

The Baptist CHALLENGE

a voice of independent Baptists

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WHOLE NO. 487

The Authority To Send Missionaries

By T. L. Blalock

“And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” — Acts 13:3.

As has so often and so well been stated, Baptists believe that the Great Commission was given to the church, after our Lord’s resurrection, assembled on one of the mountains of Galilee. If this be true (of

which there can be little doubt) then it follows that the commission is to churches, and cannot be transferred to any one else or to any other body, agency or assembly.

Notice here the wording of the command which in every respect carries with it the dignity and ring of an official order from one clothed with all power and authority. It

came not as a message sent by some servant or deputy, but as from the Head of the church Himself. *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”* He *“spake unto them”* — to whom? To the Apostles? Yes, but more, to all present, the whole assembly. There were no conditions, no preliminaries, but a

straight-forward, authoritative command that admitted of no possible change, limitations or qualifications to the end of the age.

He spake with all authority in Heaven and in earth back of Him. He had always had His place in His Father’s glory in Heaven as the beloved Son of God, but

(See **SEND** on page 20)

Your Greatest Sin

Graham Says Pope Surely In Heaven

Keep Sweet

By Buell H. Kazee

It may not be what you think it is.

It is not drinking or smoking.

It is not lying or stealing.

It is not gambling or robbery or wasting your money.

It is not stinginess or selfishness.

It is not laziness or failing to provide for your

(See **SIN** on page 18)

By David Cloud

On Larry King Live aired April 2, Billy Graham said the late Pope was “the most influential voice for morality and peace in the world in the last 100 years.” When Larry King asked, “There is no question in your mind that he is with God now?” Graham replied: “Oh, no. There may be a question about my own, but I don’t think Cardinal Wojtyla, or the Pope — I think he’s with the Lord,

because he believed. He believed in the cross. That was his focus throughout his ministry, the cross, no matter if you were talking to him from personal issue or an ethical problem, he felt that there was the answer to all of our problems, the cross and the resurrection. And he was a strong believer.”

This is a most amazing

(See **GRAHAM** on page 24)

By W. Lee Rector

It is hard to keep sweet under grave provocations. While such is admittedly true, it is wise to keep sweet under all circumstances. Courage is a choice virtue. Bravery is not necessarily revealed in the application of brute force — it is more perfectly revealed in the subjection of brute force to charity, for charity covers a multi-

(See **SWEET** on page 15)

Quiz The Pastor -- #36

What Does Zion Mean In the Bible?

By the late Nick Michalinos

Question: What does the Bible mean when it speaks of Zion?

Answer: ☐ Zion is one of the hills around Jerusalem. In the days of Joshua, the Jebusites inhabited the city of Jerusalem which also included Zion (Josh. 15:63). Zion means “sunny,” thus it is referred to as the “sunny mount.”

This hill was a formidable natural fortress. It was called a “fort.” The Israelites could not drive out the Jebusites from Jerusalem, and therefore they survived the invasion by Israel under the leadership of Joshua, and later under the day of the Judges (Josh. 15:63; 1:8, 21).

Though Israel did in a limited sense conquer the city of Jerusalem, the Jebusites remained as inhabitants in the city. Later, when David became

king, he took his army to Jerusalem, and in spite of the mockings by the inhabitants (Jebusites), “David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David ... So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David” (2 Sam. 5:6-9).

In Zion, David built himself a palace (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Chr. 15:1). Later, David brought the sacred ark of God to Zion (2 Sam. 6:12). Though Zion was a very small place at that time, it was enlarged and grew in size from time to time. It was to become the chosen beloved city of God and Israel.

The word Zion is often used for the whole city of Jerusalem (2 Ki. 19:21; Psa. 48; 65:1). The songs about Zion are referred to as the “Lord’s song” (Psa. 137:3-4). Zion is also called “My holy hill of Zion” (Psa.

2:6).

I have hosted 14 trips to Israel, and intend, by God’s grace, to lead another in April of 1993. I have seen Zion’s hill as well as the other mounts in and around Jerusalem.

Now that I have shown the historical significance of this mount called Zion, let me touch on the theological use of Zion in the scriptures. When the Lord Jesus Christ returns to earth at His Second Advent, He will set up His throne and His millennial kingdom, then Jerusalem, called Zion also, will be the capital of the world, “for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord ... nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isa. 2:3-4).

So prophetically speaking, Zion speaks of the world’s capital city of Jerusalem during the Kingdom Age. Then we see the heavenly New Jerusalem, which is called Sion (Zion), “but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels” (Heb. 12:22-24) This city called Sion is eternal and spiritual in nature in contrast to the earthly Zion, the strong hold that fell to King David and his army. So Zion in this sense speaks of heaven and our gathering to it.

There are several mounts or hills in the

vicinity of Jerusalem. There is mount Moriah, mount of Olives, mount Calvary, mount Scopus. But the mount or hill most prominently used in the Old Testament is mount Zion (or Sion), used over 100 times. ☐

Salty Salt

By C. M. Prewett

Following our Lord’s message on the Beatitudes, He said to His disciples, “Ye are the salt of the earth.” A truth so far reaching that we wonder if those few words spoken to those disciples by the Master when on earth are still true today. We also wonder if any professing Christian can claim the distinction of being designated as “salt.” The Master evidently was speaking to His church when making this statement, and He also said, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Most folk who believe the Lord’s local, visible, independent church is still operating today believe the Lord included all the members in His declaration. Just how many can you name that you believe can be classed as the Lord’s “salt”? Let’s see what composes salt, and what valuable properties it contains, and the effect of the application of natural salt, a type of the “salt” the Lord was talking

(See SALT on page 19)

THE BAPTIST CHALLENGE

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Preached on May 6, 1975 -- Message #19

The Church of Thyatira

By M. L. Moser, Editor

“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I

will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

— Rev. 2:18-29

These seven churches are all in the same general area. None of them are very far from the others, and they form a rough circle, with the city of Thyatira about 40 miles SE of Pergamos. This church and this city was the least important of all the seven cities of these that we have been talking about.

It was the center of some commercial activity and was famous primarily for its trade unions or guilds because they were well organized and powerful, and controlled every trade. The one thing that they were especially known for was their dyeing of material or cloth. You remember the Lydia that you read about

in Acts 16, a seller of purple, was from this city, and she was among the first of the congregation at Philippi.

We find that Apollo was the chief god of this city. As you read about these cities, and about the various gods and goddesses that are mentioned in connection with them, you begin to understand just how much paganism there was throughout the world. They had various kinds of gods and every city that you come to, had gods that you do not even hear about anywhere else. Then, of course, there will be certain gods that seemingly are common among all of them.

Here at Thyatira, Apollo was the chief god, but there was very little evidence of Emperor worship. Two other gods were very prominent, and they did have temples built to each of these. One was called Tyrimnos and the other was called Sambethe. These were two gods that you do not read about in any of these other cities.

The city of Thyatira had this church located within it. A small church, not as large as some of the other churches that we read about, and yet, as we read about this church, we find that she receives more praise than all of the other churches, and the praise is an evidence of the good works that were carried on within this church. This church seemed to be very active, highly organized,

and performed many good works of charity. They were instrumental in winning converts from both outside and inside the city, and they were faithful to the Lord in spite of the persecution they had to undergo.

As you read about the church at Thyatira, one can compare them with the church at Ephesus, for these two churches are both praised and blamed. When you look at the church at Ephesus in Rev. 2:5 we find that Ephesus has gone back. It says: *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.”* Ephesus, then, has gone backward. Yet as we look at the church at Thyatira we see that this church is an on-going church, it is a church that is going forward rather than on the move backward.

We find a basic difference or distinction between these two churches. First we find that in Ephesus there is much zeal for orthodoxy, that is for doctrine, but there is little love within the church. But in Thyatira we find the reverse is true, for there is much love in Thyatira, but there is a carelessness about false doctrine. Where the church at Ephesus did not allow false doctrine to enter into the church, not permitting it or allowing it, the church at Thyatira

(See REV on page 11)

God's Masterpiece -- The Human Body #27

The Pump That Drives the Blood

By Arthur I. Brown

I have sometimes been asked if the blood could not just as efficiently carry on its functions if it were stationary rather than moving rapidly through the thousands of miles of pipes which direct its course. Of course, such a question reveals a complete misunderstanding of the work which this miraculous fluid has to perform. At every point in this examination, we can easily see an omniscient planning by a Supreme Intelligence.

Think for a moment of the body and its requirements. The average person possesses billions of tiny cell people, having very specific and urgent needs. These cells are situated everywhere — on the surface and deep inside the tissues, in glands, and organs, in bones and muscles. They are living cells and must have warmth and water, food and oxygen. The body engine burns up its fuel, which is food, in order to produce the required energy. This combustion causes the production of heat, and the end result is waste material or ashes. This must be removed in some way or all the fires will be choked and life will end.

The cells are unable to

leave their location in the body to find food and oxygen, consequently these commodities must be brought to them in a constant stream. That necessitates some sort of steadily moving conveyance loaded down with everything that the cells need, and able also to act as a garbage removing system on the return journey. What better solution for these problems than a quantity of fluid equipped with oxygen carriers, and army of fighters to protect everything, the fluid itself so constituted that it can carry all kinds of food materials and release them at each cellular doorstep at frequent and regular intervals?

In the five or six quarts of blood contained in the body, we have exactly what I have outlined. There are billions of red corpuscles, each provided with a load of hemoglobin, one of the most potent chemicals to be found anywhere, having a tremendous affinity for oxygen, which it seizes wherever it can find it. In addition, these cells very readily give up this oxygen to the body cells which are always asking for it. No oxygen, no fire; no fire, no life. The plasma portion of the blood carries all the

food elements which have been gathered into it through the inner wall of the small intestine after the digestive process is complete. So these little parcels of sugar, peptones, proteoses, and fats in a form which can be utilized, minerals, salts, and water are carried around to every corner of the body.

The power behind this moving stream of liquid is a hidden automatic control which, by operating the most subtle chemical arrangements, maintains the constancy of composition of this internal environment. When we venture into this mysterious realm, we are in the presence of God. To keep the composition of the blood at practically the same level, able constantly to supply every need, to make possible the most complex and exact chemical operations under all possible varying conditions, surely requires a God.

Besides, it is obvious there must be continuity in the flow of blood. That is, there must be a central pumping station to propel the fluid to all parts of the body; and a system of vessels or pipes connected with the pump, confining the flow and returning the spent

blood to the pump. The arrangement suggests an accomplishment in mechanics which excites the greatest admiration. But when we realize that the pump and conduits are themselves alive, each of them a living organ, needing to be nourished, directed, protected, repaired without the slightest interruption of function, continually drained of fatigue products and periodically rested, our wonder knows no bounds. What a Master Mind must be responsible for this!

Look at the pump. You have a heart, which is a mass of muscle, weighting only about three-quarters of a pound, beating or contracting from sixty to eighty times a minute, some 100,000 times a day, or about 40,000,000 times a year. It exerts enough energy every twenty-four hours to raise a two-pound weight twelve miles in the air, as it moves more than ten tons of blood during this period. The resting period of the heart, remember, is never longer than a fraction of a second at a time. At that, however, it manages to rest about fifteen hours out of the twenty-four. This rest is snatched in very

(See **BODY** on page 23)

The Book of Job

Satan's Second Onslaught

By Chas. H. Stevens

The second chapter of Job opens with the word, "again." "Again, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord" (Job 2:1). Satan is a repeater. It is a great mistake to assume that Satan, once defeated, will give up. This fact is clearly seen in the wilderness temptations. Three times the devil came at our Lord, each time from a different angle. Few, if many Christian victories are won once for all. Life itself is a warfare. The young Christian often labors under the false impression — "saved, satisfied, happy on the way and never expect to turn back." It sounds good but it isn't that easy. Satan's approach to Eve was manifold. First, he raised the question, "hath God said?" next, "you shall not surely die," third, "then your eyes shall be open and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil." So Job suffers Satan's second assault that brought him to the brink of despair.

Satan Travels In Good Company

"Satan came along among them to present himself before the Lord." His chief work is often done in the church in company with God's children. Satan's masterpiece is not the drunkard, or the thief or the adulterer. Satan plays for higher stakes, and in this passage there is a good illustration of this fact. If the sons of God suit his taste and purpose, he does not bother the blasphemer or the murderer. These are sins of the flesh that proceed out of the heart of man. Satan hunts for big game. He is the promoter of the sins of the Spirit, pride, censoriousness and religious hypocrisy. He is a splitter of churches, a disputer of Christians, a discourager of the doubters. Like Judas Iscariot, Satan is religious and plys his trade with efficiency where it will be most effective.

Satan Is Unashamed

"Satan came along also to present himself before the Lord." He came to "the altar" quite frequently. Satan is as bold as a lion and is so represented. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he

may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). The devil is religious and suffers no embarrassment in his audacious, brazen intrusion into the presence of God. Being unabashed and unashamed he "presents" himself before God. The lowest depths of evil are marked by a shameless depravity which exhibits itself in religious hypocrisy. It is here that the fear of God and all reverence for His name disappear.

Divine Sovereignty Assured

"And the Lord said unto Satan, from whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Job 2:3).

Jehovah takes cognizance of Satan's presence and interrogates him concerning his activity. In the first chapter we learned that God had hedged Job about. This was personal supervision. Here again we have brought home the thought that God had not lost sight of Job in the multitude of men.

God's relationship was particular and providential. Satan could not touch Job without permission. Such permission has its restraints.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life" (Job 2:6). There is great consolation gained in the realization that just as God knew Job intimately and regarded him and his safety with a personal concern, so it must be with one and all. His love and concern are personal and minute. His watchcare never abates. Suffering and disappointment, it matters not how severe, if such is within the will of God, can be educational, disciplinary or vicarious.

Satan Persistent

Having been defeated in the first encounter in which he slandered Job before God, Satan comes back for more. He still insists that Job has his price even though the loss of his property and his seven sons and three daughters left God's servant unscathed. "Then said his wife unto him, dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God and die" (Job 2:9)!

The severity of this second test is seen from many angles. First, in the intensity his suffering, completely smitten in body

(See **JOB** on page 22)

What is Baptist “Liberty of Interpretation”?

By Chester E. Tulga

The basic tenet of the historic Baptist faith is that the Bible is the Word of God and the sole authority of faith and practice. Every historic Baptist confession of faith has affirmed this. Within this framework of Divine revelation, there is the right of the individual to interpret the Scriptures. The reverent acceptance of the Scriptures as authority, in dependence upon the Holy Spirit for illumination, is the basis of Baptist freedom of interpretation. The Baptist grants to any person the right to interpret the Scriptures rightly or wrongly, but he claims for himself only that method of interpretation based upon the absolute authority of the Scriptures, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit in the mind and heart of the born-again believer. He rejects any method of interpretation that destroys the fundamental teachings of the Scriptures. He denies that interpretation that “wrests the scriptures” from their original framework and meaning. He rejects that interpretation that arbitrarily places any desired meaning upon the plain language of Holy Writ.

We are living in a day

characterized by a liberal writer as “a day of standardless interpretation.” Liberals insist upon liberty to interpret the text regardless of the context. The Bible is made to say what they want it to say. Many fundamentalists and others have followed their example, and while they pay lip service to its authority, they actually undermine that authority by unscrupulous interpretations.

So Orrin G. Judd, then a member of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Board (1943) pleaded for latitude of interpretation concerning the doctrine of the virgin birth. He and others concluded the issue by insisting that Baptists have the right to interpret the Scriptures anyway they pleased, thus introducing the principle of arbitrary anarchy which would eventually destroy all meaning. Others called facts “interpretations” and claimed liberty to reject Scriptural facts by calling them “interpretations.”

To abandon all rules of interpretation and place any meaning upon Holy Writ that pleases us at the moment, is not only to destroy authority but also the meaning of language.

To abandon all rules of interpretation and place alien meanings on the Word to justify our practices as many fundamentalists do, is to strike a blow at the authority of the Scriptures. Modernists openly deny the authority of the Scriptures, but many fundamentalists betray the Word of God with a pious kiss, praising its authority while undermining it. The modernists divide the Word into the credible and the incredible; many fundamentalists divide the Word into the essential and the non-essential, and reserve the right unto themselves to determine the importance or the unimportance of the teachings of the Scriptures.

Baptists believe in

liberty of interpretation within the framework of an authoritative Word of God. They insist that the Spirit of God illuminating the mind and heart of the believer is the true interpreter. They reject that intellectualism which exalts the unsanctified intellect above the Word of God. They reject that liberty of interpretation which forms a cover for disobedience to the Word. They reject that liberty of interpretation claimed by the modernists by which they deny the fundamental teachings of the Word of God. By their great confessions of faith they have affirmed and reaffirmed that there are liberties of interpretation which they do not allow and will not accept. ■

Whitewashing Or Washing White

By C. M. Prewett

There is a great difference between whitewashing and washing white. The first is for the purpose of camouflaging and covering up some unsightly object. The second is for cleansing and purifying that which is soiled. Have you not noticed some old weather-beaten fence covered with a whitewash made with water and lime? Or an old gnarled tree made as attractive as possible with a white coating of whitewash? Even an old decaying barn is made to appear like “what it ain’t”

when covered with a coat of soluble lime.

As an unsightly fence, a deformed old tree, or decaying old barn is made pleasing in appearance, even so hypocritical lives may outwardly appear white and clean when they are only covered with whitewash. The Lord discloses this truth very forcefully when He declares”

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing

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WHITE . . .

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in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward" (Mt. 6:5).

"Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast" (Mt. 6:16).

The whitewashed usually sit in judgment on the washed white, or redeemed children of God. Yes, some of this same crowd even criticized the Master while He sought their salvation.

"At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day" (Mt. 12:1-2).

"And the rule of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day" (Lk. 13:14).

A good dashing rain will expose the ugliness of the old weather-beaten fence, the twisted ugly old tree, or the dilapidated old barn,

as the whitewash is all, or nearly all, washed off, revealing all their unsightliness. Even so does the dashing, drenching, seething truth uttered by our Lord reveal all the sham and unsightliness of the hypocrites.

"For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Mt. 23:4).

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Mt. 23:13).

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so also ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Mt. 23:27-28).

The Lord washes white, not whitewashes. There is no sham or make-believe with the Lord.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

The Lord requires a clean house, not whitewashed. It is not a matter

of choice, left for the church or some individual to say, whose flagrant sins may be condoned and whitewashed, but the Lord demands strict obedience if a church can lay claim to His blessings.

"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican (Mt. 18:17).

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For

even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 4-7).

"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." (Tit. 3:10-11).

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6).

The Lord looks on the heart, not on the outward appearance, as men do; and with favor on the washed white in the blood of the Lamb; but with frowns and condemnation on the whitewashed hypocrites of our day as well as those of the past, on whom He pronounced Woe upon Woe. □ □

The modernists divide the Word into the credible and the incredible.

Many fundamentalists divide the Word into the essential and the non-essential, and reserve the right unto themselves to determine the importance or the unimportance of the teachings of the Scriptures.

— Chester E. Tulga



Texas House Bill Bars Gay Foster Parents.

-- Texas could become the only state to bar gays from becoming foster parents under legislation passed Wednesday by the House. The ban is part of a bill to revamp the state's Child Protective Services agency. It passed 135-6 with two abstentions and now heads to the Senate. "It is our responsibility to make sure that we protect our most vulnerable children, and I don't think we are doing that if we allow a foster parent that is homosexual or bisexual," said Republican Rep. Robert Talton, who introduced the amendment. If the bill becomes law, Texas would be the only state to prohibit homosexuals and bisexuals from becoming foster parents, according to the American Civil Liberties Union Lesbian and Gay Rights project. Arkansas had barred gays from becoming foster parents, but a judge said the law was unconstitutional in December. — AP

Q: Did cavemen really exist? And if they

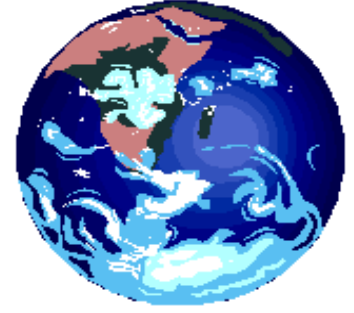
World News Roundup

did, how do you explain them in the light of the Bible? **A:** We call cave-men men that lived in caves, and yes, they did exist. And we believe the Bible even mentions them. We've been so brain-washed by evolution, that many of us automatically think that a caveman was some form of primitive, almost ape like, grunting human. But just because men lived in caves, doesn't mean that they were primitive — it just means they lived in caves. Even people today live in caves. In fact, some people have their homes built over the entrance to caves. In Hebrews 11:38 you read about those who wandered in the deserts, mountains, and the dens and the caves of the earth. Psalm 142 was written by David while he was staying in a cave. And Job 30:6 describes those who dwelled in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves in the earth, and in the rocks. In Judges 6:2 we read about the Israelites who made for themselves dens in the mountains and caves. In Genesis 19:30, we read about Lot who went into the mountains with his two daughters and dwelt in a cave. Even Genesis has lots to say about cavemen — they were the descendants of Noah!

Q: Is the Earth a special creation of God or just a "hunk of rock"?

A: When you read the creation account in Genesis, you find that the Earth is very special — actually it is really center stage. In fact, all the other heavenly bodies, the sun, moon and stars, were made for signs and seasons for the Earth. The Earth is the center of God's attention — it's not just an ordinary hunk of rock. One of the most influential evolutionists, the late Carl Sagan, said this to the world just before he died: "We live on a hunk of rock and metal that circles a humdrum star that is one of 400 billion other stars that make up the Milky Way Galaxy, which is one of billions of other galaxies which make up a universe, which may be one of a very large number, perhaps infinite number, of other universes. That is a perspective on human life and culture that is well worth pondering." What *hopelessness* there is in that statement! But what purpose and meaning there is in the statement from Genesis: "In the Beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

Kraft To Sponsor 2006 "Gay" Olympic Games. — Kraft Foods, makers of popular products



like Macaroni and Cheese, Kraft Singles, Oreo Cookies, Maxwell House Coffee and Ritz Crackers is a sponsor of the 2006 Gay Olympic Games in Chicago," according to a recent report by American Family Association. "Kraft has also authorized its company logo to be placed on the gay games official website as a major corporate sponsor. The gay games are supported and endorsed by dozens of homosexual activist groups and organizations, including homosexual magazines and television outlets."

The Constitution of Iraq. — The head of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom says the new Iraqi Constitution must protect religious liberty. Commission chair Preeta Bansal says that includes the right to convert to another faith or try to convert others. Both are illegal in many Muslim countries. At a news conference listing countries that violate religious rights,

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La Voz Del Desierto



Arrebatamiento ...¿De la Iglesia o de los Salvos?

Parte II

Por Marcos A. Curet

¿Por qué hay tantos Bautistas hoy en día que utilizan la expresión *Arrebatamiento de la Iglesia*, en vez de *Arrebatamiento de los Salvos*, que es la expresión correcta? Quizá porque desconocen la historia real de la Iglesia Bautista, como dijimos en la edición anterior; o porque no saben diferenciar entre lo que es **La Familia de Dios, El Reino de Dios y La Iglesia de Dios**.

Hoy día existe confusión en muchos cristianos en cuanto a la identificación de la Iglesia que Jesús edificó, y de cómo se puede llegar a ser miembro de ésta. Cuando los Bautistas reclaman que son las únicas iglesias que tienen a Jesús como su Fundador y Cabeza, los tildan de arrogantes y de creer que sólo los Bautistas son

salvos. Lejos está de cualquier verdadero Bautista, reclamar que uno tiene que ser Bautista para ser salvo. De hecho, siempre hemos creído lo contrario, que uno tiene que ser salvo antes de poder ser Bautista.

Toda esta confusión viene porque muchos cristianos no saben diferenciar entre lo que es **El Reino, La Familia y La Iglesia de Dios**. Por tal razón, los invitamos a razonar en las distinciones que vamos a hacer y a verificarlas con las Sagradas Escrituras.

I. La Familia de Dios.

La familia de Dios incluye a todos los hijos de Dios, tanto en el cielo como en la tierra (Efesios 3:14-15). Todos los verdaderos creyentes son hijos de Dios por medio de la fe en

Jesucristo, incluyendo tanto a los santos del Antiguo Testamento como a los del Nuevo Testamento (Hechos 10:43; Romanos 4:16; Gálatas 3:26; 4:4-7). La Familia de Dios es más grande que El Reino de Dios o que La Iglesia de Dios, porque incluye a todos los salvos desde Adán, hasta el último hombre que ha creído en Jesucristo hasta ahora; ya sea que estén en el cielo o en la tierra, porque Dios tiene solamente una familia. Todos los creyentes son hijos y herederos de Dios.

II. El Reino de Dios

El Reino de Dios incluye a todos los salvos en la tierra en cualquier tiempo dado, desde los días de Juan el Bautista (Lucas 16:16; Juan 3:3-5; 18:36; Romanos 14:17; Colosenses 1:13). Para entrar en el Reino de Dios hay que estar en la tierra y aceptar a Jesucristo como único Salvador. Después que la

persona muere pierde su oportunidad de salvación. El Reino de Dios incluye a aquella parte de la Familia de Dios que está en la tierra en el tiempo actual.

III. La Iglesia de Dios

El término La Iglesia de Dios, nunca se emplea para institución alguna, a menos que sea una asamblea o congregación de creyentes bautizados en alguna localidad dada. Ejemplo: La iglesia de Dios que está en Corinto (1ra Corintios 1:2). La Iglesia Bautista local, individual, es la única clase de Iglesia que Dios tiene en la tierra hoy. Hay solamente una *Familia de Dios* compuesta por todos los redimidos de todas las épocas en el cielo y en la tierra. Hay solamente un *Reino de Dios* compuesto de todos los nacidos de nuevo que están en la tierra ahora. Hay miles de *Igle-*

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sias de Dios en la tierra ahora. Cada Iglesia Bautista local individual es una Iglesia de Dios; ninguna otra lo es.

Cuando una persona nace de nuevo pasa a formar parte de la Familia de Dios. Esta relación nunca cambia. Ya sea que esté en el cielo o en la tierra, él está en la Familia de Dios. Cuando nace de nuevo, también pasa a formar parte del Reino de Dios aquí en la tierra, y esta relación es de por vida. Cuando muere, pasa del Reino de Dios aquí en la tierra y entra en "*Su Reino Celestial*" (2da Timoteo 4:18). Después de haber nacido de nuevo, esa persona todavía no está en una Iglesia de Dios, sino que ahora llena los requisitos escriturales para ser admitido en una Iglesia de Dios. A la Iglesia de Dios se entra por medio del bautismo (Hechos 2:41; 1ra Corintios 12:13). El "un cuerpo" al cual se refería Pablo en 1ra Corintios 12:13 fue la Iglesia de Dios en Corinto. Jesucristo tiene una sola clase de Iglesia o cuerpo en esta tierra, y esa es la asamblea local, el cuerpo de creyentes

bautizados en cualquier comunidad dada (una Iglesia Bautista).

Podemos concluir que la Familia de Dios se compone de todos los salvos en el cielo y en la tierra. Los salvos del Antiguo Testamento y los niños que murieron en su inocencia están en la Familia de Dios. No están ahora, ni jamás han estado en el Reino, ni en ninguna Iglesia de Dios. Todos los verdaderos creyentes en la tierra, en cualquier tiempo dado, desde los días de Juan el Bautista, componen el Reino de Dios (Lucas 16:16). No hay infantes en él. Todo verdadero creyente, no importa a la iglesia que pertenezca, o que no sea miembro de ninguna iglesia en la tierra, está en el Reino de Dios. Al ser verdaderos creyentes, ellos han nacido de nuevo. Únicamente los creyentes bautizados en la Iglesia que Jesús edificó, o sea la Iglesia Bautista, son miembros de las Iglesias de Cristo.

Si podemos diferenciar entre la *Familia de Dios*, el *Reino de Dios* y la *Iglesia de Dios*, tendremos claro la expresión relacionada con el Arrebatamiento y estaremos conscientes de que la

expresión correcta, no es *Arrebatamiento de la Iglesia*, sino *Arrebatamiento de los Salvos*.

El Arrebatamiento de los Salvos constituye una verdadera esperanza para el creyente, la "*esperanza bienaventurada*" de los verdaderos cristianos (Tito 2:13-15). A medida que vemos las circunstancias por las que atraviesa el mundo, nos damos cuenta de que esta esperanza es más bendita cada día. Esto hace que todo creyente viva optimista con respecto al futuro.

El pasaje clave en relación con el *Arrebatamiento de los Salvos* lo encontramos en 1ra Tesalonicenses 4:16-17, pero Jesús se refiere a este acontecimiento en otros pasajes de la Biblia (Lucas 17:34; 21:34-36). Jesús habla de un acontecimiento, en el que unos serán tomados y otros serán dejados. Nos exhorta a velar y a orar, y a estar alertas; porque el *Arreba-*

tamiento tendrá lugar sin más aviso que el que tenemos en las Sagradas Escrituras.

Según las señales que están en la Biblia, la venida de Cristo por Sus santos, está por ocurrir. Estamos esperando ser *arrebatados* de un momento a otro. Lamentablemente algunos creyentes no están conscientes de esta realidad inminente. Tal vez tengamos que ir donde ellos y decirles: *¡Despierta hermano el Señor ya viene por nosotros!* Pronto Cristo viene a levantarnos en las nubes para que podamos recibirlo en el aire, y así estaremos siempre con Él.

Hermanos, *nuestro próximo viaje* está por realizarse. **¡ESTEMOS ALERTAS!** "... Por tanto, no durmamos como los demás, sino velemos y seamos sobrios" (1ra Tesalonicenses 5:4-6).

Si aún no has aceptado a Jesucristo como tu único Salvador personal, hazlo ahora. □

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El
Don
Inefable

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allowed false doctrine to enter in and this was the danger confronting the church, the danger or the peril of compromising with heathenism.

Now I want us to notice *“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass”* (Rev. 2:18). In every letter we find that the Author is identified by using two quotations that come from chapter one where John gives us a description of the Lord in heaven. We find here that He is referred to as “the Son of God.” This, of course, indicates His being infallible, so that whatever He commends about this church, we know that it is true. Whatever He criticizes about this church, we know that also is true.

It also says, *“Who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.”* You turn back to Rev. 1:14 and we find this same thing mentioned here. His eyes refer to His omniscience. He sees everything. His feet *“being like fine brass,”* refers to His strength. He is strong.

We find that this letter is divided into two portions. The first part is addressed to the church as a whole, that is verses 18-23. The last part, beginning with

verse 24 through the end of the chapter is addressed to that faithful remnant that is still within the church. Beginning in verse 19 we note the commendations that are made of the church. We pointed out to you that the faithful in that church are growing. They are increasing in these six aspects. He says, *“I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works, and the last to be more than the first”* (Rev. 2:19). Now these are virtues that every church should desire to have. These are virtues that we at Central Baptist Church should not only strive to have, and desire to have, but we really ought to have these virtues.

First He says, *“I know thy works.”* Secondly, *“charity”* or love, Thirdly, *“and service.”* This refers to their ministry, their service ministry. Then He says, *“And faith.”* Next, *“thy patience.”* That means their steadfastness. And then he repeats again *“thy works.”* So she is commended because her last works are more than her first works, for it says, *“and the last to be more than the first.”* This church had many things that were very admirable about them; things that we ought to strive to have.

Remember this, that a church can only possess these things as the members of that church possess them. You and I together,

as individuals are going to determine whether our church has these qualities or not. We cannot expect the church, our church, Central Baptist Church, to have these qualities unless the membership of the church possesses these qualities. So when we think about this, this in reality is talking about the individual members that make up the membership of that church in Thyatira. If we're talking about these qualities being true of Central Baptist Church it would mean that these things should be true of each one of us as individuals.

I want us to apply this and make it a personal test, a personal examination. The Lord tells us that we are to judge ourselves (1 Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 6:4) and here are some things by which you can judge yourself. How can you determine spirituality? Well, to a certain extent, these are quality points that will total up to whether you have sufficient quality points to be a spiritual person or not. Some people have the impression that spirituality is to be determined by prayer, Bible reading, and by church attendance. Now all of these are a part of it, but here are the things that will help to determine it.

He says, *“I know thy works.”* The Lord knows your works. He knows your life. He knows what you are. He knows everything about you, and He knows your works whether they

are few or many. He knows what kind of works they are. This is something we must always keep in mind. The Lord says, *“I know thy works.”*

Next He says, *“and charity”* or love. The Lord knows our love. Sometimes we can carry on work without love, and this was the thing for which the Lord criticized the church of Ephesus. The church at Ephesus was an ambitious church, an active church, a working church, but the Lord says that they were a church that was working without love. It is possible for us to be active, be working, be busy all the time, and still not have this inner love that the Lord desires that we have, a love not only for Him, but a love for His people, and then a love for those who are not His people, the lost or the unsaved. It is possible for people to be active, to be working, and to do so, without love. So then work alone is not a measure as to whether you are spiritual or not, because here was a group that worked in Ephesus, but had no love. So just because you're active, just because you are working, are busy all the time, does not necessarily mean that you are a spiritual person.

What kind of love do you have? Now that's where the question comes. Love! What kind of love do you have? Now the Lord

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says, “*I know thy works, and I know thy love.*” The Lord knows you. He knows whether it’s all a front. He knows whether it’s all just show, whether it is all sham, or whether what you do proceeds from a real heart of love for the Lord. Every bit of our work ought to emanate from a heart of love.

If we sing in the choir, the purpose and the motivation for our singing ought to be out of a heart of love for the Lord. If we play the piano, or the organ, our motive ought to be out of a heart of love for the Lord. If we are a deacon, an officer, a Sunday school teacher, we ought to do what we do motivated out of a heart of love for the Lord. This ought to be what prompts us, motivates us to do what we do. Simply to do the work and not do it because of love is not a symbol of spirituality. We must show our love, not only in our action, but in our heart as well. We must get our heart involved in what we are doing. This is true of every aspect of church work. It involves not only Sunday school teaching but it involves nursery workers, and it involves any and every aspect of the church. Whatever you do for the Lord, you ought to do it because you love the Lord Jesus Christ.

I mentioned last week that the church needed the

yard cut, and we had three men that came down (maybe some others did), and cut the yard. The motive, even in our cutting the yard, ought to be out of love for the Lord. Any time you work for the Lord, any time you do service for the church, it ought to be motivated by a heart of love. So He says, “*I know thy works, and charity, and service.*”

Now our service is a ministry. There is a ministry that we can perform in our love for the Lord. Service ministry. What is this? Sometimes it may be visiting in hospitals. Sometimes it may be visiting in nursing homes. Sometimes it may be visiting those who are shut-ins. This is a service for the Lord.

I never was really acquainted much with nursing homes until my mother-in-law was in a nursing home. Edith, of course, went over there every day, usually twice a day, and for most of those ladies that were in there (there were a few men there, but most women outlive the men, so there was not as many men in there), some of them never had anybody ever visit them, even from their own family, much less anybody else.

Now I’m not trying to make it too pointed, but how many of our own people ever go to visit members of our church that are in a nursing home? We had very few members that

went to see Mrs. Fryer while she was in the nursing home. And yet she was just as faithful, regular, and active in her attendance of our church, teaching and working with our Sunday school and in our nursery, as any member we’ve ever had. Yet some never even made one single visit to visit her in the nursing home. We’ve got others in the nursing home just like that right now. These are services or ministries of love that we can do for those who are the members of our church.

I began to think, just suppose that I had to be in a nursing home. I imagine it gets rather lonesome. Who knows, maybe some day I may be in such a position that I may have to be in a nursing home. Sometimes you have to be in a nursing home because of the kind of care that is required, but our motive ought to be out of love, the love of God’s people. We ought to demonstrate our love for the Lord’s people as well.

Then He says, “*I know thy faith.*” We ought to be faithful and we ought to have “*the*” faith. Now He’s not talking about salvation. We know that salvation is by faith, but as you know, there are two kinds of faith spoken of in the Bible. There is what is referred to as “*saving*” faith, and then there is “*the*” faith. This is what Jude wrote about when he said “*Beloved, when I gave all*

*diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for **the** faith*” (Jude 3). Now that’s not talking about salvation but doctrine. This is talking about doctrine and our faithfulness in serving the Lord.

Next he says, “*and patience*” or steadfastness. You see, patience or steadfastness is what the Lord looks upon as well. The Lord wants us to be steadfast in our Christian life. Not be one thing today and another thing tomorrow, but be steadfast, continually staying within that realm that we ought to be in as a Christian. It has been said that the greatest ability that a man possesses is dependability, and that’s what He’s talking about. Being steadfast, being dependable where the Lord can count on you any time He needs to, being patient and steadfast “*and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.*” So she is commended because her last works are more than her first works. She started out, but she didn’t just taper off and gradually quit, but her last works were even greater than when she began. There was a steady increase and a growth in her works. The very opposite was true of the church in Ephesus. It worked in the reverse. That

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is not the way the Lord intends it to be. The Lord intends that we begin small and little since we are a babe in Christ, and as we learn, then we increase and grow, and we are to increase in our work as well, so that our last works ought to be greater than our first works.

Did you know that this is the way the Lord intended it to be for each of us? You take for example, and I mentioned this some years ago, somebody was talking about people's ability to serve the Lord. They talked about how when you are first saved, that most people are saved while they are young, and while they are not able to do very much for the Lord. You take a young teenager, there's not a lot that they can do in church work and in their service for the Lord. Of course, there is much that they can do, but you see, with school work, and with their studies, it takes much of their time, even out of school hours, to study in obtaining their education. And really, young people, you need to study and become well educated because the Lord can use you to an even greater extent the better that you are educated.

Then after you pass through that, you usually go on to college. In college you have much time to study

and to make your grades and to prepare yourself, it's a full-time work, being in college and studying.

Then you have marriage that comes along, and the beginning of a family. You have to get out and get a job. Usually your first job doesn't pay very much, and you have all these early expenses in setting up a home and in getting your family established, buying all the things necessary for a young family with children, so that it takes all your time, and nearly all your money. So again, it does not really leave a lot of time that you can serve the Lord. For a young family, they have to spend a lot of time in doing these things.

By the time you get to middle age, your kids are then in college or high school, and of course, by then you have finally gotten your home established. You have your future years now laid out and ready, but your family, your children, are going to high school or college, and any of you that have had kids in school know what kind of cost that is. So again, that takes a lot of your time and money.

During the early times of your work, you are preparing yourself and getting ready. By the time you reach above 50 then you begin looking toward the time of retirement and so you are preparing for retirement. Then, the kids are gone. You're by your-

self with just the wife. The kids are coming over with grandkids maybe, but did you know that when your kids leave home, and they leave college, and they're married and on their own, it is then that you have a large amount of time that you can serve the Lord. And when you do retire, you do not even have a job that causes you to punch a clock or put in a certain number of hours, and it is at that point *that you have the maximum amount of time to serve the Lord. It is then that you can be of greatest service to the Lord.* But what happens? We reach that point, and we begin to look at our retirement years as though they were ours. We begin to think that we can do things we couldn't do before, and we begin to do all of these other things, and when we are most able to serve the Lord, we don't have any time for Him. Yet, we have more time that could be used for the service of the Lord than at any other time.

Usually, if you wait very long after retirement, your health is such that you cannot serve the Lord. Your body begins to break down, you cannot be as active, so that you can't do this, you can't do that, you can't do the other, and you find out that because of health, you're not able to serve the Lord. So you see that the time that you should devote to the service of the Lord is pretty well going to

be limited to the time when your kids are out of college and before your health breaks down so much that you have to stay at home.

But what happens? In most cases, this is the time we've been talking about doing the things and going places we could not do earlier. Instead of using what life we have left as a means of service to the Lord, we use it as a means of what we might term the gratification of the flesh. Doing what we want to do and ignoring the Lord. This is why the Lord does not have more workers for Him today. From the time we're young on up, our time is occupied in getting trained, getting prepared, getting a job, getting established, raising a family, and getting the family out of the house, married, etc. and then when we do have time to serve the Lord, we don't want to. We want to do what we want to do.

Now this is where this church of Thyatira needed to serve the Lord, and the Lord said, "*I know thy works.*" This applies to each of us as individuals. "*I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.*" Are your last works greater than your first works? Sometimes we can reach the point of middle age and beyond, and instead of our last works

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being greater than our first works, they actually taper off; they become less, and less, and less. It's not long until whether we want to or not, we find that we are unable to serve the Lord because of our health.

Now brethren, it ought not to be that way. We ought to put our last works as a work of growth so that when we reach this time, we can actually serve the Lord more than what we have in the past. This is what he said about this church. But its noteworthy and something that I think we need to notice right here. This church, in spite of having the outstanding virtue of love, since it is the only thing the Lord commends, the Lord had to complain about this church as well. Though she maintained a kind of love, some where along the line she lost her love of the truth. Now Ephesus was commended because of her doctrinal purity, the fact that she would not allow false doctrine to be in her midst, but she didn't have love. Here was a church that had love, but she grew lax because she lost her love of the truth.

Notice, beginning in verse 20, "*Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my*

servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (Rev. 2:20-23).

This church was a working church, a church that was commended because of her works, her love, her service, her faith, her patience, and the fact that her last works were better than her first works. And yet in the midst of all of that, the Lord says I have somewhat against thee, and this which He has against them, is that that church allowed false doctrine to enter into the church.

This shows you that it is very dangerous to go to one extreme or the other. The Lord has given us two things. There is first of all love. Secondly, there is doctrine. These are like two rails of a railroad track. We are to have both love and sound doctrine. What we find here are examples of the church at Ephesus who maintained sound doctrine but did not maintain love, and the church at Thyatira that maintained love but did

not maintain sound doctrine. The Lord says both of them are wrong. We are to make sure that we have both of them. It is just like riding an automobile or train, but riding on one wheel. The Lord wants us to stay on both wheels.

Now there are churches today that make these errors. There are some churches today that all they talk about is love. All they talk about is evangelism. All they talk about is soul-winning. All they're interested in is trying go out and tell the world, we love the world. We're interested in seeing the world come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Now there's not a thing wrong with that.

Then on the other hand, there are churches that are more interested in making certain that they are a doctrinally sound church. They emphasize doctrine. They maintain a very close tab on what is taught within their church. They're able to diagnose false doctrine and their pastor and their teachers emphasize this so that the people might be made aware of false doctrine, lest they be brought under its influence and be led astray. Nothing is wrong with this. *Both of them need to be practiced and need to be preached.*

A church needs to be a church that is sound in doctrine. We need to warn our people, we need to influence our people, we need to point out to them

the danger of all these cults, all these isms, all of these false doctrines and false heresies, as we find today so prevalent even among so-called Baptist churches. I'm talking about the charismatic movement with their so-called divine healing, speaking in tongues, and all of these kinds of things along with their so-called "baptism in the Holy Ghost," all of which are false doctrines and are not for our generation or time. All the cults and the isms such as the Moonies and their Unification Church, or these "Jesus Freaks", and all of these others, we need to warn and be on guard against all of these things. That's true.

At the same time we need to be sure that we have real genuine love for lost souls. We need to show that we have real genuine love for men and women that are all around us, that are dying and going to hell. It does not matter how sound you are in doctrine, it matters not how straight you are in your doctrine. You can be just as orthodox and sound as you can be, but of what value is it if you don't care whether people die and go to hell or not. That is the purpose of orthodoxy. The purpose of soundness, the purpose of doctrine is to make certain that we maintain the purity of the Word of God so that we will have the true and right

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message that will go out and reach men and women with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. You will never do this if you do not keep a straight church. In time, false doctrine will soon lead to a false gospel, as we see here within this church of Thyatira. The difficulty is here because they allowed this false doctrine to enter into that church. They soon lost the pure true gospel. They allowed false doctrine to pervert their love, so that their love soon was perverted, and it resulted in a false gospel that would not save anybody at all. What we need is to make sure that we have real love.

Let me apply this right now. I believe that our church is doctrinally sound. I believe you will find that Central Baptist Church can measure up to be as straight and as sound on doctrine as any church in the world. I believe that with all my heart. I wish I could say the same thing concerning our love. Where do you fit? Are you straight and are you sound in doctrine? Fine! What about your love? This is where our problem comes. The church at Ephesus was straight and sound on doctrine, but she left her first love. The church at Thyatira had love, but they allowed false doctrine to enter in. Which one is the worst? I don't really know. They both are

bad. You see, the result is, neither one is going to win souls. The church at Ephesus may have been straight in doctrine, but they didn't have the love to go out and win souls. The church at Thyatira may have the love, but they allowed the false doctrine to come in, so that when they did go out, and when they did get them to come to church, they presented to them a false gospel. The end result was the same. This is why we need to see that we have both doctrine and love.

Where do you fit? I think that we are doctrinally straight, but I feel that our love has grown cold. I feel that we have teachers in our Sunday school, we have deacons, officers, Sunday school Superintendents, we have officials in our church, and then we have those that we might just say are members of our church, that have no love for their classes, or for the people that they are to be witnessing to. Where is our love?

The Lord commended love. That's good. If we don't have it, we need to go to the Lord and ask God to give it to us. We need to love our fellow church members. We need to love the Lord, and this is where it begins, only I put it in reverse order. It begins, first of all with our loving the Lord. Then we will love our fellow church members and we will love those who

are the lost, the unsaved. You see, the way you win lost people to the Lord is by loving them to the Lord. You don't drive them. You don't force them. You don't compel them, but you *love* them to the Lord. That's how you win lost people to the Lord. You do it by love. They believe you really love them, and they listen and respond, they pay attention to what you say.

How about those that you teach in your class, or in your department. Do they see your love? Do they believe that you love them? They should. You ought to love each member of your class so much that if somebody is absent you wonder where they are, and you call and find out. That's how love is demonstrated.

I'll give you an example. If you've got a boy or a girl that normally calls you on your phone every day, and all of a sudden they don't call you, you call them to find if somebody is sick or if something happened. Last night we got a phone call after we got home. We passed Maurice and Ellen. We were going this way and they were going that way. I was driving Edith's car instead of mine, and they called to see if something was wrong, because we weren't in the right car and we were out of our area more or less. They called to find out if anything was wrong. This is the way you do when you love somebody.

You care about them. Somebody doesn't show up for church, you call to find out "Where are you? What's happened?"

This church in Ephesus had doctrine but no love. The church at Thyatira had love but no doctrine. We need to have both. Do you? If not, let's go to the Lord and ask God to give us that kind of love that we need. Let's ask God that He will help us to be the kind of a church that we ought to be.

SWEET . . .

(Continued from page 1)

tude of sins.

When God's children are called upon to bear affronts and smile, to bear jeers and speak kindly, we understand the better the Beatitudes of Matthew. All ever rejoice in graciousness and fineness and nobleness. With love for all and hatred for none, let's go on and on unto larger and larger things, winning battles in Christ's name and forbearing as we go.

Keep sweet — that's the way of wisdom. Keep sweet — that's the way of worth. Keep sweet — that's the way of the Lord. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before." □

Fundamental Baptist Information Service

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Lesbian Restored To Pastorate In The United Methodist Church.

— Elizabeth Stroud, who was defrocked by the United Methodist Church last December for admitting she was living in a lesbian relationship, was reinstated on April 29. The ruling by an appeals panel was based on a technicality and blatantly ignored the plain wording of the denomination's law which forbids the ordination of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals." It is possible that the decision will be appealed to the denomination's highest court. Stroud is an associate pastor at First United Methodist Church, Germantown, Pennsylvania. News reports say the United Methodist Church has "been wrestling for years over the ordination of gay clergy members," but this is only because of its apostasy. Bible believers don't have to wrestle over such issues, because God has already settled them in His Word. This is not a matter of pride but of faith and obedience. Homosexuality is described in Romans 1:24-28 in the plainest manner. It is called "dishonour" (1:24), "vile

affections" (v. 26), "unseemly" (v. 27), and "a reprobate mind" (v. 28). Those who are born again are taught to put away such things (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

* * *

Forty Christians Arrested In Saudi Arabia.

— A Christian service was broken up and forty Filipino men, women, and children arrested in the Saudi Arabia capital on April 22. The Saudi religious police, the mutawwa, had been collecting information on their activities. "While non-Muslims in Saudi Arabia are supposed to be allowed to practise their faith in their own homes, it is illegal to hold non-Islamic religious gatherings and to promote religions other than Islam. A police official was quoted as saying the Christians were arrested because they had 'tried to spread the poison and their beliefs to others'" (Barnabas Fund, May 3). All 40 are still being detained.

* * *

Retired Iranian Army Officer Faces Possible Death Penalty For

Christian Faith. — Retired Iranian army colonel Hamid Pourmand, who converted to Christianity 25 years ago, has been summoned to appear before a Tehran court on charges of apostasy (AKI Adnkronos International, April 11). Pourmand, pastor of an Assemblies of God church in Bushehr, as been incarcerated since his arrest in September 2004. A court has deprived him of his rank and pension and remanded him to the Revolutionary Court for trial on the charge of apostasy or publicly rejecting the faith in which one has been raised. If found guilty, he could face the death penalty. Adnkronos International reports that the number of people converting to Christianity in Iran has risen significantly.

* * *

Homosexual Episcopal Bishop Supports Planned Parenthood

— Homosexual Episcopalian bishop V. Gene Robinson spoke at the annual Planned Parenthood's prayer breakfast in Washington, D.C. on April 15. The very confused bishop said: "This current administration notwithstanding, the world is not black and white. We need to teach people about nuance, about holding things in tension, that this can be true and that can be true, and somewhere between is the right answer. What an unimaginative God it would be if God only put one

meaning in any verse of Scripture" ("Gay bishop backs Planned Parenthood," The Washington Times, April 16). Truth to this man is not an absolute thing and even God Himself is a broadminded fellow (after Robinson's own image) who intends for the Scriptures to be interpreted in a variety of ways. Planned Parenthood has performed 3.5 million abortions since 1970 and every individual who supports this organization is a partaker of these wicked deeds. Robinson, who broke his marriage vows in 1986, abandoning his wife and two young daughters for his homosexual boyfriend, was ordained as an Episcopalian bishop in 2003.

* * *

New Pope Enthroned As Bishop of Rome in the Mother of All Churches.

— Benedict XVI completed the formal takeover as Pope on Saturday, May 7, when he ascended five steps and sat on the marble throne at the basilica of St. John Lateran, assuming his position as Bishop of Rome. It is from here as well as from the throne in the Vatican that the Pope speaks "ex cathedra" (from the throne). The splendid marble Bishop's Throne is situated in an extravagant setting in the

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apse at the rear of the basilica facing the altar, sitting beneath a painted half dome. San Giovanni Laterano is the first church of Rome and a Latin inscription on the front of the building says (translated from Latin), "*Most Holy Lateran Church, Mother and Mistress of All Churches of the City and the World.*" What heretical pomposity!! The tomb of Pope Innocent III, who was a great persecutor of those who refused to accept Roman doctrine and practice, one of the fathers of the horrible Inquisition, is located at the Lateran. In 897, the Lateran was the scene of the "*Cadaver Synod,*" when Pope Stephen VI (896-897) had the body of his predecessor, Pope Formosus (891-896), exhumed and put on trial. Not surprisingly, the former Pope was convicted of heresy and desecrated.

* * *

Looking For The Word Of God In Strange Places.

— Some Bible scholars are saying that the 666 of Revelation 13:18 is actually 616, based on high-tech photography of a bit of papyrus discovered in a dump outside Oxyrhynchus, Egypt. The fragment was discovered with 400,000 other bits of papyri in 1895, but its discolored text was illegible until now. David

Parker of the University of Birmingham claims that 616 was the original reading and that it refers to the Emperor Caligula ("666 wrong number of prophetic beast?" WorldNetDaily, May 8). Counting this garbage dump fragment, the reading 616 is only found in two of the more than 5,400 extant Greek New Testament manuscripts. The other is papyrus 115, another Egyptian gem. The fact that these two fragments are ancient means nothing. With Egypt being a hotbed of theological heresy in the post-apostolic time, the chances of an old Egyptian manuscript being corrupt are extraordinarily high. If modern textual critics would only believe God's promises, they would not make such gross mistakes. To find the "original" Scriptures one does not need to look in a garbage dump or a forgotten shelf in the Pope's library or a weird, skull-filled monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai or a remote cave by the Dead Sea. The infallibly-inspired Scripture cannot be recovered from such places for the simple reason that it was never lost. Praise the Lord! "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever" (Psalm 119:160). "...The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever..." (1 Pet. 1:24-25). The key

to finding the preserved Word of God is simple faith in God's promises. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Luke 10:21). "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world" (1 Cor. 1:20).

* * *

Jack Van Impe's Spiritual Delusion. - The following is excerpted from "Jack Van Impe and His Damascus Road Experience" by Jan Markell, Olive Tree Ministries, May 5: "... starting on his April 16 show, Van Impe has praised Pope John Paul II, the Vatican, Catholic theology, Pope Benedict 16th, the Catholic Catechism, and Rome non-stop. Jack and Rexella insist that as long as we agree on the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the bodily resurrection, and substitutionary atonement, we can set aside all other disagreements and accept Catholicism. We can set aside the adoration of Catholics for Mary, papal infallibility, baptismal regeneration, exaltation of the Eucharist, the doctrine of good works, indulgences, purgatory (which makes a mockery

of Christ's death on the cross), the power of the priesthood, and more. ... He stated he has had a 'Damascus Road experience' with Catholicism and has stopped short of announcing his conversion but one has to wonder if he has done that. ... He is now reading on air from the Catholic Catechism, and the theme of three programs has been unity, unity, unity (ecumenism), that Protestants must have unity with Rome, as he lauds 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT).' ... Jack and Rexella have pushed their video on Pope John Paul II for three weeks as, 'the most important product we carry.' Though Van Impe has taught on Revelation for fifty years, he apparently cannot see that the events in Rome in the last two months are a foreshadowing of Revelation 13 and 17 with emphasis on the one-world religion. Van Impe also says he believes there is validity in the apparitions of Mary, when in fact, these 'angels of light' have Mary declaring herself co-redeemer." ■

It is manly
to love
one's
country.
It is
God-like
to love the
world

SIN . . .

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family.

It is not gossip or criticism of others.

It is not refusing or neglecting to go to church.

It is not rudeness or unkindness to others.

It is not swearing or using vulgar language.

It is not jealousy, envy or hatred of others.

It is not dishonesty or failing to meet your obligations.

It is not adultery or other sex sins.

It is not murder.

All these are sins and some of them are bad, but none of these is your greatest sin. Would you like to know what it is? If you will read on, I will tell you.

God created all this great universe wholly for Himself. It is exceedingly vast beyond our imagination and studded with beauty and wonder of which we have never dreamed.

You and I, His human beings, are a part of that creation, perhaps the most important part, for in us He meant to recreate Himself. He made us in His own image and likeness. He made us so He could commune with us and enjoy us. We were to possess the earth where we began and to associate with Him right here on earth.

Of course, I do not know all the plans God had for His creatures here on the earth, for life here was

changed so soon and so suddenly that little more was revealed. However, we do know that God told His first man and woman to multiply and fill the earth with more creatures who were made in the image of God. Wouldn't it have been wonderful to see this whole earth filled with perfect human beings, with all of them looking and acting like God their Creator and talking with Him every day? This would have been the greatest and most glorifying thing God could do. He would have a whole planet of creatures like Himself.

However, in order to create such a being, God must give him a will of his own. Otherwise, he wouldn't be like God. In so doing, the Creator would have to run the risk of His creatures breaking away from Him just as some of the angels did.

Well, this is just what happened.

Eve was deceived by Satan. She really did not know the greatness of her sin, but Adam did, and he walked away from God with open eyes. He chose to go with Eve, who had become defiled, rather than to remain with God and leave her to His mercy. Since then, every child born of Adam's race has had a nature which is set against God's will. The whole world became a race of rebels.

The world which these rebels built upon this earth

is what Paul calls "this present evil world." It is shot through with sin and misery and wretchedness, with heartache, sickness and death. God has already condemned it and has marked it for complete destruction, perhaps soon. "Death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." This death is the wages of sin.

But God has great mercy. Even though He would be entirely just in putting the last rebel of us in Hell forever, He loved us so much that He gave His only begotten Son to die for our sins. He paid this price to redeem us. Upon this basis, He could offer us salvation and forgiveness of sin and still be just. The good news now is that God can still make us what He planned for us to be in the beginning. Yea, He can make more of us now. Whereas we were His creatures, we can now become His children.

He is satisfied with the sacrifice which Jesus made for us, and now He asks us to turn our hearts to Him, confess our sinfulness, bow to His judgment and place our hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ the Savior.

This is wonderful news for condemned rebels. It means that those who will do this may now become the actual children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, born of His Spirit and nature. One day God will raise all of these from the

death which sin has brought upon them, and He will recreate their bodies to make them look like Jesus, His only begotten Son. He will then come in a judgment of fire upon this old sin-scarred earth and make it again a paradise where He can dwell in love with the millions of His great redeemed family. Just think! He will dwell with us here, just as He planned to do.

Meanwhile, He has sent me and others to tell you that He would like to make of you one of these glorious persons and by so doing accomplish His greatest glory. But, remember, in doing this He will not take away your freedom. He will not force you, but He will draw you. Do you not feel His drawing love even as you read?

Now, do you see? Here is your greatest sin: You were created by Him, for Himself, for His own glory, and your greatest sin is your refusal to let Him do what He pleases with His own. You were created to "glorify God in your body." Your refusal to do this is your greatest sin. In fact, it is your damning sin. And why not? Where else can you go if you don't want to be with your Creator and Savior?

Many have turned to Christ and have been saved. You must repent or perish. You must be a bad

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SIN . . .

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sinner, for it took the blood of Jesus Christ to save you. Will you still rebel and resist God's will? Mercy is fading, but even now you can come. "Believe on (that is, put your trust in) the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." □ □

SALT . . .

(Continued from page 2)

about.

1. Salt is composed of two principal elements

— Chlorine and Sodium — a compound. Sodium is the medium by which the active chlorine is brought into action. Even so the "salt" the Lord is talking about must be a compound produced by uniting two elements — earthly substance, man created in the image of God, and — heavenly Chlorine — the Holy Spirit producing the compound — the Lord's "salt."

2. Salt produces results when applied to material substances, such as meats, vegetables, etc. It preserves from decomposition and corruption. Even so the Lord's "salt" must preserve His truth from error; must hold inviolate the truth about His salvation and proclaim it without deterioration and worthlessness; must maintain the truth about His divinity; must declare His virgin birth; must recognize His power, wisdom, and

eternal presence; and while disseminating the truth about the blood atonement, keep a watchful eye for His bodily, visible, and audible return from the skies.

3. Salt produces thirst when taken into the body of red-blooded animals, as well as virile humanity. Evidently the Lord included this property in His "salt." This obvious fact makes us wonder if many of those calling themselves Christians can produce a real thirst in others for the salvation they profess. We have sometimes heard others say, in making appeals to the unsaved, "If what he or she has is religion, I don't want any." Or, "if they are going to heaven, I want to go to the other place."

Again others will say, "I don't want to be a fanatic like they are." Something must be wrong with their salt. The Lord says something about "salt" losing its savor or thirst producing qualities.

4. Salt is attractive in its whiteness. What person looking upon some great salt basin on a bright sunny day and has not been attracted by its glistening whiteness. It reminds us that the Lord has promised His own children bright shining robes of untarnished brightness, robes washed in the blood of the Lamb. Surely the "salt" in the lives of God's saints is attractive. It will shine more and more unto the perfect day.

While much could be

written on "salt" we have only touched some high spots, and it is the hope of the writer of this little message that it will cause someone to let God's Chlorine — Holy Spirit — to permeate their lives that they shall be truly the Lord's "salt" compound; preserving His truth; producing a thirst for righteousness in others; and showing to the world the attractiveness of God's salvation. □

WNR . . .

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Bansal insisted that "protecting freedom of religion or belief is not un-Islamic." But vice chair Nina Shea said Saudi Arabia continues to be among the world's worst persecutors, imprisoning and even torturing non-Muslims for worship in their homes. Other countries cited for "systematic and egregious violations" of religious liberty include China, Pakistan, Iran, North Korea, Vietnam, Sudan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. — [AP]

* * *

Supreme Court Nixes "Medical Marijuana."

— Although it's already illegal in most states, the Supreme Court ruling (6-3) means laws in these states which allow medical use of marijuana won't protect sick people from federal prosecution. The ruling says users can be prosecuted

under a federal ban on the drug, even if used under a doctor's order. The decision is a defeat for the drug's advocates, who have successfully passed medical marijuana laws in 10 states," said the report. "The Bush administration had appealed a case it lost in 2003. The issue being decided was whether it was constitutional to prosecute medical marijuana users under the federal Controlled Substances Act. Under the Constitution, Congress can pass laws to regulate states' economic activity as long as 'interstate commerce' is involved. The California marijuana in this case was homegrown, distributed to patients for free and didn't cross state borders."

* * *

TV "Problem Areas" — "Gay TV — "Viacom, the corporation behind such brands as CBS, MTV and Showtime, is launching a new brand into the mainstream cable market. LOGO will be nonstop gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (CLBT) programming. Behind the new channel is MTV Networks," said Aaron Atwood, assistant editor at Focus On The Family. "Shows that are slated include *My Fabulous Gay Wedding* and *Noah's Arc* (a comedy about a group

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SEND . . .

(Continued from page 1)

now He has won it as the Son of Man. By a life of obedience, by death and the resurrection, He is now to take His place above all dominions, thrones and power in Heaven and in earth as the “seed of the woman,” the Son of Man (Phil. 2:9-11). He has through death and the resurrection driven the devil from the throne. Now He reigns supreme in His blood-bought glory as Head of the Church, “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in the world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church” (Eph. 1:21-22).

It was in His glorious fullness of authority that He gave the commission to “go and teach all nations,” and added “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” He won all authority in behalf of and for the church, and the right to pledge His personal presence unto the end. In all this unlimited power and glory He commands the churches (and no others) to carry the gospel to all kindreds and tongues of the earth.

Only on the ground of Christ’s victory over death, hell and the grave, and of His “all authority” in Heaven and in earth, can

we account for the commission to this timid, scattered and doubting church. There was absolutely nothing in such a company to warrant this sweeping world-wide commission.

It would be a very short-sighted blunder here to not remind ourselves that Christ did not expect them to carry out this command as they were then. Indeed He did not permit them in that state to attempt it, but held them for the power from on high that was, is, and will ever be indispensable to carrying out this command. Let us be not deceived, it was only on the condition of the coming, fullness and power of the Holy Spirit that Christ the Lord committed to the church the authority to send out missionaries. This command of boundless authority was to rest on a living, throbbing, powerful organism, a *body* — the church of Christ, not an organization.

To come back to our text, we see this is just what the church at Antioch acted upon: “when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” There were two and *only two* parties to the action of this church, the church at Antioch and the Holy Spirit. It is too evident to need mention that the Holy Spirit was the sole leader and director in the sending forth of these missionaries by the Antioch church.

First, they were called by the Holy Spirit. Second, the Holy Spirit directed the church to separate them unto Him for the work appointed them. They did this and sent them away (Vs. 3). Third, it is then significantly stated in verse four, “so they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, departed unto Seleucia.” Here we see too clear for doubt or question the active presence of the Holy Spirit who came in power on the day of Pentecost, and had taken His place in the church at Antioch, directing her in sending forth the first missionaries to the Gentiles. This is an infallible, inspired example and perfect pattern for all New Testament churches for all time. This action of the Holy Spirit and the church at Antioch is in keeping with the plan and purpose of our Savior when He gave the church at Jerusalem the great commission and had them wait for their Sovereign Director, the Holy Spirit, to descend in power.

Let us mention a few significant and compelling facts about the sending forth of these first missionaries to the Gentiles.

1. It was done by a Divinely established institution.

2. It was done by the only truly spiritual body or unity on earth — twice born men and women.

3. By the only spiritually qualified institution for sending forth missionaries.

4. By an institution with

power to bind and loose on earth and have the same bound and loosed in Heaven (Mt. 18:18; Jn. 20:22-23).

5. By an institution that is to ever be submissive to and controlled by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16-17; 16:13-14; Acts 1:8).

6. By an institution of which Christ Himself is the personal Head through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23).

7. By the only institution on earth against which the gates of hell shall not prevail (Mt. 16:18).

8. Sent forth by one local body or assembly. Not by a collection of them or some one delegated or appointed by messengers from a collection of churches.

If the churches are not qualified to send forth missionaries and carry out the great commission, then we are driven to the conclusion that our all-powerful Lord and Savior made a mistake in committing this world task to them. Moreover, we are driven to the conclusion also that the Holy Spirit blundered in starting the church off in the manner He did in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1-4).

It is deeply interesting to note here that the Holy Spirit continued this course of procedure in all truly New Testament churches for over 1,700 years, when the first Baptist Board was

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organized at Kettering, England, October 2, 1792, by twelve preachers.

There are further interesting facts connected with this transaction of the Holy Spirit and the church at Antioch. Among these we note that after a long and successful campaign of preaching, suffering and planting churches among the heathen, they returned and reported directly to the church at Antioch the mighty work of the Holy Spirit through them (Acts 14:25-28). How artless and simple their report, and yet what honor it gives the church at Antioch as the one institution they felt under the Spirit impelled to report to.

It is worthy of note that when Paul went out again with Silas, it was from Antioch, just as at first (Acts 15:40; 14:26). No greater or more worthy missionaries were ever sent forth with the message of life. Yet they had nothing, and sought nothing to back them save a Spirit-filled and Spirit-directed church.

To what extent the Antioch church ministered to their needs we are not told, but that they did this there can be little doubt. One thing, however, is sure — we have no record or even hint that any other church ever laid hands on them and set them apart to mission work, and certainly

no mission committee or board did so. The action of the Antioch church through the direction of the Holy Spirit in setting them apart was all-sufficient and final. It was perfect, as all the work of the Holy Spirit is.

It is well to note here that the church's setting apart and recommending a servant of God means something. It means more than any recommendation, yea, than all recommendations that can be given to man, when done as at Antioch, under the direct oversight of the Holy Spirit. It is God's final certificate and diploma for His Spirit-called and Spirit-filled servants. It is the church, under the power of the Holy Spirit, loosing the minister of God unto his work. At the same time he is separated, set apart, loosed unto his Lord's work in heaven (Mt. 18:18). Thereafter follows fellowship and communion with all other churches. Paul speaks time and again of receiving offerings and help from other churches (2 Cor. 11:8; Phil. 4:10,16; Gal. 4:14-15).

One of the saddest and most serious conditions in our Baptist Zion everywhere today is the loss of the doctrine of the Divine and unique calling and place of the churches. It is held strongly in theory by most of our true Baptists, and preached vehemently by some, but its practice has become a lost art. There are a few — but how sadly

few there are who contend for and practice their sovereign right, privilege and duty to bind and loose on earth that the same may be done in Heaven. How few the pastors that have deep enough convictions and vision to lead their churches to practice this Christ-conferred right and honor! More and more are other forms, other plans and other organizations thrusting the churches to the background.

It is indeed alarming and heart-breaking to the lovers of the churches of God. Our hearts cry aloud, almost in despair, "What shall we do?" There is only one thing we can do, that is stand for our convictions and lay down our lives practicing them. Convictions count for little save as they live and throb in action in our daily practice. Very often this will need to be done alone, as one only, standing against an ever-rising tide of opposition, if not downright oppression. Yes, one church, one pastor, will need to face all alone. But remember one Spirit-filled soldier in union with the Head of the church can chase a thousand. This kind of men and churches is all that is needed.

Here is an example of a small country church that is putting these principles into practice. It is Corinth Baptist Church of Louisiana. In 1935 their membership was only forty-nine, yet they paid their pastor \$205.24, paid other

preachers \$95.40 and gave to foreign missions \$80.50. Other expenses brought the total up to over \$400.00. It was easy to speak to these saints when at home because I was conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the midst of them. This will be true in any church that gives the Holy Spirit His sovereign place in the assembly as did Antioch of old. This church is not only sound in doctrine but welcomes fellowship with true Baptist churches everywhere.

In her ministry of giving to missions, etc., she suffers no outside associations or other body to exercise any sort of authority or control. This service, like receiving and excluding members, calling her pastor, etc., she considers peculiarly the right, privilege and duty of the church alone under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. With her, this church autonomy and sovereignty is not a mere theory but a practice.

Church independence is never to be used as a license to do nothing, but means the church has assumed her direct obligation to Christ to do His commandments. This one example is sufficient, but there are others. They are few, however, and far between. We are fully persuaded that in God's purpose for His churches this should not be an exception but the normal

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WNR . . .

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of African-American gay men living in Santa Monica) plus more than 200 gay and lesbian films. Adelphia Communications Corp. one of the nation's leading cable companies, as well as giants Time Warner Inc. and RCN Cable, have agreed to pick up the channel as part of their contracts with Viacom."

* * *

Show Stereotypes Christians. — ABC summer reality show *Welcome to the Neighborhood* portrays Christians as bigoted, self-righteous and judgmental," said Focus On the Family Correspondent Steve Jordahl. "The program features seven

The name *Jesus* refers to His saving His people; the designation *Christ* to His being anointed for that purpose; and that of *Lord* to His sovereign authority.

— Haldane

diverse families vying for a new house on a suburban cul-de-sac. The neighbors get to pick the winners. But *Movie Guide's* Ted Baehr said the Christian contestants will be the ones people love to hate."

* * *

"No" To "Most" Military Hospital Abortions. — The House of Representatives has rejected (233-194) an attempt to remove the ban on most abortions in overseas U.S. military hospitals, according to a recent report by Baptist Press. The amendment "would have permitted abortions for all reasons in medical facilities operated by the armed services in foreign countries. There are exceptions to the ban that permit abortions in cases in which the mother's life is threatened and in which pregnancy results from rape or incest." — BP

JOB . . .

(Continued from page 5)

with boils, there was left no way to turn for relief. We can well imagine with his strength exhausted and the weariness during the sleepless nights, the human constitution was taxed to the limit. Suffering protracted wears the nerves threadbare, tries the patience and can often bring one to the brink of exasperation.

Second, Job lost his

personal dignity as he sat upon the ash heap, scratching himself like a plagued animal. Job had passed from abounding wealth and dignity to the poverty represented by a potsherd — a broken piece of pottery. The contrast was all but unendurable. Men suffer in proportion to their sensitivity of soul and the distance of their descent from a former excellence.

Third, Job's visage was so marred until his three friends did not know him. "And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven" (Job 2:12). Few things are so calculated to destroy and discourage self-respect as one's personal appearance. Few experiences can be more traumatic than a look in the mirror and there behold after a long illness a face and body once attractive, now emaciated and withered.

Job lost the sympathy of his wife. In sickness and calamity this is about the ultimate of human endurance.

God's Assessment Vindicated

"In all of this did not Job sin with his lip!" The Word does not tell us here of Job's inward thoughts. This comes out later. At

least Job kept his doubts and fears to himself. There is great virtue in restraint. All thinking men and women have their moments of doubts but they do not have to confess these doubts to others. Martin Luther in speaking about doubts had this to say. "You can't keep the birds from flying over your head but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair." We gather from these words about Job that God does not charge His own with doubts unexpressed, unentertained and pampered. It is rebellious words and complaints that dishonor God.

In all of this Job vindicated God's proclaimed faith in a man who was perfect and upright and one who feared God and eschewed evil. But the end is not yet. Job has many lessons to learn during which faith untried becomes faith confirmed. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:7). □

SEND . . .

(Continued from page 21)

state of all. It will never be, however, till all pastors and churches bring back the Holy Spirit to His sovereign place in their lives and bow to His authority and guidance under their Head, Jesus Christ. □

BODY . . .

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brief cat naps between beats, some muscles relaxing while others are working.

This living pump has four chambers, connected by valves and tubing to accomplish its propulsion of blood in two successive pumpings, for two are always necessary. When the blood reaches the heart, following its travel around the body, it has given up its oxygen. It carries carbon dioxide, has lost its lovely red color, and is now purple with this new gas, whose retention would poison and unbalance the entire internal arrangement.

Naturally, the first problem is to get this poisoned blood to the lungs where it can discharge its waste gas, at the same time take on, quickly, fresh cargoes of oxygen. Having reloaded with the life-giving oxygen, the blood requires a new impulse to force it through the arteries once more into the far corners to every waiting cell. So, the fluid must enter the heart again and submit to a second pumping. And now again we cannot ignore the remarkable evidence of design.

This double propulsion is accomplished through the arrangement of the four chambers and their interconnections. Will you pay close attention while I describe to you what now happens? It is very in-

teresting and important.

The blood, laden with its load of waste materials from various parts of the body, enters the heart by its right upper chamber — the right auricle, a thin-walled muscular structure. There is a valve which prevents the purple liquid from flowing backward through its entering vein. (Is evolution responsible for this, may I ask)? So, when the auricle contracts, the compressed blood, because of this valve, can find only one exist; and that is the valve in the floor of the auricle which opens into another and lower chamber — the right ventricle.

The ventricle has thicker, stronger muscular walls than those of the auricle, and as soon as it is filled with blood from the auricle, it contracts and squeezes the contents out. The only exist from the ventricle opens into a large vein (a huge tube through which the blood pours into the lungs). There, from thousands of air-sacs filled with oxygen, the red blood cells, now purple or bluish because loaded down with carbon dioxide, take on a fresh cargo of life-giving oxygen after dumping the poisonous carbonic acid gas into the air in the lungs, and out through the mouth and nose and into the atmosphere. Immediately the color of the blood becomes bright scarlet and passes rapidly through another vein back to the heart, entering this time on the left side

and filling the left auricle. When the left auricle contracts, its lower valve releases the blood downward into the left ventricle.

This left ventricle is the most powerful of the four pumping units, because its job is to force the blood out into the main circulation, giving it a thrust that will carry it to the most remote cells of the body.

The rate of the circulation depends on the amount of blood discharged from the heart, on the diameter of each vessel, and on the total cross section of the vessel bed at any given part. For instance, when the blood leaves the left ventricle and enters the aorta — the very large artery issuing from the heart — the rate of flow is about twelve inches a second; but the small arteries, called capillaries, throughout the body have an aggregate cross section 600 times that of the aorta, and so the speed is 600 times less rapid or one-fiftieth of an inch a second — about one inch a minute. This slow circulation in the capillaries is an admirable and necessary device. If the tiny cells had to snatch their food in a stream moving twelve inches every second, there would be real difficulty; but at one inch a minute, they are able to look over the supply of various nutritives laid out for them and choose whatever they desire. We see here another instance of Divine wisdom.

It is not necessary to speak of the importance of the heart. It is absolutely necessary to life and scores of references to it are found in the Bible. Let us look at some of them. In the Bible as with us, the heart is often synonymous with the seat of the mind, the will, the understanding. In Proverbs 4:23 we read: “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” Jeremiah 17:9 informs us that “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

This truth that the natural heart is wholly wicked and hardened against God is deeply humiliating to the natural man. We prefer to believe that, although we may not be exactly what we ought to be, it lies in our power to improve this innate wickedness by our own efforts. Then there are many people who refuse to accept what is known as the depravity of man. We are supposed to be evolving upwards, always progressing and improving, until, ultimately, we shall arrive at a pinnacle of excellence, having achieved a great success.

This view of the natural goodness of man and his ability to improve himself is flatly contradicted by the Word of God. Psalm 51:5 says, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive

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GRAHAM . . .

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statement by the man who is considered the world's foremost evangelist. Graham expresses less than certainty about his own salvation but complete certainty about the Pope's, even though he preached a false gospel of grace mixed with works and sacraments and put his trust in Mary as his intercessor.

Graham should know that John Paul II did not believe in the cross in any scriptural sense. Rather he believed in the cross PLUS baptism PLUS the mass PLUS confession to a priest PLUS the saints, and above all PLUS Mary.

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. 11:6). "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6).

* * *

Graham's Children Honor the Pope

Billy Graham has two children that are preachers, his daughter Anne Graham Lotz, who Billy once called "the best preacher in the family" (Christianity Today, April 5, 1999), and his son Franklin. Both are walking in their father's ecumenical

footsteps.

Anne echoed her father's opinion when she told the press that she is certain that Pope John Paul II is in heaven, and Franklin said the Pope preached the same gospel as he does. Anne represented her father at the Pope's funeral, and Franklin is scheduled to attend the coronation of the new Pope.

Speaking on Larry King Live, Billy Graham said: "I don't have the physical strength to go, and I have been invited. I was invited about six or seven months ago by the Vatican ahead of time. And they've asked that I come. So I'm asking my daughter, Anne Lotz, to go ... and then my son, Franklin, will be going to the enthronement of the new Pope."

More than any other one man, Billy Graham paved the way for the widespread acceptance of a Catholic Pope by Protestants and Baptists. His groundbreaking ecumenical evangelism, which downplayed doctrine and exalted experiential religious unity, stretches back more than half a century. □

BODY . . .

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me." The hopeless sinfulness of man is everywhere pointed out in both Old and New Testaments. I read in Romans 5:23, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

In other words, our hearts are not right. The

heart cannot be repaired. God is not in the repair business. He never repairs or simply improves anything. Either He makes it perfect or destroys it. Thus He does not improve the old heart; He gives an entirely new heart. And so I am not surprised when I read in Ezekiel 11:19 "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh." Yes, the heart which has been hard and disobedient and defiant is thrown away and the wonderful new heart, soft and pliable and obedient, is put in its place.

What kind is your heart today, my friend?

Do you know how to get the new equipment? Listen to this word in 2

Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be IN CHRIST, he is a new creature (creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

With this new heart, will come a new and rich experience. You will have a new song, a song of joy and exultation, a song of deliverance. It will take away the heartache and the longing for sin. It will give you strength to resist temptation, it will bring to you eternal life, and it will be all of grace. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy, he saved us" (Titus 3:5). What will you do with Jesus who is called Christ? Yes — HE'S WONDERFUL! {Next Month: "What Makes Your Heart Beat?"

Have You Checked Out "Great Bible Tracts"

A new section has been entered on the web site of the Central Baptist Church under baptistchallenge.org. In this section we are listing articles and tracts both English and Spanish, on all subjects. Some of the articles and tracts available are:

"[Creation Versus Evolution](#)" by Kenneth Mathis

"[The Eternal Security of the Believer](#)" by M. L. Moser, Sr.

"[The Gift](#)" by Father Chiniquy

"[El Don Inefable](#)" por Padre Carlos Chiniquy

"[The Gospel of Your Salvation](#)" by Norman H. Wells

"[Saint Patrick Was a Baptist](#)" by John S. Wimbish

"[Three Days and Three Nights](#)" by L. F. Gill

"[What Is An Independent, Fundamental Baptist Church](#)" by M. L. Moser, Jr.