

The Baptist CHALLENGE

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WHOLE NO. 473

“The Passion of The Christ”

By *Kenneth Mathis*

This article is one that I would rather not write. I have no interest in being involved in the controversy that whirls around this movie. But I am amazed at the unreserved acceptance of this movie by the religious world.

This film has been recommended by Billy Graham, James Dobson, Chuck Colson, Robert

Schuller, Jack Graham of the Southern Baptist Convention and others too numerous to mention. Also, several Baptist pastors that I know and consider sound have come out in support of this film. From the reviews I have read, the film segments I have seen and the news releases showing people leaving after seeing advance

showings of the movie, I have little doubt of the tremendous emotional impact on those that view the movie. People in tears who have been moved to the point of having difficulty in speaking show that this is not an ordinary film.

The supporters of this film state it is a great opportunity to win others to Christ. I do believe that we

can and should use every opportunity to witness to the lost of this world. But this film presents a one-sided view of Calvary. It shows the physical death of Christ in graphic detail but there are two sides to Calvary. One side shows the physical death of Christ and the terrible depravity of

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Have Tongues Ceased?

The following is excerpted from The Banner, October-December 1987:

This is a vexing question. Evangelicals are confused, and needlessly so. Trying to prove that tongues have ceased by resorting to 1 Corinthians 13:8 is futile. It is unconvincing and inconclusive. It merely fuels more debate, adding to the confusion.

(See **TONGUES** on page 2)

Message #3 — Preached January 21, 1979

The Interpretation of the Book of Revelation

By **M. L. Moser, Editor**

We have been talking about the author, date, and purpose of the book, what the word “Revelation” itself means, that it is a revealing or an uncovering, and we spoke concerning Satan and his attitude toward the book. We now want to begin our study.

Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ,

“The Revelation of (See **REV** on page 17)

God In Our Government

By **William J. Smith**

Before the birth of our nation, the American people debated the volatile issue of religious freedom. After the adoption of the United States Constitution, these debates continued, and on September 25, 1789, the First Congress proposed to the states ten amendments that were ratified and became known as the Bill

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Quiz The Pastor -- #25

What Is Meant By "Power"

By the late Nick Michalinos

Question: What is meant by the word "power" as mentioned in John 1:12 in order that we can become the sons of God?

Answer: Let me quote the entire verse in John 1:12: "But as many as received him, to them gave he *power* to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

The word "power" herein stated means, "the right; the privilege; the authority." In light of the context we can see that God gives the "right" or "privilege" to a certain group "to become the sons (children) of God." Only they have the right to become the children of God. No one else is recognized by heaven as children of God.


I want us to look at this special group upon whom

God confers the right (power) to become sons of God. Notice John 1:11 tells us that our Lord "came unto his own (His own countrymen, the Jews), and his own (the Jews) received him not" (refused to accept or take Him as Savior). Then we look at verse 12, "But *as many* as received him (did take Him as Savior), to *them* gave he power (the right) to become the sons of God."

Notice, "*as many ... to them.*" The "*many*" are the "*them*" that "received him" while others received Him not. There are two groups mentioned in these verses and this distinction holds true even unto this very hour. There are "acceptors" and there are "rejectors." There are sheep and there are goats. There are children of light

and children of darkness. There are children of God and children of the devil.

That which separates the two groups is found in our text, "as many as received him" which is the same as "them that believe on his name" (Vs. 12), for to "believe on his name" is the same as believing on the Lord Jesus Christ which results in the believer being saved (Acts 16:31). Thus, we must conclude that God bestows the privilege of being a child of God on those *who* receive Christ as Savior. "We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26).

This privilege was purchased for us by the death of our Lord Jesus (1 Pet. 3:18). To reject Him as Savior, is to reject the right to become a child of God. "He that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn. 3:36). 

TONGUES . . .

(Continued from page 1)

The fact that the miracle of languages at Pentecost has completely ceased with the passing of the Apostles is beyond question. Why then is this prevailing confusion?

The confusion has arisen for this one reason. People try to equate the present day "ecstatic" meaningless gibberish with the miracle languages of Pentecost. These are two entirely different things. The New Testament "tongues"

were known, understandable, interpretable languages brought on by the supernatural working of the Holy Ghost. They appeared suddenly, were equally abruptly withdrawn, and never appeared again after the Apostolic era. They come under the category of "the signs of an apostle" (2 Cor. 12:12).

Modern tongues are not languages at all. There are no rules of grammar, or syntax, or vocabulary. They cannot be understood, neither can they be interpreted. They are not exclusive to Christianity, being commonly found in heathen and idolatrous tongues-speaking groups. They are certainly not the work of the Holy Spirit.

Now, we come back to the question: have tongues ceased?

Answer: Positively, YES. The Holy Spirit-inspired foreign language-speaking of New Testament times has ceased. Being one of "the signs of an apostle," they ceased with the passing of the apostles.

After the Apostles, the earliest post-apostolic Church records report nothing of this miraculous occurrence. Since then, and throughout the 1900 years of Church history, all the Church fathers, great saints and men of God have expressed the same consistent conclusion:

In the following, we have summarized from the

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THE BAPTIST CHALLENGE

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God's Masterpiece — The Human Body #13

The Powerful Sulfa Remedies And Penicillin

By Arthur I. Brown

The parasites that invade and attack the human body may be arranged according to size from the largest to the smallest. We find that there are five groups: worms, infesting the digestive tract, liver, lungs, or other tissues; fungi, one example of which causes the disease of the skin known as "ringworm"; protozoa, one-celled animals, the cause of malaria; bacteria, one-celled plants; and finally, viruses, which I mentioned in the preceding article. Most of the illness of mankind are caused by protozoa, bacteria, and viruses.

We have observed the natural defenses of the body, principally the wonderful white blood cells, which fight until they are victorious by devouring the enemies, or when seemingly there is a limit to their powers, until they themselves are poisoned or attacked directly and overcome. Another body defense is the strange ability of the tissues to manufacture antibodies which neutralize the microbes. No one can explain what antibodies are nor how they are formed. Also, the body has the power of producing anti-

toxins to neutralize the bacterial toxins. Often, as we all know, the natural defensive mechanism of the body is unable to cope with the attacking bacteria and death results.

On June 30th, 1924, Calvin Coolidge, Jr., 16-year-old son of the thirtieth President of the United States, developed a blister on the big toe of his right foot, while playing tennis. That was Monday, and he paid little or no attention to the trivial matter. On Tuesday the toe pained. The best doctors were called in and everything known to science was done, but this young man died, Monday, July 7th, from septicaemia or blood poisoning, just one week after the blister was raised. When the skin was broken, powerful pus-forming bacteria gained an entrance into the blood stream, and completed their deadly work in seven days.

Twelve years later, December 16, 1936, our newspapers carried screaming headlines telling of the cure of another president's son, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Jr., suffering from a similar blood infection, derived from a sinus condition. The

new remedy was called Prontosil, the first of the sulfonamide compounds. It was a new dye discovered by German scientists and found to have strange power over bacteria without damaging the body tissues. It was combined with sulfanilamide and at first it was not known exactly what part of the compound did the work, or how it operated. Sulfanilamide is a synthetic compound derived from coal tar, and was first made by a young chemist, P. Gelmo, student at a university in Vienna, who published his report in 1908 in a German chemical journal. Having achieved his synthetic, Gelmo dropped out of the picture into obscurity and nothing more is known of him.

But the chemists of the German dye trust saw the obscure student's paper and in 1909 tried out sulfanilamide as an ingredient in concocting dyes, the dyes being their only interest at the time. They found that the dyes made by joining sulfanilamide to other compounds were distinguished by "greater fastness for washing and milling."

Experiments dragged along until 1930. Atabrine, the new substitute for quinine, had been discovered, and it killed the protozoan animals which caused malaria. Two German chemists conceived the idea of finding a compound that would kill the

little one-celled plants — bacteria — as quinine killed one-celled animals. Luckily, they chose Gelmo's chemical, sulfanilamide, as one of the ingredients. In May, 1933, a child near death with staphylococcal infection was miraculously saved by a preparation, known as streptozon, which was supposed to be helpful only in streptococcal infections. The name was then changed to Prontosil. This compound, a brick-red dye, had been developed late in 1932, composed of a dye element, mixed with the coal-tar product, sulfanilamide. After much discussion and experimentation it was found that the curative factor was the sulfanilamide fraction.

Now there are several variations of the original remedy, which I will not take the time to describe: sulfapyridine, sulfadiazine, sulfathiazole, sulfaguanadine, etc. They have changed the whole aspect of certain dread infections, especially those caused by the streptococcus germs, as everyone knows. It appears that they do not actually kill bacteria, but greatly interfere with the reproduction of the germs in the blood stream. Each one of these little germ invaders splits into two, each part becoming an independent bacterium, and proceeds after a few minutes, to repeat the process. Soon their numbers are enormous

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Pres. John Adams


John Adams said in the first paragraph of his inaugural address on March 4, 1797:

“Relying, however, on the purity of their intentions, the justice of their cause, and the integrity and intelligence of the people, under an overruling Providence which had so signally protected this country from the first, the representatives of this nation, then consisting of little more than half its present number, not only broke to pieces the chains which were forging and the rod of iron that was lifted

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up, but frankly cut asunder the ties which had bound them, and launched into an ocean of uncertainty.”

He closed his address with this sentence:

“And may that Being who is supreme over all, the Patron of Order, the Fountain of Justice, and the Protector in all ages of the world of virtuous liberty, continue His blessing upon this nation and its Government and give it all possible success and duration consistent with the ends of His providence.” 

TONGUES . . .

(Continued from page 2)

Sword and Trowel (1987 No. 2) the pronouncements of many recognized church leaders spanning 1,600 years of Church history, from Chrysostom to Arthur Pink. All of these, without exception, are agreed that ‘tongues have ceased.’

a. John Chrysostom (c 347-407) Concerning the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians: “This whole

place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to, and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place” (“Homilies on 1 Corinthians,” Vol. XII, The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Hom 29:2).

b. John Calvin (1509-1564) “...the gift of healing, like the rest of the miracles, which the Lord willed to be brought forth for a time,

has vanished away in order to make the preaching of the Gospel marvelous for ever” (Institutes of the Christian Religion, Bk IV:19, 18).

c. John Owen (1616-1683) “Gifts which in their own nature exceed the whole power of all our faculties, that dispensation of the Spirit is long since ceased and where it is now pretended unto by any, it may justly be suspected as an enthusiastic delusion” (Works IV, 518).

d. Thomas Watson (c 1620-1686) “Sure, there is as much need of ordination now as in Christ’s time and in the time of the apostles, there being then extraordinary gifts in the church which are now ceased” (The Beatitudes, 140).

e. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) Speaking of the “gift of tongues,” he said, “These and other gifts of prophecy, being a sign, have long since ceased and been laid aside, and we have no encouragement to expect the revival of them; but, on the contrary, are directed to call the Scriptures the more sure word of prophecy, more sure than voices from Heaven; and to them we are directed to take heed, to search them, and to hold them fast ...” (Preface to Vol IV of his Exposition of the OT & NT, vii).

f. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) “Of the extraordinary gifts, they were given in order to the founding and establishing of

the church in the world. But since the canon of Scriptures has been completed, and the Christian church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased” (Charity and its Fruits, 29).

g. George Whitefield (1714-1770) “... the karismata, the miraculous gifts conferred on the primitive church ... have long ceased ...” (Second Letter to the Bishop of London, Works, Vol. IV, 167).

h. James Buchanan (1804-1870) “The miraculous gifts of the Spirit have long since been withdrawn. They were used for a temporary purpose” (The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit, 34)

i. Robert L. Dabney (1820-1898) “After the early church had been established, the same necessity for supernatural signs now no longer existed, and God, Who is never wasteful in His expedients, withdrew them ... miracles, if they became ordinary, would cease to be miracles, and would be referred by men to customary law” (‘Prelacy a Blunder,’ Discussions: Evangelical and Theological, Vol. 2, 236-237).

j. Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) Speaking of the office of the apostles, “an office which necessarily dies out, and properly so, because the miraculous power also

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Beyond The Shadows

By Homer Stuart

Beyond the shadows the sun is always shining, and beyond the valley the mountains forever lift their heads toward the sky.

The Christian life is like a sun-lit lane, criss-crossed by many shadows. The Glory of God beams steadily down from on high, and the path of the Just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. But often things of this world obstruct the light and darken our pathway.

We walk out of the light into the shadow, but if we keep going we walk out of the shadow into the light again. Sometimes we walk out of the day into the black shadow of the night, and the way grows weary and long. The stars overhead are cold and distant and God seems far away. We feel all alone and despair grips our hearts. But remember darkness cannot hurt us. It has no substance whatever. It is simply the absence of light. It does not change the contour of the landscape or alter the course of the road. It only dims our vision.

The night itself is but a passing shadow made by

the earth coming between us and the sun. No matter how black the night it always ends and day breaks in the morning.

Today, perhaps, the road stretches away before you, clear and straight toward that bright goal ahead. You are living in the morning of life and climbing up the sunny side of the mountain. Your hopes are high and your faith is strong — your strength and courage equal to whatever test may come. Tomorrow, it may be, you awake to skies overcast with lowering clouds of discouragement and defeat.

Icy winds of doubt chill your soul, and the fog of uncertainty quenches the fires of your zeal. Ill health hobbles your steps, and debts, silently accumulating like snowflakes in the night, choke your spirit and stifle your testimony. The bright dreams of yesterday are gone and the high hopes of success have turned to ashes of failure.

The Devil tells you you are licked and proves it with bitter facts. You can see there is no use trying any more. The forces against

you are too powerful, and the problems you face too great. You cannot solve them. You can see no way out. The only thing you can do is give up and forget what might have been.

When that day comes, brother, go on! No matter what, go on! In spite of all hell, GO ON! To turn back is folly; turning aside leads only to misery and ruin. The terrible beating you may have to take by going on is nothing to the price you will pay all your life if you don't go on.

It was better for the Israelites to plunge into the Red Sea, even if they drowned, than to go back under bondage to Pharaoh. They too were in an impossible situation. The Egyptian army pressed hard upon them from behind, the wilderness glowered down upon them from all sides, and the murky waters of the Red Sea rolled sullenly at their feet. Beyond the Red Sea and the wilderness and the lofty peaks of the far away mountains lay the promised land, the land flowing with milk and honey — their divinely appointed destination. But

the Israelites saw no way to reach it. They were trapped. They could not fight; neither could they flee. Apparently there was no way out.

Yet God commanded them to go forward — in spite of the Devil and the difficulties and the howling discouragers within their own ranks. When they obeyed He opened the waters before them and they went on. Those that kept going went on to their destiny — to their rendezvous with history. The rest died in the wilderness.

The long trail of my life has led me across the valley many times, and often through the shadows. Also over a few mountain peaks. Along the way I discovered valleys are connections between the hills, and shadows are evidence light somewhere is shining. For without light there can be no shadows and the blacker the shadow the brighter the light behind it.

The shadow of poverty crossed my trail in my early

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SHADOWS . . .

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childhood — bitter poverty the like of which the present generation has no conception. When we had no food we did without, period. More than once I ran home from school at the noon hour and sat and played my harmonica and went back to school without a bite to eat. The harmonica was one without backs I had picked up in the alley. I whittled backs out of a piece of pine and held them in place by hand. Sometimes I varied the program by whistling through a three foot piece of one inch water pipe I had found somewhere. The weird notes I produced harmonized perfectly with the gnawing hunger in my stomach and the wintry winds howling outside.

Those missed meals destroyed all fear of starving to death and have helped me past many tight spots since. I can miss a meal without batting an eye and my stomach knows better than to complain. It takes what I send down and likes it. Like one of these stretch socks that fits any foot, my stomach expands or contracts to fit the fare, whether it be a hamburger or a T-bone steak. When we are in the chips, as saying goes, we eat — my stomach and I — and it hums a little tune, “happy days are here some more.” When nothing comes down the elevator

my stomach says “Oh well, never mind, there’ll be another day.” And there always is.

The shadow of the Devil flickered around my ministry from the beginning. By threats and lies and his ability to foment trouble he tried to intimidate me and scare me off the job. Many times his servants threatened to beat me up and run me out of town, or stone the church, and so on. But they always backed down when I challenged them to go ahead and start if they were sure they could do it. People mean enough to do the Devil’s dirty work, like their daddy, are cowards and don’t have what it takes when the showdown comes. They work always under cover of darkness or behind superior numbers. Catch one of them alone in broad daylight and he is very meek and polite as he hurries by.

Twice from out of the darkness an overripe egg whizzed by my head as I was preaching and smashed to pieces on something nearby. The only result was to cause me to prolong the meeting for another week. Bad eggs and bullets, like automobiles don’t hurt you unless they hit you. Death hurtles by every instant on a busy highway and we never flinch — why jump when the Devil cracks his whip? Other feeble efforts were made to do me bodily harm but always without success. For the Lord has said, “When thou walkest

through the fire thou shalt not be burned.”

The Devil is stronger than we are, but God is stronger than he is. The Devil cringes before Christ even as shadows flee before the light. We can take everything the Devil throws at us, for God has said He will not put upon us more than we can bear. He also says, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” We should not be deceived by his lies nor intimidated by his threats nor frightened by his shadow. When we see the black silhouette of his ugly shape looming up large before us, let us remember a little child with his chubby fists could cast a shadow on the wall just about as terrifying and little less dangerous when we recall God is always right behind the Devil and breathing down his neck. Look what God did to Pharaoh after He said to him “Let my people go ...”

The shadow of doubt regarding the validity of certain practices connected with the administration of the ordinances of the church disturbed me for a little while in my early ministry. These questions caused me much heartache and concern, and forced me to search the Scriptures earnestly for the answers. I found the answers and in doing so got a firmer grip on the whole body of church truth.

According to the Bible the only church Jesus Christ

ever established on earth was a local, visible, sovereign, independent body of properly baptized, born again, believers, with Christ alone as its head, and the Bible only as its rule book and guide. He founded His church during His earthly ministry and assured its perpetuity. Any other is unauthorized and without Scriptural basis.

The drums of the Ecumenical Movement are rumbling long and loud these days, and the brassy winds of interdenominationalism howl in from all directions. But I learned my lesson in the shadows long ago. I am not about to be blown off the course. Let the hurricane roar. The church Jesus built will ride out the storm. Above the tumult I can hear His voice saying, “Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt. 16:18).

The shadow of ill health swept over me in the midst of my greatest success in the ministry. I lost my health and I lost my hearing, and for more than twenty years I limped along, unable to pastor a church, unable to hold a meeting, unable to sell Bibles, which I had done successfully in the past; unable to work as a telegraph operator, the trade of my younger days — in short, unable to make a living.

The black tide of debt crept around me like a

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GOVERNMENT . . .

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of Rights. The First Amendment was written to allay the fears of some of the people concerning certain liberties, including freedom of religion. This Amendment reads as follows:

“Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or of the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

Even though I do not attempt in this work to present a legal history of the First Amendment or even the religion clauses contained in the Amendment, I think it is important to note that application of the Amendment was limited to the federal government for about 150 years. The Supreme Court held in property rights case in 1833 and in a religious rights case in 1845 that the Bill of Rights did not apply to actions by the states or their political subdivisions.

Therefore, during this period, religious liberty was a matter for the states. A few of them had adopted official religions. However, after heated political battles in the states that had established official religions,

these states, one after another, withdrew official sanction of all official religions.

Religious freedom remained in the states' legal domain until the Supreme Court brought the First Amendment under the umbrella of the constitutional protection guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. This occurred in 1940 when the Supreme Court held in a Jehovah's Witnesses case that the fundamental concept of liberty in the Fourteenth Amendment embraces the liberties guaranteed by the First Amendment. Since that time religious freedom issues have been federal legal problems, and there has been little unanimity of opinion in the federal courts on the interpretation of the religion clauses in the First Amendment.

Some of these volatile issues have been, and still are, when and where one may pray to God; what may or may not be taught in public schools; government financial aid to parochial schools; religious displays on government property; whether governmental legislative bodies may employ chaplains, pray and be led in prayer; whether gifts for religious purposes should be deducted from income taxes; whether property used for religious purposes should be taxed; whether courts should be opened with a plea for God's protection, whether ministers and ministerial

students should be exempt from military service; should God's name be used in oaths of office; should chapels be in government buildings; should displays of religious art be permitted in government buildings, et cetera.

Can anyone doubt that this list will continue to grow in the years to come?

The Supreme Court's decision in 1940 has caused an expanded dialogue which has increased litigation on the subject of freedom of religion. The right to participate in this dialogue and litigation is a precious right.

Even after many of these religious issues have been declared legal or illegal, the dialogue, often bitter, rages on, questioning or approving the courts' decisions. This situation is aggravated by the infighting between the Justices of the Supreme Court who criticize one another's opinions and in many instances in words of sarcasm and ridicule.

For examples, I refer to three of the most controversial cases.

In a 1962 New York case, the Supreme Court held prayer in public schools violates the First Amendment. Two Justices did not participate in the decision. Five Justices joined in the Court's opinion, one Justice filed a concurring opinion and one Justice filed a dissenting opinion. Here we find a divided Court with multiple

opinions.

In a 1963 Pennsylvania case, the Supreme Court held that reading from the Bible, without comment, and the reciting of the Lord's Prayer by students in unison violates the First Amendment. While joining in the decision, four Justices filed separate opinions and one Justice dissented. Here again we find a divided Court with multiple opinions. And now we have the Supreme Court's decision on June 4, 1985 striking down an Alabama moment of silent meditation statute, because it contained the word prayer. Once more we find a divided Court with multiple opinions. Justice Stevens wrote the opinion of the Court and was joined by Brennan, Marshall, Blackmun, and Powell. However, Justice Powell wrote a concurring opinion. Justice O'Connor filed an opinion concurring only in the judgment. Here is an interesting quote from her opinion:

“No law prevents a student who is so inclined from praying silently in public school.”

Justice Rehnquist's dissenting opinion included a detailed history of the religion clauses of the First Amendment.

Justice White filed a brief dissenting opinion in which he stated: “I appreciate Justice Rehnquist's explication of the

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Mel Gibson's New Movie "The Passion."

— Billy Graham praises it. Most reviews speak of it in glowing positive terms (e.g., Schuller, Campus Crusade, Dobson, Hybels, etc.). Most all the criticism we've heard has centered around the "anti-Semitism" issue. But our main concern is the big "C" question — Catholicism! It's a Catholic film! Reasons for our concern: 1. Gibson's Catholic roots, staunch RC heritage. While filming, he, cast and crew members regularly attended Catholic Mass together. He said there is no salvation for those outside the [RC] Church. 2. Big emphasis on Mary, strong Marian imagery. The actor who played Jesus in the film prayed the Rosary to Mary every day. He said for him, being a Christian is a continual conversion process. 3. The film is not based entirely on the Bible but also on visions of RC nuns/mystics. 4. It equates church with Catholic Church, and links Crucifixion to Last Supper to highlight "Holy Communion" sacrament ... many will be confused about Catholicism, and

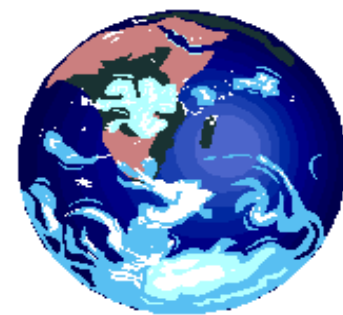
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others will use the film as a shortcut to supplant other forms of evangelism ("It pleased God by the foolishness of *preaching* to save them that believe.") — CC

Kerry Backed "Gay" Marriage. — Democratic presidential front-runner Sen. John Kerry has declared opposition to same-sex marriage, but two years ago he signed a letter issued by homosexual Rep. Barney Frank urging Massachusetts state lawmakers to drop an amendment limiting nuptials to a man and a woman. The Associated Press reported Kerry also opposed similar federal legislation in 1996, comparing it to 1960s efforts in the South to criminalize interracial marriage. "This is an unconstitutional, unprecedented, unnecessary and mean-spirited bill," Kerry declared at the time. — CNS

Female Pastors Increasing. — According to the latest statistics from the Association of Theological Schools, women now make up 35 percent of seminary students. An article in Charisma magazine in April observed that the number of female pastors in black Pentecostal churches is

increasing quickly. While some Pentecostal denominations, such as the Assemblies of God and the Foursquare Pentecostal Churches, have ordained women since their inception, others have resisted this until now. The African Methodist Episcopal Church, for example, and the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship now allow women pastors. Gardner Taylor of the latter fellowship says, "I have no right, nor do I think anybody else has the right, to put limitations on what God can and cannot do." He is right that man cannot put limitations on God, but God has a right to put any limitations He pleases upon man, and He has done exactly that in the Scriptures. The ministry is restricted in many ways. Only certain men, for example, can be pastors (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1), and women are forbidden to teach men or to usurp authority over men (1 Tim. 2). Female preacher Millicent Hunter, pastor of the 3,000-member Baptist Worship Center in Philadelphia, says: "If God does not approve of what He's doing through me, ... by what power are souls being saved by the thousands? ... The anointing speaks for itself." We are not required to explain such things. All we are required to do is to be faithful to God's Word,



and His Word plainly forbids Millicent Hunter to do what she is doing.

O.K. To Keep Teaching Islam In Calif. School. — A federal judge has ruled that a California school district may continue requiring seventh-grade students to make believe they are Muslims, wear Islamic garments, memorize Quran verses, etc. The school's chief counsel said: "While public schools prohibit Christian students from reading the Bible, praying, displaying the Ten Commandments, and even mentioning the word 'God,' students in California are being indoctrinated into the religion of Islam." — CC

Trash MTV. — What happened at the recent Super Bowl half-time show was in most part what raunchy MTV is all about — what they do every day. By week's end it was admitted that the disrobing was done by design. Hip-Hop music is salacious at

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best, pornographic and prurient at worst — the grinding, bumping, groping rebelliousness of it is cause for concern by any society concerned about decency. — CC

* * *

Christian Killed In Egypt. — One was killed and several hospitalized when a bus plowed into a group of Christians who were trying to stop soldiers from destroying their church. This occurred on Monday, January 5, at the Patmos Christian Center about 20 miles from Cairo (Barnabas Fund). The center, which provides care for handicapped children and orphans, has been attacked nine times in six and a half years, even though it is legally registered with the government.

* * *

Episcopal Bishop Says God Revealed Koran To Mohammed. — Episcopal Bishop John Chane of the Washington National Cathedral said in his Christmas sermon, “What was God thinking when the angel Gabriel was sent by God to reveal the sacred Quran to the Prophet Muhammad?” This confused “bishop” would have us believe that the Islamic Koran and the

Bible were given by the same God, even though they teach contradictory doctrine. The Koran denies the Trinitarian God, the divinity and vicarious death of Jesus Christ, salvation by grace without works, and many other teachings of the Bible.

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Pope Calls For New World Order. — In his message for the New Year, Pope John Paul II called for the creation of a new international order “based on the dignity of the human being, on an integral development of society, on solidarity among nations rich and poor, on the sharing of resources and the extraordinary results of scientific and technical progress.” If the pope would read the Bible, he would see that he is promoting a pipe dream. There will be no universal peace and prosperity in this present wicked world, because “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isaiah 57:21). There will be no lasting peace until the coming of the Prince of Peace to establish His kingdom with its headquarters in Jerusalem. The Antichrist will come into power with a grand peace program, but it will be an illusion. “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they

shall not escape” (1 Thess. 5:3).

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Young Christians Shot While Singing Christmas Carols In Indonesia. — The following is from Religion Today, Jan. 6, 2004: “It was several days before Christmas when six young people were sitting outside of the Indonesian Christian Church in Poso, singing Christmas carols. Police say two men riding a motorcycle and carrying a military-style pistol shot at the young people. Two were hit and sustained minor injuries. The incident, which took place only 200 yards from police headquarters, was the third such attack in the area in the last several months.”

* * *

China Crushes House Churches. — Inside sources say Red China is crushing the house church movement. It considers unregistered churches political subversives. Protestant churches can register only through the China Christian Council and its related Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Both closely cooperate with the Communist regime, which forbids worship outside state-backed official “patriotic” religious bodies (1/04 *Chr. Today*). Worship is allowed only in government-monitored

churches, temples, and mosques. In a two-month period beginning last mid-August, authorities closed or bulldozed over 100 churches in one town (12/23 *Huntsville Times*). Today, about 15 million Protestants and 10 million Catholics worship in the official churches. Millions more belong to unofficial house churches. — CC

* * *

Dean Thinks Homosexuality No Sin? — Presidential candidate Howard Dean stated the following in his views on homosexuality: “From a religious point of view, if God had thought homosexuality is a sin he would not have created gay people.” This is similar to the old “born that way” argument that winds up blaming God for a wicked life-style. We have said over and over: “It is absurd, unscriptural and blasphemous to suggest that the homosexual is not responsible for his perverted life-style, or that an adulterer is not to blame for his sin. To do so implies that God is to blame. If a person was born without a choice in the matter, God (under the Law) would never have required the death penalty for homosexuality. Capital punishment was for crimes a person committed voluntarily (see Lev. 20, etc.)” Life-style choices

(See WNR on page 10)

WNR . . .

(Continued from page 9)

stem from our volition. --
CC

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Evolution In Georgia. — Gov. Sonny Perdue of Georgia said the word “evolution” should remain a part of the guidelines for teaching science to Georgia students, the official’s first definitive statement on the issue since a recommendation by state school Superintendent Kathy Cox to replace the word with “biological changes over time.”

* * *

Pastor Murdered In Tajikistan. — A Baptist pastor has been murdered in the Republic of Tajikistan, according to Baptist World Alliance officials. He is the 10th Baptist to be murdered in that country over a 10-year period. Serghei Basarab, a pastor in Hujand in northern Tajikistan, was shot Jan. 12 by an Islamic fundamentalist as he knelt in his home for morning prayers. Basarab’s wife, who heard the shot, reportedly found him dead. — ABP

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Commandments On Display In Rotunda. — The Ten Commandments are back in the Alabama Judicial Building, this time in an exhibit that opened

Thursday and features seven other historical documents. The display stands just across the rotunda from the spot once occupied by a 5,300-pound granite monument to the commandments that cost Roy Moore his job as chief justice in November. The new display is intended to be permanently based in the rotunda, though it will be sent to county courthouses around the state upon request, acting Chief Justice Gorman Houston said. The new display includes the Ten Commandments as one of many sources of Western law, an arrangement that courts have found permissible. Attached to a black Velcro background about 10 feet long and 8 feet tall are photocopies of the oldest known manuscript of the Ten Commandments, the Magna Carta, the U.S. Constitution and other documents. A 31-page booklet containing the text of all eight documents is in the display.

* * *

Social Security For Illegal Aliens? — Don’t you dare give our Social Security benefits to illegal aliens, a group of senior citizens told Congress. The Seniors Coalition — a free-market advocacy group — is pressing for legislation that would block any attempt to have the Social Security Administration pay benefits to people who come to this country

illegally. “Protecting the Social Security benefits of senior Americans has always been a priority of The Seniors Coalition,” said TSC spokesperson Flora “Grandma” Green. “We consider any proposal that would pay out Social Security benefits — our benefits — to people who have violated federal law and entered our country illegally, and who may have never paid into the Social Security program, as an attack on seniors’ interests that must be defeated.” According to TSC, such a dramatic expansion of recipients could cost the Social Security program an additional \$350 billion. — CNS

* * *

South Dakota House Passes Bill Criminalizing Abortions. — Following an emotional debate, the South Dakota House has passed a bill saying that life begins at conception — something that would outlaw abortions in the state. The vote in favor of House Bill 1191 wasn’t even close. It passed 54-14. Backers said the bill is intended to prod the U.S. Supreme Court to reconsider its 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling which legalized abortions nationwide. The preamble to HB 1191 says that based on the best scientific and medical evidence, life begins at fertilization and that South Dakota’s Bill of Rights

applies equally to born and unborn human beings. The legislation also notes that abortions pose risks to the health and life of pregnant women, including the risk of suicide, depression and other post traumatic disorders. The bill now goes to the South Dakota Senate, where support is said to be strong. — CNS

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America’s Civil Religion. — A front group for a Hamas terrorist group wants to see the U.S. a Muslim country. Its spokesman said, “Islam is not in America to be equal to any other religion but to be dominant.” Christianity’s goal is for everlasting life. But Islam’s goal is not the salvation of souls but the establishment of Koranic law in society. Ancient Rome was religiously inclusive, working all its cultural religions into a single civil religion. But its tolerance ended when it came to Christianity, which condemned the other gods as idols and insisted Christ is the only way to salvation. Religiously diverse America is becoming polytheistic (e.g., 9/11 “worship”: service), a new civil religion with all “faiths” working together. — CC

Crosses will always
come when God’s will
runs one way and ours
another

GOVERNMENT . . .

(Continued from page 7)

history of the religion clauses in the First Amendment.”

Chief Justice Burger filed a dissenting opinion and I am constrained to quote his first two paragraphs:

“Some who trouble to read the opinions in this case will find it ironic — perhaps even bizarre — that on the very day we heard arguments in this case, the Court’s session opened with an invocation for Divine protection. Across the park a few hundred yards away, the House of Representatives and the Senate regularly open each session with a prayer. These legislative prayers are not just one minute in duration, but are extended, thoughtful invocations and prayers for Divine guidance. They are given, as they have been since 1789, by clergy appointed as official Chaplains and paid from the Treasury of the United States. Congress has also provided chapels in the Capitol, at public expense, where members and others may pause for prayer, meditation — or a moment of silence.

“Inevitably some wag is bound to say that the Court’s holding today reflects a belief that the historic practice of the Congress and this Court

is justified because members of the Judiciary and Congress are more in need of Divine guidance than are schoolchildren. Still others will say that all this controversy is ‘much ado about nothing,’ since no power on earth — including this Court and Congress — can stop any teacher from opening the school day with a moment of silence for pupils to meditate, to plan their day — or to pray if they voluntarily elect to do so.”

Nine Justices participated in this case and six opinions were filed. This lack of consensus by the Court shrouds the religion clauses in the First Amendment with mystery as to meaning.

There is one thing I am certain of, no one can deny the fact that this on-going dialogue and litigation has led to the unquestioned right of the individual to choose a religion or no religion without interference by the Government at any level.

Even though the words “separation of church and state” do not appear in the First Amendment, these words constitute the phrase most often used in arguments and litigation (pro and con) concerning the relationship between government and religion. It is quite significant that while all these arguments and all this litigation have been going on, the citizens of our country have never

Ambush In Baghdad Kills Baptist Pastor

The U.S. military has confirmed that gunmen killed an American pastor when the taxi he was riding in was ambushed outside Baghdad.

John Kelley, 48, pastor of Curtis Corner Baptist

Church, an independent Baptist church in South Kingstown, RI. He was traveling with about 10 other ministers who went to Iraq on a two-week trip

(See **PASTOR** on page 16)

elected a person to lead the United States who has failed to publicly state his belief in and reliance on God. This should tell us all something about the vast majority of our people, something that we should think about, reflect upon, and cherish.

Yes, every President of the United States of America has publicly proclaimed his belief that Almighty God is our Creator and is the Ruler of the World.


As proof of this statement, I have selected from our Presidents’ public speeches and proclamations certain excerpts that are clear and unequivocal expressions of their faith in and reliance on God. Most of these excerpts have been selected from inaugural addresses, because of the solemnity of such ceremonies and the further fact that such speeches are among the most widely publicized of all presidential statements.

As I have stated, these articles are not a legal treatise on the First Amendment — they are a

collection of bits and parts of the history of our nation. In my opinion, the historical facts recorded in these articles prove that God is, indeed, in our Government.

These speeches and proclamations by our Presidents should be proof enough for anyone that God has always been and is in our Government. But, for the benefit of the unconvinced, I have cited certain official actions by our Government, facts from our history, as proof that God is in our Government and has been from the birth of our nation, in peace and in war.

Evidence, illustrated and demonstrated, since the birth of our nation, proving God’s presence and power in our Government is so abundant it cannot be assembled in one place or in this series of articles. For this reason, I have limited these articles to some of the most impressive and irrefutable bits and parts of this mass of evidence.

Read these articles and judge for yourself whether God is in our Government. 

Fundamental Baptist Information Service

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Buddhist Prayer Wheel To Top New World Trade Center?

The following is from WorldNetDaily, Jan. 10: "An engineer [Guy Battle] working on plans for the 1,776-foot-high replacement for the World Trade Center in New York wants the wind turbines at the top to serve as Buddhist prayer wheels, 'cycling through mantras of peace.' ... The Village Voice explained Tibetan Buddhists write the mantra 'Om Mani Padme Hum' many times over on thin papers and enclose them within cylinders called mani, which are also inscribed with the mantra. 'These spin on an axle, continuously repeating the prayer,' writes the Village Voice's Erik Baard. 'The words aren't directly translatable, but they invoke blessings from Chenrezig, the embodiment of compassion.' ... Battle's proposal has not been ruled on yet by Architect David M. Childs of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP, master planner Daniel Libeskind and developer Larry Silverstein, the paper said."

* * *

Christians May Be Shot At.

— The following

is from Missions Insider Report: "It's OK to shoot at people as long as they are Christians, seems to be the sentiment of Lao officials, according to a report received by Christian Aid on Friday. Six women and children arrived in the city of Pakse in southern Laos Friday after being threatened in their home village because of their Christian faith. The village chiefs reportedly fined the Christians 150,000 kips (about a month's wage) for believing in Christ and demanded they renounce their Christian faith. If they did so, they could still remain in their village. Those who did not renounce their faith would be shot. Two families decided to leave, having endured the fire of persecution for many months. Their flight followed on the heels of raids on Christians in at least four other places in Attapue province in recent days."

* * *

Christian Fired For Opposing Homosexuality.

— The following is from Religion Today, Jan. 8: "A federal appeals court recently upheld a lower court ruling that Hewlett-Packard (HP) did not

violate the rights of a devout Christian employee who was fired for posting biblical verses on his cubicle that condemned homosexuality. In a 3-0 ruling Tuesday, the San Francisco-based court said Richard Peterson, who worked in HP's customer support division in Boise, Idaho, for more than two decades, was not a victim of religious discrimination. Peterson claimed that HP unfairly singled him out for punishment while allowing other employees to display religious symbols and pro-diversity posters. But Judge Stephen Reinhardt wrote that Peterson had been fired 'because he violated the company's harassment policy by attempting to generate a hostile and intolerant work environment' and disobeyed managers' orders to remove the postings. ... Peterson's attorney, Christ Troupis, said he would appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court."

* * *

Worldview Lacking Among Many SBC Pastors.

— A new Barna Research poll finds that roughly 30% of Southern Baptist pastors do not have a "biblical worldview." This is defined as embracing the accuracy of biblical teaching, the sinless nature of Christ, the literal existence of Satan, the omnipotence and omniscience of God, salvation by grace alone, and the personal res-

ponsibility to evangelize. As simplistic and insufficient as that is as far as determining whether someone is a true Bible believer, almost one-third of Southern Baptist pastors failed. Other denominations are in much worse shape, of course. More than 70% of pastors from mainline denominations do not have a biblical worldview by Barna's definition. This includes the United Methodist, United Church of Christ, American Baptist, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Presbyterian Church USA. In reality, if a pastor does not believe the Bible, he is thoroughly disqualified. I would not be aligned with any group of preachers if even 1% of them did not believe ALL of the Bible, because God warns that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" and "evil communications corrupt good manners."

* * *

Christians Killed In Pakistan.

— Almost four dozen Christians have been killed in Muslim-dominated Pakistan in the last four years. The latest was Protestant Pastor Mukhtar Masih, who was shot dead on January 5, in Khanewal, northern Pakistan. Many others have been wounded in terrorist attacks against churches and Christian organizations. The latest of these was on January 15,

(See **FBIS** on page 13)

FBIS . . .

(Continued from page 12)

when Muslims exploded a powerful bomb outside of the Pakistan Bible Society, wounding at least 13.

* * *

Pastor Killed In Tajikistan. — On January 12 Pastor Sergei Bessarab was shot to death while kneeling in prayer in Isfara, Tajikistan. He was shot 13 times with a Kalashnikov automatic rifle (Barnabas Fund, Jan. 16). Tajikistan is a Muslim stronghold, and the week before the murder a local newspaper had criticized Bessarab for his missionary work.

* * *

Fined For Warning About Islam. — French Catholic priest Philippe Sulmont was fined \$990 for writing a letter to his parishioners warning about Islam. Sulmont was found guilty of “provoking discrimination, hatred or violence” for writing these words: “The Asiatics proliferate and invade our land, bringing with them an ideology that threatens the whole world. Indeed I would add there is no such thing as ‘moderate’ Islam. All the populations infected by the Muslim religion are indoctrinated by the Quran — a holy book which is the manual for the extension of the kingdom of the devil at the expense of

the kingdom of Christ.” It is a rare occasion when I agree with a Catholic priest, but this is one of them. He is being persecuted by the modern thought police for speaking the truth.


* * *

Pastor Killed In Pakistan. — The following is from Religion Today, Jan. 9: “A Protestant pastor in Pakistan’s Punjab province was murdered in the early hours of January 5, just minutes after he left his home to catch a train to Lahore. Pastor Mukhtar Masih, 50, was shot once in the chest at close range with a 32-caliber pistol sometime after 3 a.m. in Khanewal, 180 miles southwest of Lahore. Police officials ruled out robbery as a murder motive because 3,500 rupees (\$58) were found untouched in Masih’s pockets and there were no signs of struggle. Police suspected it was a grudge killing. As pastor of the local Church of God, Masih regularly conducted 10 minutes of prayer and Bible reading over the church loudspeaker each day at 6 a.m., a common practice in areas that, like Khanewal, have large Christian populations. Parishioners from Masih’s congregation confirmed that Muslims had threatened their pastor ‘on many occasions’ and several times tore down the speakers.”

WCC Head Says Multiplicity of Bibles Is Tool In “The Struggle Against Fundamentalism. — In launching a new edition of the ecumenical French Bible, the head of the World Council of Churches observed that it is good to have a multiplicity of Bibles. At the presentation ceremony in Geneva, Sam Kobia, WCC general secretary, said: “Having a variety of translations available encourages the Bible to be read in a plural and ecumenical way. Having a variety of translations available is a precious tool in the struggle against religious fundamentalism” (ENI, Jan. 23). Thus we see that the liberals and ecumenists understand that a multiplicity of Bible versions works against biblical fundamentalism by weakening the authority of the Scriptures. The original Ecumenical translation of the Bible in French was published in 1975 and was the first time Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestants worked to-

gether on a French Bible.


* * *

British Government Adviser Supports Infanticide. — Professor John Harris, a member of the British Medical Association’s ethics committee, said recently that it is ethical to kill unborn babies if they have defects such as a cleft palate and to kill babies after they are born if they have genetic disorders. He said: “People who think there is a difference between infanticide and late abortion have to ask the question: What has happened to the fetus in the time it takes to pass down the birth canal and into the world which changes its moral status? I don’t think anything has happened in that time” (WorldNetDaily, Jan. 25). The professor is correct, of course. There is no difference between killing an unborn baby or a newborn one. Recently a baby was aborted at 7 months in the UK when the parents learned it had a cleft palate. 

How To Use Tobacco

Some time ago, a tobacco company sent packages of cigarettes to some high-school boys with this explanation. “We are sending you a package of our finest cigarettes. We hope you will use them to your satisfaction and want more.”

One of the boys used

the cigarettes, and wrote back: “I received the package of cigarettes and used them in a quart of water which I sprayed on our bug-infested rose bushes. Every bug died! The cigarettes are sure good poison. I want more next spring if any bugs survive! 

Faithfulness In a Day of Apostasy

By Harry A. Ironside

The circumstances in which the apostle Paul was found as the prisoner of the Lord, when penning his second letter to Timothy, largely gave answer to the place in which faithfulness to the truth is likely to put one in these closing days of the dispensation. Whether believers may be called on to endure actual persecution, even to deprivation of liberty, as Satan's plans are developed, may be an open question. But it is very evident that the gospel of the grace of God and the great truths connected with the mystery of Christ and the church were never in greater disfavor among so-called leaders in Protestantism than at the present time.

Rome's attitude toward the gospel has always been distinctly antagonistic, and persecution would be as severe today, did she have unrestrained power as in the bloody centuries just before and after the Reformation. But it is a new thing to find men of prominence in Protestant churches and great semi-religious organizations lined up under the Protestant banner, boldly denouncing the gospel and holding up to ridicule those who preach it. More than that,

so much as in them lies, they have not refrained from using the most unprincipled means whereby to hinder the usefulness of men who proclaim salvation through the atoning Blood of Christ, and especially those who thus set forth the glorious truth of the Lord's near return.

It is a solemn fact that the Word of God predicts just such an apostate condition as the last state of the professing church on earth. And it behooves all lovers of Christ and His truth to bestir themselves to increased faithfulness and devotion in days such as these. Never was there a time when it was so necessary to "*Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.*"

Faithful preaching and faithful living go hand in hand. The time has already come when men, generally, will not endure sound doctrine. In accordance with their own carnal desires they are heaping to themselves teachers whose sentimental platitudes, and whose well-rounded unscriptural methods, tickle their itching ears. Having turned away from the truth, they turn eagerly to all

kinds of fables and are ready to believe anything or everything that hides man's true condition and obscures the cross, with eternal issues that hang upon the acceptance or rejection of the gospel message.


Everyone who desires the Lord's approval at His soon-coming judgment seat may well take to heart the solemn admonition: "*Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*"

One does not need to be what is commonly called an "evangelist" to do the work of one. Every believer who circulates gospel tracts, every one who uses his pen to write to his unsaved friends seeking to impress upon them their need and God's remedy, every personal worker as well as those who take the public platform telling out the "old, old story," is doing the work of an evangelist. Gospel days are nearing their close. The dispensation is fast coming to an awful end for those who are in rebellion against God and His truth. The Lord's return is drawing near. Let us spend and be spent for Him in our brief season for faithful testimony.

The love of many waxes cold. Imitators of Demas, who loved the present world and left Paul, abound. The times demand men like faithful Luke and "*profitable*" Mark who value what is of God and will stand unflinchingly for

His truth whatever the cost.

I would press upon every Christian reader of these lines the importance of turning absolutely away from fellowship with those who are leading in the apostasy. The call of the Lord is distinct: "*From such turn away.*" "*Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*" "*We would have healed Babylon, and she is not healed; forsake her.*" "*Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*" "*Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*"

Christians will be held responsible for every penny they contribute to organizations that are apostate in character and for every act of fellowship that helps to make it easier for Satan's emissaries to pursue this nefarious work. Faithfulness to Christ demands separation from that which so gravely dishonors His name. 

If you were busy
being kind,
Before you knew it,
you would find,
You'd soon forget
to think 'twas true,
That someone was
unkind to you.

MOVIE . . .

(Continued from page 1)

man in crucifying him. The other shows the spiritual significance of his death and why he died. One emphasizes the depravity of man and the other shows Christ dying in obedience to the Father and glorifying God in his death. Acts 2:23 says that he was “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” and that man with “wicked hands” crucified him.

Calvary pictures the virgin born sinless Son of God dying in payment for your sins and mine, but it also pictures the love of God in giving his Son to die for us (John 3:16).

The side of Calvary where the Father hides His face and pours out His wrath upon His Son cannot be viewed with the mortal eye and when Christ cried out “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” this suffering is beyond human understanding. But the joy of Calvary is that He said “It is finished” and then gave up His own life. The penalty of sin had been paid and the great joy of Luke 2:10 was a reality for all who come to Him and trust Him as their Savior. When viewed through the eye of faith, Calvary will bring great joy and the peace that passeth understanding. I marvel at the tears of those who, in seeing this movie, were moved by the terribleness of his death but I hope

were also lifted up to the heavens by the joy of his salvation.

Now this brings me to one of the things that I strongly object to in this film. This film depicts, in the most graphic and violent way, the death of Christ complete with the morbid gore that is typical of Hollywood today. No one can watch this film without an emotional reaction. One preacher stated that the images of the film were seared into his mind such that he would never be able to erase them. You may think that this is good and that what Christ suffered for us should be seared into the mind. But this film depicts the horrible depraved and depressing state of man and does not show the great joy and peace that the love of God brings in giving His Son to die for us. I remind you that Paul said in Philippians 4:8 that we are to think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good and etc.

For over 2000 years, men have been saved through the preaching of the Gospel and the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Now I have preached on the crucifixion of Christ many times straight out of the Gospels and the Holy Spirit of God has used the Word of God to convict sinners. But suddenly, in

this generation, we need something more sensational to reach men.

I can't help but think of the rich man who lifted up his eyes in hell and asked Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to reach his brothers (Lk. 16:27-28). But Abraham said that they had Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. But suddenly today we need Mel Gibson's violent graphic, even morbid presentation of the death of Christ to emphasize and reveal what Christ went through in dying on Calvary.

Are we assuming that the power of the Holy Spirit is no longer sufficient to use the written Word, as inspired of God, and verbally preached to reach this generation? Are we assuming that the Holy Spirit will bless the work and interpretation of the Gospels of a man who has appeared in many Hollywood films, some containing foul language, nudity and sex, and who is a Roman Catholic who believes salvation is in the Catholic church?

Do we ignore any differences or slant within the film (the various things added or deleted) and write them off as artistic, poetic or dramatic license? Yet we claim to stand for the King James version of

the Bible and quickly condemn other translations that change words, that change the meaning of passages (such as the virgin birth) or delete passages.

Now the Gospel is the story of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ *according to the scriptures*. When you leave out the resurrection or de-emphasize the resurrection, you leave out the unspeakable joy of Calvary and the Gospel.

The bodily resurrection of Christ is that which makes Christianity unique among all so called religions of the world. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:19 “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

The unsaved world is fascinated with violence, nudity, morbid gore and death. The Spirit of God could have included in the four Gospels such gore and detail as is in this film, but rather presented the details of His death in such a way that the Spirit could reveal the truths necessary for our salvation, to the young and old alike.

Jim Caviezel, a Roman Catholic, who played Christ in this film, stated in an interview with Catholic priest Mario Knezovic, in December 2003 “he believed that this film was

(See **MOVIE** on page 16)

MOVIE . . .

(Continued from page 15)

made by Mary for her Son“. He also said, in the same interview, that his goal with the movie is to “bring mankind back together.”

There is no doubt that this film has as its goal ecumenism. Now you may think this is good and that uniting all so called Christian religions into one group is the will of God. The truth is that this is Satan’s goal. The spirit of the Antichrist is compromise. The goal of most Catholics is to pull Protestants back into the Catholic church.

False religion began with Nimrod and Babylon and when you see “Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the earth” in Revelation 17:5, you are reading how God views false religion. Catholicism is nothing but Babylonian religion with a Christian cloak. I call your attention to 2 Corinthians 11:1-4 and 11:13-15. In these passages I learn that some are preaching another Jesus and another gospel than that which I preach.

Now I believe that we can cooperate with other groups in many moral and political goals. But most of these groups believe in salvation by works in one form or another. Saved by the grace of God and not works is a unique and precious truth of scripture. No one is a legalist that


accepts these truths and rejects the theology of those who do not. To unite with these people in an evangelistic effort is unscriptural and unsound period. Now I may love these people as individuals but not their theology.

Indirectly, we put our approval on the individuals making this movie when we support this movie. Mel Gibson received a standing ovation at one of the advanced showings of this film. In this I strongly disagree.

Now God may or may not use this movie but it will have a strong emotional impact. But I caution you that the most unstable and unreliable thing about you and me are our emotions and feelings. Satan manipulates our feelings and unless those feelings are based on the uncompromised Word of God, they are totally unreliable and are changeable. Remember, the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. Divine conviction is necessary for one to truly be saved.

Some believe that this film will bring about great revival. They argue that this film visually presents the Word of God. But each group will interpret this film according to what they already believe. When you consider endtime prophecy, I do not believe that this film will bring revival. I, also, do not believe encouraging your people to

see an R-rated film is the will of God. I believe this film is just another step in the compromise of the Word of God and is very similar to the compromise that is going on by the multitude of so-called translations.

Preachers, you and I will one day answer to God for our actions and how we lead the people to whom we minister. Be careful that it is the Spirit of God and the Word of God that leads you and not your biased opinion based on an emotional response to a film put out by an unsound source. 

PASTOR . . .

(Continued from page 11)


to explore the possibility of starting a church there.

U.S. paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division learned of the Feb. 14 attack while they were patrolling in the town of Mahmudiyah, about 15 miles south of Baghdad, according to Associated Press. They were told the Americans had been riding in a taxi when a white sedan pulled up alongside them and opened fire.

Three other men, including David Davis of Grace Bible Baptist Church of Vernon, Conn., and Kirk DiVierno of Grace Baptist Church of Franklin, Mass., were injured in the ambush and were being treated at an Iraqi hospital, soldiers

were told.


Kelley, a former Marine, is survived by his wife and four children.

“Pastor Kelley was willing to give his life so that people would hear the message (of Jesus),” said Roland Vukic, a member of Kelley’s congregation. — BP 

TONGUES . . .

(Continued from page 4)

is withdrawn” (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1871, Vol. 17, 178).

k. Benjamin B. Warfield (1851-1921) “These gifts were ... distinctively the authentication of the apostles. They were part of the credentials of the apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the church. Their function thus confirmed them to distinctively the apostolic church and they necessarily passed away with it” (Counterfeit Miracles, 6). 

Sign in a supermarket in Springfield, Illinois:

“Wanted — clerk to work eight hours a day to replace one who didn’t.”

* * *

The more steam you put behind your work, the louder you can whistle when it is done.

REVELATION . . .

(Continued from page 1)

and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:1-3).

The book of Revelation, it is to be interpreted in the same manner as any other book of the Bible. In other words, what is read is to be understood literally unless the context indicates that it is symbolical. There are symbolical teachings within the book of Revelation, and we need to be careful in the interpreting of these symbols that we interpret them in the light of the other Scriptures.

The Book of Revelation ties in with all other books of the Bible. It is not just a book set apart by itself. It is referred to as the capstone of the Bible. The "capstone", when applied to a structure of a pyramid with a broad base, is the final stone to be placed on top. The capstone is the stone that completes the structure, and so it is with the book of Revelation. It is the capstone, but as the capstone, it is not separate and independent of all the other books. When we begin to understand the signs and symbols in the book of Revelation, we must interpret them in the light of the other Scriptures, particularly the book of

Daniel, which, of course, is a prophetic book, and much of which speaks of the same things. For every sign or symbol in the book of Revelation, there is a counterpart to that sign or symbol to be found in other books of the Bible, so that it is to be studied along with the other books of the Bible, not separate from them.

We begin our study with verse 19 which is a key verse, for it gives us the divisions of the book. It is divided into three divisions. The verse says: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." Thus, a part of the book is that which is past "Write the things which thou hast seen." This is past tense. "And the things which are," that is present tense, "and the things which shall be hereafter" is future tense.

When you divide the chapters of the book so that they correspond with these three divisions, you find that chapter one covers that time referred to as "the things which thou hast seen." Chapters two and three correspond to "the things which are," that is, things that are present. These chapters deal primarily with seven different churches, commonly referred to as the "seven churches of Asia," and corresponds to this present church age. The third division begins with chapter four and carries us

through the rest of the book or through chapter 22

So you have these three divisions: Chapter 1 — things "*thou hast seen.*" Chapters 2 and 3 — "*things which are.*" Chapters 4 through 22 — "*things which shall be hereafter.*" This is important in our understanding of the Book of Revelation, and when we get into these chapters we will see how they logically fit into this threefold division.

There is another three-fold division that we can use as the dividing mark or the three-fold division of this book, and this would be the millennium of the Lord Jesus Christ. This book, along with other books, speaks of the fact that Jesus Christ is to return to live upon this earth, and to reign for one thousand years. This would be the center of the division. Here you have things *Pre-millennial*, that is, things that are to take place *before* the millennial reign of the Lord. Then you have things that are *millennial*, things that are going to take place *during* the millennial reign of the Lord, and then you have things that are going to take place *after* the millennial reign of the Lord. These would be *Post-millennial*.

Perhaps we should define the word at this point. The word "millennium" comes from two Latin words, *mille*, meaning a thousand, and *anno* meaning year. Millennial

therefore means one thousand years. We find the one thousand year reign of the Lord mentioned several times in the 20th chapter of the Book of Revelation. Commonly it is referred to as simply the "Millennium."

There are some who deny that the Bible teaches the Millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, and one of their arguments is that the word "millennial" or "millennium" does not appear in the Bible. Well, it just so happens that is true. The reason is that this is an English word composed of two Latin words, but the Greek words for one thousand years do appear in the Bible. So, if you wish to argue about the word millennium, we can omit the word millennium and adopt the Biblical words "one thousand years," for we find in the 20th chapter of the Book of Revelation this phrase is repeated several times.

In the latter part of verse 2, Satan is to be bound "*a thousand years.*" According to verse 3, Satan is to be released but not until after "*the thousand years*" should be fulfilled. In the latter phrase of verse 4 it says "and they lived and reigned with Christ *a thousand years.*" It says in verse 5, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until *the thousand years* were finished." Verse 6, the latter part says, "But they shall be

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priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him *a thousand years.*” Then verse 7 says, “And when *the thousand years* are expired.” The Bible only has to say something one time to make it true, and that’s sufficient for me to believe it, but here we find that this phrase is repeated some six times. Therefore, if repetition means anything at all, it shows that the Lord intended for us to understand that there is to be a period of one thousand years when Jesus Christ will rule and reign on this earth.

In our study of the Book of Revelation, everything beginning with chapter 1:1 through chapter 19:21, the first 19 chapters of this book, deal primarily with events leading up to the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. These are events that we can say are things Pre-millennial. They occur before the millennium.

The things millennial are recorded in just six verses. This leads us to say that we cannot speak with much authority concerning what things will take place during the millennium since the Bible does not tell us very much. One thing we can be sure of, there is to be a one thousand year reign called the Millennial Reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is not the end of time, but is only the end of that

segment of time, because after the Millennial Reign, we find that there are other events to take place before eternity future begins. These are referred to as “things Post-millennial,” found in chapter 20:7 through chapter 22:6. Then 22:7 and following is an admonition and exhortation to those who read and hear, etc. the reading of this book.

There are three basic viewpoints in the interpretation of this book, all dealing with the definition and time of what is called the millennium. The first view is the *A-millennial* viewpoint. This is often called the “preterist” viewpoint, meaning past.

A-millennialists interpret the book as having already been fulfilled in the early history of the churches. They say chapters 5-11 record the church’s victory over Judaism. They say chapters 12-19 record their victory over pagan Rome. They say chapters 20-22 record their glory because of these victories. Thus, *A-millennialists* say the persecutions described are those under the Roman Emperors Nero and/or Domitian, and the entire book was fulfilled by the time of Constantine.

They say the one thousand years of chapter 20 is not to be understood as literal, but as a long unspecified length of time beginning with the first coming of Christ and ending with His second coming.

According to this interpretation, the Millennium has already lasted nearly 2,000 years. They say there is to be no literal reign on earth, but that Christ is in His spiritual reign at this time. They also say that Satan is bound now (20:2-3) rather than being loosed upon the earth (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

The *Post-millennialist* accepts the fact of a millennial reign upon the earth, but delays the return of Christ until after the Millennium, hence, post-millennialism. Their belief is that the world is to progressively get better until they bring in a universal world peace and a universal world salvation and thus, they will bring in the Millennium, after which Christ will then return. They interpret the Parable of the Leaven (Mt. 13:33) as teaching this, making the leaven refer to the gospel and the meal the world, resulting in the whole world being converted before the coming of Christ.

The *Pre-millennial* viewpoint is often called the “futurist” viewpoint as this interpretation sees everything from chapter 4-22 as being yet unfulfilled. Though there are some symbols within the book, *Pre-millennialists* say that most of the book is to be interpreted literally. If one follows the plain, literal or normal principle of interpretation, he must conclude that most of the book is yet future and that

the Pre-millennial viewpoint is the correct and scriptural one. For this reason, we interpret this book as a Pre-millennialist, believing it to be the correct interpretation.

We must be careful in the interpretation of the symbols of the book and to interpret them in the light of other Scriptures. Every picture or symbol has its counterpart in some other book of the Bible.

So these are the things that we are going to be looking at. To begin with, in this first chapter we find the “things that thou hast seen.” These are the things we now wish to look at.

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1). Now I am very conscious of the exact title of this book, so that I notice many people, in referring to this book, give it an improper title. Many people refer to this book as “The Book of Revelations” (plural) as though it was a book of many revelations, but this book does not contain “revelations” (plural), but is one great revelation. The title of this book is not then “The Book of Revelations” or “The Book of the Revelations” but the title is given to us right here in verse one “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”

This is, of course, what I pointed out to you in earlier messages. When you study and read this book, you are to look for

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the “Revelation of Jesus Christ.” You are not to study this book out of mere curiosity to know future events, or what is going to occur and the order of them, what’s going to happen to this one and that one, but the purpose is “the revelation of Jesus Christ.” So when you study and read it, you must do so with the idea of learning about the Lord Jesus Christ. It is “the Revelation of Jesus Christ.”

The Lord also tells us how we got the revelation, the means by which God communicated this book to us. Verse 1 says: “*The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.*” According to this verse the Father gives the revelation to His Son, Christ Jesus (Jn. 5:19-20; 7:16; 8:28; 12:49); the Son in turn gives it to His angel (1:1; 22:6; Acts 7:53); then His angel gives it unto John, according to verse 11, and John in turn gives it to the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:11). The churches then give it to the world. This we find in chapters two and three.

Notice verse 2: “*Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he*

saw.” We find three things here that John bears a faithful witness to. First, he bears a faithful witness to the Word of God (Jn. 21:24; 19:35). God communicated with him. God communicated with him directly, and John faithfully recorded these words that God gave unto him. “Who bare record of the Word of God”. This is why he was banished to Patmos. Secondly, “And of the testimony of Jesus Christ” (1:5; Jn. 8:18; 18:37; Rev. 3:14). Thirdly “of all things that he saw” (1 Jn. 1:1-3). The things — this is definite. It describes definite events. “Must” indicates absolute certainty, necessity. A-millennialists declare that the words demand an immediate fulfillment if they are to be of any comfort to these believers to whom John was writing. James, however, encourages the saints by the promise of the second coming, yet it has been nearly 2,000 years and Christ has not yet come (Jas. 5:8). We also see that Paul encouraged the persecuted church of Rome by stating that God would bruise Satan shortly, referring to the promise made in the Garden of Eden (Rom. 16:20). Also see Luke 18:7-8.

“Shortly come to pass” (1:1). Two ideas are expressed by this phrase. The certainty that they will come to pass and the speed in which these events take place when they begin to come to pass. God does not

compute time as we do (2 Pet. 3:8). By this phrase we are to understand that the return of the Lord is always imminent (Rom. 13:11). While the coming of the Lord is not presented to us in Scripture as something immediate, it is always something which is imminent. Only Peter did not have this hope (Jn. 21:18-19; 2 Pet. 1:14).

So here then is a faithful record, an accurate record, a true record of these things that God communicated unto John, the “things that he saw.” When the word “things” is mentioned, it refers to things that are specific; it refers to definite events. He writes about specific things that were revealed unto him. The word “must” also refers to the fact that they “must” be written for us so that we might be aware of, and acquainted with this information that the Lord has revealed unto him.

There is a special blessing attached to the reading, hearing and obeying of this book. This book begins with the possibility of a blessing and ends with the possibility of a curse (22:18-19). I do not recall any other book of the Bible that has a special blessing attached to just simply the reading of the book. Notice in verse three: “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (1:3; Lk. 11:28).

There are three words to be noted here: there is a blessing to all who *read* the book. Secondly, who *hear* the book; and thirdly who *keep* the things that are written therein. You see, God does not reveal to us this information simply for knowledge sake alone. He does not tell us that it is good just to read it, or just to hear it, but the blessing comes not in simply reading or simply hearing, but in *the keeping* of the sayings of this book, obedience. God intends for us to do this.

Note that it says “blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy.” Remember that when John was writing, they did not have Bibles like you and I have today. Bibles were very rare when John wrote this book. No church had all the books of the New Testament. I know they didn’t have the book of Revelation for it had not yet been written. We see here the custom that was carried on in that day in having a reader; one who would stand up in the congregation to read the Bible. They were not privileged to own Bibles like you and me, so they could not read the book, but there would be one who would stand up before the congregation and read the book, “Blessed is he that readeth.” There is a special blessing attached to simply reading this book.

Now we are always

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interested in receiving blessings from the Lord. I suppose if you are like me, in praying unto the Lord, you often ask the Lord to bless you. Usually we may even pinpoint what we want Him to bless us with, and usually it is a petition in which we ask for certain things. We find here there is a blessing that God says is conditioned on just the reading of this book.

This may apply to the entire Bible because we read, particularly in the 119th Psalm, about blessings that are attached to the reading of the Word of God. This does, however, primarily refer to the Book of Revelation, as there is a special blessing that one can receive from the Lord just by reading this book, that is not attached to any other book of the Bible. In fact, it is repeated twice, for in the 22nd chapter and verse 7, he begins to end the book, and in completing this book he says "Behold I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." So again he talks about a blessing that is particularly included with the reading, hearing, and the keeping of the sayings of this book.

The author visualizes a man standing before a congregation of people, assembled in public worship, as indicated by the pronoun "he" (singular) and

the two pronouns "they" (plural). The hearers do not have copies of the Book of Revelation; therefore they cannot read it for themselves. With the book in hand, this man stands before them and reads to them the "Book of the Revelation."

"Blessed is he that readeth" and then it says, "and they that hear the word of this prophecy." There is a blessing not only connected with the reading but there is a blessing connected with the hearing. If one cannot read because of blindness or not knowing how to read, it may be necessary for somebody to read it to them. There is a blessing then, not only to the reader but also to the one who hears.

The third part says: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." God expects obedience, and when we read the Bible and understand what God says, then God intends for us to obey Him. Whatever His commands are, God does intend for us to obey. So there is a blessing to the reader, there is a blessing to the hearer, and there is a blessing to the keeper — the ones who keep the sayings of this book.

Now what are these blessings? Just what are the blessings that you will receive? The first blessing is a wonderful vision of our Savior and Lord, implied in

verse one where it says: "The revelation of Jesus Christ." The first blessing that you will receive is that you will see here a wonderful vision of your Savior and your Lord. When the world saw Jesus Christ last, it was Jesus Christ as He was crucified, Jesus Christ hanging upon a cross. That's all the world saw of Him. When we come to the book of Revelation and begin to read, we see Jesus Christ in all His glory, in all His majesty, and with all His power. We begin to see who our Savior and our Lord really is. In this book of Revelation we have this wonderful vision of the Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords, coming back to this earth to destroy all unrighteousness and to establish His reign of righteousness that will last forever.

The second blessing we will receive in this book is that we will be able to see what is in store for this age. We read of the judgments that are going to overtake this world, how Satan's power is going to be manifested to the fullest upon all of those who reject the grace of God. This is followed by the judgment, tribulation, and the wrath of God that are swiftly going to come upon this earth, but will not come upon believers for God has delivered us from all of this. No judgment, no wrath for us who are saved (Rom. 8:1; 1 Thess. 1:10). We can look at the future, we can

see that this world is now getting ripe for judgment, that things are shaping up in the Middle East for this final battle of Armageddon that will be fought in the valley of Megiddo or the valley of Jezreel in Palestine. Everything is shaping up. But, when we read in the Bible about it, we are told that we will not be involved in it nor even be here when all of this takes place, for the Bible tells us, God tells us, that we are going to be delivered from all of this.

Paul says in the book of Romans, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1). There is therefore *now* no condemnation — that means no judgment. When we look at this judgment to come upon the world as recorded here in the Book of Revelation, we can know that we will not have to go through it.

In First Thessalonians 1:9-10: "*For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*" So we are not going to undergo the wrath of God; nor here

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when God returns to this earth and pours out His wrath upon the earth. He has delivered us from the wrath to come.

Several times in Revelation, primarily in chapter 6 in the latter verses, it talks about this judgment or these judgments (plural). This has reference to the Tribulation Period, or God's wrath poured out upon this earth. We do not have to undergo this tribulation, for we have been delivered from the wrath to come.

Lastly, we find that a blessing that comes to us through the reading, hearing and keeping of the sayings of this book, is the assurance that we are on the victory side, for God is going to be victorious. It doesn't look that way right now. This world is a dark picture, and getting darker every year. We look today and find that the forces of atheism are growing stronger every year. Every year the forces of so-called "Christianity" are getting farther and farther away from the truth. Every year we see that churches that still believe in the Word of God, and still believe in the second coming of the Lord, and still believe in the fundamentals of the faith, are getting fewer and fewer. When you look at it in that light, it should cause us to be discouraged. It should cause us to become

down-hearted, it should cause us to look and think we are losing and that Satan is winning the battle. But when you read the Book, God tells you these things are all going to come to pass. He tells you that there is to be an apostasy among Christendom, when denomination after denomination will forsake and leave the truth. He even points out in the last church, the church of Laodicea, that it is going to affect even true churches — Baptists if you please.

Just to give you an illustration, an article appeared in one of our local papers yesterday. Who do you think is going to be delivering the Lenten lectures at Christ Episcopal Church this week? The pastor of First Baptist Church of Little Rock. Lent is a heathen holiday brought into so-called Christendom by the Roman Catholic church. Baptists don't observe Lent, but the pastor of First Baptist Church will. You know what else they are going to do? They are going to have an open communion service for anybody that wants to come. Not only that, but Rufus Womble, the Rector of the church, is going to have a healing service too, and here is the pastor of First Baptist Church of Little Rock getting involved in that kind of mess. This is what the Bible is talking about.

I have on my desk "*The Record*," a paper

from the Mississippi Baptist State Convention. On the editorial page, they were talking about what a wonderful dialogue they had with Roman Catholic priests in Mississippi. I'm not sure where it was, but I believe they said there were 32 of them, all met together, trying to decide how they could get everything in common.

Things are getting dark and they are getting darker, as we see even those who are supposed to be sound Baptists beginning to play around and flirt with the Devil's bride, because this apostate church, as we'll learn later on, is the bride of the Antichrist.

When you read the book of Revelation, it tells you all of these things are going to come to pass. It also shows us that Jesus Christ is going to come back victorious over all His enemies. It shows us that we that are His children, who have received Him as our personal Lord and Savior, are going to live, reign and rule with Him for one thousand years, and afterwards to have all eternity to enjoy the things that God has in store for His children.

There is a real blessing to understanding the book of Revelation because it gives encouragement. If you didn't know what was in the book, you'd be discouraged. You'd be down-hearted. You'd be blue, despondent, going around with a long face all

the time. We ought not to, for Jesus Christ is still in charge. He knows what is going on. He just permits Satan so much latitude, and that is all. Satan is on a leash. He can only go so far, and that is all God allows him. When God's time comes, when the time is ready, then Jesus Christ is going to return to this earth, and is going to take charge. He is to take over and Satan will be expelled from this earth, ultimately to be cast into the lake of fire which burneth with fire and brimstone forever and ever.

Now when shall these things take place? Remember, that this is a book of prophecy. It is a prophetic book. It is then future. It is not written from a historical standpoint, but from a future standpoint. When shall these things take place? The "things" we are to study follow in the book of the Revelation and "must come to pass" and "shortly." [The word "shortly" not only means very soon but also very quickly Lk. 18:7-8; Zeph. 1:18.] Since this is repeated in 22:6, this eliminates the "historical" interpretation, that is, making the Seals, Trumpets, Vials, etc. apply to events of church history rather than to future events. Notice verse one: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which *must shortly*

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SHADOWS . . .

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flood and the shadows deepened. Twice death knocked at my door and for weeks and months I lay within a heartbeat of eternity. My life was spared, but one by one most of my dear ones were taken from me. My wife's health failed and for twelve years she was almost an invalid, sometimes bedfast for years on end. At the last she was apparently improved but had a heart attack and in five minutes she was gone.

With her going the light of my life went out and I longed to follow her into that bright land beyond the shadows, but I knew God had work for me to do. The darkness was so thick I could not see my way, but overhead the stars were shining still and long experience had taught me the sun would shine again for me. And it did.

The shadows long since have faded, like night mists before the rising sun. Poverty still stalks my trail but I have lived to see my debts paid. Modern hearing aids have put me back into the world of sound, and God restored my health beyond my fondest dreams. I have more life and vigor than I had thirty years ago, and more desire to preach, and I believe more power to preach, than I ever had. I have traveled several

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come to pass." "Shortly" or "the time is at hand" would apply to any event whose beginning was soon to occur, though the end might be remote, for the series of events might stretch far into the future.

Now look at verse 3: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: *for the time is at hand.*" In other words, the only time element that we find in the Bible referring to the second coming of Christ is that it is soon, sudden, quick, that it must shortly come to pass — that the time is at hand. The things that we are going to be studying here in the Book of Revelation must come to pass and shortly, indicating that they are very soon.

We see in Second Thessalonians that the people in Thessalonica misunderstood Paul's writings in his first book and thought the second coming was going to be immediately, in their lifetime, but Paul did tell them that there were certain things that must take place first. When you begin to look at these things that Paul said must take place first, they have already happened. They have already taken place. The time is short; the time is near.

Now that's the last verse in the last chapter —


"things must shortly be done." That shows that the book is not talking about things that are history, but things that are future; things that are shortly going to come to pass. Most of these prophecies are still future, but not far away. We are living now in the last days. Most of these prophecies are still future and will not take place until after the church age which ends in chapter three, for the Rapture takes place at the close of chapter three and before the beginning of chapter four.

As we look at the events in the world, we see that prophecies are soon to come to pass. Everything is shaping up. Even this peace overture that between Egypt and Israel is prophesied in the Bible in the sense that Egypt is going to be treated differently and separately from all the other Arab nations. Egypt is going to be blessed of the Lord. Egypt is going to have a blessing of God placed upon it, separately and distinctly from the other Arabs. The Bible is talking about how these things are all getting ready to come to pass.

Are you ready if they were to come to pass today? For there is not anything that prevents Jesus Christ from coming today. All the prophecies that must be fulfilled before He comes have already taken place, and there is not one thing that must be fulfilled before Jesus comes again.

He could come today. He says: "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me." If he were to come today, where would you be?

There are only two places, heaven and hell, and you are going to be in heaven if you have trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and if not, you are going to be left behind, and you are going to have to go through that Tribulation Period. You may not even make it all the way through, because there is going to be one third of the world killed at one time. You may not even make it through, but you may just undergo all kinds of suffering before you ultimately are killed, but ultimately you are going to stand in eternity in the lake of fire.

Are you ready? If not, this book of Revelation is written for you as a warning so that you might know what things are soon going to come to pass and so that you might get ready. There is only one way to get ready, and that's by trusting Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. 

God seldom speaks to a man unless that man will get quiet and "shut up" — in order that God may be heard.

* * *

A revival spasm furnishes no permanent stimulation.

BODY . . .

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and the leucocytes are overwhelmed. But the sulfa drugs prevent this reproductive process in some mysterious way, and perhaps also, assist the manufacture of great numbers of white cells, so that the body's phagocytes have an easy time in killing off the enemy, and the patient makes an astonishing recovery.

Penicillin, the amazing product of the mold, *penicillum notatum*, is even more spectacular than the sulfa drugs. It seems to take over where the other miracle-performing remedies fail. Every day we read of some fresh surprise where this remedy has banished death as soon, almost, as it enters the field of battle. These remarkable remedies, however, will not cure every disease. Cancer and tuberculosis and some others such as virus diseases still wait for their eradication by the discoveries which will probably yet be made. But always remember that the most important item in the cure of our bodies is the defensive mechanism devised by the Creator and centering in the white blood cells.

This would seem to be as good a place as any to mention blood pressure, of which we hear so much these days, and which is an important item in the life of every individual. There are

five factors which regulate the circulation, and a change in any one of them can increase the blood pressure. The first of these is the pumping of the heart. If it beats more rapidly or more powerfully, more blood is forced into the arteries and the pressure is elevated.

Next there is volume of blood — although this does not play a great part in altered blood pressure. That is, high blood pressure does not indicate a greater volume of blood, which rarely occurs with chronic hypertension.

Third, viscosity. Normal blood is about five times thicker than water, and sometimes, if this is increased for any cause, there will be a degree of hypertension. This, however, is not common.

Fourth, elasticity of the blood vessels interfered with by what is called arteriosclerosis, and hardening of the arteries. And yet, this is not considered a very important factor, and quite often patients are found with arteriosclerosis but no rise in blood pressure.

The remaining factor is known as vasoconstriction, a property which characterizes the small arterial branches known as arterioles. In the organs of the abdomen alone there are tens of thousands of miles of hairline arterioles threading their way among the tissue cells. So great is their potential capacity

when dilated that, if the muscles which control their contraction were to relax completely at one time, almost all the blood in the body would fill this abdominal area. But this never happens in the healthy body because of the internal control exercised over the small muscles which encircle the arterioles.

This control is involuntary, never-sleeping, and infallible, always operating to distribute the blood to the different organs as needed at the moment. When one set of vessels is dilated to admit more blood, another set is restricted to limit the flow to its area. Investigation shows that vasoconstriction is the most powerful agency available for increasing blood pressure. If the heart beat is doubled, other factors remain unchanged, the pressure is doubled, and the same ratio applies to increase in viscosity, but if the arterioles are contracted to half their diameter, the blood pressure is increased sixteen times. So, a slight perversion of this normal function may precipitate a dangerous condition. If, for any reason, there is repeated stimulation and contraction of the muscles attached to the small vessels, there will be heightened tension, which may become chronic. The walls of the vessel thicken, the caliber narrows, until eventually there is a fixed state of high

blood pressure.

The chief factor in producing this condition is the involuntary nervous system, an extensive network stretching from the lower brain to heart, stomach, and along to myriad vessels. What causes this nervous system to be overactive? And here is where your doctor comes in and will advise you. Watch your blood pressure twice a year, is good advice to any one; live normally without excessive worry or work which demands constant drive and energy. In some respects, one is as old as the blood pressure. There are many things I would like to discuss with you now, but the time has elapsed.

One way to secure the necessary rest which will prevent this condition is to "Rest in the Lord; wait patiently for Him." I have found in my own life that it is not easy to acquire and hold this blessed state of restfulness and peace, when the crises of life come upon me. But it is possible to know it, and to rejoice in the Lord even when we seem to be faced with inevitable calamity. Our Heavenly Father so often tries to calm our needless fears by assuring us that He *knows*. If we really believed that we are in His loving and powerful care, how the turmoil of life would be eased and our mental attitude would be

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SHADOWS . . .

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thousand miles each year for the last ten years and am expecting one day to really go on the road for the Lord.

During the long night I acquired a little patience, of which, in my younger days I had none. Then I wanted everything done yesterday. Now I have learned to wait years for the turning of the lane, with the deep certainty it will surely turn. Also in the valley I got closer to the great heart of God, and formed a deeper compassion and sympathy for suffering humanity. Until we walk through the valley ourselves we cannot understand the burdens and sorrows of those who live in the shadows.

The view from the mountain top is wonderful. It is inspiring and up lifting and refreshes our spirits and brings us closer to God. But the people live in the valley and there the battle of life is fought, and there we must go if we are to do the work of the Lord. There we find sorrow, the universal note of all the earth; and there we confirm the truth in the song "We know His love shineth brighter as it falls on paths of woe."

During my long illness, when I could do little else, I developed, in some degree, my talents for drawing, painting and writing. And all three of

these lines have provided outlets of expression that have greatly broadened the scope of my ministry. They are sources of much pleasure and satisfaction to me in the sunset days of my life; and open avenues of useful activity I hope to pursue after I get too old to preach.

As I travel down the valley toward the setting of the sun I have so much to think about and so many things to do, time flies like light on the wings of the morning. And many of the blessings that are mine today, and the benefits others may receive from my activities for the Lord are the fruits of seed sown in the darkest corners of the valley. The shadows of the past have somehow become pillars of light to brighten my pathway in the present.

The threat of war and destruction hangs over the whole world today, and the shadow of the Anti-christ looms above the horizon higher by the hour. These things are very real and very near and men's hearts are failing them because of fear. But with Christians it ought not so to be. The Lord says, "When you see these things begin to come to pass, then look up for your redemption draweth nigh." Beyond the gathering storm and the shadow of the Anti-christ shines the glory of the coming of the Lord. Brethren, let us lift up our feeble knees and go on. □

BODY . . .

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poised and serene instead of worried and fearful. We are very slow to learn this lesson of trust in spite of all God's assurances.

Do you remember the plight in which the children of Israel found themselves down in Egypt, when the armies of Pharaoh were rushing to destroy them, and "they were entangled in the land?" Then, they began to blame Moses for bringing them out into worse trouble than they had in Egypt. But, hear the voice of God in Exodus 14:13: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show you *today*. For the Egyptians whom ye have seen today ye shall see them again no more for ever." What a glorious promise — and how splendidly God kept His word.

Have you come to this Red Sea crisis; no place to

turn for help, sure defeat apparently coming upon you? This is His word today, as in the day of Moses: "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

Of course, this is *only* for God's children. Unless you have taken Christ into your life, you have no right to call upon God — except in confession of sin, and a prayer for salvation. You see, you do not belong; you are not in the family. Would you not like to know the "peace of God," "the peace which passes all understanding," the immediate deliverance from all foes which can assail us? You may have this as your right, when you come in confession and surrender to and faith in Jesus Christ. It is mightily worth while to get acquainted with Him, and to discover that HE'S ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL!

[Next month: "Why We Must Breathe." □]

Missions Conference March 22-24

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“Y’all Come”