

The Baptist CHALLENGE

a voice of independent Baptists

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WHOLE NO. 483

The Scriptures and the First Baptist Church of Jerusalem

The Scriptures disclose three houses of witness; namely, the House of Seth, and the House of Abraham, and the House of God.

1. The first to witness is the House of Seth (Gen. 4:25-26). Here, men began to call upon the name of the Lord. The witnesses are set forth in Gen. 5:1 to Gen. 8:22, and these witnessed during a period approximating two thousand

years.

2. The second to witness is the House of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). Here, the Lord makes a covenant with Abram and promises to make His House of Witness a blessing unto all the families of the earth. In this house, He

perpetuated the faith of the House of Seth and thus doing He helps preserve the "seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15). He renews this covenant with Isaac and with Jacob, and identifies both redemption and millennial truth in the covenant He makes with

David (2 Sam. 7:4-17). He fulfills the redemption price provided in the Abrahamic covenant in the birth of the Virgin's Son (Mt. 27:35; Lk. 2:7), and in His crucifixion (Mt. 27:35). And finally he will culminate the Kingly aspect of the Davidic covenant with the coming of the Lord Jesus to reign over the kingdoms

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By W. Lee Rector

Would You Run?

Imagine this happening to you. One Sunday morning during service a 2,000 member congregation was surprised to see two men enter, both covered from head to toe in black and carrying submachine guns. One of the men proclaimed, "Anyone willing to take a bullet for Christ remain where you

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The State of the Baptist Witness

By Chester E. Tulga

The early witness of the people called Baptists was recorded in their own blood. These are the people who called attention to the New Testament church, the separation of church and state, believers' baptism, the importance of observing the ordinances after the New Testament pattern, and the duty of godly living. The books they wrote, the papers they edited and the

truths they advocated are still largely buried in dusty libraries and unknown to the Baptists of our day.

Very early in Baptist life (especially in England) they began to form fellowships, which later became associations and still later became conventions which undermined the independence of the church.

(See **TULGA** on page 4)

Booze In the Bible

Too long we have listened to the pious expression, heard from many quarters, which says, "Let the preacher stick to his Bible and leave the liquor question to laymen and politicians."

One has only to examine the Bible to find abundant references condemning the drink evil. In

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Quiz The Pastor -- #34**Can We Trust Our Conscience?****By the late Nick Michalinos**

Question: Can we trust our conscience to be a safe instructor and guide?

Answer: I don't think we know as much about the conscience that we would like to know, but I'm convinced there is enough light from the Bible to help us to better understand something about this important unseen faculty that resides within each of us.

By my count, I have found 32 direct references in the Bible that mention the "conscience." Since we cannot look at all of these 32 verses, we'll answer your question, and then give an explanation as pertaining to the purpose and function of the conscience.

To answer your question, I must answer with a qualified "yes." By this, I mean we can depend upon our conscience to be a safe guide only if our conscience is guided by the

Word of God. The conscience is a faculty of instruction and education.

The word conscience means "a knowing with" ("con" — with, "science" — to know). It is a witness borne to one's conduct according to the light one possesses. God inherently places within every man this witness that can be influenced by right or wrong information. From this information or knowledge, our conscience will set rules, standards or criteria that will either approve or disapprove our actions.

We have heard of some who can murder without any feelings of wrong doing or remorse. Their conscience does not condemn the wrong doing. Millions of innocent infants have been aborted over the last few years, but the conscience of the abortionist does not accuse him or her of this blood-

shedding. The abortionists do not go about their daily lives in a state of guilt or torment, because they are convinced their actions are proper and permissible. They have been educated by the views, the opinions, and the consciences of others. There is no inward guilt to be reckoned with. This is the point we are making. This God-created faculty acting as an umpire called a conscience can be cultivated to accept wrong doing as right doing by standards set by man, but apart from the Mind and Will of God.

Paul speaks of people who have their "conscience seared (cauterized) with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:2) so as to lose all feelings of right or wrong. Their conscience has been perverted. Just as "seared" flesh can lose all sensibility, the nerves being destroyed, even so there are some consciences which nothing can affect. They "call evil good, and good evil ... That put bitter for sweet, and sweet for evil" (Isa. 5:20).

Even after a person is born again by faith in Christ as Savior, the conscience alone is not a good guide to follow. We are under a constant barrage of ideas and thoughts from the ungodly, secular world, and we must beware that we do not find ourselves walking "in the counsel (advice, ideas) of the ungodly" (Psa. 1:1) instead of the wisdom of God as revealed in His Word.

(Read Psa. 19:7-11; 119).

The only safe guide for right living is the Word of God. We can always depend on the Word. At the moment of salvation, the believer has his conscience purged by the blood of Christ "from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). This is a new beginning for the saints of God, and we must move forward and upward in our Christian lives, allowing our minds to go through a renewing process as we adhere to the Word of God (Rom. 12:2).

We must "learn to do well" (Isa. 1:17). No man or law should demand of the believer that which is contrary to the dictates of his God instructed conscience.

"We ought to obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29).

We must live and move within the realm of the Word if we want to have a clear, approving conscience, and thereby glorify God.

THE BAPTIST CHALLENGE

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Many Folks**Want To****Serve God,****But Only****As Advisers**



Message Preached April 8, 1979 — #14

The Church Of Smyrna

By M. L. Moser, Editor

[These messages on the Book of Revelation are being published “as preached,” and not as they would normally be in written form. They form a total of 113 messages preached at the Central Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas over a period of two years, in 1979-1981. We hope they will be a blessing to each of you as you read them. It is our hope to complete transcribing all of them and to print them in the form of a verse-by-verse commentary.]

“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive: I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall

cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Rev. 2:8-11).

This now is the second city to which we find a letter has been directed, the city of Smyrna. At the time this letter was written, it was a city that was already over 2,000 years old. It, as most of these cities were, were heathen cities and Smyrna was the seat of the Emperor worship with the temple of Tiberius located here.

The word Smyrna has been translated three different times in the New Testament. These Greek names all have meanings, and the word Smyrna has been translated for us in Matthew 2:11, Mark 15:23, and John 19:39. It has been

translated by the word “myrrh.” The word means “bitter” and it was one of the ingredients used in the embalming of the dead. For myrrh to be used, it had to be crushed to bring out its fragrance.

The location of Smyrna today is a city by the name of Izmir which is the largest city in Asiatic Turkey and is famous as a city of great beauty and for its many magnificent buildings. As we mentioned, these seven cities are located roughly in a circle, Smyrna being about 40 miles north of Ephesus. It also was the seat of a fairly good size or a large population of Jews.

The church had an interesting background. I want to look in history for just a few moments and talk to you about the man who was the pastor of the church of Smyrna at the time this letter was written. We do not find it mentioned here in this letter. All we have to indicate the pastor here is verse 8 where it says “Unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write.” As we saw in chapter one and the latter verse, the angels were the pastors of the churches.

Reading from history, we see that Polycarp was

pastor of this church at Smyrna. Polycarp was martyred on February 23 in the year 160 A.D. after having been a Christian for 86 years. Now, if you subtract 86 from 168 you find that he became a Christian, or was converted at 82 years of age.

We have preserved for us some of the writings of the writers that lived in that day and time. They are usually found in books called the books of the Fathers. The Anti-Nicene Fathers are some of them. One man by the name of Ignatius, in his writings, says that he visited Polycarp in the year 108 A.D. and that Polycarp was the pastor of the church.

Besides Ignatius, we have three other men who have left us writings that have been compiled today, Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Eusebius. They, along with Ignatius, say that Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, had been made the pastor of this church at Smyrna under the administration of the Apostle John, so that we find that the pastor of this church in Smyrna was a disciple of John. He had been converted under the ministry of

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RUN . . .

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are."Immediately, the choir fled — the deacons fled — and most of the congregation fled. Out of the 2,000 there only remained around 20.

The man who had spoken took off his hood. He then looked at the preacher and said "Okay Pastor, I got rid of all the hypocrites. Now you may begin your service. Have a nice day!"

And the two men turned and walked out. □

TULGA . . .

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ches. As this development went on, the prosperity of the Baptist organizations became more and more important than the preservation of Baptists truth or keeping bright the true Baptist testimony. In England this resulted in the formation of the Baptist Union which long ago compromised with modernism.

In this country, the first comprehensive convention was the Southern Baptist Convention. For years this Convention was a citadel of Baptist orthodoxy and an exponent of the historic Baptist truths. It became rich and increased with goods, it glorified itself, its numbers, and came to feel that they were indeed the children of Abraham. They constructed the strongest Baptist ecclesiastical ma-

chine in America, and soon loyalty to the denominational program became more important than loyalty to the Word of God, and pride in the Baptist name overshadowed the Name which is above every name. Denominational loyalty refused to note the modernism invading their colleges and seminaries and men who raised the alarm were blacklisted by powers that be. Modernism is now entrenched in the centers of power in the Convention, while many orthodox pastors have their faces in the sand and fail to see the coming apostasy.

The Northern Baptist Convention (now the American Baptist Convention) was formed in 1907. It has no binding confession of faith whatever. It has been torn between modernism and fundamentalism for more than a generation. It has steadily decreased in membership. The exodus of the Regular Baptists and later the Conservative Baptists, left the modernists and the middle-of-the-roads in control of the Convention. After literally hundreds of Bible loving Baptist churches and preachers left, then the apologists for the Convention insist that it is more conservative than before — a ridiculous claim. While its publications constantly show their sympathy with the modernism of our times, many Convention pastors are always asking for evidence to prove what is

before their very eyes. The fact that the Convention holds membership in the National Council of Churches, a modernistic and left-wing organization disturbs them little.

In the North, due to the modernism in the Convention, Bible loving Baptists more and more sought fellowship in interdenominational Bible conferences, Bible institutes and faith mission societies. Fundamental Baptists, more than any other group, were the strength of interdenominational fundamentalism, an interdenominationalism which is bogged down in doctrinal confusion, religious sentimentalism and looking kindly on compromisers and even apostates. Fundamental Baptists, deeply involved in interdenominational fundamentalism, now find themselves embracing a false evangelism, a false intellectualism and advocating a false religious unity.

The walls of interdenominationalism are crumbling. The fundamental doctrines of the faith are being undermined by their professed friends. The line of demarcation between believers and unbelievers in the Word of God are constantly breaking down in fundamental circles. Is interdenominational fundamentalism willing to compromise with that modernism against which it has fought? *Little Baptist man, where are you going now?*

BOOZE . . .

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fact, if the preacher is to preach the whole truth, and be fair with the Word of God, he *must* preach against this sin.

I have taken Young's Concordance and other helps, and have made a study of the Bible on the subject. It is indeed revealing! Here one finds scores of direct references, comprising one hundred and sixty-two verses of Scripture. This is more Scripture than one will find on any of the subjects of lying, adultery, swearing, stealing, Sabbath-breaking, cheating, hypocrisy, pride, or even blasphemy.

Below is a summary of these Scriptures for handy reference:

1. Genesis 9:20-26.

Here is the first mentioned drunkenness in the Bible: Note the concomitant immorality — behavior ever since inseparably associated with alcohol consumption.

2. Genesis. 19:30-38.

In this instance drinking resulted in Lot's debauchery of his own daughters.

3. Genesis 27-25.(See **BOOZE** on page 13)

Back to the truths which made Baptists a great people, or down the drain with those who are compromising the faith. This is the hour of decision. □ □



God's Masterpiece Man's Body — #24

More About Vitamins

By Arthur I. Brown

We are now following the process of digestion of food from the moment it enters the mouth until, after the digestive process is completed, it is carried to the millions of cells by that moving cafeteria system which we call the blood stream.

If you have read the immediately preceding articles, you will recall that in my last discussion the meal was entering the first portion of the small intestine, known as the duodenum — given this name because it is twelve inches in length. The food has been ground into small portions by the teeth-mill, moistened and softened by the saliva poured out from the three sets of mouth glands; and the digestive ferment of the saliva, known as ptyalin, has partly digested the starch, assisted by another enzyme, maltase. In the stomach, the meal has been churned by the muscular movements of this strange bag, and the gastric juice through the operation of its enzymes, rennin and lipase, has changed the proteins into peptones and proteoses.

Then the pyloric valve opened and the stomach contents were released. The

glands of the intestine have sent into the blood stream that marvelous hormone messenger, known as secretin, carrying a message to G.H.Q., asking for ample quantities of bile, intestinal juice, and pancreatic juice. We have studied the action of these three fluids on starches, proteins, and fats, converting them into other forms which can be taken in and assimilated by the body cells. Now the mass of changed food mixed with the various digestive juices is known as chyme. It moves slowly along as the process of digestion continues and absorption into the blood takes place.

So that you may understand this complicated and interesting process, let me give you a summary. The foods we eat contain carbohydrates, including sugars and starches, proteins, and fats, mixed with minerals, salts, and water. The carbohydrates are found in cereals, as wheat, rice, corn, oats, and in cereal products, such as bread, cakes, macaroni, potatoes, beans, peas, and fruits. These are all changed in digestion to simple sugars, of which the most important is glucose,

which circulates in the blood after being absorbed. Any excess of supply is built up to the starch glycogen, and stored in the liver until needed. Glucose is taken from the blood by the tissues and undergoes oxidation in the muscle and gland cells, giving rise to carbon dioxide and water.

Proteins are supplied chiefly in meats, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, and to a less extent in certain vegetables, as beans, peas, and nuts. These food proteins, changed by digestion to the simpler compounds, amino-acids, are distributed by the blood and built up by the cells into the new and special proteins of human tissues. Vegetable protein alone will not build normal human cells. Consequently, it is well to include in the diet some animal proteins, such as milk, eggs, or meat.

Fats are contained in butter, cream, egg yolk, bacon, lard, suet, olive oil, etc. These must be changed in digestion before they can be used by the body, and this process already has been briefly described.

Mineral salts are necessary, chiefly the chlorides, carbonates, and phosphates of sodium and potassium. These are

supplied in milk, cereals (especially when the husk is present as in the whole wheat products), and in green vegetables. Salts are important in providing building materials for bones and teeth, also in giving to the blood and other fluids certain necessary ingredients. In addition, they regulate the solution of other substances, and control the acidity and alkalinity of the tissues.

Water plays an important part as tissue builder, being essential to all solution and circulation of materials throughout the body. It is taken in as water, in beverages, and in many cooked foods.

Then we have seen that certain mysterious substances, found in foods, and known as vitamins, are essential to normal nutrition and health in both humans and animals. Vitamin A provides resistance to infection by bacteria. If not present in sufficient amount, the visual purple in the retina is reduced and the individual has difficulty in seeing at night. This vitamin is fat soluble, and heat stable and is found abundantly in cod-liver oil,

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BODY . . .

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butter, raw carrots, cream, eggs, milk, spinach, and water cress.

Vitamin B and its complex known as B1, B2, etc., are important. Its absence leads to loss of appetite, lack of energy, derangement of carbohydrate metabolism, glandular degeneration and atrophy. It is found plentifully in husked barley, white bread, maize, whole grain, white or yellow malt, unpolished rice, string beans, lentils, peas, almonds, peanuts, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, beef liver, pork, yolk of egg, and Brewer's yeast.

Vitamin C prevents scurvy, a disease characterized by painful and tender bones and joints, due to hemorrhage. In this disease the gums are tender, the teeth become loose and are easily pulled out. There is weakness of the muscles and digestion is poor. Vitamin C is water soluble and partially heat resistant. It is found in lemon and orange juice, fresh string beans and peas, cabbage, raw potato, grapefruit, strawberries, ripe tomatoes, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, mushrooms, spinach, and water cress.

Vitamin D regulates the deposition of calcium and phosphorus in bones and teeth. When it is deficient or absent, rickets results. This vitamin is found in butter, fish oil, especially

cod, yolk of eggs and milk. There are several other vitamins, but our knowledge of them is still in the experimental stage.

To understand the meaning of what I am trying to give you, we must have in mind four operations. The first is digestion, or the process of changing the food that it may be absorbed. I have just given you some details of this, and the digested food is moving slowly along inside the lumen of the small intestine. It will not be of any service to the individual unless the second operation of Absorption is working satisfactorily. That means that these digested substances must be taken from the intestine into the blood and lymph. Then there is the wonderful Circulation of the blood which carries the necessary materials to every part of the body. And lastly, the most mysterious process of all, that of Assimilation, the operation which enables the tissue cells to make use of the food which has been conveyed to them — placed on their very doorstep.

Man has not yet been able to penetrate this secret of assimilation which is one phase of metabolism. This metabolism depends on the ceaseless chemical changes which are going on constantly in the living body cells. The latent energy concealed in the food is utilized by the tissue cells in some unknown way, and at the same time heat is

produced, and certain new products formed.

The dictionary tells us that a machine is an apparatus for transforming energy. Certainly the living body meets this requirement, and shows itself to be a machine of remarkable complexity. Think what it has to do constantly, rapidly, and accurately. We know that all matter in the universe is made up of simple substances known as elements. These elements may be combined to form new substances. Some of the commonest elements are the gases, — oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen; and the solids, — carbon, calcium, iron, sulphur, and phosphorus, all found in the various compounds of the body. Some of these compounds are comparatively simple, such as water, which has two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen in its molecule. But when we come to fats and proteins we begin to see something of the enormity of this job of manufacturing compounds. These tiny chemists, working silently and unobtrusively, exhibit the most astonishing skill.

A certain kind of fat, for instance, has in each molecule eighteen atoms of carbon, thirty-six of hydrogen, and two of oxygen; glucose, a simple sugar, has molecules each of which contains six atoms of carbon, twelve of hydrogen, and six of oxygen. The molecules of cellulose, of

wood, paper, and cotton, contain an unknown number of atoms of these three elements.

The protein molecule is so complex that no chemist has yet been able to determine exactly the correct formula of any of them. Hemoglobin, the red coloring protein of the red blood cell, is supposed to have this possible formula: 758 atoms of carbon, 1,203 atoms of hydrogen, three of sulphur, one of iron, and 218 of oxygen. Just imagine the work of the chemists whose job it is to count the number of these atoms and bring them together accurately and do it millions of times without mistake!

On the inside of the intestinal canal — chiefly the small intestine — are millions of tiny fingers, called villi, projecting slightly into the lumen, and in some way they are able to seize the products of digestion, get them into the blood stream and on their way to the countless millions of hungry cells. This process is known as osmosis and as to how it operates little is known.

It appears that all amino-acids, sugar, water, and salts pass through the liver, in which the water and salts are used for various combinations; sugar is changed into glycogen and stored for future use. The liver, when required, can change glycogen back into sugar and send it into

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RECTOR . . .

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of this world (Mt. 25:31-34; Rev. 11:15).

3. And the third to witness is the Church of the Living God. The Lord Jesus Christ in person founded this House during His earthly ministry (Mk. 3:13-14; Lk. 6:12-13). The church differs from the other houses of witness. It is a local assembly (1 Cor. 1:2), and the body of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 12:27); and is by divine will composed of twice-born souls. The House of Seth and the House of Abraham were family affairs, not necessarily composed of born again souls, each preaching betimes the glorious gospel of the Son of God, while the Church of the Living God knows no family lines and embraces the born again of both Jew and Gentile races in its work of carrying on.

The First Church, A Baptist Church

We assert here that the Jerusalem church, founded by the Lord Jesus, was a local Baptist church, the first of its kind in all the ages. Our claim here should surprise no one. Notwithstanding this fact, doubtless some will lift their eyebrows and scowl at our contention. Unless the Scriptures very definitely and very positively so teach, a man would be foolish to enter such a claim. We

here and now invite the reader to follow as we search the Scriptures to see what the divine One has to say about this matter.

In entering this claim, we invite the reader to follow as we trace the source of the name "Baptist," and the divine identification of John as the Baptist, and the significance of the name.

The Source of the Name "Baptist"

When we seek out the source of the divine name, "Baptist," we do not find it stemming from the thought life of men during the ages. Its origin is not rooted in the experience of human beings. Its origin is rooted in the divine.

The Scriptures attest the Lord as being the author of the name. The Holy Spirit, the divine Chronicler of the Word, makes Matthew add the name "Baptist" to the name John (Mt. 3:1-2). The Lord confirms this act by recognizing John as the Baptist (Lk. 7:28). Thus the Lord is the source of the Baptist name.

The Identification of John As the Baptist

It is vitally important in this connection to remember that John did not come as John the Baptist, but came simply as John. Again we appeal "to the word and the testimony."

1. In announcing the

promised birth of John to Zacharias, the angel said, "Thou shalt call his name John" (Lk. 1:13).

2. At the birth of John, neighbors came in and called the babe "Zacharias," but Elizabeth protested, saying, "Not so, but he shall be called John" (Lk. 1:59-60).

Thus the angel, and Elizabeth, and Zacharias all testify that the babe was named "John." Heaven further declares that his name was John. The Scriptures say, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John" (Jn. 1:6), and they also tell us that John preached as John in Bethabara beyond Jordan (Jn. 1:15-17, 29).

In the light of these Scriptures, we must know that he who came to be known as John the Baptist, was sent as John; was born as John; and was commissioned as John.

Now, why did the Lord add the name, the Baptist, to the name John? The name, the Baptist, was obviously added because of his message and his method of baptizing. He was Baptist in these. To illustrate:

He preached Christ as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29, 34). This doctrine is basic because it involves all redemption truth.

He preached against sin and called people to repentance (Mt. 3:2). This doctrine is cardinal because

it recognizes God to be the just One, and all sin is rebellion against Him.

He preached "confession of sins" (Mt. 3:5-6). Thus demanded that sinners be brought to repentance, or be reconciled with God, before they can become members of the family of God and before he would baptize them.

He demanded new creatures in Christ Jesus (Mt. 3:8). Following the confession of their sins and the giving of evidence of this new life, John baptized them. And surely he did so in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19).

4. John's Baptist message and method were confirmed by a Triune God. Observe this fact in the actions of the Son, the Holy Spirit, and the Father.

Christ showed His approval of the message and the baptism of John by demanding and receiving baptism by John (Mt. 3:13-15). Thus He OKed the work of John, whom He later called "the Baptist."

The Holy Spirit showed His approval of John's message and method by appearing on Him in the form of a dove (Mt. 3:16). Thus He OKed the work of John, whom He later called "the Baptist."

The Father also shows His approval upon witnessing the baptism of His Son by John, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am

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“Violators” Appointed to Oversee Human Rights at UN. — China, Zimbabwe and Cuba are among five countries represented on a small United Nations subcommittee that on Monday will begin to discuss which cases of rights violations should be considered by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights at its annual meeting. Just two months ago, a panel of experts investigating how to reform the U.N. said that its primary human rights body suffered from “eroding credibility and professionalism” and that gross rights violators sought membership in order to escape censure. International human rights experts agree that China, Zimbabwe and Cuba are among the world’s most egregious abusers of human rights.

Wal-Mart Counts Some Same-Sex Couples As “Immediate Family Members” — A homosexual advocacy group is applauding Wal-Mart, a company more often vilified than praised by liberals, for including same-sex couples

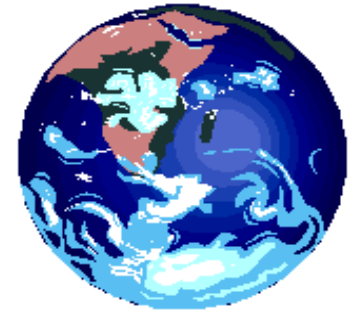
World News Roundup

in its new definition of “immediate family.” The Human Rights Campaign said Wal-Mart defined “immediate family” in a conflict-of-interest policy it filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission this week. That policy says Wal-Mart employees may not use confidential information they get on the job for their own benefit or for the benefit of their “immediate family members.” According to Wal-Mart’s policy, “Immediate family members include (whether by birth, adoption, marriage or Domestic Partnership or Civil Union, if recognized by your state or other local law) your spouse, children, parents, siblings, mothers and fathers-in-law, sons and daughters-in-law and brothers and sisters-in-law.” We hope that with equal responsibility come equal benefits,” said Daryl Herrschaft, deputy director of the Human Rights Commission’s workplace project.

When the Authorities Deny Terrorism. — Anyone following the investigation into the mid-January slaughter of the Armanious family — Copts living in Jersey City, NJ. — knows who the presumptive suspects are: Islamists furious at a Christian Egyptian immigrant who dared to

engage in Internet polemics against Islam and who attempts to convert Muslims to Christianity. The authorities, however, have blinded themselves to the extensive circumstantial evidence, insisting that “no facts at this point” substantiate a religious motive for the murders. Somehow, the prosecutor missed that all four members of this quiet family (husband, wife, two young daughters) were savagely executed in the ritualistic Islamist way (multiple knife attacks and near-beheading); that Jersey City has a record of Islamist activism and jihadi violence; and that an Islamist website carried multiple threats against Hossam Armanious (“we are going to track you down like a chicken and kill you”). Law enforcement seems more concerned about avoiding an anti-Muslim backlash than to finding the culprits.

Swedish Pastor Acquitted After Anti-Gay Sermon — A Swedish pastor convicted of hate crimes for a sermon denouncing homosexuals as a “cancer” was acquitted Friday by an appeals court that said he was protected by the country’s free speech laws. The Goeta Appeals Court said that while Aake Green’s views



of gays can be “strongly questioned,” it was not illegal to offer a personal interpretation of the Bible and urge others to follow it. “The purpose of making agitation against gays punishable is not to prevent arguments or discussions about homosexuality, not in churches or in other parts of society,” the court said. Green, 63, was the first clergyman convicted under Sweden’s tough *hate crimes* laws, which make it a crime to make inflammatory remarks against racial, religious or national groups. The laws were ratified in 2003 to include homosexuals.

Arkansas School Ruled In Contempt. — A Federal judge has ruled the eastern Arkansas school district of DeValls Bluff in contempt of court for allowing Christian prayers at last year’s graduation ceremony. The complaint was originally filed by a former teacher, and the school district was ordered in 2002 to ban “any

(See WNR on page 11)

La Voz Del Desierto

La Verdadera Identidad de María

Por Edgar Javier Félix Rodríguez

Por más de 1500 años aproximadamente, el mundo a través de sus líderes religiosos, le han dado a María una posición y poder que no es cierta, ya que ella fue madre de Jesús (hombre), no de Dios Hijo, porque Dios Hijo no tiene principio ni fin. (Apocalipsis 22:12-13). María era una doncella joven de Nazaret, al igual que todas las señoritas o vírgenes de aquella época, que estaban esperando la promesa hecha en Mateo 1:23.

Estaba profetizado que de una virgen iba a nacer el Mesías llamado el Cristo. María era fiel a los mandatos de Dios y al igual que otras, cumplía con el requisito para ser la seleccionada por Dios, es importante indicar esto porque ella misma reconoce su condición de pecadora como lo somos todos los hombres (en el sentido humano) (Lucas 1:45-49).

María, si Dios le diese la oportunidad de venir a la tierra, no estaría a gusto con la adoración que le están haciendo, mayormente los católicos. La palabra del Señor, o sea la Biblia, cualquiera que sea la versión que se use, que no haya sufrido grandes cambios, expresa con claridad la posición de María. El único que cumple con los requisitos

para ser mediador entre Dios y el hombre, es Jesús el Cristo o Jesucristo hombre, eso lo podemos ver en 1 Timoteo 2:5. Jesús tiene dos naturaleza, la Divina y la humana. María sólo tiene una, la humana.

María, como todas aquellas, que vivían en aquella época, era obediente al Señor en todo, y obviamente seguía el mandato del matrimonio. El matrimonio es una unión sagrada y fiel, instituida por Dios, y si Dios la instituyó es buena. Dios lo hizo así para que continuara la procreación en progreso, los judíos eran bien estrictos en esto y les gustaba procrear.

José, esposo de María, no la conoció como mujer hasta que ella no dio a luz a Jesús (Mateo 1:24-25). María y José después que nació Jesús, procrearon varios hijos e hijas, o sea hermanos carnales de Jesús, estos son: Jacobo, José, Simón y Juda y sus hermanas, no se mencionan los nombres, pero se entiende que hay 3 o más (Mateo 13:55-56).

Un aspecto importante es que Jesús nunca se refirió a María como madre, sino como mujer (Juan 2:3-4). Y es apreferible decir que María no es madre de Dios ni de nosotros. ¿Por qué? Por que

(Vea **MARIA** on la pág. 10)

El Libro Más Peligroso Del Mundo

Por Felix M. González Bulgalá, Redactor

Los cristianos que entablen discusiones con los “testigos” de Jehová deben estar conscientes de que la “Traducción del Nuevo Mundo de las Santas Escrituras” que ellos usan y que felizmente no tiene el nombre de Biblia, está arreglada con el único propósito de apoyar las doctrinas de los Atalaya. El apóstol Pedro advirtió contra todo aquel que intente pervertir y corromper la Palabra escrita de Dios diciendo “... las cuales los indoctos e inconstantes tuercen, como también las otras escrituras, para su propia perdición” (2 Pedro 3:16). De igual forma el apóstol Pablo nos dice que “... no somos como muchos, que medran falsificando la palabra de Dios, sino que con sinceridad, como parte de Dios, y delante de Dios, hablamos en Cristo” (2 Corintios 2:17).

En Juan 1:1 dice que el Verbo, o sea, Jesucristo, “*era Dios*,” pero en la “biblia” atalaya traducen incorrectamente este versículo “*era un dios*” lo que prueba que la traducción de los “testigos” ataca la deidad de Jesucristo, reduciéndolo a la categoría de un pequeño dios de segunda clase, inferior al Padre.

En Mateo 2:11; 14:33; 28:9; Lucas 24:52; Juan 9:37-

38 y Hebreos 1:6 la Traducción del Nuevo Mundo deja fuera la adoración de Jesucristo al cambiarla por “*rendir homenaje*.” ¿Por qué? ¿Será para que sus miembros no se den cuenta de que cuando Jesucristo aceptaba la adoración era porque El es Dios? No hay otra razón.

En Miqueas 5:2 añaden la palabra “*origen*” para decir que Cristo tuvo un origen como los ángeles y el hombre. De esta forma tratan de acomodar en su propia “biblia,” la falsa doctrina de que nuestro Señor Jesucristo es una criatura en vez del Creador eterno.

En Génesis 1:2 se niega la deidad y personalidad el “*Espíritu de Dios*” al cambiarlo por “*fuerza activa*.” Puesto que no creen que el Espíritu Santo sea una persona, ni Dios, sino sólo una fuerza activa impersonal, también eliminan la palabra “*Consolador*” y la cambian por “*ayudante*” en Juan 14:26. En este mismo versículo en vez de escribir “*Espíritu Santo*” con mayúsculas encontramos la referencia al “*espíritu santo*” con letras minúsculas, mientras que al diablo lo nombran con letra mayúscula.

Por cuanto tampoco acep-

(Vea **JEHOVA** en la pág. 10)

MARIA . . .

(Viene de la pág. 9)

Dios no tiene madre, Dios ha existido siempre (Juan 1:1, 14; 5:26), es principio y fin de todas las cosas. Lamentablemente, la iglesia católica romana, ha hecho de María un ídolo, que si ella estuviera aquí se sentiría avergonzada. Estos pasajes presentados reflejan la verdadera identidad de María, la cual amo como a mi hermana en Cristo, y a quien veremos en el cielo, los que hemos aceptado a Jesu-cristo como nuestro único Salvador.

Para concluir, les exhorto a buscar la verdad, que se encuentra en la Palabra de Dios. Dios nos ha capacitado para poder discernir, utilicemos ese don de Dios para comprender el por qué de las cosas. No nos limitemos a creer todo lo que se nos enseña desde pequeño, en cuanto a lo religioso. Cuando nuestros padres nos prohíben algo porque es malo o hace daño, preferimos comprobarlo por cuenta propia, para saber si es verdad, porque no hacer lo mismo con las enseñanzas religiosas. Espero que nadie se ofenda con este trabajo, pero la verdad no se puede ocultar. □

JEHOVA . . .

(Viene de la pág. 9)

tan la doctrina bíblica de la Trinidad. En 1 Juan 5:7 se encuentra otra gran diferencia donde los “testigos” toman parte del versículo 8 y lo ubican en el versículo anterior para aparentar que no han eliminado 1 Juan 5:7 donde omiten las tres personas de la Trinidad.

En Mateo 24:27 Cristo no habla de su segunda “venida,” sino de su “presencia” (la cual creen los “testigos” que vino invisiblemente en el año 1914). Esto fue necesario ya que Cristo no apareció visiblemente en varias de las fechas que ellos han establecido.

Según la Sociedad Atalaya en vez de ser Jesucristo crucificado en una “cruz” su “biblia” dice algo diferente, dice que “*lo fijaron en un madero de tormento*” para apoyar la enseñanza de que Cristo no murió en una cruz sino en un madero levantado sin palo transversal (Juan 19:17-19). El apóstol Pablo nos advirtió repetidas veces de los falsos maestros y los falsos profetas. En su carta a los de Filipos, él llama a estos falsos hermanos “*enemigos de la cruz de*

Cristo” (Filipenses 3:18).

En Gálatas 4:7 nos dice que somos “*herederos de Dios por medio de Cristo,*” por lo tanto la única forma de ser salvos y herederos de Dios es por medio de Cristo. Sin embargo la Traducción del Nuevo Mundo omite la parte donde dice “*por medio de Cristo*” omitiendo así la parte más importante de este versículo.

Los “testigos” han ido muy lejos al insertar el nombre “*Jehová*” en el Nuevo Testamento sustituyendo las palabras “*Señor*” y “*Dios*” por el nombre “*Jehová*” 237 veces. Cuando no aparece ni una sola vez en ninguno de los manuscritos del Nuevo Testamento griego. Mientras que en los siguientes versículos de la Traducción del Nuevo Mundo, “*Cristo*” desaparece y la palabra “*Jehová*” es puesto en su lugar (Colosenses 3:13; 2 Timoteo 2:19).

Parece ser que en Marcos 1:1 la Sociedad Atalaya intenta separar a Jesucristo del evangelio ya que su nombre no aparece en este versículo como tampoco aparece en muchas partes de su traducción adulterada de la Biblia (Hechos 2:30; Mateo 8:29; 23:8; Juan 4:42; 1 Corintios 16:22; Gálatas 1:7; Efesios 3:14; Colosenses 1:2; 2 Tesalonicenses 1:8; 1 Pedro 1:11). Sacar a Cristo de estas escrituras es cambiar el verdadero evangelio de Cristo por otro evangelio.

La traducción del Nuevo Mundo no sólo omite palabras y frases, sino también versículos (Mateo 17:21; 18:11; Marcos 9:44; Lucas 17:36; 24:40; Hechos 8:37 y muchos

más). ¿Ven la diferencia?

Cuando se trata de conseguir los nombres de los miembros que forman parte del comité que hizo la Traducción del Nuevo Mundo, no se obtiene respuesta ya que la Torre del Vigía se niega a darle a sus seguidores los nombres y credenciales del comité de traducción de su “biblia.” ¿Por qué es tan importante que sean anónimos? Es posible que tengan algo que ocultar.

Lo cierto es que ningún traductor reconocido y con credenciales, que tiene conocimientos del hebreo, arameo y el griego bíblico apoya la Traducción del Nuevo Mundo, por la sencilla razón de que añade, quita y cambia la Palabra de Dios para su propia conveniencia (Apocalipsis 22:18-19).

De hecho, antes del 1950 ellos usaban un ejemplar de la versión Reina Valera (porque tiene el nombre Jehová en todo el Antiguo Testamento); pero afrontaban el problema vergonzoso de tratar de negar la Trinidad y deidad de Cristo con la Biblia que cargaban en sus manos. Por lo tanto decidieron solucionar este problema en el año 1950 donde la Sociedad Atalaya dejó de usar nuestra Biblia (Versión Antigua Reina Valera) para anunciar y seguir “*otro evangelio diferente*” titulándola “*La Traducción del Nuevo Mundo de las Santas Escrituras*” (Gálatas 1:6-9).

Si el cristiano sigue prácticamente ignorando las actividades de los falsos testigos de Jehová, estará poniendo en peligro a un sinnúmero de almas; por tanto, despertemos a sus perversiones de la Escritura y estemos firmes en la defensa de “... la fe que ha sido una vez dada a los santos” (Judas 3). ■

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WNR . . .

(Continued from page 8)

endorsements of a particular religion, as violates the First Amendment.”

* * *

La Quinta Inn Evicts Abortion Practitioner. —

The national corporate office of La Quinta Inns has asked a Wichita-based hotel to prevent staff from the office of late-term abortion practitioner George Tiller from using the facility as a staging area for women having abortions. The Wichita La Quinta Inn had offered discounted rates for women traveling to the Midwestern city to obtain late-term abortions. Tiller’s staff also used the hotel as a “labor annex” to his abortion facility. The late-term abortion procedures take 3-4 days to complete and staff from his abortion business would stay at La Quinta with the women to monitor them during the abortion process. According to Operation Rescue, which unveiled the activities at La Quinta, the national corporate office sent an investigator to Wichita to look into the complaints. The representative discovered that the local La Quinta was renting rooms to Tiller’s staff in order to provide monitoring and follow-up abortion services. La Quinta Inn corporate representative

(See **WNR** on page 15)**RECTOR . . .**

(Continued from page 7)

well pleased” (Mt. 3:17). So the Father, by acknowledging His pleasure in His Son and His Son’s act of being baptized by John, also OKed the message and the method of John, whom the Holy Spirit and His Son later called “the Baptist.”

According to the witness of these three we can but conclude that John was given the name “the Baptist” because of his message and his method, and we can but conclude that the disciples won unto the Lord and baptized by “the Baptist” must be of the same faith and practice as John. Accordingly, the baptized converts, brought to the Lord by John, were Baptist saints.

5. When Christ was ready to organize His church, He went up into a mountain and called unto Him His disciples, converts won and baptized by John the Baptists (Mk. 3:13-14; Lk. 6:12-13; Acts 1:21-22). According to the Scriptures, we must conclude that John won and made disciples for Christ to use. This is disclosed in the following testimony of John:

“I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias” (Jn. 1:23).

“I baptize with water; but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is who coming after me is preferred before

me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose” (Jn. 1:26-27).

“He must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn. 3:30).

Thus John puts the Lord ahead of himself to be a worker for the Lord.

Since the disciples out of whom the Lord organized His church were baptized converts of John; and since the Triune God had previously confirmed the witness and the work of John; and since the Lord had added the name “the Baptist” to the name “John”; and since disciples, won and baptized by John, obviously embraced the same faith that John embraced, and approved the same method John practiced, then they had to be Baptists, even as John. Accordingly, we can but conclude that the Lord organized His church out of Baptists. The first church was a Baptist church.

The Significance of the Name “Baptist”

The Lord does not choose and use names loosely. The word “Baptist” had definite significance with the Lord, and its meaning was surely found in the message and the method of John.

The name “Baptist” is a symbol of blood redemption with all of its attendant truth. To verify this symbolism, the Lord called John, who preached redemption truth and baptized by burial in water, “the

Baptist” and this burial, practiced by John the Baptist, showed forth the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the which would transpire during the days ahead. So John the Baptist’s baptism was a pictorial of blood redemption.

The name “Baptist” stands for what John stood for. He stood for blood redemption, for the Saviorhood and the Lordship of Jesus Christ, for repentance toward God for sin, for the confession of one’s own iniquity, for a new creature in Christ Jesus, for the immersion of believers in Christ, and for the whole of heaven’s work on earth.

The name “Baptist” then stands for salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, for blood cleansing and pardon, for repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, for the new birth from above, and for the Saviorhood and the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The name “Baptist” centers all authority and all power and all justice and all mercy in the name of Jesus Christ. Salvation comes only in and through the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 4:12).

We, Baptists, have a mighty heritage in the name the Lord gave us. May we never betray it. □

**Don’t Put A Question
Mark Where God Put
A Period**



Thinking About the Brain

The following is an excerpt from the article "Thinking About the Brain" by Dr. Don DeYoung and Dr. Richard Bliss, copyright 2004, Institute for Creation Research:

"The adult brain weighs about 1350 grams, just

three pounds, yet it handles the information of 1000 supercomputers. The fundamental unit within the brain is the neuron, or nerve cell. Each cell, about 10-6 meter in diameter, contains a nucleus and branching fibers called dendrites and axons. When a cell 'fires,' it sends electrochemical impulses along its axon extension to neighboring neurons. Our brain contains about 10 billion neurons

(10¹⁰). During the first nine months of life, these neurons form at the astounding rate of 25,000 per minute. ... Each neuron is in dendritic contact with perhaps 10,000 other neurons. The total number of neurological interconnections is on the order of 10¹⁴ (100 trillion). This number is equivalent to all the leaves on all the trees of a vast forest covering half of the U.S. The total

length of the nerve dendrites in an adult brain is over 100,000 miles! ... the brain holds at least 10¹⁴ bits (binary digits) of information. Actually, it is a much greater number, since the neurons also show intermediate firing states, somewhat like a light-dimmer switch. The storage capacity of this supercomputer [the Cray-2]

(See **BRAIN** on page 15)

A Preacher On the Fence

The following is an old poem, but I do not know the author or the original source. I first heard it in July 1982, when Perry F. Rockwood read it as he was preaching a sermon entitled "New Evangelical Dreamers" at the 10th annual Fundamental Bible Conference. — FBIS

From out the millions of the earth
 God often calls a man
 To preach the Word
 And for the Truth to take a royal stand.
 'Tis sad to see him shun the cross,
 Nor stand in its defense;
 Between the fields of right and wrong,
 A preacher on the fence.

Before him are the souls of men
 Bound for heaven or hell;
 An open Bible in his hand,
 And yet he will not tell
 All the truth that's written there;
 To them 'twould be an offense.
 The joys of heaven, the woes of hell.
 A preacher on the fence

Now surely God has called a man
 To battle for the right;
 'Tis his to ferret out the wrong,
 And turn on us the light.
 And yet he dare not tell the truth;
 He fears the consequence;
 The most disgusting thing on earth
 Is a preacher on the fence.

If he should stand up for the wrong,
 The right he'd not defend.
 If he should stand up for the right,
 The wrong he would offend.
 His mouth is closed; he cannot speak
 For freedom or against.
 Great God, please deliver us
 From a preacher on the fence!

But soon both sides will find him out,
 And brand him as a fraud.
 A coward who dares not to please the devil or
 his God.
 Oh Lord, free us from fear of man;
 From cowardly pretense;
 Cleanse out the dross and fear of loss,
 And keep us off the fence!

Modern Technology

A cowboy was tending his herd in a remote pasture when suddenly a brand-new BMW advanced out of a dust cloud towards him.

The driver, a young man in a Brioni suit, Gucci shoes, Ray Ban sunglasses, YSL tie, leans out the window and asks the cowboy, "If I tell you exactly how many cows and calves you have in your herd, will you give me a calf?"

The cowboy looks at the man, obviously a yuppie, then looks at his peacefully grazing herd and calmly answers, "Sure. Why not?"

The yuppie parks his car, whips out his Dell notebook computer, connects it to his AT&T cell phone, surfs to a NASA page on the Internet, where he calls up a GPS satellite navigation system to get an exact fix on his location which he then feeds to another NASA satellite that scans the area in an ultra-high-resolution photo. The young man then opens the digital photo in Adobe Photoshop and exports it to an image processing facility in Hamburg, Germany. Within seconds, he receives an email on his Palm Pilot that the image has been

processed and the data stored. He then accesses a MS-SQL database through an ODBC connected Excel spreadsheet with hundreds of complex formula. He uploads all of this data via an email on his Blackberry and, after a few minutes, receives a response. Finally, he prints out a full-color, 150-page report on his hi-tech, miniaturized HP LaserJet printer and finally turns to the cowboy and says, "You have exactly 1,586 cows and calves."

"That's right. Well, I guess you can take one of my calves," says the cowboy. He watches the young man select one of the animals and looks on amused as the young man stuffs it into the trunk of his car.

Then the cowboy says to the young man, "Hey, if I can tell you exactly what your business is, will you give me back my animal?"

The young man thinks about it for a second and then says, "Okay, why not?"

"You're a democrat consultant" says the cowboy.

"Wow! That's correct," says the yuppie, "but how did you guess that?"

"No guessing required." answered the

cowboy. "You showed up here even though nobody called you. You want to get paid for an answer I already knew, to a question I never asked; and you don't know anything about my business. Now give me back my dog. □ □

BOOZE . . .

(Continued from page 4)

Isaac was drinking wine when he blessed Esau.

Express Command

4. Leviticus 10:9. Here is an express command not to drink.

5. Numbers 6:3. No Nazarite should ever drink wine or liquor.

6. Deuteronomy 21:20. Drinking leads to stubbornness, rebellion, and gluttony by young men; and brings dishonor to parents.

7. Deuteronomy 29:2-6. Abstinence assures better knowledge of God.

8. Judges 13:4, 7, 14. Samson's mother, an example to all womanhood, was commanded to drink no wine. Was alcohol recognized even then as a protoplasmic poison, injuring posterity in the parents?

9. 1 Samuel 1:14-15. Hannah, an example of all honored motherhood, practiced total abstinence.

10. 1 Samuel 25:33, 36-38. Nabal, rich but churlish man who opposed David, died at the end of a drunken spree.

11. 2 Samuel 11-13. Only by strong drink could David lead Uriah into the trap which cost him his life.

Leads To Murder

12. 2 Samuel 13:28-29. Ammon, while in a drunken brawl, was murdered by his brother Absalom.

13. 1 Kings 16:8-10. While a king was "drinking himself drunk" in his own home, one of his captains conspired against him and slew him.

14. 1 Kings 20:13-21. No drinking army can hope to win battles. While Ben-Hadad and thirty-two other kings were "drinking themselves drunk" in their pavilions, a small band of Israel's men fell upon the Syrians and put them to flight.

15. Esther 1:5-22. Drink wrecks homes and separates man and wife. At a drinking party which lasted a week, King Ahasuerus drunkenly subjected his queen to the beastly gaze of inebriated nobles and thus brought on the separation of the royal husband and wife.

16. Job 1:13-19. The children of Job were drinking wine when blown away in a cyclone.

17. Proverbs 4:17. Through drinking the wicked become violent. They are bad enough at best, but drink leads them to violence.

18. Proverbs 20:1.

(See BOOZE on page 14)
BOOZE . . .

(Continued from page 13)

No wise man will take wine or liquor.

Leads To Poverty

19. Proverbs 21:17; 23:21. Strong drink leads to poverty.

20. Proverbs 23:29-30. Strong drink produces woes, sorrow, contentions, babbling, wounds without cause, redness of eyes.

21. Proverbs 23:30. Young men should shun the company of drunkards.

22. Proverbs 23:31. We are urged not to look upon intoxicants.

23. Proverbs 23:32. The Word of God says it hurts every one who drinks: "It bites like a snake and stings like an adder."

24. Proverbs 23:33. It fills men's minds with adulterous and impure thoughts.

25. Prov. 23:33. It produces vain talk "every idle word" of which must be accounted for at the judgment.

26. Proverbs 23:34. It brings on insecurity.

27. Proverbs 23:35. It brings on insensibility, which paves the way for every evil and dangerous act of the drunkard.

Habit Forming

28. Proverbs 23:35. It is habit-forming; one drink always calls for another.

29. Proverbs 31:4-5. It is not for kings, nor

presidents, nor officials to drink.

30. Proverbs 31:6-7. The only sanction given in Old Testament times for the use of strong drink was that it might be used as a medicine or anesthetic for those about to die. Let no one construe this as a command to take strong drink. We now have far better medicines and anesthetics than whiskey, wine, or beer.

31. Ecclesiastes 2:3. The writer of Ecclesiastes tried strong drink, but in the end was forced to acknowledge that it, too, is vanity.

32. Ecclesiastes 1:17. Blessings are promised to the temperate and abstaining nation.

33. Isaiah 5:11-12. Woe to the drunkards.

34. Isaiah 5:22. More woes to them that drink wine.

35. Isaiah 22:13. Drinking and carnality go together.

36. Isaiah 24:9. Strong drink bitter to them that drink it.

37. Isaiah 28:1. Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim.

38. Isaiah 28:3. The pride of drunkards will be trodden down.

Erred Through Drink

39. Isaiah 28:7. Prophets and priests erred through drink.

40. Isaiah 28:7. Prophets and priests put out of the way by drink.

41. Isaiah 28:27. Prophets and priests finally swallowed up by drink.

42. Isaiah 28:7. Drinking brings on spiritual blindness.

43. Isaiah 56:9-12. Rebuke to drinking church leaders.

44. Jeremiah 35:5-6, 8, 14. Total abstinence of the Rechabites cited as examples of obedience on the part of God's people.

45. Ezekiel 44:21. Priests are not to drink wine.

46. Daniel 1:5, 8, 16; 10:3. God honored Daniel because he abstained from the king's wine. Daniel the man was true to the home training he had received as a boy.

47. Daniel 5:1. Belshazzar exhibited as an example of a leader who drank and taught his people to drink. What of America's leaders?

48. Daniel 5:2, 23. What becomes of a nation when its women resort to drinking?

49. Daniel 5:3. Belshazzar's sacrilege in using sacred temple vessels for liquor glasses.

50. Daniel 5:5-9, 25-29. Ruin and downfall is certain to come to nations when their rulers and leaders cause them to drink.

51. Amos 2:8. Wine of the condemned.

52. Amos 2:12. Bootleg liquor given to the priests.

Opressors Drink

53. Amos 4:1. Op-

pressors of the poor and needy call for their liquor.

54. Amos 6:6. Drinkers are not concerned about God, nor about the welfare of the people.

55. Hosea 3:1. Part of the degradation of Hosea's wife was incurred by drink.

56. Hosea 4:11. Strong drink and immorality go hand in hand.

57. Hosea 7:5. King and people reprovved because of their drinking.

58. Joel 1:5. Drunkards called to awake from their drinking.

59. Joel 3:3. Young womanhood sold for the price of strong drink.

60. Nahum 1:10. Drunkards to be destroyed.

61. Habakkuk 2:5. Strong drink is a transgression against God's law.

62. Habakkuk 2:15. Wrong to give one's neighbor strong drink.

Leads to Shame

63. Habakkuk 2:16. Strong drink leads to shame and humiliation.

64. Matthew 24:49. Drunkards are warned against the return of Christ and His judgment.

65. Luke 1:15. Greatness of John the Baptist linked with his total abstinence.

66. Luke 12:45. Christ warns against becoming enmeshed in drink evils.

67. Luke 21:34. Warning against drunken-

(See **BOOZE** on page 15)
BOOZE . . .

(Continued from page 14)

ness and the cares of this life.

68. Romans 13:13. All are admonished to walk honestly and not in rioting and drunkenness.

69. Romans 14:21. Drinking will cause one's brother to stumble.

70. 1 Corinthians 6:10. No drunkard shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

71. 1 Corinthians 11:21-22. The Lord's Supper no place for feasting and wine drinking.

72. Galatians 5:21. Revelers in drunkenness shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

73. Ephesians 5:18. Here is a direct command not to become drunk.

74. 1 Thessalonians 5:7. Sobriety, as opposed to drunkenness, is enjoined upon the Thessalonians. □

BRAIN . . .

(Continued from page 12)

is 1,000 times less than that of the human brain. ... Note that the potential brain capacity is estimated as at least equivalent to that of 25 million volumes, a 500-mile-long bookshelf! ... The beautiful complexity of our brain contrasts sharply with all simplistic, secular attempts to explain it away. Our brain remains a frontier of science; we actually know very little about it, but what is known is overwhelming. In addition,

every single neuronal cell within the brain contains a trillion atoms. This is like a microscopic universe within each cell, complete with order, purpose, and interdependence of components. ... The brain truly provides an ultimate design challenge for evolution. It should be a cause for humble praise in considering the wonder of the mind. It is a privilege to dedicate these minds to the Creator." □

WNR . . .

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Teresa Ferguson told the pro-life group that the corporate office also told Tiller to stop the practice, which she said was illegal. Ferguson also told Tiller that he could no longer use the hotel's name in literature or on his web site to promote discounted rates or abortion services.

Child Euthanasia Already Happens Everywhere, Says Dutch Hospital. — The disclosure by a Dutch hospital that it has carried out euthanasia on terminally ill newborn babies has shocked pro-life groups, but the institution claims it is merely trying to bring into the open a practice already happening around the world. The Groningen Academic Hospital is asking the Dutch government to approve guidelines legalizing euthanasia on newborns

described as enduring "unbearable suffering" and with "no hope of a future." The hospital has admitted doing so in the case of three babies last year. In a statement issued Friday, Groningen pediatrics head Dr. A. Verhagen said that "worldwide, the U.S. included, many deaths among newborns are based on end-of-life decisions, after physicians reached the conclusion that there was no quality of life." — CNS

ACLU and AUSCS Sue School Board Over "Intelligent Design." — A federal lawsuit filed December 14 contends that "intelligent design," if presented in public school science classes will violate students' religious liberty by promoting particular religious beliefs under the guise of science education. The lawsuit, filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for the Separation of Church and State in behalf of eleven parents, challenges a Pennsylvania school board's decision requiring biology teachers to present intelligent design as an alternative to the theory of evolution. Intelligent design is a theory arguing that some features of the natural world are best explained as the products of an intelligent cause rather than evolution. The ACLU-AUSCS lawsuit argues that intelligent design

is a religious argument that falls outside the realm of science. Pennsylvania's Dover Area School Board is the first school district in the United States to require the teaching of intelligent design.

Just Call It Eurabia. — I used to wonder why the Jews of Europe, particularly German Jews, didn't flee the Holocaust that would destroy six million of them by the end of World War II. Some did, of course, but many simply could not conceive that their fellow countrymen would conspire to kill them. In a similar fashion, many Americans still want to believe that Islamists, the extreme Muslims characterized by the Taliban and al Qaeda, are just a minority of greater Islam. The wish that we will be embraced by those to whom we have brought freedom and democracy ignores the long history of Islam's quest for world domination. — Alan Caruba. □

The conscience of the natural man is blurred, though not extinguished, by sin, but in the Christian it is enlightened by the Word of God, and quickened by the Holy Spirit.

Fundamental Baptist Information Service

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China Still Enforcing One-child Policy.

— The following is from “U.S. says China forces abortions,” Chicago Sun-Times, Dec. 15: “Despite some changes, China’s one-child family planning program remains a source of coercion, forced abortions, infanticide and perilously imbalanced boy-girl ratios, State Department officials said Tuesday. Testimony before the House International Relations Committee focused on a Shanghai woman who, since her second pregnancy in the late 1980s, has been assigned to psychiatric wards, coerced into an abortion, and removed from her job. She is reportedly subject to torture in a labor camp. Mao Hengfeng, said Rep. Christopher Smith (R-N.J.), ‘is the most egregious example of China’s mistreatment of women who do not comply with China’s draconian policies, but there are thousands of other victims.’ China in the 1970s launched a one-child policy to slow the growth of its population, now at 1.3 billion. Couples who have unsanctioned children have been subject to heavy fines, job losses and forced

sterilization. There have been some modifications, allowing second children for ethnic populations and rural families whose first child is a girl. In 2002, under U.S. pressure, Beijing enacted a national law aimed at reducing coercion.”

* * *

Billy Graham Voted Most Trusted Spokesman For Christianity.

— in a survey of U.S. pastors a Barna poll found that Billy Graham is the most trusted spokesperson for Christianity. The survey involved 600 pastors from three broad categories: Pentecostal, Baptist, and Mainline Protestant (such as Episcopal, United Methodist, and Presbyterian Church USA). Graham received 58% of the vote. Following Graham at a distant 2nd and 3rd were James Dobson (20%) and Rick Warren (14%). Graham was also voted as the person having the most influence on churches, which is doubtless true. For 50 years Billy Graham has been at the forefront of encouraging churches to disobey the Word of God for the sake of pragmatism.

New Interconfessional Dutch Bible. — The new interconfessional Dutch Bible illustrates the radical ecumenical nature of the United Bible Societies today. It was produced by the Netherlands Bible Society, the Flanders Bible Society, the Flemish Bible Foundation, in cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church. Belgian Catholic Cardinal Daneels was the keynote speaker at a presentation ceremony for Queen Beatrix. Dutch is spoken by 22 million people in Europe and is also spoken in Suriname, Antilles, South Africa, and Namibia. The Dutch Statenvertaling version was published in 1637, but the old Protestant Received Text translation that so plainly exposed Rome’s heresies is no longer printed by the Bible societies.

* * *

Germany Targeting Homeschoolers.

— The following is from WorldNetDaily, Jan. 21: “German Christians who choose to homeschool their children are coming under continued enforcement action by the government, with one group of families fearful they may lose custody of their kids. According to Richard Guenther, an American expatriate who lives in Germany, several families in the town of Paderborn currently ‘are being heavily persecuted for their faith.’... Guenther says if the parents’

attempt to negotiate with government officials fails, the parents could have their children removed from their homes. Thirteen children are threatened with such action. ... ‘Christian family values are being replaced by the state’s moral values, which are designed to create autonomous individuals. The authority of the parents is not being recognized. ... Here, the state is replacing the Christian worldview with those of the New Age, particularly the use of its psychological techniques and occultism. ... Fourth-grade students are shown videos of sexual intercourse ... Homosexuality must be accepted as normal and the children are encouraged to examine themselves as to their own sexual orientation. Darwin’s evolution theory must be accepted as truth.’ As WorldNetDaily reported, seven homeschooling fathers from the Twelve Tribes Community in Klosterzimmern spent several days in jail last fall for refusing to pay fines that were imposed on them for failing to send their children to government schools. Other German families have escaped the nation to keep from having their children seized. ... Thomas Wriessnig, head of Cultural Department of the German Embassy, said, ‘Daily contact with other

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students from all walks of life promotes tolerance, encourages dialogue among people of different beliefs and cultures, and helps students to become responsible citizens.' Wriessnig said "Germany had to counter the rise of parallel societies that are based on religion" and force religious minorities to 'remain open and engage in dialogue with those who think differently.'" This is the philosophy of the New World Order.

* * *

Blaming Christians For the Tsunami Disaster.

— Some Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims are blaming Christians for December's tsunami disaster. Hindu leaders in India are blaming the tragedy on the recent arrest of a popular Hindu leader (on the charge of murder) and on Christians and are warning that the aid efforts might be used for proselytism. A national missionary in Sri Lanka reports that Buddhists in one area destroyed by the tsunami are "cursing the Lord Jesus, claiming He destroyed them." This area, Galle City, was the scene of anti-Christian propaganda on Christmas day. Black flags, banners, and posters against Jesus Christ covered a one-kilometer-long bus stand, which was destroyed

the next day by the flood. Some Muslims, of course, are blaming Americans and Israel for the disaster.

* * *

BBC Producer Resigns Over Blasphemy.

— Senior BBC radio producer Antony Pitts has resigned in protest of the broadcast of the blasphemous musical "Jerry Springer — The Opera." In his resignation letter he said: "Having now watched the show in its entirety and the hour-long introductory broadcast, my conclusion was that the blasphemy was far, far worse than even the most detailed news reports had led me to believe. ... I feel a corporate responsibility for what has happened — aggravated by the fact that the BBC did not give sufficient attention to the overwhelming level of listener protest in advance." Examples of the blasphemy included "the ridiculing of the figure of Jesus on the cross, dressed to imply sexual perversion" and "the repeated mockery of the wounds of Jesus, linked to acts of crudeness." Pitts quoted legal authorities that defined blasphemy as "contemptuous, reviling, scurrilous or ludicrous matter relating to God, Jesus Christ, or the Bible" ("BBC Producer Resigns," *The Guardian*, Jan. 12). We applaud Mr. Pitts' courage of conviction. The hypocritical BBC would not

dream of broadcasting something along these lines dealing with Mohammed.

* * *

Persecution Continues In Vietnam, Contrary To Communist Propaganda.

— A lengthy report in the Jan. 18th World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty News documents the ongoing persecution of Christians by the communist government of Vietnam. Nearly 300 Christian leaders have been incarcerated since April 2004 and at least 60 Protestant leaders "languish in the infamous Ba Sao Prison in Nam Ha Province

on long prison sentences." Hundreds of churches have been forcibly disbanded and government campaigns have sought to force Christians to renounce their faith. The report also describes the violent treatment of Mennonite prisoners and the distressing state of a 21-year-old female Mennonite prisoner, Le Thi Hong Lien, who has become deranged through physical and mental abuse. In the midst of this brutal persecution, the Vietnamese government is putting on a propaganda campaign for western governments in an attempt to maintain economic benefits, pre-

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Mission Conference

March 27-30, 2005

Central Baptist Church

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L. M. Potts, Pastor

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tending that religious freedom exists.

* * *

Social Work Without Evangelism?

— A Jan. 17 article in the Denver Post, titled “Proselytizing During Relief Efforts Divides,” described the different opinions among various Christian social work groups toward the subject of evangelism. It observed that the relief arms of the Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Methodist denominations “follow a Red Cross code of conduct against furthering a particular religious or political viewpoint.” This viewpoint is not limited to Catholic or liberal Protestant work. It is shared by some influential evangelical organizations, including Compassion International and World Vision. In 1966 the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (an arm of the National Association of Evangelicals in America) adopted this statement on social action: “Evangelical social action will include, *whenever possible*, a verbal witness to Jesus Christ.” The World Vision web site proclaims: “In all World Vision projects, staff are ready to give a reason for their hope “*whenever appropriate and desired by the community*.” In many countries where we work,

formal public evangelism is forbidden by government policy and *we respect this*.” Glenda Moore, a social worker with the Church of the Nazarene, said in 2001 of their work in India following an earthquake, “We know it’s not a Christian area, and *we are sensitive not to spread the gospel*” (**Christianity Today**, April 23, 2001). What eternal good does it do to help people with their physical needs if they die without Christ? The bottom line is that the Lord gave one Great Commission and that is the preaching of the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Matt. 28:18-20, etc.). The Apostles did not involve themselves in social-political action.

* * *

Islam Shaping A New Europe.

— A lengthy report in the Chicago Tribune for Dec. 19 was titled “Islam Shaping a New Europe.” Following are some excerpts: “Anyone wondering how the struggle for the soul of Islam could play out in America should look to Europe. ... For the first time in history, Muslims are building large and growing minorities across the secular Western world — nowhere more visibly than in Western Europe, where their numbers have more than doubled in the past two decades. The impact is unfolding from

Amsterdam to Paris to Madrid, as Muslims struggle — with words, votes and sometimes violence—to stake out their place in adopted societies. ... By mid century, at least one in five Europeans will be Muslim.... >From the Paris suburbs 25 years ago, Shiite Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini planned a revolution that ultimately overthrew the Shah of Iran and, in turn, helped inspire a global Islamic revival. The fallout is easily visible today as the children and grandchildren of Muslim immigrants in Europe increasingly embrace religion. In France and England, polls show greater commitment to daily prayers, mosque attendance and fasting during Ramadan than there was a decade ago. ... Within six years the three largest cities in the Netherlands will be majority Muslim. ... A 2002 poll of British Muslims found that 44 percent believe attacks by Al Qaeda are justified as long as ‘Muslims are being killed by America and its allies using American weapons.’ ... The potentially serious effects of that radicalization became clear on March 11, when coordinated bombings of four commuter trains in Madrid killed 191 people and wounded more than 1,800. More recently, the Netherlands is in turmoil after the brutal killing of Theo van Gogh, who made a controversial film about violence against women in Islamic societies. ... Mo-

hamed Atta, one of the Step. 11 hijackers, lived for some time in Germany.”

* * *

New City Office In Austin, Texas, Consecrated By A Witch and Other Pagan Religious Leaders.

— On January 13 the new City Hall in Austin, Texas, was consecrated by a hodge-podge of religious leaders, including representatives of Wicca, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Bahai, Sufi, Unitarian, and Christian Church. Wicca High Priestess Susan Pinsonneault of the Covenant of the Goddess added her pagan chant to the confusion (American Statesman, Jan. 14).

* * *

The Dead Sea Scrolls Debate Continues.

— As of this year there are 13 different theories about who deposited the Dead Sea Scrolls in the caves near Qumran where they were discovered in the 1940s and 50s. The most popular is that they belonged to an ascetic and secretive Jewish cult called the Essenes who lived in a nearby community. The latest theory, by archeologists Yitzhak Magen and Yuval Peleg, is that the ruins uncovered near the caves were that of a pottery making facility

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that had no relationship to the scrolls. There are also contradictory theories about the age of the scrolls, some dating them to B.C. with others dating them to A.D. The Dead Sea Scrolls, which include portions (mostly fragments) of every book of the Old Testament except Esther, are used by modern textual critics to "correct" the Hebrew Masoretic text, but this flies in the face of divine preservation, for they lay hidden away for most of the church age. Modern textual critics would have us believe that the preserved Word of God was hidden in the sands of Egypt and in strange monasteries such as St. Catherine's, with its room full of unburied skulls, and in the Pope's library; but Bible believers know better than this. The New Testament has not been preserved in its disuse but in its use, by Bible-believing churches as described by the Lord Jesus in Mat. 28:19-20.

* * *

Beware of C.S. Lewis. — The late British author C.S. (Clive Staples) Lewis (1898-1963) is extremely popular with evangelicals today. Though Lewis died in 1963, sales of his books have risen to two million a year. In a Christianity Today reader's poll in 1998, Lewis was

rated the most influential writer. In an article commemorating the 100th anniversary of Lewis's birth, J.I. Packer called him "our patron saint." Christianity Today said Lewis "has come to be the Aquinas, the Augustine, and the Aesop of contemporary Evangelicalism" ("Still Surprised by Lewis," **Christianity Today**, Sept. 7, 1998). Lewis claimed that followers of pagan religions can be saved without personal faith in Jesus Christ: "There are people in other religions who are being led by God's secret influence to concentrate on those parts of their religion which are in agreement with Christianity, and who thus belong to Christ without knowing it ... For example a Buddhist of good will may be led to concentrate more and more on the Buddhist teaching about mercy and to leave in the background (though he might still say he believed) the Buddhist teaching on certain points. Many of the good Pagans long before Christ's birth may have been in this position" (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, pp. 176-177).

* * *

The Labyrinth: Pagan Spirituality. — Labyrinths, which have their roots in pagan "spirituality," are increasing in popularity among evangelicals today. The Weatherly Heights

Baptist Church (Southern Baptist) in Huntsville, Alabama, has a permanent labyrinth of stones on its grounds. Simpson University in Redding, California, associated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, has a labyrinth. Bethany Mennonite Church, Bridgewater Corners, Vermont, has a labyrinth in its lawn. Michele Hershberger, chair of the Bible department at Hesston College (Mennonite) uses labyrinths. The labyrinth is a circular pattern with a path that winds its way to the center and which is used as a tool for prayer and meditation. Used by pagan religions for thousands of years, the labyrinth was borrowed from paganism and "Christianized" by the Roman Catholic Church as part of its desperate search for spirituality apart from the Bible. God forbids His people to adopt things from the devil's program and to associate with pagan things such as labyrinths. □

BODY . . .

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the blood stream, where it is used chiefly to give energy to muscles. The digested fats take another route and are picked up by a set of lymph capillaries, the lacteals which are of infinite smallness. This milky fluid, called chyle, finally reaches the thoracic duct away up in the side of the neck where it is emptied

into the blood stream through a large vein, and so distributed to the tissues of the body by way of the general circulation. Can you imagine anything more miraculous than the intricate processes I have just described? There is no possible explanation of them but the wisdom and power of a personal God.

For several months now, I have been passing on to you spiritual food. Have you assimilated it? Food for our bodies will do us no good unless we have power to absorb; and in fact, if this power is lacking, much trouble may be caused by food. You have listened to me, as I have read from God's Word the wonderful words of life. I have so often told you of the Lord Jesus Christ, the

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Quit griping about your church; if it was perfect, you couldn't belong.

If the church wants a better pastor, it only needs to pray for the one it has.

God Himself does not propose to judge a man until he is dead. So why should you?

Prayer: Don't give God instructions — just report for duty!

REVELATION . . .

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the Apostle John. Now if he had been saved or converted in the year A.D. 82, and if he had been a Christian for some 14 years, we see that he had been saved some 14 years at the time he pastored the church at Smyrna, and when this letter was written to the church. John went to Asia in 80 A.D., so that means that he was saved approximately 2 years after the Apostle John had gone to Smyrna.

As John writes these words, he is simply writing the words of the Lord when he tells of the persecution that is to fall upon this church at Smyrna. He says unto them, "*I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty*" (Rev. 2:9). He also says, "*Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried*" (Rev. 2:10a). Furthermore He also says, "*And ye shall have tribulation ten days*" (Rev. 2:10b). He then exhorts them saying, "*Be thou faithful unto death*" (Rev. 2:10c). So the church at Smyrna represents that time around 170 A.D. to about 315 A.D. which is to be a time of intense persecution.

If you read your history, you find that this was true. The Jews and the Pagans combined in accusing the Christians, and Polycarp, as the pastor of this church at Smyrna, of

hostility to the State. When the time came for his trial, we find that the Jews united with his accusers in demanding that he be thrown to the lions. They were not able to do that, so failing in that, they sought to have him burned alive, and this was done. History points out that the Jews helped to gather the fagots as fuel for the fire in which he was to burn to death. History also records that they even gathered the sticks on the Sabbath day, which as you know a Jew would not do on the Sabbath Day — a violation of the Sabbath. By this we see the intense hatred they had for Polycarp.

As he was bound on that stake, with the fagots all around, with them ready to light the match to the fagots, they gave him the opportunity to recant. He was offered his freedom if he would simply confess that Caesar was Lord. But here's what he said, and I quote verbatim: "80 and 6 years have I served Christ and He has done me nothing but good. How then could I curse Him, my Lord and my Savior."

They took the match, lit the fire, and Polycarp, the pastor of the church in Smyrna, was burned alive at the stake. As the flames rose up round about him, and as they began to burn him, those standing near by said they heard him pray, "I thank thee that Thou hast graciously thought me worthy of this day and this

hour, that I might receive a portion in the number of Thy martyrs in the cup of Thy Christ." Smyrna was indeed a church to undergo persecution, and her pastor Polycarp was one of the first, being burned alive at the stake.

Now this persecution that we read about in this chapter, this impending tribulation, is doubtless a part of that general persecution that the author foresees is going to happen to all the churches. The apostolic age was followed by a time of martyrdom that lasted into the 4th century. During this time, there were 10 great persecutions under the Roman emperors, beginning with the persecution under Nero in A.D. 64 and ending with Diocletian around 310 A.D. Of these 10 persecutions, seven of these occurred during the time or the period of Smyrna. It is therefore called in church history the time of the great persecution.

Thousands, probably, millions were flayed, burned alive, cast to the wild beasts, or cruelly tortured during these times of persecution. In this name Smyrna, we have a prophecy of the persecution and the death that would befall the members of this church of Smyrna.

Let us read these words again concerning this church. "*And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first, and*

the last, which was dead, and is alive: I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. (2:8-10).

Now, I want you to note some of the characteristics of this church. As we look at the seven churches, the wealthiest church was the most severely reprov'd for its spiritual weakness, while Smyrna, the poorest of them all, was praised in being rich in spiritual attainment, the very opposite, the very reverse of the church of Laodicea. It seemed that wealth became a handicap. It seemed that luxury became a handicap. The church of Laodicea, the wealthiest church was also the worldliest church. But Smyrna, in the midst of persecution, in the midst of poverty, was characterized by things that were spiritual rather than things that were worldly. There is not even one word of criticism about this church at Smyrna. Smyrna was a faithful church, a working church,

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a trouble-bearing church, a poor church financially, but a rich church spiritually. It is the exemplary church, the example of what a church ought to be. As you read these words, no hint of condemnation or word of rebuke is anywhere to be found in this letter to Smyrna. Though we do not find very much written here about their works, what could a poor church in the midst of poverty and persecution do? Naturally their works would be little and few, but they were a church that was strong in their belief and their strong faith led them all the way to be persecuted even unto death.

Now let's look at the message that the Lord has to this church. He says: *"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive"* (3:7). Now remember that in each of these letters the author is to be characterized. The Author is to be identified, and we find that there are usually two statements used to identify the Author, and these two statements are taken from the description that we find in chapter one. Here we find the two statements are: *"These things saith the first and the last."* When you turn to 1:8, the Lord identifies Himself by saying, *"I am Alpha and Omega,*

the beginning and the ending." Notice in 1:17, *"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."*

Now they were familiar with the Old Testament scriptures, and they would know that this was a reference to God Himself. We read in Isaiah, *"Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God"* (Isa. 44:6). So the church in Smyrna would know that this letter that they are receiving is a letter from the *"first and the last,"* from God Himself. First means that He was before all things; last means that He is after all things have passed away. This identifies Him as God.

The second identification is *"These things saith the first, and the last, which was dead, and is alive."* You notice in 1:18, He says, *"I am he that liveth, and was dead,"* so the Author then identifies Himself. They know then that this is a personal letter written to them by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and given to them through the Apostle John.

Now we find the persecution that is to fall upon them. He says, *"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty,*

(but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (2:9-10).

He now tells them about the persecution that is to come upon them, and He tells them where the persecution is going to come from. The source of that persecution is the devil. We know that the devil did not come down here personally and persecute those believers, but we do find that these believers were persecuted. These believers that were persecuted had either been killed or thrown in prison by heathen judges, the kings, the emperors, or the Roman Popes or others. And yet it is said that it is the devil that did all of this. So we see that even though it was these heathen judges, or these Romish Popes, or these kings, or these emperors, or whoever it might have been, we see that the devil is behind all of this persecution, and this is true even today. What persecution we find today, whether it be physical persecution, where men are literally put to death, or whether it be ridicule, mockery, or other means,

whatever opposition there is to the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, though it is carried on by human instruments, we can know that Satan is the one behind all of this. All of these people were simply agents of the devil.

Now who are these persecutors? They are identified for us right here. He says, *"I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan"* (2:9). These that are persecuting them say they are Jews, but they are not Jews, rather they are of the synagogue of Satan. Well, what does he mean by that? Well, Paul described these people like this, for in Romans he makes a distinction between Jews. He says, *"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God"* (Rom. 2:28-29).

Paul tells us that there are two kinds of Jews. He says there are Jews that physically are the descendants of Abraham. They are members of the Jewish race physically, but that is simply the circumcision of the flesh, only an outward relationship. They are not

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to be considered real Jews. He says those who are the real Jews are the ones that have the circumcision of the heart, "*But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly.*" So there was to be a distinction made between those who were the believers from those who were the unbelievers. We are to make that same distinction today, the distinction between those who are the false professors and those who are the real possessors, those who are really saved. Unsaved church members as opposed to those who are saved church members.

For those who were the unsaved Jews, he says that they were members of "*the synagogue of Satan.*" You remember that the Lord told those Jews when they rejected Him, and turned their back upon Him, and when they determined that they were going to crucify Him, He said, "*Behold, your house is left unto you desolate*" (Mt. 23:38). It no longer was to be a house of God. The Tabernacle was in its day. The Temple was in its day. The synagogues were used in their time, but the Lord said concerning the Temple that your house is now left unto you desolate, because of their unbelief. It was no longer a house of God, but instead, the Lord tells us here, that it is now the "*synagogue of*

Satan."

There are churches that today are not churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. They may have the name church; they may call themselves a Christian church. Some of them may even call themselves a Baptist church, but if they are unbelievers; if they have rejected the Lord; if their doctrine is false, they are a church of the Antichrist and not a church of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are false professors and not possessors, not genuine Christians. They constitute the Synagogue of Satan today.

Now it is not difficult to identify them today. If you want to know how to identify a true church from a false church; if you want to know how to determine a synagogue of Satan, a church of Satan, as opposed to a true church of Christ (belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ), you compare the doctrines and practices of that church with the Bible itself. That's the only way you can tell. You cannot go by the name. You cannot go by the label. You have to see what they teach and what they practice. If they do not teach and practice the doctrines of the Word of God, then you can know that it is a synagogue of Satan, regardless of what they may have over the door of that church.

Just who were these who were the opponents of the church in Smyrna, and who were these that were

going to be the persecutors of the church of Smyrna? It was the false religions of that day; those who were the professors, those who claimed to be the followers of God. Today, we find that false religions have always been the most zealous in persecuting the Lord's churches and opposing the truth.

Read your history of the "dark ages," the medieval ages. What you find there is a history of the persecution of the true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were called heretics, sects or Anabaptists in the history books, and all kinds of maligning words were used against them, but most of the Anabaptists were the true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet they were persecuted by the church of that day and time who was allied with the State, the Roman Catholic Church.

Now I don't mean to say that every person who went under the name Anabaptist was a true Baptist. Just like today, every one that goes under the name Baptist is not a true Baptist. The majority of those who had the name Anabaptist applied to them, were named in a derogatory manner after some of their leaders. Groups, such as the Waldenses who were named after Peter Waldo, or the Albigenses named after a region in Europe, and things of this kind. Most of them were true be-

lievers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the churches of which they were members were true New Testament churches. Some though were not.

There's a group that was called the "mad men of Munster," and they were rather wild characters. They did some things that we as Baptists do not believe in. We don't believe some of their doctrines, and they were pretty fanatical in some ways. They too were called Anabaptists, but don't believe that every Anabaptist was like these "wild men of Munster." Even so, you have some so-called Baptists today. Martin Luther King, Jr. was supposed to be a Baptist, but denied nearly every fundamental of the faith. He was not a true believer. [President Bill Clinton comes to mind also.] So everyone that wears the name Baptist today is not a true Baptist, just as all of those that went under the appellation of being an Anabaptist were not always true Anabaptists. Sometimes others were lumped in with the Anabaptists, but the vast majority of them were true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. These true churches, and true believers were persecuted by the false churches during the time of what is referred to as the Dark Ages or the Medieval Ages.

Satan still works that

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way today. Satan does his most effective work by means of those who are professing Christians. Satan can work as well and perhaps he can even work a little bit better through one who claims to be a church member than through one who is an outsider. Satan can be more effective in his work by using someone on the inside of a church to do his work than he can by using outsiders to do his work. We can expect, therefore, that Satan's work is going to be in accordance with his character and nature, and that's to be underhanded and deceitful. This is what happened to the church of Smyrna. The greatest and most intense persecution that they had, came from those who were of false religions.

Now by false religions, it means the followers of Caesar, emperor worship, and the followers of Diana of the Ephesians, a goddess, but it also means the followers of those who made up that apostate church that developed into what we know today as the Roman Catholic Church. They were the most severe persecutors of the true believers and the true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, the Lord tells us how long this intense persecution was to take place. He says, "*Fear none of*

those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days" (2:10). This could refer to the 10 great persecutions under the Roman Emperors, or it could refer to the 10 years of the fiercest persecution under Diocletian. But regardless, he tells them that their persecution is going to be a real severe persecution, "*unto death.*" "*Fear none of those which thou should suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days.*"

Then note this statement, "*Be thou faithful unto death.*" Now if He had said be thou faithful until death, until death would have referred to a natural death. But he doesn't say be thou faithful until death comes, but He says, "*Be thou faithful unto death*" and the word "*unto*" suggests a time when they will have to die a martyr's death. He's telling them that they are going to die by martyrdom, not by means of a natural death. Then He says to them also, "*And I will give thee a crown of life.*" They're going to receive a martyr's crown.

Not very encouraging to that church at all was it, telling them that you're going to have to undergo 10 years of persecution. Some of you are going to

be imprisoned, you're going to be tried, and as a result of your trial, you're going to be martyred or put to death. Some of you are going to be thrown to the lions. Many of you will be boiled in oil. Others tied to a stake and burned alive. Others stretched out upon a wrack, and they're going to have ropes tied to them and they are going to be pulled apart so that all of their joints separate, until they actually pull that body apart. Others, because of their testimony in the face of their persecutors, had their tongues literally cut out of their mouths so that they strangled to death on their own blood. Not very encouraging at all was it!

But the Lord tells them, "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*" The Lord tells you and me the same thing today. He says, "*Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul*" (Mt. 10:28a). He says don't be afraid of them. All they can do is kill your body. All they can do is put you to death, and you're going to die eventually anyway. "*Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul.*" Then He tells them, "*but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*" (Mt. 10:28b).

Can you imagine the preaching and the message of this church at Smyrna? As they were preaching the gospel to those who

were the unsaved, they would say "now that's all that we have to offer you." We've gotten a letter from the Lord, and He has promised us persecution, and has said that many of us are going to be martyred and put to death, but this we gladly and willingly to do so that you might be saved. Will you trust the Lord, and will you join with us? Will you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and will you become a child of God so that you might be one with us, even though it may mean that you too will die?

Then they could tell them the words of the Lord. He says, remember now, fear not him that can kill the body, but can't touch the soul. And as these preachers, Polycarp, and these believers, as they talked to the lost round about them, they knew the persecution was coming. Maybe they were hiding, maybe they were preaching in secret, in homes, in caves, in out of the way places, and they would preach to those people there and say, now we know that persecution is coming, but don't you fear the persecution. Don't you fear what man can do unto you. If you realize whom you are to fear, you'll realize you need to fear God, because God will not only cast your body into hell, but He will cast your soul into hell as well. Therefore you ought to be-

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come a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It meant something to be a believer in that day and time. It meant something to stand up and be counted. It doesn't mean much today. Everybody's a church member today. It's popular to be a Christian today, and everybody can be a Christian and never have to worry about it. So everybody's a church member. But are you a real, true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you really willing to take your stand, and are you really willing to serve the Lord? Are you really willing to make the sacrifice to be faithful to the Lord?

"Oh, yeah, preacher, if they were going to kill me, boy I'd sure stay faithful, I'd be willing to be martyred. I'd stay faithful even though they were to boil me in oil, or if they were to take me out, tie me to a stake, and burn me alive. I'd be just as faithful as Polycarp." Would you really? Are you faithful in serving the Lord in the way He wants you serve Him today? Are you faithful in your attendance at church as God commands you to be? Do you come to church every time the doors of this church are open? God's command is *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another:*

and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). That's God's command!

Are you witnessing? Are you willing to go door-to-door, visit somebody that's unsaved, and witness to them and try to lead them to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior? Have you done that? If not, then don't be so quick to tell the Lord, "Now Lord, I would do so and so, I'll die if the time comes," etc. But you know you're not going to have to die. You know there's not going to be any persecution. You know you're not going to be boiled alive or thrown to wild animals, or burned at a stake. You know that's not going to happen.

Are you willing to do what the Lord tells you to do as a Christian today? Are you willing to give up a little bit of your television in order to come to visitation on Tuesday nights and go visiting? Are you willing to give a little bit of your time to serve the Lord? Are you willing to do this for the Lord? Are you willing to do that for the Lord? Don't brag to the Lord about what you would do if persecution came, if you're not willing to live for the Lord today! After all, the Lord doesn't call upon you to die for Him. He doesn't ask you to sacrifice your life in death for Him, but He asks you to sacrifice your body in service unto Him. *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by*

the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). That's what He wants. He wants your body as a *living sacrifice*. It's so easy for us to say that if I had lived during the times of Smyrna I would have stood right there and I would have been willing to die for Jesus Christ, but will you live for Him today? Will you live for Him?

Now for you that are unsaved, the Lord tells you that you need to be saved, and that you need not fear him that can only destroy the body, but He says you better fear Him who can cast both body and soul into Hell. That's what you need to be worried about. If you're not saved today, you don't need to be worried about whether you're serving the Lord, or whether you're going to die for the Lord, or something like that. What you need to be worried about is that God says He is going to cast both your soul and body into Hell if you are not saved. That's whom you are to fear.

Are you afraid? You don't act like it. You don't act as if you are worried at all. You act like you could care less what God is going to do with you. But you mark the words of Jesus Christ, for if He speaks the truth, then you better fear Him, for He is going to cast both your soul and body into

Hell unless you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You better fear the Lord, and if you're not afraid, you ought to be.

What's the answer? The answer is believe! Trust! Receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior .□

BODY . . .

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Bread of Life and the Savior of the world. If you have done nothing about Him, you are now, it may be, farther away from salvation than you used to be. You may have unconsciously hardened your heart against my Lord, and you find it easier to go on living without Him.

Will you pay very close attention to this warning found in Proverbs 29:1? Do not treat it lightly, I beg of you. Here it is: "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy." That is very definite and very terrible. Many will find themselves in the place of eternal punishment who might have chosen eternal life. Will you decide to link yourself with Jesus Christ without delay? You may not understand what it means. Never mind that. Just ask Him to save you. And you will surely discover that HE'S WONDERFUL! [Next month "Your Blood and Its Uses."] □□□□□