

*The First Sunday after Christmas*  
29 December 2013  
*Concordia Lutheran Mission*  
Terrebonne, Oregon

## **“Christ Saves by Fulfilling God's Commandments for All Men.”**

### **Galatians 4:5**

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

### **Introduction**

On this Christmas Eve and Christmas past, we meditated on the Blessed and Saving Truth that God was born of a woman in order to cleanse us of our impure conception and birth and give us a pure conception and birth unto life eternal. Here in today's Epistle St. Paul reminds us *how* God did it. God subjected Himself to the same law all men are subject to in order to fulfill its obligations for them and, thereby, save them.

From the womb to the tomb Christ fulfilled the law of God perfectly for us, loving in our stead perfectly God and neighbor. And even on the gallows He fulfilled the law perfectly, not cursing God in the midst of His Deep Travail, but calling Him, crying out “My God!”.

No greater track record of the fulfilment of the obligations of men can be had than Christ being born of a woman and subjecting Himself to the obligations of all men in order to fulfill their obligations for them and save.

### **I. God was Born of a Woman and Subjected Himself to God's Commandments in order to Save Men by Fulfilling Men's Obligations for Them in their Stead.**

#### **A. God Himself is born of a woman, the Virgin St. Mary.**

Christ's Birth certainly has become politically incorrect in our day because no greater going of feminism's ox can one have than the Birth of God by a woman, the Virgin St. Mary. Feminism detests motherhood. God being born of a woman is an endorsement of motherhood without peer and a direct affront to feminist dogma. Consequently, feminism is a philosophy that is directly at odds with Christianity.

But why does feminism hate motherhood so? The proponents of feminism despise motherhood because, whether they realize it or not, their loathing is inspired by Satan's hatred of Christ, who was born of a woman and through that Birth became Man and crushed his head. Consequently, Satan is inveterately embittered at and consumed with hatred for motherhood

because his head was crushed and he was utterly defeated and pulverized by God born of a woman.

After the first preaching of the Gospel in the Garden of Eden, Satan feared all women because he was afraid of the *one woman* who would give Birth to God in the Flesh who would crush his head and end his dominion over man. Luther writes:

Since it was stated: “I shall put enmity between you and the woman,”[Satan] was hostile and suspicious of all those who gave birth from that time on until Christ was revealed.<sup>1</sup>

For this reason, King Herod, following his sinful flesh, which flesh was spawned by the devil and does his bidding<sup>2</sup>, slaughtered the innocents after Jesus’ birth in a demonic attempt to eliminate the Messiah – feminism reprising the slaughter of the innocents through abortion<sup>3</sup>, reinforcing the demonic teaching that the fruit of the womb is disposable, worthless, including the Fruit of the Womb that is the Savior. St. Matthew the Apostle writes:

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.<sup>4</sup>

The Apostle St. John writes of this:

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there

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<sup>1</sup>*Luther’s Works*, Vol. I, p. 194, underscore added.

<sup>2</sup>“Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” **St. John 8:44.**

<sup>3</sup>Here feminists are, whether they know it or not, following the lusts of their father. “Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” **St. John 8:44.**

<sup>4</sup>**St. Matthew 2:16-18.**

appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, Satan failed. Christ was born, died, rose again, ascended to the Right Hand of God, completing man's salvation. So why should Satan still to this day hate motherhood? Satan indeed failed to stop the birth of Christ; now he seeks to stop His Birth in our hearts by the Gospel through faith<sup>6</sup> by leading men to despise any Savior born of a woman. By despising the Savior born of a woman, men forego His Birth in their hearts by faith and perish – exactly Satan's goal.

St. Paul reminds us again, that God, obviously Satan's greatest foe and also his foe because God is the greatest advocate for fallen man<sup>7</sup>, has become man in Jesus Christ<sup>8</sup> when he writes in today's epistle:

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<sup>5</sup>**Revelation 12:1-4.** “This great dragon takes his position before the woman to devour the child as soon as it is born. So then in this scene the holy Seer becomes witness to the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Christ was born from the people of God, the Church of Israel. And so John also beheld how this Child was caught up unto God. The devil was unable to devour Christ.” The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt, *Lectures on the Revelation of Saint John*, tr. the Rev. H. W. Degner, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1981, p. 46.

<sup>6</sup>“However, since it is by the power of the Son and the Holy Spirit, one then correctly says that through rebirth we are born from Christ and Christ is born in us, just as we are called children born of God on account of His will. So then Christ **born and given to us** is called, among other titles of honor, **eternal Father** (Is. 9:6), namely because of this new spiritual birth by which we from Him and in Him become a new creature, 2 Cor. 5:17: **Therefore, if someone is in Christ, he thus is a new creature, etc.**” *Seven Christmas Sermons*, tr. Elmer M. Hohle, ed. David O. Berger, Decatur: The Johann Gerhard Institute, First Edition, November 1996, p. 90.

“Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) has rightly been classified the ‘third preeminent theologian after Luther and Chemnitz.’ ... However, while Gerhard is best remembered for his great dogmatics, the *Loci Theologici*, Gerhard produced a number of devotional volumes and preach [sic] many sermons to the ‘common man.’ The sermons in this volume were apparently preached when Gerhard was 31 years old and already superintendent at Heldburg and a Doctor of Divinity.” **Foreword** from *Seven Christmas Sermons*.

<sup>7</sup>God is the Greatest Philanthropist. “The glory of God is His wonderful love for a sinful world (‘God so loved the world,’ John 3:16). In His tender mercy on man in the misery of sin (‘Through the tender mercy of our 1 John 4:9-10) God has revealed Himself to us as the greatest Philanthropist.” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II p. 333.

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.<sup>9</sup>

**B. God born of the Virgin St. Mary subjects Himself to the obligations of men and fulfills them perfectly for them and, thereby, saves them.**

Because God was born of a woman in order to fulfill men's obligations under the law and, thereby, save them, Satan especially hates the Savior born of a woman because He comes to establish a perfect religion, which perfect religion delivers men from his dark dominion and saves.

*All other religions Satan can tolerate because all other religions keep men separated from God by teaching men they are always working their way to God but never getting there – hence, forever separate. But Satan cannot bear Christianity because Christianity is perfect religion. Christianity does not teach men forever to work their way to God but starts men with God and establishes a Blessed and Eternal relationship with God through the Gospel immediately.<sup>10</sup>*

Christianity is a perfect religion because no stone in our relationship with God has been left unturned by Christ. Hence, nothing stands between men and God and Satan no longer has issues with which to drive wedges between man and God. The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes:

Christianity is the “absolute,” altogether perfect, and unsurpassable religion ... . [Christianity] conveys perfect salvation. It does not ask man to reconcile God through his own works or own virtues as all non-Christian religions do, but it teaches man to accept and obtain by faith the perfect unsurpassable reconciliation effected by Christ – “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. 5:18-19). In other words, the Christian religion is absolutely perfect because it is not a moral code instructing men how to earn the forgiveness of sin themselves, but rather it is faith in that forgiveness of sins which was

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<sup>8</sup>“The Christian believes that there are two natures in Christ, for he reads or hears that the eternal Son of God became man through the Virgin Mary (Gal. 4:4-5; John 1:1-2, 14).” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 57.

<sup>9</sup>**Galatians 4:4-5.**

<sup>10</sup>“For just as the promise of the Gospel belongs certainly and immediately to the entire Church, because the keys are nothing else than the office whereby this promise is communicated to every one who desires it ... .” The Smalcald Articles, Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope.<sup>24</sup>, *Triglotta*, p. 511.

gained through Christ's vicarious fulfillment of the Law and His substitutionary suffering of our punishment (Gal. 4:4-5; 3:13; Acts 26:18; Luke 24:46-47).<sup>11</sup>

In other words, by faith through the Gospel, Christians receive the perfect and complete righteousness of God at the start.<sup>12</sup> What greater righteousness can there be than God's righteousness, which is flawless righteousness that stretches on forever? There is none. Hence, Christianity is an absolute or perfect religion because nothing is left undone and everything is completed by the righteousness of God in Christ for us at the outset.

God accomplished this Miraculous and Blessed Work, as we've already noted, by being born of a woman and placing Himself under the law, i.e. under our obligations. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.<sup>13</sup>

Christ placed Himself under the law in order to redeem us are who under the law and had not fulfilled its obligations. The obligation of the law is to love God and neighbor perfectly,

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<sup>11</sup>*Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I, p. 35.

<sup>12</sup>Hence, Christ is called "the Lord our righteousness." "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness." **Jeremiah 23:5-6.**

"From this passage [Jeremiah 23:6, 33:16] we are eager to prove and demonstrate that it is necessary that the Branch of David, or the Messiah, to whom all concede this passage must be understood to refer, is true God. For he says: This is His Name by which men call Him, 'Lord' and the tetragrammaton [YHWH] is used here, which belongs to God alone. Therefore we contend that Christ is true God who justifies us because He has a name which is assigned to God alone." *Luther's Works*, Vol. 6, p. 248, amplification in brackets added.

Tetragrammaton means the four [tetra] letters [grammaton]. God's Name as it appears in the Hebrew is hwhy. y = Y, h = H, w = W, and, finally, another h. Hebrew reads from right to left so I started at the right with y when giving the transliteration into English. The vowels of the Lord's Name were omitted by writers of the Old Testament.

God's Name was unpronounceable name because no vowels were ever attached to it. The people of Israel merely said, "Lord", when they came to this Name and never pronounced the Name itself. Hence, the vowels that do appear are the vowels for "Lord" ("Adon").

<sup>13</sup>**Galatians 4:4-5.**

namely, to do right by God and to do right by neighbor perfectly<sup>14</sup>. Jesus sums up the keeping of the commandments:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.<sup>15</sup>

Whereas we are supposed to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, and with all of our mind, and with all of our soul, and with all of our strength, and our neighbor as our self, but would not because of the fall of Adam<sup>16</sup> and now cannot, Christ stepped in as our Substitute under the law and He loved God with all of His Blessed Heart, and with all of His Pure Soul, and with all of His Righteous Mind, and with all of His Almighty Strength, and He loved His neighbor as Himself. This Blessed and Saving Work that gives men a clear conscience before God is called Christ's *Active Obedience*. In catechism we learned:

As my *Priest*, Christ *fulfilled the Law* in my stead perfectly (active obedience), *sacrificed Himself* for me (passive obedience), and still *intercedes* (pleads) for me with His heavenly Father.<sup>17</sup>

The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes of Christ's *Active Obedience* for us:

This teaching of Scripture is of great practical importance. In his life of faith the Christian continually resorts to Christ's vicarious fulfillment of the Law. Luther: "He satisfied the Law; He fulfilled the Law perfectly, for He loved God with all His heart, and with all His soul, and with all His strength, and with all His mind, and He loved His neighbor as Himself. Therefore, when the Law comes and accuses you of not having kept it, bid it go to Christ. Say: There is the Man who has kept it; He fulfilled it for me and gave His fulfillment to me. Thus the Law is silenced."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law."  
**Romans 13:10.**

<sup>15</sup>**St. Matthew 22:37, 38-40.**

<sup>16</sup>"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ... ." **Romans 5:12.**

<sup>17</sup>*The Small Catechism*, question 132 B, p. 108.

<sup>18</sup>The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 375.

Now in Christ we have loved God and neighbor perfectly, flawlessly. This Blessed Work Christ carried out all His life, beginning in the womb. The prophet David writes of Christ's *Active Obedience* from the womb of the Virgin St. Mary:

But thou *art* he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope *when I was* upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.<sup>19</sup>

What one of us has had God for our God from our mother's womb? None of us – because all of us were conceived in sin; and sin means *not* to have God for our God<sup>20</sup>. David writes:

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.<sup>21</sup>

Because of Christ's perfect obedience to God's commandments from the womb of the Virgin St. Mary, we gain a pure conception and birth. Luther writes:

Christ is born for you and ... his birth is yours, and come to pass for your benefit. For the Gospel teaches that Christ was born for our sake and that he did everything and suffered all things for our sake ... . Christ has a pure, innocent, holy birth. Man has an impure, sinful, damned birth, as David says in Psalm 51[:5] ... . There is simply no remedy for this except through the pure birth of Christ. ... Christ willed to be born so that we might be born in different manner... In this manner Christ takes to himself our birth and absorbs it in his birth; he presents us with his birth so that we become pure and new in it, as if it were our own, so that every Christian might rejoice in this birth of Christ and glory in it no less than if he, too, like Christ, had been born bodily of Mary.<sup>22</sup>

Christ obeyed God's commandments perfectly for us throughout His entire life. Jesus says:

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<sup>19</sup>**Psalm 22:9-10**, underscore added.

<sup>20</sup>“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” **I John 3:4.**

<sup>21</sup>**Psalm 51:5.**

<sup>22</sup>*Luther's Works*, Vol. 52, pp. 14, 15.

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.<sup>23</sup>

The Apostle St. Paul writes:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.<sup>24</sup>

Even from the darkness of the gallows of the Cross, Christ remained obedient to God's commandments for us and loved and worshiped God perfectly. St. Matthew the Apostle writes:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?<sup>25</sup>

In the midst of agonies of body and soul that exceed words or comprehension, Christ did not curse God and die, as Job's wife suggested to him in the midst of intense suffering<sup>26</sup>, but still called upon Him as "My God", fulfilling the First Commandment for us even at this dreadful moment. This Remarkable Obedience in the midst of suffering God's wrath for us burst the gates of hell for us. The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt writes:

Yet, while Christ knows Himself totally forsaken of God in the abyss of hell, He cries, "My God, My God!" Even in such an abject condition, as He was in, He still clings to God as His personal God. This was a God-pleasing prayer that as it were issued from the pit of hell. This is something extraordinary, something unheard of. In the midst of the torments of hell Christ asserts that as His Son He will cling to God and claim Him as His own! Never before and never after has such a confident prayer issued from the abyss of hell on the part of those who are damned in that place. Ordinarily from those who suffer the torments of the

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<sup>23</sup>**St. Matthew 20:28.**

<sup>24</sup>**Ephesians 2:9-10.**

<sup>25</sup>**St. Matthew 27:46.**

<sup>26</sup>“Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.” **Job 2:9.**



damned come only cries and sighs of despair, never prayers of faith. It was by this prayer that Christ conquered and overcame the power of hell.<sup>27</sup>

Christ's obedience on the Cross in the midst of suffering also reminds us that He also endured the obligations of the law for those who violate the law, namely, death and the everlasting wrath of God. The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard writes:

Although in many passages of Scripture the work of redemption is ascribed to Christ's death and the shedding of His blood, yet this must by no means be understood *exclusive*, as if by it the holy life of Christ were excluded from the work of redemption. But it is done for the reason that nowhere does the fact that the Lord has loved and redeemed us shine forth more clearly than in His Passion, death, and wounds, as the devout old teachers says; the death of Christ is, as it were, the last line and completion, ... the end and perfection, of the entire obedience, as the Apostle says in Phil. 2:8.<sup>28</sup>

God was born of the Virgin St. Mary and subjected Himself to the obligations of all men in order to fulfill those obligations for them and, thereby, give them the impeccable righteousness of God and save. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.<sup>29</sup>

## **II. God Adopts Men His Children through the Gospel, i.e. God's Word and Sacraments, and thereby Gives Life Eternal.**

### **A. God Adopts Men His Children through the Gospel, i.e., His Word and Sacraments.**

Christ bestows the Blessed Work on our Behalf upon all men through His Word and Sacraments, the Gospel<sup>30</sup>. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

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<sup>27</sup>*Lectures on Select Psalms*, tr. the Rev. Dr. H. W. Degner, Ft. Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, p. 67, underscore added.

<sup>28</sup>Quoted in Francis Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 376, footnote 81.

<sup>29</sup>**II Corinthians 5:21**

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.<sup>31</sup>

Here are our adoption papers, Holy Baptism, i.e. the Gospel. For in Holy Baptism we become a child of God. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.<sup>32</sup>

We see here also why there is so much opposition to God's Word and Sacraments: *Satan whips up this fury against God's Word and Sacraments because he knows therein men cease to be his slaves and become children of God.* The Apostle St. John writes:

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony...<sup>33</sup>.

Why does the Apostle St. John add "and by the word of their testimony"? Isn't Christ's Blood sufficient? Yes, Christ's Blood is sufficient. But that Blessed Sufficiency and Its Benefits come to men through God's Word and Sacraments, their testimony, i.e. the Apostolic Office of God's Word and Sacraments, the Gospel. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

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<sup>30</sup>The Gospel is God's Word and Sacraments. "But let us speak of the word *liturgy*. This word does not properly signify a sacrifice, but rather the public ministry, and agrees aptly with our belief, namely, that one minister who consecrates tenders the body and blood of the Lord to the rest of the people, just as one minister who preaches tenders the Gospel to the people, as Paul says, I Cor. 4, 1: *Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, i.e. of the Gospel and the Sacraments.* And 2 Cor. 5, 20: *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in God's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* Thus the term *leitourgia* agrees aptly with the ministry." *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV. (XII.): Of the Mass, Of the Term Mass.* 80, 81, *Triglotta*, p. 411.

<sup>31</sup>**Galatians 3:26-27.**

<sup>32</sup>**Galatians 4:4-5.**

<sup>33</sup>**Revelation 12:10-11**, underscore added.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*....<sup>34</sup>

Satan stirs up his hatred and fury against God's Word and Sacraments because through them men gain the perfect religion, perfect relationship, and perfect peace with God<sup>35</sup> and crushes Satan's head in their lives and gives them life with God. The Apostle St. Paul speaks of the Gospel and faith crushing Satan's head:

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.<sup>36</sup>

**B. Christians gain life eternal through Christ's fulfilling of their obligations for them.**

Because we are adopted God's children through the Gospel, we gain life eternal. For God does not adopt children merely to have them perish, but that He might be their Eternal Father and we His eternal children. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man<sup>37</sup> appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.<sup>38</sup>

## Conclusion

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<sup>34</sup>**Ephesians 2:19-20.**

<sup>35</sup>“The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ ... .” **I Peter 3:21**, underscore added.

<sup>36</sup>**Romans 16:20.**

<sup>37</sup>The Greek word St. Paul uses for the phrase “love ... toward man” is *philanthropia*, from which we get our word philanthropy.

<sup>38</sup>**Titus 3:4-7.**

From womb to tomb Christ perfectly fulfilled all our obligations for us. Now in Christ we have perfect religion that establishes us right now by the Gospel through faith in a Happy, Blessed, and Eternal Relationship with God

God adopts us His children in Christ through the Gospel. By the Gospel through faith, we gain now a perfect relationship with God and look forward to the relationship going on now and forever in life eternal.

*Amen.*