \$500 worth of goods daily to satisfy his habit, since a “fence” will give only about 20% of the retail price for any stolen goods.) These drugs may be taken through the mouth or, more frequently, shot directly into a vein with a hypodermic syringe (“a fix”). Stories about narcotic addicts are often some of the saddest and sorriest ever heard on earth, including, it may be added, stories about addicted babies born to addicted mothers.

Heroin was first discovered in 1898 and believed to be a miracle drug. Doctors soon learned that it is vastly worse than morphine or codein. It “makes one into an old man in two years’ time.” It depresses blood pressure, appetite and intestinal action; it causes dehydration; it may have many possible evil side effects like malaria, syphilis, and hepatitis from the needles that are used.

2) The Down Drugs, called goof balls, yellows, reds, blues, etc., are sedatives or depressants like the various barbiturates (identified by the ending “barbital”). They are frequently prescribed by doctors to relax the central nervous system, for example, before an operation, to calm a patient, to put him to sleep, or to treat his epilepsy. Taken without supervision, they often produce confusion, lack of muscular control, emotional instability, drowsiness, slurred speech, poor judgment, damage to lung and blood vessels, depression, coma, and death. Their usage may give one a drunken appearance, and they cause more intentional and unintentional suicides than any other substance. (One may become so confused that he does not know whether he took the pills or not, and then he takes more.) Regular users can quickly become “hooked” on them, and the addict needs ever larger doses.

Tranquilizers are meant to control tension and anxiety without producing sleepiness or impairing mental and physical functions; they are also used to control mental disorders; they are often abused (the average American uses 50 a year); they may harm the body when taken without supervision by a doctor; and a Marshfield, Wisconsin, psychiatrist calls them “poisoned valentines.”

3) The Up Drugs, called speed, bennies, or pep pills, include caffeine found in coffee, tea, and cola. Taken moderately, caffeine is not thought to be particularly harmful for many people. However, synthetics like the amphetamines of which America uses a tremendous number, are a different story. Again, a physician may prescribe them under certain specific conditions, yet taken without supervision by a doctor, they can cause severe mental and physical harm. They are stronger than caffeine; they are used by truck drivers to stay awake on the road, by students studying for exams, and by athletes supposedly to give them additional stamina. They may cause an increase in blood pressure, perspiration, palpitation of the heart, headaches, hallucinations (drivers may see something in the road that isn’t there), physical behavior, restlessness, damage to major organs (liver, kidneys, pancreas), suicidal attempts, and death.

When one is “hooked” on “Speed,” his life expectancy may decrease by five years. It may decrease much more than that, when one follows the highly dangerous practice of taking sedatives to fall asleep and stimulants to become awake. If stimulants or sedatives are combined with alcoholic beverages, the danger is still greater.

A child of God will understand at once that the taking of such drugs is a clear violation of God’s great Fifth Commandment.

4) Hallucinogens or Psychedelic Drugs, called acid, Big D, etc., include especially LSD (discovered in 1938 and soon thereafter found to be extremely dangerous), STP, etc. These drugs cause more or less extreme changes in the conscious mind. For example, they may produce intensification of colors or figures and visions that are either ill-defined or beautiful. They may result in hallucinations, the seeing or hearing things that are not actually present, delusions or belief in something contrary to fact. One person may claim, “I can fly,” and jump from a sixth story window, as did Art Linkletter’s daughter, weeks after she promised that she would never again go on a “trip.” Others may claim, “I can stop a locomotive,” or they may tear out their eyeballs.

Affects of these drugs are highly unpredictable; and they may reoccur months after they are originally taken (one patient at a Winnebago, Wisconsin, hospital was still on a “trip” five years after she had taken the drug).

In general, however, one can say that they cause illusions, inability to sleep, nausea, incoherent speech, brain damage, overwhelming panic, severe mental disorders, and a tendency to suicide. They corrode body and mind, and they may be as dangerous to unborn children as that infamous drug thalidomide. A Christian must avoid them at all costs, since their use is strictly forbidden by the Fifth Commandment.

5) Marijuana, also called pot, grass, weed, bag, reefers, is the dried tops and leaves of the female Indian hemp. It has been known since 2800 B.C.; it is widely used by millions, often to gain social acceptance or to escape anxiety and depression. According to *Time* magazine, 12/2/74, recent studies show that 24 million Americans have tried marijuana and about 13 million smoke it at least occasionally. In the middle 1970’s it sells for

about \$1,000 a pound on the street.

There is a great deal more controversy regarding the ill effects of marijuana than there is regarding almost all of the previously mentioned drugs. Even though much research is being done in the 1970's, we still don't know enough about its effects to draw a positive conclusion. The National Institute of Mental Health states that no one can predict the results for any individual.

All of the evidence, however, seems to point to harmful effects of marijuana upon the body and especially upon the brain. For example, the chief psychiatrist at the University in Berkeley, California, claimed in the 1960's that he could see no harm in marijuana. Five years later he completely reversed himself, saying that, "Pot smokers cannot think straight." That verdict was reinforced by the opinion of many other researchers, who have made the same discovery; although pot smokers may argue vehemently that they are the ones who are correct, while everyone else is wrong. As long as six months after smoking pot, people have said, "All of a sudden I'm lost when I try to do something."

In December, 1974, the director of the President's special Action Office of Drug Abuse Prevention "warned that marijuana's effects on the body may be more widespread and persistent than had been previously suspected" (*Time* 12/2/74). A 193-page 1974 report compiled by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare stated that marijuana usage can lower the levels of sex hormones in men, have an adverse effect upon drivers' coordination and perception, and make people more prone to disease by interfering with the immune system. The director concluded: "The health consequences of marijuana are unknown at this point and potentially quite severe." (One of the reasons why the evidence against marijuana is unclear is that it comes in various strengths. Hashish, for example, made from the resin, is 6-8 times as strong as some other forms of pot.) This much is clear: Pot smoking causes rapid heart beat, a lack of coordination, and a wandering mind; it may cause irreversible brain damage; it frequently leads to the use of other more dangerous drugs; and its sale and use are restricted in almost every civilized country on earth. How then can a child of God experiment with it, when he knows its potential dangers?

6) Other Chemicals include sniffing or inhaling glue, gasoline, carbon tetrachloride, lacquer, etc. All of these produce a variety of physiological changes, including lack of judgment, carelessness, inflamed membranes, nausea, damage to the brain and to other organs (lung and liver especially), coma, and death. Antihistamines, antibiotics, etc., may seriously affect one's driving ability by causing listlessness, inattentiveness, and confusion, again sins of harming our bodies, unless carefully controlled and supervised by a competent doctor.

7) The use of many of the drugs mentioned above is contrary to both federal and state law. For example, federal law strictly regulates the sale and use of narcotics, sedatives, and amphetamines. The Drug Abuse Act of 1965 requires control of the manufacture, the sale, and the use of various drugs under penalty of up to a \$10,000 fine or five years in prison or more. Federal law makes possession and use of marijuana illegal.

In addition, all states and many localities also have laws, some of them very stringent, regarding the possession, sale and use of drugs. Wisconsin's laws, for example in 1975, had penalties of up to one year in prison and a \$5,000 fine or both for illegal possession of marijuana, amphetamines, LSD, barbiturates, cocaine, heroin and related products, codeine. Penalties for illegal sales run from one to fifteen years in prison with fines of from \$5,000 to \$25,000, depending on the substance sold.

In many states the possession of marijuana is a felony. If convicted, one could lose his right to run for public office, become a doctor or hold similar offices that deal with the public one can be denied the right to work for any local, state, or federal government, and the offender has a police record. (In states like Wisconsin, first time drug offenders may erase their police record after a probationary period, except in the case of the opiates.)

The Christian then has a second compelling reason for avoiding all illegal drugs: They not only harm his body, contrary to the Fifth Commandment, but their possession and use are against state and federal laws, a breaking of the Fourth Commandment. How can a child of God deliberately break two of God's great Commandments?

8) Purchase and use of illegal drugs aids the criminal elements in our society. The drug habit is, of course, promoted everywhere by death-dealing pushers who can make profits of up to \$10,000 a week from their wicked ways. Criminals can pocket a markup of 5,000% on heroin, and they can sell amphetamines for 50 cents that may cost 1 cent to manufacture. Is it any wonder that they defy the wrath of the living God by their evil ways in one great, but tragic attempt to become rich? Do you want to place yourself into a position where you encourage that criminal element in its wicked ways by purchasing and using their products? Thereby you are actually making yourself a partner with a criminal; do not think that you will then escape the judgment of God.

9) Do all that you can to stamp out the use of illegal drugs. The work of authorities in trying to enforce the drug laws is difficult, sometimes almost impossible. Law enforcement officials have said, “What progress has been made in the war against drug abuse has been negligible.” Stiff penalties, like those in Spain (a six years and one day mandatory prison sentence for carrying hashish into the country) has had some deterrent effect, but America generally deals much more leniently with its drug offenders.

We in our country could learn something from the Japanese, who had some 60,000 hard drug addicts in the 1960’s. In the 1970’s this crime has been almost eradicated, largely because of the stiff sentences given. They include a life sentence, strictly enforced on pushers, several years in jail for possessors, and a thirty-day “cold-turkey” treatment for users. The thirty-day “coldturkey” for users is an excruciating ordeal. Users are simply denied any drug during this time, and this withdrawal period is so dreadful that few who have experienced it ever go back to drugs and thus run the danger of a second such treatment. That’s quite different from the American way of treating the drug addict.

Since the taking of illegal drugs hurts the individual, his family, and society (the number of tragic stories is unbelievably large), should we not do everything we can to root out its use? Since such usage is clearly contrary to two of God’s great Commandments, should we not avoid it at all costs? When anyone tempts you with illegal drugs, adopt Joseph’s familiar words as your own, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:9) If you are at a party where pot is being smoked or other drugs used, run, do not walk, away immediately. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and you must not defile it with these dangerous substances.

Furthermore, if you know of someone who uses illegal drugs, show him how dangerous, even deadly, this frightful sin is. (A doctor who works with drug addicts says that he has never seen a happy one.) Use the SOS (Stamp-Out-Stupidity) motto. Encourage him to repent of his sin and to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness. (Art Linkletter, who has devoted his life to the study of the drug problem, says that a personal faith does “more to effectively halt and cure drug addiction than anything else I’ve seen.”) Lead him to a life of prayer, asking God for help to combat the temptations. Our Lord will not leave us nor forsake us, when we need Him the most. That is His precious promise (Heb. 13:5).

e. God forbids smoking that harms or destroys our body.

King James I of Bible translation fame called smoking “a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, and dangerous to the lungs, resembling the Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless.” At one time Russia’s Czar commanded all smokers to be beaten for the first offense and executed for the second. Both men recognized the dangers of smoking long before most other people did.

Yet, tobacco culture was America’s first industry and our first major export; its use became highly popular over the course of the years; and in the 1970’s the tobacco industry is one of the biggest and most powerful in our country. It manufactures some six hundred billion cigarettes each year, sufficient to provide every American over eighteen with approximately 205 packages every year, plus a tremendous number of other products. The value of this crop is about one and a half billion dollars annually in the middle 1970’s, and it produces probably three times that much revenue for state and federal governments (every state has a tax on

cigarettes ranging from three cents to eighteen-and-a-half cents a package). You can be sure that such a powerful industry will promote smoking in every possible way, regardless of the consequences. One of the results is that forty-two per cent of American men and thirty percent of our women over twenty-one smoke. This means that if a husband and wife smoke a package a day from the time that they are twenty until they are sixty-five, the cost will be close to \$20,000, not a tiny sum to send up in smoke.

What are the dangers of smoking? (We are speaking here primarily of cigarette smoking, although what is said of them applies almost equally to pipe and cigar smokers, if they inhale.) Some years after cigarette smoking became highly popular, especially during and after World War I, there was a dramatic rise in lung cancer. The National Advisory Cancer Council reported that in the forty years from 1930 to 1970 there was an approximate sixteen hundred per cent increase in **lung cancer**; due almost entirely to smoking, as hundreds of research projects have demonstrated. Lung cancer among non-smokers is only some three to ten per cent as high as it is among smokers, and the chances of a heavy smoker having lung cancer are about 64 times greater than that of a non-smoker. Veterans Administration doctors studied 8,000 lung cancer patients from 1958-1974, 98% of whom were cigarette smokers. They found the survival rate an almost hopeless 1.5% (for five years). In the middle 1970's approximately 165 Americans daily die of lung cancer. Indeed, the American Public Health Association estimated in 1972 that one million children then in school will eventually die of lung cancer, primarily because they will be smoking.

One research project after another has proved beyond a doubt that smoking also is a leading cause of **other types of cancer**. For example; a California dental researcher reported in 1970 a 100 per cent increase in mouth cancer among women. He stated that it "can be attributed to no other than smoking." Other research projects have shown that cancer of the throat is as much as six times more prevalent among smokers than among non-smokers. Do you who smoke want to face the prospect of learning to talk with a voice box? Your chances of doing that are very good indeed, since the poisons in tobacco enter the lining of the mouth and the throat to cause cancer.

Still other research projects have shown that smoking doubles or triples the chances of a **heart attack** since tobacco smoke decreases the oxygen carrying capacity of the blood; it is the major cause of **emphysema** (emphysema is 13 times more prevalent among smokers than among non-smokers, as much as 65 times more prevalent among heavy smokers), since it coats the air sacs of the lungs, making them useless; it doubles one's chances for a **stroke**; it is one of the leading causes of sinus problems and bronchitis, for tobacco smoke irritates those cells, thereby causing excessive coughing; it causes **tooth cavities**, for the tobacco tars stain the teeth and deposit plaque on them; an ideal nesting place for bacteria; it is a good way to obtain **bad breath** and **stomach ulcers**, for it stimulates production of stomach acids.

Is it any wonder then that the American Cancer Society states: "For every minute you smoke, you are shortening your life by one minute"? *Time* magazine stated that a package a day will generally shorten one's life by eight years. It has been estimated that there are 1,000 daily premature United States deaths because of cigarette smoking. Cigarette smoking is unquestionably the greatest single cause of unnecessary illness and death in America.

(Did you hear the story about the 90-year old man who smoked cigarettes constantly? A cigarette advertising manager heard about it and said, "You are just the man we need. We should like to have you come down and make a commercial on behalf of cigarettes next Thursday morning at ten o'clock." The man answered; "I couldn't possibly do that because I do not stop coughing until noon.")

Furthermore, rather conclusive evidence shows that smoking is harmful to others also. A huge 15-year Great Britain project extending into the 1970's showed that children born of mothers who smoked during their pregnancy had a 26% higher death rate than children born of non-smokers. They also were shorter in height, had more leukemia, and encountered more problems at school than those of the non-smoking mothers. A Michigan survey likewise shows that children exposed to tobacco smoke had twice as much respiratory illness as did children in non-smoking families.

Since the evidence of the evil, even deadly effects of smoking is clear, overwhelming and conclusive, many individuals, private organizations, and public health officials all over the world are desperately trying to

reduce, or, if possible, to eliminate it. For example, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, and the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare have many pamphlets that show the dangers of smoking. They also give advice for quitting. One 1973 government pamphlet has this title: “Unless You Decide To Quit, Your Problem Is Not Going To Be Smoking; Your Problem’s Going To Be Staying Alive.” The Seventh Day Adventists have a successful “Five-Day Plan to Quit Smoking,” a plan used by the United States Navy and by many others. Jehovah’s Witnesses will not accept as a member anyone who smokes.

Other countries, too, are waging strenuous anti-smoking campaigns. In the middle 1970’s Sweden, for example, was engaged in an intensive campaign aimed at eventually reducing the consumption of cigarettes from 1,700 annually per person to 300. The program included the removal of cigarette vending machines and increasing the price to \$2 per package. Finland was considering a ban on smoking in all public places. People in many countries have adopted the slogan, “Don’t puff on me.” West Germany, Great Britain, Venezuela, Canada, Palestine, and Australia all have some anti-smoking programs. At least 14 countries do not allow cigarette advertising on radio; TV, or both in the middle 1970’s.

All of these discoveries regarding the dreadful evils and illnesses that result from cigarette smoking, the many warnings about the dangers connected therewith, and the forceful campaigns to reduce smoking have had some effect. Airlines, for example, have nonsmoking sections; a 1970 survey showed that 23% of college students smoke, while 76% did not; the Public Health Service estimated that 100,000 United States doctors, some 36%, quit smoking since the first 1964 government report linked cigarette smoking with cancer and heart disease (35% never smoked); all cigarette companies voluntarily agreed to carry a conspicuous sign on all their advertisements: “Warning, the surgeon general has determined that cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health”; and in the middle 1970’s there are only 50 million United States smokers, while if the trend of the 1950’s had continued, there would be some 70 million. The obvious question is this: Why are there 50 million United States smokers; 50 million who burn away God’s money on smoke; 50 million who harm their bodies, shorten their lives; make their wives to become widows prematurely, harm others, and know that they should quit? Obviously, they are “hooked” by cigarettes, slaves to nicotine. They may make all manner of excuses, saying, “I’m considering giving it up; I’m afraid I’ll gain weight; I enjoy it; I tried to quit, but I can’t; I’m not afraid of cancer.”

All the while these people know that they are only deceiving themselves. They can quit, as tens of thousands have demonstrated. To do so one must first of all have the proper motivation. One must know clearly the bodily harm resulting from smoking; one should remember his wife and children, if he has a family, and the obligations he has toward them; one must know that a cigarette is one of his worst enemies—resist it for an hour, then a second hour, etc.; get a “How to Stop Smoking” pamphlet from the American Heart Association, and follow it rigorously.

Above all else the child of God will say something like this to himself: “Since in my judgment there is indisputable proof that smoking harms the body, since the Fifth Commandment tells me that our Lord requires me not to shorten or destroy my life, and since I love my Lord and want to do His will, there are only two things that I can do about smoking: Don’t start, or, if I have started, quit.” One can quit, if he makes up his mind to do what the Lord wants him to do with the strength that He provides (do not neglect praying for help). There may be difficulties for a few weeks, but in the end one is grateful, happy, and blessed for it. That is the Christian attitude. (If, despite all of the information that has been given, one still insists on smoking, then possibly the rather cynical advice given by someone is in place: smoke, choke, croak.)

f. God forbids gluttony and drunkenness that harm or destroy our bodies.

Our God graciously gives us our daily bread. In fact, He has given America so much daily bread that we frequently abuse His good gifts by **overeating** and thus harming our bodies. King Solomon wrote about this evil long ago, when he said, “Put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite” (Prov. 23:2). St. Paul also wrote of people “whose God is their belly” (Phil. 3:19).

The American Heart Association also pointed to the evils of overeating. They wrote in one of their pamphlets:

It has been shown that life expectancy may be shorter for people who are markedly over their normal weight. Middle-aged men who are 20 per cent overweight, for example, have about three times the risk of a fatal heart attack compared with middle-aged men of normal weight. Obesity also means greater likelihood of high blood pressure, elevated blood cholesterol, or diabetes.

Most people reach their normal adult weight between the ages of 21 and 25. With each year after that, fewer calories are needed to maintain this normal weight. But people in their 30's and 40's usually eat as much as they did in their early 20's, become physically less active, and store the excess calories as fat.

The same pamphlet ("Reduce Your Risk of Heart Attack") had a word about diet. They recommended that we replace saturated fats in our diet with polyunsaturated fats as much as possible. Saturated fats are usually solid animal fats (fat in meat, butter, cheese, cream and whole milk). Polyunsaturated fats are largely the liquid vegetable oils such as corn, cottonseed, soybean, and safflower oils. They advise us to eat less food that is high in cholesterol, since excess cholesterol tends to be deposited in the arteries.

God also strenuously forbids **drunkenness**. We must, of course, recall that our God has given us wine and other alcoholic beverages for our welfare, as Ps. 104:15 states: "God gives wine that maketh glad the heart of man...and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." You will remember also that the very first of our Lord's miracles was the turning of water into wine at the wedding in Cana for the enjoyment of the guests (John 2:1-11). St. Paul also recognized the value of wine, when he wrote to his co-worker, Timothy, "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (I Tim. 5:23). Scripture does not forbid the moderate use of alcoholic beverages, provided, of course, that we are not breaking a state or federal law by using them.

Yet, Scripture strictly condemns the abuse of alcoholic beverages, and it does so repeatedly. Prov. 23:29,30 reads as follows: "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." Isaiah warned: "Woe unto them that rise early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them?" (Isa. 5:11). Our Lord also clearly warned against drunkenness in Luke 21:34 (NIV): "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap." St. Paul wrote that drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:10).

So many other Bible stories and passages speak against drunkenness that some people have mistakenly assumed that all drinking of alcoholic beverages is a sin. It is true, that if we cannot drink moderately, we must refuse it entirely. (A 1972 Baltimore research project casts some doubts upon the old saying that alcoholics must not touch even one drop of alcohol. In their experiment, it was found that alcoholics could stop after a moderate amount of drinking, if they were sufficiently motivated, something that is exactly in keeping with God's directive to avoid drunkenness.)

The cost of excess drinking in money, wrecked lives, disturbed family relationships, disease, and death is staggering. Americans spend some twenty-two billion dollars annually for alcoholic beverages in the middle 1970's plus fifteen billion dollars in loss of wages, health, and property costs. As many as one-third of the mental patients in hospitals and sanitariums are there because of alcoholism. The H.E.W. department tells us that there are nine million alcoholics in America; they have an average life expectancy some ten to twelve years less than the person who is not an alcoholic; one-half or more of all highway fatalities involve people with some or with large amounts of alcohol in their blood. Doctors also tell us that excess use of alcohol causes cirrhosis of the liver, sludging of body capillaries, and destruction of irreplaceable brain cells by depriving them of oxygen. If excessive drinking continues long, so many brain cells will die that the person will eventually surely suffer mental difficulties.

Since drunkenness, especially drunken driving, causes such a tremendous amount of evil, many countries have taken rather drastic measures to curb it. For example, in the middle 1970's Australia sent drivers' names to local newspapers and had them printed under the headlines: "He's drunk and in jail." In Turkey drunk drivers are taken out of town twenty miles and forced to walk back under police escort. In South Africa the driver is given a ten year prison sentence, a fine of \$2,800 or both. In Norway drunken driving (only .05 percent alcohol in the blood is considered sufficient evidence) is punished by automatic three-week jail sentences and at least one year driver license revocation. If one is arrested twice in five years for drunken driving, his driver's license is permanently revoked. Auto accidents in Norway are considerably less than they are in the United States. In Canada drivers with .08 percent of alcohol in their blood are considered criminals; the penalties are up to \$1,000 fine and six months in jail. Wisconsin strengthened its own laws against drunken driving in the early 1970's, making .10 percent alcohol in the blood evidence of drunken driving with severe penalties.

Almost everyone understands the evils that result from drunkenness. Unfortunately, some authorities are beginning to regard it as a disease and treat it accordingly. Such treatment has small, if any, chance of success, for drunkenness is not a disease. If it were, God would not have warned against it.

For the Christian, God's Word is clear: we dare never drink to excess; we should gladly practice moderation in food and drink out of gratitude to Him who made us and saved us.

(Note: Medical authorities seem to agree generally that obesity, excess smoking, lack of exercise, and working under much pressure will almost guarantee a heart attack. Avoiding these evils will surely aid us in taking care of our bodies, in keeping with the requirements of the Fifth Commandment.)

C. God forbids sins of the tongue against the Fifth Commandment.

When we speak of sins against the Fifth Commandment, we naturally think first of evil deeds like murder and harming our neighbor's body. Those are the only two major kinds of transgressions that Dr. Luther mentioned in his famous explanation to the Fifth Commandment in the Small Catechism.

However, in the Large Catechism Dr. Luther goes much farther than that. For example, he writes:

We hear it explained every year in the Gospel, Matt. 5, where Christ Himself explains and summarizes it: We must not kill, either by hand, heart, or word, by signs or gestures, or by aiding and abetting.

Not only is murder forbidden, but also everything that may lead to murder. Many persons, though they may not actually commit murder, nevertheless call down curses and imprecations upon their enemy's head, which, if they came true, would soon put an end to him. The spirit of revenge clings to every one of us, and it is common knowledge that no one willingly suffers injury from another.

Briefly, then, to impress it unmistakably upon the common people, the import of the commandment against killing is this: In the first place, we should not harm anyone. This means, first, by hand or by deed; next, we should not use our tongue to advocate or advise harming anyone; again, we should neither use nor sanction any means or methods whereby anyone may be harmed; finally, our heart should harbor no hostility or malice toward anyone in a spirit of anger and hatred.

Yes, our Lord Himself in His explanation to the Fifth Commandment, said, "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell" (Matt. 5:22, NIV).

Another Scripture example of the way in which we can sin against the Fifth Commandment by our words is the story of Jeremiah's enemies who called "Come, and let us smite him with the tongue" (Jer. 18:18). And what shall we say about Joseph's brothers? Before they ever laid hands upon him, they talked about their

deadly plan, saying: “Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams” (Gen. 37:20).

At the time of Absalom’s rebellion Shimei cursed King David violently (II Sam. 16:5-13), thereby betraying his desire to see the king dead. Later he apparently repented (II Sam. 19:16-23), and the king spared his life. However, when he did not obey, he was killed, and Solomon said: “The Lord shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head” (I Kings 2:36-46).

These people and countless others became murderers with their tongues, when they planned someone’s death or spoke in favor of it. A Christian will, consequently, watch his words carefully. Our Lord referred to that; when He said, “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be judged, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matt. 12:36,37). He meant that the idle words of the unbelievers betray the lack of faith within their heart; He also meant to tell us that we can sin against the Fifth Commandment with our words.

D. God forbids sins of the heart against the Fifth Commandment (77).

The evil heart with which we are born is the source of all sin. Our Lord Himself said, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matt. 15:19). In his Small Catechism explanation to the Fifth Commandment Dr. Luther did not mention the sins of the heart, although he did write about them in his Large Catechism. For example, consider the following:

It (the Fifth Commandment) forbids anger except, as we have said, to persons, who occupy the place of God, that is, parents and rulers. Anger, reproof and punishment are the prerogatives of God and His representatives, and they are to be exercised upon those who transgress this and the other Commandments.

Thus we may learn to calm our anger and have a patient, gentle heart, especially toward those who have given us occasion for anger, namely, our enemies.

Our heart should harbor no hostility or malice toward anyone in a spirit of anger and hatred.

Scripture indeed has much to say about these unseen sins against the Fifth Commandment, as we shall hear in the following paragraphs.

1. God forbids envy. Envy is undoubtedly one of the most common sins, and therefore many Scripture passages warn against it. For example, Ps. 37:1: “Do not envy the workers of iniquity.” The entire Ps. 73 speaks about children of God envying the wicked because of their seeming prosperity, until one looks at their end. Prov. 23:17 reads as follows: “Let not thine heart envy sinners.”

A Bible story is that of Joseph’s brothers, who “envied him, (and)...conspired against him to slay him” (Gen. 37:11-35).

In our day, when millions are tremendously concerned with material success, who can count the number of times people envy someone for his position, wealth, honor, and the like? All of us need to guard against it, to remember that envy itself is a sin against this great, important Commandment, and to recall that it can easily lead to other sins, as, for example, the story of Joseph’s brothers indicates.

2. God forbids unrighteous anger. Solomon cautioned in Eccles. 7:9: “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.” Eph. 4:31 states: “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.” Jas 1:19,20 admonishes us to be “swift to hear, slow to wrath.” Anger is one of the most common sins; it has worked a tremendous amount of misery. God warns us against it in the Fifth Commandment, even as He warned Cain against it long ago (Gen. 4:6).

Yet, at the same time we must also remember Eph. 4:26: “Be ye angry, and sin not,” a passage in which our Lord commands us to be angry at times. We heard about this in the passage previously cited from Dr. Luther’s explanation in the Large Catechism. Moses was dreadfully angry with the children of Israel when he broke the two tables of stone because of their idolatry (Gen. 32). Our Lord was frightfully angry on occasions; for example, He was angry at the hard-hearted Pharisee, when they objected to His healing of the man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day (Mark 3:1-5); in great anger He repeatedly said, “Woe, woe unto you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites” (Matt. 23); He also zealously cleansed the Temple twice, driving out the merchants in such a burst of anger that none dared to oppose Him (John 2:13-17; Matt. 21:12,13).

Our anger must, of course; be properly motivated, if it is to be a righteous anger. We should be angry at sin done to others (if a sin is done to ourselves, we normally accept it meekly as Jesus did on Good Friday). Our anger must be directed against the evil deeds, the sin, but not against the sinner; we must hate cruelty, drunkenness, drug addiction, and the like. Finally, righteous anger must be implemented, that is, we must try to right the wrong, following Jesus’ example, “Who went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). Be angry, yes, but at the right times and in the right way.

All other anger is unrighteous, and we must admit that we have frequently been guilty of this sin. Someone wrongs us intentionally or unintentionally, and our temper flares up against him; someone does something of which we do not approve, and we become angry at the one who did it; someone does not appreciate what we are trying to do for him, and we leave that work in great anger.

3. God forbids unrighteous hatred. Dr. Luther wrote that one should not differentiate between hatred and anger, since hatred is simply an old, deep-seated anger. That is certainly true, yet Scripture does repeatedly condemn hatred, and we should know some of the Bible passages in which this is done. They will help us to guard against unrighteous hatred.

I John 3:15 reads as follows: “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” I John 4:20 has a similar message: “If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” Hatred is one of the works of the flesh mentioned in Gal. 5:19-21, and unrepentant haters cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Yes, hatred is murder in God’s sight, and it can also lead to many other sins.

We should note, however, that our Lord condemns unrighteous hatred only. There is such a thing as righteous, hatred, a hatred of the evil, the wicked, the blasphemies against God, as we mentioned previously.

4. God forbids the desire for revenge. In Rom. 12:19 God tells us: “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” There the Lord tells us clearly not to repay evil with evil or to take vengeance, for the Lord will do this. What a blessing that is! Then we do not need to do any revenging at all—God will take care of this matter, something that we could not possibly do perfectly.

A Bible story along this line is written in Luke 9:51-56. James and John wanted to take vengeance upon a Samaritan village, because it did not receive the Lord Jesus, but our Lord rebuked His disciples for such a thought. An important Old Testament Bible passage is Lev. 19:18: “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Thus we have seen a few of the thoughts, words, and actions that are sins against the Fifth Commandment. May God preserve us from every one of them. When out of weakness, we fail, then may we go immediately to the Lord and ask Him to forgive us our sins and to guide us in the right way.

III. What Does God Require of Us in the Fifth Commandment? (76)

The Fifth Commandment, as written in Exod. 20 and Deut. 5 does not tell us what God commands us to do; it simply states the negative, what we are not supposed to do: “Thou shalt not kill.”

Yet, the negative surely also includes the positive, as many Bible passages testify. If we are forbidden to hurt or harm our neighbor or our own bodies, then we are surely required to do all that will benefit our neighbor and ourselves physically. Dr. Luther brought it all together in his excellent explanation: “Help and befriend him (our neighbor) in every bodily need.” He might have added, “Take care of your own wonderful body also,” except that he always wanted to keep his explanations as simple as possible.

A. God requires that we help our neighbor in every bodily need (76C).

For example, in asking what is acceptable to God, Isa. 58:7 clearly states: “Is it not sharing your food with the hungry, taking the homeless poor into your house, clothing the naked when you meet them and never evading a duty to your kinsfolk?” (NEB) St. Paul, too, was concerned about helping our fellowmen in their distress. He admonishes us, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10). The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has a similar message: “Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Heb. 13:16, NIV).

In all the ages children of God have given us fine examples of the way in which we are to follow these admonitions. For example, the centurion was greatly concerned about the health of his servant, when he hurried to Jesus with the request, “Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented” (Matt. 8:6). Jesus healed him. At another time four men let a paralytic down to Jesus through an opening in the roof. Jesus not only healed his body, but infinitely more important, healed his sin-sick soul (Mark 2:1-12). Abraham rescued Lot, when he had been captured (Gen. 14:12-16). Abraham was so wealthy and he had such a huge number of workers that he could arm 318 of his servants and slaves to battle against Lot’s captors.

All of these Bible passages and stories show us that we must help our needy fellowman. We are to ask ourselves continually how we can help our neighbor and then do it. Consider the Red Cross, the Heart Fund, and all the many other local appeals. Consider, above all, the church’s institutions of charity, where less fortunate members of the household of faith are cared for. Support them adequately. Do it, not because you expect help from someone when you are in need (that isn’t Christian charity). Do it because you love the Lord and desire to serve Him through serving your fellowman. Then you will hear from Jesus’ lips on Judgment Day those familiar words: “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me” (Matt. 25:35,36). When the righteous will ask the Lord under what circumstances we did all of those things, He will answer: “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matt. 25:40, NIV).

We ought to remember also a Bible passage like Prov. 19:17: “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord: and that which he hath given will He pay him again.” We do not make ourselves poorer by helping our needy neighbor.

See I Tim. 5:8 (help family); Gal. 6:10 and Acts 2:44,45 (help fellow Christians and others; Matt. 5:44-48 (help enemies); Heb. 13:16.

B. God requires that we befriend our neighbor in every bodily need (76C).

In his Large Catechism Dr. Luther does not indicate that we are to make a great distinction between “helping” our neighbor and “befriending” him. One flows from the other.

Yet, Scripture mentions some outstanding examples of people who did befriend others. One of the first examples that comes to mind is the story of Jonathan’s friendship for David, despite King Saul’s opposition (I Sam. 18, etc.).

Obadiah befriended 150 of the Lord’s prophets against the persecution of Jezebel and her wicked husband Ahab. At the peril of his own life, Obadiah hid them in a cave and fed them (I Kings 18:13).

An outstanding New Testament example of befriending someone is the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-35). His friendship moved him to take the wounded man to an inn and to pay for his keep until he was well again.

Dr. Luther stressed this aspect of the Fifth Commandment in his Large Catechism. We shall cite several of those excellently written paragraphs:

In the second place, this commandment is violated not only when a person actually does evil, but also when he fails to do good to his neighbor, or, though he has the opportunity, fails to prevent, protect, and save him from suffering bodily harm or injury. If you send a person away naked when you could clothe him, you have let him freeze to death. If you see anyone suffer hunger and do not feed him, you have let him starve. Likewise, if you see anyone condemned to death or in similar peril, and do not save him although you know ways and means to do so, you have killed him. It will do you no good to plead that you did not contribute to his death by word or deed, for you have withheld your love from him and robbed him of the service by which his life might have been saved.

Therefore God rightly calls all persons murderers who do not offer counsel and aid to men in need and in peril of body and life. He will pass a most terrible sentence upon them in the day of judgment, as Christ himself declares. He will say: "I was hungry and thirsty and you gave me no food or drink, I was a stranger, and you did not welcome me, I was naked and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison, and you did not visit me." That is to say, "You would have permitted me and my followers to die of hunger, thirst, and cold, to be torn to pieces by the wild beasts, to rot in prison or perish from want."

What else is this but to reproach such persons as murderers and bloodhounds? For although you have not actually committed all these crimes, as far as you were concerned you have nevertheless permitted your neighbor to languish and perish in his misfortune.

It is just as if I saw someone wearily struggling in deep water, or fallen into a fire, and could extend him my hand to pull him out and save him, and yet I did not do it. How would I appear before all the world in any other light than as a murderer and a scoundrel?

Therefore it is God's real intention that we should allow no man to suffer harm, but show to everyone all kindness and love. And this kindness is directed, as I said, especially toward our enemies. To show kindness to our friends is but an ordinary heathen virtue, as Christ says in Matthew 5:46,47.

Here again we have God's Word by which he wants to encourage and urge us to true, noble, exalted deeds, such as gentleness, patience, and, in short, love and kindness toward our enemies. He always wants to remind us to think back to the First Commandment, that he is our God; that is, he wishes to help and protect us, so that he may subdue our desire for revenge.

C. God requires that we take care of our own bodies.

We emphasized this point in connection with drugs, smoking, and other harmful habits in the second section of this paper, II. The Psalmist wrote of our bodies: "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Ps. 139:14).

Furthermore, our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost; we are not our own; we cannot pamper, mistreat, or harm our bodies, since they belong to God (I Cor. 6:19).

Therefore it stands to reason that we must preserve our bodies from physical harm by caring for them as well as possible. This includes the proper diet, regular exercise, cleanliness, sufficient rest, etc. Jesus Himself called to His disciples on at least one occasion: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). They needed this rest for their bodies after the exceptionally strenuous days they had just experienced. We need that same kind of rest from time to time in order to renew our bodies' strength.

D. Does the proper care of our bodies include accepting organ transplants or blood transfusions, if advised by physicians? Shall we will one or the other of our organs to someone else?

The 1960's began an era of organ transplants that was climaxed with the transplant of a human heart on December 3, 1967, at Capetown, South Africa, by Dr. Christian Barnard (the means to do it were available in the United States, but doctors were not convinced about the morality of the operation; much of the experimentation has been done at the University of Minnesota hospitals). By May 1, 1968, there were eight more heart transplants, and the next year Dr. Denton Cooley performed 22, more than anyone else in the world, but it was a horror-filled year for his staff, especially for the immunologists. For the patients there were many problems, psychoses, rejection factors, etc. By December of 1970 there were 166 heart transplants, but the mortality rate was 85%, although ten did survive over two years. Only at Stanford University does any enthusiasm remain for heart transplants in the early 1970's. (This paragraph was summarized from *Life* 9/17/71.)

Doctors generally feel that some transplants should be done, because one just shouldn't bury a multi-million dollar organ like a kidney, a cornea, etc. Use them for the benefit of others, they say. But there are many connected problems. "When is death?" is especially important, because some organs must be transplanted or removed within minutes after one is dead. (Doctors agree that one is dead when the brain ceases to function.) We shall never have enough spare parts to go around; there are the tremendous problems of preservation and transportation and who is to get the transplant. Also doctors are far from overcoming the rejection factor.

An artificial organ is the obvious answer, but some of them are extremely difficult to prepare, especially one like the liver. The artificial kidney can cost thousands of dollars annually to administer. There might be an implanted power plant for an artificial organ, possibly something like an atomic pacemaker, but there is the great problem of disposing of the heat. It is all one great, great problem with not many definite answers.

Should we allow blood transfusions? There seems to be no Scriptural principle that would deny something like that. We should belong to blood banks and give blood regularly, since this may be an excellent way of helping our neighbor in his bodily need.

Shall we will one or more of our organs to a hospital for use by a needy patient after our death? If we are ready to accept a kidney transplant from someone else, there would seem to be no valid reason against willing one of our organs to others. God will not have any problem in restoring and perfecting our bodies on Judgment Day.

There seems to be no Scripture passage that applies directly to these questions. Therefore we do not presume to lay down a rule for everyone to follow.

Scripture does repeatedly indicate that we are to have respect for the dead bodies. Therefore we bury them under all normal circumstances. Cremation is a custom that is associated with unbelievers who feel that death ends all. Therefore we do not generally cremate our loved ones after their death. (A disastrous epidemic may, however, require cremation.)

That same respect for the dead may well lead many to say to the attending physician: "No tampering with this body."

E. What attitude of the heart does the Fifth Commandment require of us? (78)

1. Scripture frequently exhorts us to **be patient** with all people. For example, Eccles. 7:8: "The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit." I Cor. 13:4,7: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind...beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." I Thess. 5:14: "Now we exhort you, brethren...be patient toward all men." Rom. 12:12 admonishes us to be "patient in tribulation."

Since none of us by nature is particularly patient, the Bible encourages us to practice this virtue, not only with the passages mentioned above, but also with various examples. St. James (5:11) reminds us: "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord" (what God finally brought about). Heb. 6:15

cites the example of Abraham, “And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised” (NIV). Yes, Abraham waited patiently for many years after God had promised him a son, before Isaac was born. He never did see the fulfillment of another promise that the entire land would be given to him, but he believed God’s Word nevertheless.

Job and Abraham and others furnish us with excellent examples of the way in which we, too, are to practice patience. Parents must practice it in their dealings with their children; teachers must practice it in their classrooms; teenagers must be patient with their parents and vice versa; all of us must be patient in adversity, sickness, and the like, casting all of our cares upon the Lord, knowing that He will take care of us. All of God’s children ought to follow the perfect example of our Lord, “Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not: but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously” (I Pet. 2:23).

2. The Fifth Commandment requires us to **be merciful** toward our neighbor. To impress that thought upon our minds, our Lord told the striking parable of the Unmerciful Servant: A man owed his king many millions of dollars. Since he was not able to repay the debt; the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before him, “Be patient with me,” he said, “and I will pay back everything.” The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

Yet, that same servant found a fellow-servant who owed him but a few dollars. When he begged for mercy, the unmerciful servant refused. He threw him into prison “until he could pay the debt.”

When the master learned that, he

called the servant in. “You wicked servant,” he said, “I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow-servant just as I had on you?” In anger his master turned him over to the jailers until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart (Matt. 18:23-35, NIV).

The lesson of the story is plain: God has had mercy upon us; through Jesus’ work He forgave us our multitude of sins against Him; now He expects that we shall in turn be merciful to our neighbor. If not, then we can expect no mercy from God either.

Other Bible passages that stress this truth are Prov. 14:21: “He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he”; and our Lord Himself promised: “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Matt. 5:7), and “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:36). (See also Gal. 6:2; Phil. 2:3.)

3. The Fifth Commandment requires us to **be forgiving**. The greatest example of forgiveness in the entire Bible is that of our Lord, who almost at the very moment that His enemies were nailing Him to the Cross, prayed: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

That is our example as St. Paul wrote in Eph. 4:32: “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” To help move us to forgive our neighbor, we might recall the story of Joseph, whose brothers had cruelly wronged him. When they learned that Joseph was prime minister of Egypt, they were afraid that he would punish them severely. That fear was especially evident after their father died. Yet Joseph forgave them with all his heart. He said,

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them. (Gen. 45:3-15; 50:15-21).

One day Peter asked our Lord, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times” (Matt. 18:21,22, NIV).

God also cautioned us against postponing our forgiveness: “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Eph.4:26). Jesus said, “Agree with thine adversary quickly; whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at anytime the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison” (Matt. 5:25). Indeed, a Christian forgives, as we promise every time that we pray the Lord’s Prayer: “Forgive us our trespasses,” then we shall also certainly “forgive those who trespass against us.”

IV. What is the Role of Our Lord Jesus in the Fifth Commandment? (79)

A. Jesus kept the Fifth Commandment perfectly.

Even a casual reading of the Gospels will reveal to us immediately how frequently Jesus helped thousands with various bodily troubles. For example, Matt. 4:24 tells us:

And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them.

Luke 5:15 tells us that “so much the more went there a fame abroad of Him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities.”

After spending much of the day in teaching the people, Jesus was so concerned about their bodily welfare that He fed the 5,000 with five loaves and two fishes (Mark 6:30-44).

Yes, indeed our Lord always kept the Fifth Commandment perfectly. He never harmed anyone’s body; He explained that the Fifth Commandment applied also to one’s words and thoughts; He was merciful and forgiving, even toward His enemies.

The greatest blessing of all is that our heavenly Father now applies this perfect righteousness of Christ, this complete holiness of His to our account. The hymn writer expressed that thought in this way:

He serves that I a lord may be;
A great exchange indeed!
Could Jesus’ love do more for me
To help me in my need?

When God now looks at me, He does not see all of my ugly sins against the Fifth Commandment. He sees in me the righteousness of Christ, exactly the kind of righteousness that I need to stand before Him on Judgment Day.

B. By the same token we now have an obligation toward our Lord.

We are to follow in His footsteps. With the power that He gives us through the Word we are to strive earnestly to keep the Fifth Commandment. Thus we shall show our gratitude to Him who saved us from damnation for heaven.