

Difficult Texts in 1John 5

By Paul R. Blake

A young evangelist recently asked me: "Can you help me understand 1John 5:6-8 and 5:16-17?"

"For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one" (1John 5:7-8). 1John 5:7-8, or the "Comma Johanneum," does not exist in manuscripts before 1600. It is believed that those verses were added by Erasmus in his third edition of the Greek New Testament under pressure from the Catholic Church. While their meaning does no violence to the scriptures, at best it is unnecessary and irrelevant; in reality it is one of three cases in the King James where verses crept into the text that were not in the oldest manuscripts. It appears that the intended meaning is that the heavenly witnesses -- Father, Son, and Spirit -- testify alike to the authenticity of revelation, specifically salvation generated by the love of God. And that the three "witnesses" of the same in this world -- the spirit of the revealed word, the water of baptism, and the blood of Christ shed in this world -- give like testimony to the same thing.

"If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death" (1John 5:16-17). As to "sin not unto death" and "sin unto death"... that's easy. What sins are unlikely to lead unto spiritual and eternal death? Sins committed by one who can and will repent (see 1John 1:6-10, 2:1-2). If one has a humble heart, every sin that is truly repented and confessed by a fallen Christian will be forgiven upon asking God in intercessory prayer. What kinds of sins lead inexorably to spiritual and eternal death? Those committed by one who refuses to repent, by one who is reprobate and has lost his capacity for remorse. (See Titus 3:10-11; Rom. 1:28-32; Heb. 10:26-29) There is no point in praying for forgiveness for someone who is determined to remain in sin.

I Am a Soldier

"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier" (2Tim. 2:3-4). Consider this brief article by an unknown author entitled, "I Am A Soldier."

I am a soldier in the army of my God. The Lord Jesus Christ is my commanding officer. The Holy Bible is my code of conduct. Faith, prayer, and the Word are my weapons of warfare. I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity, and tested by fire. I am a volunteer in this army, and I am enlisted for eternity.

I will either retire in this army at the end of time, or die in it; but I will not get out, sell out, be talked out, or pushed out. I am faithful, reliable, capable, and dependable. If my God needs me, I am there. If He needs me to teach a class, to teach my neighbor, to help someone in need, or just to sit and learn, He can use me because I am there! I am a soldier. I am not a baby. I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up, or pepped up.

I am a soldier. No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me, or lure me. I am not a wimp. I am in place, saluting my King, obeying His orders, praising His name, and building His kingdom. No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards, candy, or give me handouts. I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for, or catered to.

I am committed. I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around. I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside. I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit. When Jesus

called me into this army, I had nothing materially. If I end up with nothing, I will still come out ahead. I will win spiritually. My God has supplied my needs, and will continue to supply all of my needs.

I am more than a conqueror. I will always triumph. I can do all things through Christ. Devils cannot defeat me. People cannot disillusion me. Weather cannot weary me. Sickness cannot stop me. Battles cannot beat me. Money cannot buy me. Governments cannot silence me, and hell cannot handle me, because I'm safe in my Savior.

I am a soldier. Even death cannot destroy me. For when my commander calls me from this battlefield, He will promote me, and then allow me to rule with Him. I am a soldier in the army, and I'm marching claiming, victory. I will not give up. I will not turn around. I am a soldier, and I am heaven bound, and here I stand! Will you stand with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ?

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (1Tim. 6:12).

A Moments Wisdom

--A moving mouth does not require a working brain.

--The wind of anger blows out the lamp of reason.

--No atheist can injure the Bible's message so thoroughly as a Christian who disregards it in his daily life.

--There is one thing for which you should be deeply grateful: only you and God have all of the facts about you.

--It is important to remember when giving advice that someone might actually take it.

--When we have prayed for rain, we must be willing to put up with a little mud.

--I value the friend who for me finds time on his calendar; I cherish the friend who for me does not consult his calendar.

--It is never too late to learn, but often we learn too late.

--Knowledge is knowing facts; wisdom is knowing what to do with the facts you know.

--We praise the man who has the courage of his convictions, but every bigot and fanatic has that; what is much harder and rarer is to have the courage to re-examine one's convictions and to change them if they don't square with the truth.

--Keep an open mind; but, don't keep it too open or people will throw a lot of rubbish into it.

--The pleasures of sin are for a season, but the wages of sin are eternal.

--It is not easy for children to practice better manners than they see at home.

--It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.

--One can never catch up with good intentions.

--Prejudice is the child of ignorance.

--Genius may have its limitations, but vanity and stupidity do not.

--"On the plains of hesitation bleach the bones of countless millions, who at the dawn of victory, sat down to rest, and resting, died." (George Cecil)

--Unused talents give you no advantage at all over someone who has no talents.

--Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to a better understanding of ourselves.

--The most difficult math to master is that which enables us to count our blessings.

--The best bridge between despair and hope is often a good night's sleep.

--Those who do nothing are often certain that nothing can be done.

--God without man is still God; man without God is nothing.

--Let us live well and let God handle the stress of how long we live.

--A dewdrop does the will of God just as much as a thunderstorm does.

--Our hatred can turn to love when we do right to those who do us wrong.