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Will America Self-Destruct?

By Norman H. Wells

America has veered so far from its Christian course that it is about to self-destruct! America has gone from being a Christian nation to a non-Christian nation in one lifetime and is now one step away from becoming Satan's Society.

Today's Christians are living with a haunting memory of America when it was a Christian nation. They know that it should be today — and it is not. This haunting memory brings an awareness that the future is charged with urgency and danger. This is it! But what is it? It's the eerie silence just before the roar of the tornado. It is hearing the screech of the brakes and waiting for the crash. It is the faint memory of a terrible warning that can't quite be recalled. Christians, with a good memory, are aware that something is about to happen and the time is now! This is it! Is it the return of the Lord? Is it judgment? Is it something not yet known or experienced? This contemplation has brought a swelling tide of excitement. The one area of certainty among Christians is the urgency itself, whatever it is, in America — it's now or never.

Urgency and anger is there but we don't really know why. It is the fatal disease that no doctor can diagnose. Christians

know that they are the light of the world, yet at this moment, in America's darkest hour, that light is flickering at its lowest. Will it go out?

It seems as though all the brakes have been applied, all the shouts of warning given, all the tears shed, and yet America continues its death slide towards destruction. Will America heed one more warning? Words like this, in general, are labeled "calamity howling." America laughs and goes on — like a baby crawling over to play with the coiled rattlesnake.

Along with the urgency and danger there is a sense of loss. It is like the sorrow and emptiness felt when turning to walk away from the graveside of a loved one. We have lost America! All that Christians have left is the memory of a Christian nation and that memory is growing faint. We are even failing to pass the memory on to the young who have no knowledge of a Christian America.

This memory of a Christian America is not to be exaggerated into thinking that there was ever a time when a majority of Americans were born-again Christians because that condition never existed. America, however, could have been called a Christian nation be-

cause Christian teaching and influence molded a Christian conscience that produced a Christian society. Just one lifetime ago America could have been described as a Christian nation with a Christian culture produced by a Christian conscience brought about by an effective teaching of the Bible.

Let us try to refresh our memories as to what it was like in a Christian America. In the first place it was generally accepted that truth existed and that the Bible was the truth. It is hard to remember but it hasn't been so long ago that this fact was hardly questioned. It seems strange now and a little difficult to understand but even those who did not believe nor obey the truth accepted the fact that it was truth and it was there. And what seems even more difficult to understand now is, that in the Christian America of yesterday, truth was accepted as absolute. It was truth that was perfect, complete, unconditional, and unchangeable. It was hard to recall the kind of difference this made in America. There was always the assurance that there was something sure and safe to fall back on — something that would always be there. It was something that was fixed and established and that could always be relied upon

in any circumstance. There was a foundation — a final appeal. This gave a cohesion to the whole nation: this acceptance of the fact of an absolute truth is what held it together and gave all a common bond. There was truth in the Christian America: a truth that had been proven in every conceivable situation and thus gave a real assurance for solving all of tomorrow's problems.

Again it must be said, our memory of a Christian America is not to be interpreted that everyone in America ever lived by the truth: but it does mean that nearly everyone accepted the fact that absolute truth was there and that is what made the difference. It was there — even if it wasn't always used.

Another thing about a Christian America that is a little difficult to explain to today's generation is that, not only was it accepted that absolute truth existed but anything that denied, or was contrary to the truth, was error. Now to an older Christian, with a good memory, this might bring a smile — the idea that it has to be said that there is truth, that which is opposite or contrary is error, seems so simple. Why, surely, everyone knows that. Back in a Christian

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The Book of Revelation -- Message #27

The Open Door

By M. L. Moser, Editor

[This message on "The Open Door" was preached June 18, 1979 and is being printed "as preached," and is one of a series of 113 messages on the Book of Revelation preached at the Central Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas over a period of two years, 1979-1981. It is our hope to complete transcribing all of them and to print them in the form of a verse-by-verse commentary. For those who might be interested, tapes of these messages are available from the editor.]

This morning we did not get as far as we intended. In the outline that I have made for the Book of Revelation and which I am going by, sometimes I do not get as far in the outline as I intend, and this morning was one of those cases. We covered

the identification of the Author this morning, and I intended to go further than that. You'll note in the seventh verse the identification is made concerning the Author of this letter. "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (Rev. 3:7). We pointed out three means of identification for this Author. First, "He that is holy." That refers to the character of the Author. Second, "He that is true." That refers to the conduct of the Author. Third, "He that hath the key of David." We went back to Isaiah 22:22 and found that that referred to the work of the Author, the work of being the Messiah. This key represented au-

thority and power and that Jesus Christ has all power and all authority. Next we pointed out that He is the one who opens and closes the doors according to His sovereign will.

In this passage we find an open door placed before this church of Philadelphia. Verse 8 says: "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

Now tonight I want us to note that He says, "I know thy works." This is the same thing that He has said to all of these churches. He knows one just as well as He does the others. Nothing escapes Him at all. And yet, knowing all about this church at Philadelphia, we find that in the reading of these verses about this church, not one place does He rebuke this church just as He did not rebuke the church at Smyrna. The Lord does not have one critical word to say about this church of Philadelphia. In fact, the Lord does not even say a word about their works. All He says is, "I know thy works," and this indicates that He was satisfied with them or else He would have criticized their works even as He criticized the works of these other churches.

Now He says, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door." Any time that the Lord places an open door before a church, they should consider that open door as a gift from the Lord. It is given to them as an opportunity of service. Open and shut doors represent opportunities for service, and if, or whenever the Lord places an open door before a church, it is so that that church might enter through that door and that they might make use of that door. It is a means whereby God intends for them to serve Him. So for the church at Philadelphia, He says, "Behold, I have set before thee

an open door."

The Apostle Paul used this term "open door" many times, and it was always used in connection with the proclamation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us note some of these.

Turn with me to First Corinthians 16:9. Paul says, "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." Then in 2 Corinthians 2:12, "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord." In Colossians 4:3 we read, "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds." Next, turn to Acts 14:27, "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

So we see that the open door is an opportunity of service that involves the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We could say that it involves the opening up of the opportunity of doing missions. No wonder then that this church of Philadelphia is a church that represents the great missionary activity that took place after the Reformation, the period from 1750 to 1900. It was during this period that the greatest missionary activity that has ever been known in the world has been practiced, and it also is representative of the many great revivals that took place even here in the United States during that great time, the 19th century revivals. In fact, you and I today can say that we owe much of our spiritual heritage as a result of the great revival activity that took place during the 19th century. This is when America really became the great spiritual

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Biblical Evidence For A 7-Year Tribulation

By B. Lawrence Jones, Pastor,
Central Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas

[The following message was delivered at the Missions Conference at the Tabernacle Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas on March 14, 1995.]

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed" (Dt. 4:26)

Soon the world will enter the period of time described in Daniel as "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a

nation". A time when humanity will find itself under the rule of a one world government with a wicked tyrant at its helm. A tyrant who the Bible teaches will be controlled by the devil himself. God's judgment will fall in a fashion and intensity never known to man before. These explosive events will happen in a period commonly called the seven year tribulation which occurs before the 1000 year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth.

Those who believe this truth are commonly called dispensational pre-millennialists. Pre-millennialists believe there will

be a 1000 year period before which Christ will physically return to this earth. Pre means before, and millennium means 1000. Put them together and you have "before 1000". The term dispensational is used to denote pre-millennialists who believe the Bible teaches there will be a seven year tribulation period preceding the millennium. Dispensational pre-millennialists are also classified as futurist. My assigned subject for this conference is "Biblical Evidence For A 7-Year Tribulation."

Concerning the return of Christ and the millennium there are two other major positions: A-millennialism and Post-millennialism. A-millennialism denies there is a millennium while post-millennialists believe there is a period called the millennium. Post-millennialists simply believe Jesus returns at the end of this period instead of the beginning. These three positions profoundly disagree with each other on more than just the timing of the return of Christ or the length and existence of the millennium.

There is an important terminology problem I must address before proceeding. Some use the term a-millennialist as a "catch all" word applied to all non-premillennialist. This is probably because it is perceived to be a more incriminating term than post-millennialist. We've also all been told that post-millennialism died with the advent of the Second World War, a statement I have found to be false.

I personally have never met a true a-millennialist who also called himself a Baptist. The men that I know among independent Baptists who claim to not be Pre-millennial all basically fall under

some division of Post-millennialism. They believe in some kind of millennium with Christ's return at the end of it. It is arguable that a person who denies the millennium is 1000 years in length is a post-millennialist, but if he only denies its length and not its existence I still qualify him as post-millennial. My view seems to be supported by most modern writers on this subject. When Loran Boetner detailed his post-millennial position it was very similar to the position that usually attracts the title a-millennialist among independent Baptists. In this message I will use the term Post-millennialists to describe the doctrinal position that has a millennium of varied lengths of time, but places Jesus' return after the millennium.

The seven year tribulation stands at one of the most important strategic positions in dispensational prophecy. Strategically I place it at the top among independent Baptists. This is not to say that it is the most essential truth or the greatest truth. Decidedly there are other truths that have a more important place in the mosaic of prophetic truth than this one. During peacetime the most strategic position is not always the most vital, but during war it can become priceless.

In the war that began the day Ben Gurion declared Israel to be a state, a small town on a hill became one of the most strategic positions in all of Palestine. It is relatively unimportant in peace time, but to Israel it meant access and, therefore, possession of Jerusalem. Because of its location it became the most

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A-millennialism Refuted By The Word of God

Post-millennialism is dead. Solomon said: "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Post-millennialism thus sickened and expired.

Why Post-millennialism Died

Post-millennialists believed, for the most part, that the preaching of the gospel would accomplish the conversion of the overwhelming mass of the people of the earth in this age and thus usher in that reign of righteousness alluded to in Revelation 20. Writing in 1883, in "An American Commentary on the New Testament," Justin A. Smith said: "It has been said that in twenty-five years more, if the present rate of progress continues, India will be as thoroughly Christian as Great Britain is today; there will be thirty millions of Christians in China, and Japan will be as fully Christianized as America is today. The old heathen systems, they tell us, are honey-combed through and through by Christian influence. It looks as if the day may come soon when these systems, struck by vigorous blows, will fall in tremendous collapse. Meantime, every 'weapon formed against Christianity' breaks in the hand that holds it."

That was written over a hundred years ago, and we are farther from post-millennial expectations now than we were at the time it was written. The author of the quoted words did not anticipate the hold that evolution would get on the religious world and the consequent rise of modernism and neo-orthodoxy; nor did he foresee the rise of those anti-Christian philosophies that brought on both world wars and

have now culminated in Godless communism which has engulfed more than half of the inhabitants of the world and has turned the world into an armed camp. In the light of the past fifty years it is not hard to understand why post-millennialism died.

Amillennialism Has Come In The Place of Post-millennialism

But there has come in the place of post-millennialism a worse scourge. The time was when it was rare to find a post-millennialist among the rank and file of Baptist preachers, but now we have many a-millennialists among them. Thus a-millennialism has taken over the defunct stock of post-millennialism. This stock has been carefully sorted. Outdated items have been discarded. The remaining items have been renovated. The premises have been painted and made more attractive. New personnel has been employed. An ambitious sales program has been put on. The result is that business is much improved.

The Source of A-millennialism

It is not that a-millennialism is really new. No; in essence it is older than post-millennialism. But before the death of post-millennialism it had been largely dormant for two hundred years. Post-millennialism had so many able advocates (such as Broadus, Carroll, Boyce, Pendleton and Mullins) that A-millennialism was smothered. But with the passing of post-millennialism, it was rejuvenated. It received a shot in the arm. A-millennialism had its

source in the "philosophy of vain deceit," against which Paul warned the Colossians (Col. 2:8). Philo, a Jewish contemporary of Jesus, set out to blend Hebrew and Greek thought. By the allegorical method of interpretation he explained away everything in the Old Testament that was not in harmony with the philosophy of Plato. In doing this, Philo was simply applying to the Old Testament the principle that the Greeks had employed for centuries in the interpretation of Homer.

This allegorizing method of interpretation of Scripture was established in the great center of learning at Alexandria. Here it was passed on to Clement of Alexandria, Dionysius, and Origen. It was Origen that did more than any other to popularize this method.

The Early Church Pre-millennial

Pre-millennialism was the original faith of Christendom. Charles Feinberg, in "Pre-millennialism or A-millennialism," says, "Every

book that we have read and studied on the question of the millennium, whether it was favorable or unfavorable to the doctrine, or whether it gave full force and value to the testimony or tried to dissipate its implications, admitted freely that the entire Church for the first three centuries was pre-millennial, almost to a man." This is admitted by Harnack, Mosheim, Geisler, Chillingworth, Stackhouse, Bishop Newton, Bishop Russell, Gibbon, and even by Daniel Whitby. Not only was Montanus a pre-millennialist, but so also were Justin Martyr, Polycarp, Papias,

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Smyth Not Founder of Baptist Churches

Proof By Baptist Authors Refute Claims of Some

By D. N. Jackson

The purpose of this article is to refute the claim by some that John Smyth of England and Holland was founder of the Baptists. To do this we shall examine the proof offered taken from some Baptist authors, which our opponents twist to suit themselves. We make no effort to vindicate all positions taken by some of the authors, still what they do say does not support the claims of our opponents.

It is not difficult to refute their contention that John Smyth founded the regular Baptists. Now let's examine some of our opponents' garbled evidence.

W. J. McGlothlin, in "Baptist Confession of Faith," page 560, says that the "*English Baptists* arose in the Netherlands" (Holland), and goes on to say they were the *General* Baptists, not the regular Baptists. On page 308 Dr. McGlothlin, speaking of early settlers to North Carolina, said they were the *General* Baptists from England.

Whitsitt, in "A Question in Baptist History," page 11: "Immersion baptism does not appear to have been practiced or pleaded for by either Smyth or Helwys, the alleged founder of the *General Baptist* Denomination in England."

Again, page 66: "In view of these three confessions by Mr. Smyth that he baptized himself it is vain to appeal to the fraud that has been foisted upon our Denomination by the *English General* Baptists. This is the first instance in our history where resort has been had to such unworthy means to support our cause. Let us trust in God that it shall also be the last."

It matters not whether John Smyth was sprinkled, properly baptized, or baptized himself, for he had no connection whatsoever with the regular Baptists. If he had any connection with any Baptist group, it was the *English General* Baptists. And even if these writers should claim (which they do not) that Smyth did found the Baptists in "England" even then it would be only in England, not the first Baptists in the world.

Henry C. Vedder, "Short History of Baptists," pages 135, 138 says: "The first church *English* Baptists was not organized on English soil, but in Holland ... Smyth died in 1882, but before that the church he had been instrumental in founding had disappeared from Holland. Persecution seems to have become less severe in England, and Thomas Helwys and others returned to London, probably sometime in 1611, and founded the first Baptist church composed of Englishmen known to have existed on English soil. This church was also Arminian in theology, and churches of this type came to be called *General Baptists*."

What a pity anyone would pervert the words of a dead man.

Even Vedder did not say John Smyth founded the first Baptist church in the world, but that it was the first one to be composed of Englishmen in modern times. But regular Baptists who have existed from the apostolic days, do not trace their lineage through the *General* Baptists. In fact they do not have to go through Baptists of the regular order in England, as they can trace a line through other sources, even through the *Welsh* Baptists.

Thomas Armitage, in "History of the Baptists," completely destroys the claim that John Smyth founded the Baptist church. On page 454 we read: "Meanwhile the question had arisen with Helwys and his followers whether they were doing right by remaining in Holland, to avoid persecution in England, and at the peril of their lives they had returned to London, in 1611, and formed the first *general* Baptist church there, 1612-14."

Dr. Armitage says this church was *General Baptist*, and he does not even say that Smith founded it, as Helwys and others returned from Holland, where Smith died, and they organized the *General Baptist* Church.

Why cover up the true facts about Dr. Armitage's history? Turn to the title page and read this: "A History of the Baptists; Traced by their Vital Principles and Practices, from the time of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to the year 1886," the year the book was written. He says Baptist principles and practices

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strategically coveted city during that war.

It has been my experience that Independent Baptists don't just one day become Post-millennialists. They don't wake up one morning and declare that the 1000 years of Revelation 20 is not really a 1000 year period, and that Christ returns after it. They have come on a protracted journey that ends with that conclusion. The denial of a literal thousand year reign before which Jesus has returned is a conclusion not a fundamental doctrine in their prophetic system. This denial is the effect of a process that began in another place besides Revelation 20. The major battles in the mind of this person were probably waged far from Revelation 20 ... in fact far from The Revelation at all.

By the time one declares himself to have left pre-millennialism he has usually come through long struggles in his own soul, and sees the issue of a literal 1000 year period as a very small affair. He has accepted an historicist interpretation of a multitude of scriptures that he once believed were yet to be fulfilled. His view of the covenants has changed. His view of the Church has changed, as it has now been couched in his new covenantal understanding and a differing view of kingdom concepts. He has a newly modified idea of what God is doing in this age. His view of the interpretation of The Revelation has changed. Where once he accepted a chronological view of The Revelation he now may see it as multifaceted cycles of time periods. One major cyclical division usually falls between Chapters 19 & 20 for those who cannot tolerate the spiritualizing of chapter 19. His understanding of Israel's place

in God's plan has completely shifted. He may now even find himself to be anti-Semitic. To now debate this individual from the standpoint of the true meaning of *kelios* in Revelation 20 is like taking an eye-dropper to fight a three alarm fire ... too little, too late.

I must confess -- I have been down this tumultuous road as well. I have struggled with each of these issues. I have been in those casual meetings where preachers gather apart from the eyes and ears of those they fear would prevent them from delving into discussions of this sort. I have felt the frustration of not having my questions answered by those who would wish me to remain where I was. I have read with intensity those books and writers who speak with disdain of pre-millennialism. I have heard the historical arguments declaring that dispensationalism is nothing more than heresy spawned in the pathetic prophecies of crazed Irvingite cultists of the early 1800s. I have energetically read of the glory church eschatology that carried missionaries to foreign shores. I have uneasily listened as pre-millennialism is denigrated as defeatist, negative eschatology, and post-millennialism is exalted as a positive, victorious reality. I have lamented a bit when some authors write, with the superior disdain of a lord to a pauper peon, of those poor ignorant pre-millennialists.

While many of my dispensational friends were arguing over pre, mid, or post-tribulation rapture, I was struggling with whether there was any seven year tribulation at all. Sadly it was to these friends that I privately posed questions they could not answer while seeking answers for myself. An influence that began for some the radical descent to post-millennarian thought.

I remember the time well

when I began to wrestle with this issue. I was reading a treatise on Daniel by an historicist writer. Writers, by the way, that abound in Baptist and Protestant ranks. The arguments he raised concerning Daniel 9 were unknown to me, and very difficult for me to deal with. I remember the fear that came over me as I felt the blows of what seemed to be black belt argumentation that left Daniel's 70th week in the cold grasp of history past. From there it seemed that everywhere I looked, from D. B. Ray's "Baptist Perpetuity" to B. H. Carroll's "Interpretation of the English Bible", I found the historicist view propagated. This was only the beginning. "The Covenants", and "Interpretation of the Scriptures" by A. W. Pink as well as the writings of a number of others deeply troubled me. There are also plenty of post-millennial men sprinkled around among independent Baptists to keep these issues alive.

These writers set the stage for a different view of much of the New Testament. The idea that the age of Israel is over for good and a new age has begun. Here is that brand of doctrine that moves forever the reality of Israel's future and positions the Church in her place! Here there are many paths -- paths that others have walked: Origin, Augustine, Calvin, Luther, and even Alexander Campbell. Upon some of these paths you will find men walking who slew Baptists while justifying their horrible deeds by misguided prophetic beliefs.

The arguments are so multifaceted and complex that you could spend days simply defining terms for discussion. For me, privately, this became a battle for the survival of what I had believed to be true. My confidence was shaken. I pity those who do not realize where they are heading, and the dangerous complexity they seem to simplify so eas-

ily in their minds. I have seen some grapple with these perplexing questions, and then immediately change their positions as they would a shirt only to find themselves facing a more radical departure from truth down the line. Just as surely as I was disturbed by these issues there were verses that kept my soul anchored in the midst of the storm. Verses I could not get away from -- verses that made me cautious.

Now, you might be thinking, how can one little seven year period be so important as to be a strategic position in such a complex war? It seems that all the major issues of the war are concentrated in this one prophetic capsule. Here the issues of Israel's future, Biblical Interpretation, the church, the chronology of Christ's return, and the interpretive basis for The Revelation, the Olivet discourse, and a multitude of other passages seem to come together in a smaller less complex setting.

All of these issues are vital to Biblical Christianity. The method of Biblical interpretation, for instance, is fundamental. The issue of interpretation is so important that to be wrong here could land a person in hell. I am not saying anyone who is not pre-millennial is going to hell. I said that error on the *method* of Biblical Interpretation can land someone in hell. To interpret, for instance, the death of Christ by the allegorical method is to utterly deny it's reality thus forfeiting its benefits.

Daniel's 70th week rests on the battleground between radically different sides. On one side you will find the futurists, and on the other the historicists. If you believe this seven year period is yet in the future you are a futurist, and if you believe it is in

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the past you are an historicist. The view of a great body of scripture is different between these two groups. If the battle is won here first the war will be over.

Furthermore, if you believe in a future seven year tribulation you cannot consistently be anything but a pre-millennialist. Those who don't believe in a future seven year period usually fall in some post or a-millennial camp. Unless they find a makeshift resting place in a more or less rare position, usually only an excursion on the way to post-millennialism, called by its proponents historic pre-millennialism.

I can tell you by experience that most people will not see the strategic importance of the seven year tribulation. They will wonder why you are making a big deal over such a small period of time. Don't be dismayed! Defend this position -- defend it with knowledge and understanding of where the real attacks will come! There are many arguments that are simply smoke and mirrors, and are only intended by the opposition to confuse the issue. Don't allow this to happen. Keep the basic issues ever before you!

A proper view of the seven year tribulation begins with Israel. If God is done with Israel then the basic issue of a seven year tribulation is destroyed, but if God is not done with Israel as a nation then the issue is very much alive. I submit to you that the Bible is very clear on this point.

These people are the people of God -- they are called God's chosen people! They were specifically chosen by God to be His nation. The Old Testament details this great relationship. The relationship was rocky for sure, but Israel was always

called back by God! There is a perpetual relationship God has with Israel that no other race of people on the earth can enjoy. Read carefully the following declaration about this great relationship.

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. *When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.* For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt

before your eyes? Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he showed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day. Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else" (Dt. 4:26-39).

Please notice the promises of verses 30 and 31. These are promises to an Israel that is in exile! God promises to hear and not forget His people. Notice He says "even in the latter days". This promise extends to all Israelites today.

Some people become confused about the basis of this reconciliation. We must be clear on this issue. The future relationship with Israel will be based on the same truth it always has: gospel truth. All that stands between Israel and God today is their refusal to "be obedient unto his voice" and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is clear on this too. One day soon Israel will turn to the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the Messiah! The restoration of Israel will be a gospel restoration.

Granted there are those Dispensational Pre-millennialists who teach that Israelites were saved by the law. I am not among them! There has ever been only one way of salvation: through repentance and faith in the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. "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. 11:5-6).

Look at verse 37: "And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them." God's Covenant with Israel was born out of God's love for the fathers of this nation. They are His! They are His still. This Covenant goes deeper than what took place at Mount Sinai; it is a relationship that goes back to Abraham! God called Abraham out, not based upon Abraham's righteousness, but based upon God's choice derived from His love and mercy! God not only promised His heart and fidelity to this people, but a commitment that no other people on the earth possess as a race! That He will hear them wherever they are because of who they are! They are the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! They are the people of the Messiah!

It is true that Israel today is an enemy to the gospel of Jesus Christ, but so is the rest of the world. So were you, if you are a Christian, before God saved you! What about their future? How can a nation of people so tied to tradition and set against Jesus as the Messiah ever turn to Him? The same way multitudes did on the day of Pentecost; by hearing and believing the gospel of Jesus Christ! To those post-millennialists who call pre-millennialism defeatist I ask you what can be more glorious in victory than Jesus finally saving the nation who has fought Him for all these years? Look at what the Bible says in Romans 11:28-29. "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies

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for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

Even now they are "beloved for the father's sakes" -- now while they are enemies of the gospel! You might say, "Explain it"! My reply is, "I can't, but I believe it because the Bible says it!" Even now while they are steeped in their Christ rejecting ritual, they are the beloved of the Father! It behooves us to give respect to Israel as a nation because the Father loves them! Read Romans 11 and you will find that God will never forsake His people! We are the exception, they are the rule! Never forget that. Salvation is of the Lord!

The Bible teaches that Israel has a definite future relationship with God. We are told in Romans 11 that this will be a definite time period marked as clearly as was the opening of the age of the Gentiles.

First we must establish that Paul is speaking of the Israelites as a race not some "spiritual Israel." Note in the first few verses of this chapter that Paul defines the Israel he is speaking of! He is speaking of a people identified by the race they were born into not by their religion or affiliation! "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (Rom. 11:1).

Furthermore, he speaks of two separate groups: the Gentiles and the Jews. The Gentiles he speaks of are saved Gentiles.

"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of

the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." (Rom. 11:11-13). Paul cannot be speaking of anything other than a specific race of people. A race to which he belonged!

Paul raises the same question I raised earlier: "Hath God cast away his people?" (Rom. 11:1), and "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" (Rom. 11:11). He answers each of these with the strongest *no* there is: "God forbid".

He then declares "God is able to graft them in again" (Rom. 11:23). Then he declares that God *will* graft them in again, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25). Note that God brings one period of time to a close and opens another.

Paul calls the future reconciliation of Israel a mystery. Surely it is a great and glorious mystery. When I face complex arguments, born in the minds of intellectually brilliant men, against the possibility of God doing this I can say I don't know how He will do it. It is a mystery, but I know He will do it because He said He would! Always, as I listened and read powerful arguments on this subject, these verses haunted me. They haunt many tonight -- many who have found themselves out on a prophetic limb without Israel in sight! You must turn back and find the trunk, and when you find the trunk you'll find the branches of Israel there, and if you look up the tree you will see where Israel has been graft in again!

The restoration of Israel will

be established in a different time period. A time after this present age! In verse 25 he marks the end of this present age as the "fullness of the Gentiles." Fullness means the completion of something. [See Gal 4:4, Eph. 1:10, Col. 1:19, 2:9 for other usage's of the word fullness.] The age of the Gentiles is defined as a period when God is still saving Gentiles, and bringing them into His earthly government! We are in this age now, but it is clear there is an end to what we are now experiencing. The end is near. The scripture gives us notice.

The Bible also tells us Jerusalem will be given back to Israel when this present period ends. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Lk. 21:24). The governmental seat of God's earthly kingdom was at Jerusalem before the Church began.

Israel's government must be nationalistic since it is based on race and geographic boundaries. This makes Israel distinctly different from the Church as we know it today. I am not speaking of anything other than the governmental form of Israel as compared to the present day Church. Issues of ordinance will, without question, be settled by God when He institutes the new Israel. Jerusalem is governmentally under the partial control of the nation of Israel today.

Does the Bible speak specifically of the duration of this future time period? Look at Daniel 9:24-27. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going

(See **PRE** on page 9)

The Myth of the Universal, Invisible Church Theory Exploded

By Roy Mason

One of the most wide-spread theories of today is the theory that the church that Jesus founded was not a local, visible assembly, but a universal, invisible church to which all believers belong, and of which they were made a part through a mysterious, mystical [mythical] Holy Spirit baptism. The author shows the fallacy of such a theory by a candid discussion of all passages used to support a universal church theory, showing that not one passage of Scripture refers to anything other than to a local assembly.

Roy Mason was a missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention in Brazil for some 25 years. Order from:

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forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Because of time constraints I am only able to deal with the logical order of this prophecy, and the chronological order of the events therein described.

Notice in verse 24 that this prophetic revelation concerns Israel and the holy city. We are told this period is determined by God "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." Since Romans 11 teaches that God is not finished with Israel and Jerusalem, these words become very important to us.

If God is finished with Israel then there is no question these verses are, for us, historical in nature. But, if God is not finished with Israel, as the Bible teaches, then how can it be said that the fulfillment of these verses is completely in the past. Has God finished the trans-

gression of Israel? Has God made an end of the sins of Israel? Has God fully reconciled Israel if there are yet Israelites to be saved? Has God brought everlasting righteousness to Jerusalem? Has the preparation for and fullness of the Messiah's rule over Israel come completely about yet? The answers to these questions must be based upon the New Testament verses we have already touched not Old Testament millennial and Messianic prophecies that are so easily moved into the post-millennialist's catalog of symbolic passages. Romans 11 does not speak of a symbolic restoration of Israel! It is, without question, to any Bible believer, a literal restoration, and therefore I can firmly answer each of these questions: NO!

This proper answer to these vital questions establishes an interpretive base for the rest of this prophecy. For us then, Daniel is giving information about the past and future of Israel. Let's look at that information:

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times" (Dan. 9:25).

Verse 25 clearly declares when the Messiah was to come. He came right on time. Notice that this verse covers the first 69 of Daniel's 70 weeks. It is undisputed, with the exception of liberals, that these weeks are to be interpreted as weeks of years. This simply means that from the date of the going forth of the commandment to the Messiah was 483 years. It is interesting to read the intensity with which historicists struggle about this time period's termination point. If the 483 years

ends at the birth of Christ and not His baptism their position against a period of time between Daniel's 69th and 70th weeks is destroyed. These arguments, however, are simply smoke and mirrors. No matter when the 483rd year came, verse 26 establishes that there is a period of time between the 69th and 70th weeks.

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined" (Dan. 9:26).

Note the word "after". What takes place in verse 26 is after the 69th week. What happens *after* the 69th week? The Messiah is cut off. This is the atoning death of Jesus Christ. Note it is not the last event mentioned in verse 26! If the death of Christ was the complete fulfillment of verse 24, as many historicists claim, then why didn't the chapter end here. Why is another event mentioned in this verse and the 70th week not mentioned until the next verse?

Post-millennialists are so fond of pointing out that the event mentioned after the crucifixion is the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Do they place this event in the 70th week where they inevitably place the first event of this verse? Definitely not. They place it in 70 A.D. far from where they position the 70th week. They accuse dispensational pre-millennialist of an exegetical crime when we declare there is a period of centuries between Daniel's 69th and 70th weeks, while they declare that one part of this verse is in Daniel's 70th week and the other part is not. This is indeed exegetical inconsistency on their part, especially when the 70th week has yet to be intro-

duced. I'll tell you where I place both events of verse 26: after the 69th week and before the 70th week. This is right were these events are placed in the logical order of the verses.

The age of the Gentiles came in when Israel crucified their Messiah. That's why the resurrection is not mentioned in verse 26. The age of the Gentiles began! Israel rejected the resurrected Messiah, and Jerusalem and the temple (the city and the sanctuary) were destroyed in 70 A.D. by Titus. Israel is still in the same evil unbelief they were then. They are in the same rebellion that precipitated the destruction of the city and the sanctuary!

The gap between Daniel's 69th and 70th weeks has to extend to at least 70 A.D. because this is the period of time between the 483rd year of verse 25 and the last event of verse 26! We know this period of time is much longer than this because the temple that was destroyed by Titus' men has yet to be rebuilt, and the 70th week requires a temple. Furthermore, Titus did not confirm the covenant or sit in the temple and declare himself to be God. This event has yet to happen. "That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:2-4). Josephus says Titus was running around trying to get his men to stop destroying the temple.

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Does The Bible Forbid Blood Transfusions?

By L. K. Tarr

It is surprising to hear that anyone would refuse to have a transfusion after it has been recommended by a competent doctor but it is nothing short of incredible to learn that there are those who refuse blood transfusions for themselves, their children, and other loved ones on the grounds that the Bible forbids such an act of mercy!

From all across the continent, however, there come reports of parents refusing blood transfusions to their children even though such a refusal means certain death. The reason given for this stand is that the Holy Scripture condemns the practice. The wide publicity which has been given to these incidents raises the question in the mind of thinking people, "Does the Bible really forbid blood transfusions?"

In just one short word, the answer to this question is — NO! The source of this opposition to blood transfusions is not the Bible but Brooklyn, the headquarters of the cult that designates itself as "The Jehovah's Witness."

There are four brief considerations which will assist anyone in coming to a conclusion as to whether the Bible forbids transfusions.

1. The Bible nowhere mentions blood transfusions. It is surely not surprising to learn that the Bible, which was written hundreds of years ago, nowhere mentions the subject of blood transfusions for this is a relatively recent medical discovery. Yet some of the Jehovah's Witnesses' statements are so dogmatic that one could gain the impression that the Bible describes transfusions and spe-

cifically forbids them. Do not be deceived by their specious statements for the Bible nowhere mentions the subject.

2. The Bible verses which the Jehovah's Witnesses quote as condemning blood transfusions have no remote connection with the subject. The Scriptures which these zealous, but misguided people usually quote are: Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 3:17; 7:27; 17:10, 11, 14, and Acts 15:19-20. Anyone who will take just a few moments to read these verses in their proper setting will discover the following interesting facts:

(1) They speak of the eating not transfusion of blood. (2) They speak of the blood of animals (not humans), killed for blood or sacrificial offerings. (3) Only the most vivid imagination could associate these verses with the matter of blood transfusions.

If these verses can be made to refer to blood transfusions (and they can't) then the Bible can be made to say anything. An *honest, unbiased* reading of these and other cited proof texts which the Jehovah's Witnesses put forward will demonstrate conclusively that they have no connection whatever with the subject under discussion.

3. The specific example and words of the Lord Jesus Christ would condemn this attitude toward blood transfusions. The Jehovah's Witnesses' official publication states that "blood transfusion is not Christlike." Is this bold statement true? Definitely not!

For instance, the Savior once encountered a man with a crippled hand. It was on the sabbath day and the Pharisees

stood by to see what would transpire. The Lord Jesus beckoned for the sufferer to step forward and turned to His very precise critics with this searching question, "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days or to do evil? to save life or to kill?" (Mk. 3:4). Notice that the Pharisees could point to a specific reference in the Old Testament which forbade work on the sabbath day and by their own cold reasoning could label a deed of mercy as work. The Savior recognized that even the law of the Old Testament was the expression of the character of a holy, but loving, God; consequently, He turned and healed the man, thus demonstrating that it is right to save human life.

The modern critics of a merciful medical practice, who have no Bible grounds whatever for their objections against life-giving blood transfusions, would do well to answer in the spirit of Christ the pressing question, "Is it lawful ... to save life or to kill?" If they really desire the "Christlike" answer, they will discover from His own life that it is right to save life.

4. The unfounded claim that the Bible condemns blood transfusions is a slur against God's word and a slander on the character of the Lord God.

If those who are so opposed to blood transfusions would honestly acknowledge that this man-made dogma comes from headquarters in Brooklyn, U.S.A., no one would object too much. When, however, the Bible is declared to be the source of this inhumane teaching, those who love and honor God's Word cannot be silent. We cannot sit idly by while the leaders of this cult boldly announce in newspaper interviews that their objections to blood transfusions are based upon the Bible for the public is then left with a false conception

of God's Word and the character of God.

We would emphatically restate that the opposition to blood transfusions has no scriptural support. Further more our heavenly Father's character and attitude finds its true expression, not in the cold Pharisees, but in the Savior who, by word and deed, affirmed that human life is a sacred trust from God and who had such compassion upon the sick and afflicted.

Those who today believe the Bible thank God for blood transfusions and for every other advance of medical science which contributes to the healing of the body and preservation of sacred human life. •

Giving Our Best To God

The story is told of a Hindu woman who was walking along the banks of the Ganges; as she walked along, she had by her hand a little boy some three or four years of age, and in her arms she had a little baby girl a few weeks old — a crying, miserable, weeping and wailing little thing.

An English officer passed that way and spoke to her because there was agony written in that woman's face. He said, "What is wrong?" She replied, "The gods are angry with me; they have given me this little baby girl."

He passed on, but came back, drawn, I suppose by the agony in that woman's face. The woman was there; the baby girl was there; but the boy was not there — the sturdy, strong little fellow of three or four years. And this officer knew what had happened. The boy had been thrown into the river, and he said to her, "Why did you throw the boy in?" She answered, "Could I give less than my best to my god?" •

Analysis of Alleged Problem Passages In The Bible

By Thomas Strouse

On Saturday, October 23, 1993, Dr. Strouse spoke at the Trinitarian Bible Society's 25th Anniversary Conference and Annual Meeting in Toronto, Canada. He addressed an audience of about 350 with the message entitled "An Analysis of Alleged Problem Passages in the Bible." This was a defense of the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew OT and the textus receptus of the NT. The following are some excerpts from Dr. Strouse's presentation which may be obtained for \$4.00 from Tabernacle Baptist Theological Seminary, 717 N. Whitehurst Landing Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23464

A. The Definition of Inerrancy: The Scripture is entirely without error, including statements regarding history, science, morals, and doctrine, and the data of the Bible are exact and accurate."

B. Biblical Support for this theological definition:

1. "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Psm. 12:6).

2. "Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book" (Jer. 36:4).

3. "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13).

4. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).

5. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21).

C. Current Views On Inerrancy:

1. *Full Errancy:* the Bible is a product of errant, human thinking.

2. *Limited Inerrancy:* the Bible is inerrant in salvation passages but errant in historical and scientific areas.

3. *Full Inerrancy:* the Bible is without errors, but scientific and historic passages are phenomenal but not necessarily exact.

4. *Absolute Inerrancy:* the Bible is without error in all areas and is exact, as well as accurate.

D. The Real Issue With Errancy:

1. The teaching of errancy in the Bible is an attack upon God's character — *He is not deceitful!*

2. The teaching of errancy in the Bible is an attack upon God's nature — *He is not imperfect.*

3. The teaching of errancy in the Bible is an attack upon God's power — *He is not limited!*

E. Principles In Dealing With Problem Passages:

1. Realize many apparent problems are the result of trying to harmonize different events, or different occasions, or different people.

2. Be persuaded that all apparent problems are just that — *apparent*, and not real.

3. Be cognizant that we are removed from the author's original meaning by at least 2000 years, and we are in a different culture and in a different land.

Campbellism and Modernism Are Spiritless Twins

(From The Baptist Examiner)

Campbellism and Modernism are twins. They both deny that a miracle is wrought in conversion. They both deny the direct, immediate work of the Holy Spirit in conversion. They both are deniers that conversion is a supernatural work of grace. They both teach that man is only body and soul. They both

4. Understand that many alleged problems in the Bible are leveled at the Bible by unbelievers.

5. Remember that the Bible is an ancient historical and archaeological record with superior weight over other historical or archaeological records.

6. Reject the liberal idea that there may be copyist errors; if we do not have the original wording extant, then the Lord has not preserved His Word in any manuscript.

7. Be cautious about accepting the fallacious position that the NT writers cited the LXX (Septuagint). It is unwise to suggest that any NT writer utilized the LXX as an authoritative source for divine revelation instead of the Hebrew OT. The NT writers were bilingual, knowing Hebrew and Greek, and there is no reason to think that the Holy Spirit could not have lead them to interpret the OT Hebrew and to express the new revelation in their own statements. The Lord did not need the uninspired LXX to convey His truth when He moved the Apostles to reveal new truth.

8. If the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior, He is your Friend, so give your Friend the benefit of the doubt and accept His inerrant Word rather than His critics' fallacious attacks.

deny the Bible teaching that man was made in the image of God and is a tri-unity. The Bible plainly says that man is body, soul and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). The Gospel Advocate editorially denies the work of the Holy Spirit in the following blasphemous, sacrilegious words: "The popular idea of conversion is that of a *direct, miraculous* operation of the Holy Spirit; but that would be using a *physical* power to accomplish a "moral process," for the simple reason that all such power exerted by the Holy Spirit is *physical* in its nature."

In that statement there are eight falsehoods. We use falsehood in the sense of perversion of the truth.

1. The statement that the "popular idea of conversion is that of a direct, miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit" is a falsehood. The popular idea of conversion is that it is a "moral process," "hitting the trail," quitting your meanness and joining the church or reformation of life. Every popular, hot-air evangelist in this country preaches that. So do the Campbellites. There is no conversion in any "moral process." Conversion means the sinner is given a "new heart." Only God can do that. In doing that the Spirit used the Word of the truth as well as working directly upon the dead spirit of the sinner.

2. The second falsehood in the Advocate's statement is that the Spirit "uses physical power" in conversion. Campbellites say you can't be saved without submitting to a bodily or physical act. They say

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One Trillion Dollars! It's a trillion-dollar world for Americans. Public debt of the U.S. government is over 2 trillion dollars. Spending by Washington will top 1.2 trillion dollars during the year that starts October 1 if President Clinton plans are carried out. Just how much is one trillion dollars? 1 trillion dollars would buy 172,414,000 autos, 18,416,000 new houses at the average price for single-family homes. A shopper buying goods 24 hours a day, seven days a week, would have to spend \$100,000 a minute for 19 years; in bundles, 1 trillion \$1 bills would stretch 4 million miles beyond the sun — 96,909,000 miles; stacked up, 1 trillion \$1 coins would reach as high as 5,661,000 Empire State buildings.

* * *

What Shall We Wear On Sunday? A man from Virginia wrote recently to his church paper complaining about the dress of some of his fellow church members. "You go to a Saturday night dinner at a plush hotel or restaurant and everyone is well dressed. The next day you see the same people ... " in church dressed in "dungarees and sweat shirts ... I refuse to believe," he said, "the Lord doesn't care what you wear ... Did you ever see anything the Lord made that was not beautiful? I remember a time when the clergy would admonish people to wear proper dress. Now they act as if they just don't care. Too bad!"

Abortion Training To Be Required. Obstetric training programs will be required to teach abortion skills under a policy adopted by the group that governs graduate medical education. Programs that refuse to do so risk losing accreditation, which teaching hospitals need to be federally reimbursed for services that medical residents provide to patients. Also, most doctors must graduate from accredited training programs to get certified in their specialties. The unanimous decision by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education was prompted by reports that teaching hospitals had neglected to ensure that residents have adequate training in the procedure. The revision was supported by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, which certifies obstetricians, and by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the professional society for the specialty. An accreditation official said a teaching program with a moral or religious objection to providing the training must contract to have it done by another facility. The revised policy takes effect Jan. 1, 1996. It's ironic that all those abortion supporters who call themselves "pro-choice" and use "choice" as a euphemism for abortion, aren't willing to allow physicians and teaching hospitals to make their own choices on this issue.

* * *

Southern Baptists Meet With Catholics. As part of a new effort to improve Catholic-

Baptist relations, a contingent of seven Catholic mission leaders visited the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board headquarters in Richmond, Virginia Feb. 2-3 and met with board officials. Father Francis Ruff of Nashville, Tenn., leader of the Catholic delegation, said the contacts and discussions between Catholic and Baptist foreign mission leaders could lead to greater collaboration and fewer tensions between missionaries of the two faiths in other countries. Father Ruff is the field staff representative for relations with Southern Baptists in the U.S. Bishop's Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. Sam Pittman, Foreign Mission Board executive director of public affairs and facilitator of the meeting, described it as "a mutual dialogue and fellowship with no expected outcome." Behind the meeting was a resolution last year by the Southern Baptist Convention formally encouraging — for the first time at the level of the national convention — the "ongoing Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic conversation." — Catholic News Service.

* * *

Lifeline Customer "Slammed Back" to AT&T. In the AFA Journal, it was reported that a lady from Colorado Springs, CO has switched her long distance phone service to LifeLine and when she received her last bill, she had been switched back to AT&T. She contacted Wiltel Long Distance, the carrier that Life-

line uses, and learned that switching a customer back without their consent is a common practice known in the long distance business as "slamming." If you have switched to LifeLine and want to make sure you have not been "slammed back" to your original carrier, call 1-700-555-4141. A recorded message will identify your current long distance company. LifeLine customers will hear: "You have reached Wiltel Long Distance. Thank you for using Wiltel." I just tried the 700 number and it worked perfectly. For those of you who wish to help **The Baptist Challenge** and also help yourself, you can switch to LifeLine for your Long Distance service, and they will contribute 10% of your long distance bills to **The Baptist Challenge**. To do so, call them at 1-800-800-7550. Be sure and tell them you want **The Baptist Challenge** to receive the 10%.

* * *

Are You A Cultist? "A cultist is one who has a strong belief in the Bible and the second coming of Christ; who frequently attends Bible studies; who has a high level of financial giving to a Christian cause; who homeschools their children; who have accumulated survival foods and have a strong belief in the second amendment; and who distrusts big government." — U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno. Quoted in *The Sword of the Lord*. [I guess I must be a Cultist since I believe in everything above except the storing of sur-

vival foods. So have our Baptists forefathers down through the years, including those in the United States. MLM]

* * *

Clinton Regime Heavily Jewish. An Israeli Hebrew newspaper says that what it calls "warm Jews," that is, Jews with strong Jewish loyalties, are so heavily represented in the Clinton regime that the American government should no longer be considered "gentile." The article in *Maariv* of September 2, 1994 quotes Washington, D.C., rabbi who said, "[We] no longer feel that we live in the Disapora. The U.S. has no longer a government of Goyim, but an administration in which the Jews are full partners in the decision making at all levels." — Christian News

* * *

Creationism Controversy In New Hampshire. People for the American Way (PAW), the liberal religious and civil rights advocacy group, has warned a New Hampshire school board it will likely be sued if it adopts a proposal to have creationism — the biblical account of creation — made a part of the school system's science curriculum. At the request of 20 parents whose children attend schools in Merrimack, NH, PAW attended a school board meeting, telling board members that the teaching of creationism is unconstitutional "even if used to balance the teaching of evolu-

tion." Citing a 1987 Supreme Court ruling, PAW argued that "creationism is religious doctrine, and the teaching of religious advocacy or doctrine in public schools violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment." The proposal to include creationism as part of the Merrimack schools' science courses was made by the Rev. Paul Norwalk, a Merrimack Baptist pastor. "Although there are circumstances in which teaching about religious beliefs, including creationism, in a public school may be permissible, Rev. Norwalk's proposal to teach creationism in science classes plainly contravenes the Constitution and should be rejected by the board," PAW said. The school board delayed action on the proposal until their next meeting. — Christian News.

* * *

Franklin Graham To Go Casual. Franklin Graham, Billy Graham's son and possible successor, seems to disdain the little dignity left in the ministry. He refuses to follow the time-honored ministry dress code. He says he will wear in the pulpit blue jeans, cowboy boots, no coat, his collar unbuttoned without a tie. At a service in Raleigh, NC recently he told an audience: "I suppose you are wondering why I have on a suit and tie. Well, Dad and Mom are here." — CC

* * *

Here Comes Pat. Accord-

ing to the US News & World Report Pat Buchanan, the archconservative television commentator and ace speech writer in the Nixon and Reagan White Houses has decided to mount another run for the Republican presidential nomination. Sources close to Buchanan say he will soon leave CNN's "Crossfire" program and he has already set up an exploratory committee, a necessary first step in raising money for a 1996 campaign. Buchanan, who failed in his effort to derail George Bush's renomination in 1992. Buchanan is a devout Roman Catholic.

* * *

ACLU, Where Are You? San Jose, CA used half a million dollars of public tax funds to build an idol honoring a pagan god from ancient Mexico. This "god" with many others was worshiped by human sacrifices. In fact, some of the ancient tribes were nearly wiped out by sacrificing humans! It would be ideal in front of abortion clinics. So far, the infamous ACLU has made no effort to prevent public taxes from going into this religious practice. But these creeps lurk in every corner to pounce on a school teacher or government official who uses the Bible in public. Their silence here shows

CORRECTION

The dates for the Missionary Baptist Church Bible Conference in Arkansas City, Kansas were listed last month as April 4-5. The correct dates are May 4-5.

that these hypocrites are not against religion, but only against the Bible! — The Missionary Challenge

* * *

Change of Address. Postage Due on Change of Address cards has been increased this year by the Post Office so that we must pay 50¢ every time we get a notice from the Post Office. When you move or change your address, will you please notify us of your change? The Post Office furnishes blank cards for that purpose, so you can give your old address as well as the new address, making it easier for us to make the change. Since we do not charge for subscriptions to **The Baptist Challenge**, please notify us *before* you move so that we will not be out that extra expense.

* * *

Home Schoolers Excell. Home school children scored in the top seventy-seventh percentile in reading, math, and language arts in standardized achievements tests. Scores were for K-12 children. Statistics were compiled from the 1994 Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. More than 700,000 children are schooled at home in the U.S. today. Some 3,500 Jewish children are home schooled, the Home School Legal Defense Association said.

(See **WNR** on page 14)

FELLOWSHIPS

and

CONFERENCES
WASHINGTON, IL

April 3-5, 1995, Beverly Manor Baptist church, 209 Vohland St., Washington, IL 61571. Michael McCoskey, Pastor.

BIG SPRING, TX

April 4-6, 1995, Birdwell Lane Baptist Church, 1512 Birdwell Ln., Big Spring, TX 79720, Lewis McGarity, Pastor.

CALVERT CITY, KY

April 26-28, 1995, New Hope Baptist Church, 1661 Griggs-town Rd., Calvert City, KY 42029, Edgar Lee Paschall, Pastor.

HAMILTON, OH

April 28-30, 1995, Twinbrook Hills Baptist Church, 40 Wrenwood Dr., Hamilton, OH 45013, Richard Riddick, Pastor.

WICHITA, KS

May 1-3, 1995, Lincoln Baptist Church, 7801 E Lincoln, Wichita, KS 67207, Vernon Lindbloom, Pastor.

BENTON, KY

May 2-5, 1995, Benton Baptist Temple, Highway 641 North, Benton, KY 42025, Bill Amberg, Pastor.

ARKANSAS CITY, KS

May 4-5, 1995, Missionary Baptist Church 608 "A" St., Arkansas City, KS 67005, Richard Coldwell, Pastor.

LIBERAL, KS

May 1-3, 1995, Fellowship Baptist Church, 216 Wilson, Liberal, KS 67901, L. K. Landis, Pastor.

SIoux FALLS, SD

October 2-4, 1995, Empire Baptist Temple, 412 S. Hawthorne Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57104, Ron Tottingham, Pastor.

MATTOON, IL

November 27-30, 1995, Bible Baptist Church, 34th & Marion Sts., Mattoon, IL 61938, Tom Pullen, Pastor.

We shall be happy to list the dates of fellowship meetings of independent Baptist churches throughout the country. Please send the dates far enough in advance.

WNR...

(Continued from page 13)

Multiplying, Welfare Style. In a recent story in one of the news magazines, readers were introduced to a long-term welfare mother who produced four children — one boy and three girls — who were supported to adulthood by taxpayers. Today, the boy is gainfully employed, but *all three* of the girls are single mothers on welfare. Two are more successful than their mother. They have five taxpayer-supported children each. The third daughter has only three taxpayer-supported children. If each of the third-generation children is as successful as their grand-

mother and the boy-girl ratio remains the same, there will be 29 taxpayer-supported children in the fourth generation. If they are as successful as two of those in the second generation, there will be 33. The numbers for the fifth generation will be 65 and 123. — Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.

Joyful Woman Ad Lists Poor Role Models. The Sep-Oct. 1994, *Joyful Woman* magazine had a full-page ad of three Ed Resse books. The top half described his *Women Used of God* book, and said it was "IDEAL FOR: young people (especially girls) looking for role models." It listed 50 "Women leaders of the Christian Cause." The list included some notorious liberals, charismatics, mystics, and New Evangelicals. Included on the dangerous "role model" list were: Kathryn Kuhlman, Aimee S. McPherson, Susan Anthony, Pearl S. Buck, Carry Nation, and Jean Guyon. Kuhlman and McPherson were divorced women preachers.) — CC

Pastor Needed In Montana.

Gentlemen, I have contact with a group of about 3 families that are interested in starting an Independent Baptist Church in Lewistown, Montana. The town is about 8,000. The best 'church' in town had a youth program and featured rap music. That "church" is independent Baptist. As you can see there is a need. If you know of a man sound in the faith and separated in life-style and ambitious enough to trust God to use him please mention this to him. He can call me if he has some interest in pursuing if it be God's will for him. (610)965-4700 church; (610) 967-3970 home. Doug Hammett, Emmaus, PA. •

SMYTH...

(Continued from page 5)

go back to Christ on earth.

But let's go on with Dr. Armitage, page 149.

"Without casting ungenerous reflections upon any Christian body, it may be said that as to substance and form, the most accurate resemblance to this picture of the Apostolic Churches, is now found in the *Baptist Churches of Europe and America*. Dr. Duncan reports: 'That when Gesenius, great German Hebraist and Biblical critic, first learned what Baptist Churches were, he exclaimed: 'How exactly like the primitive churches!' So Ypeij, late professor of Theology in the University of Groningen, and Dermont, Chaplain to the King of Holland, who, together, prepared a History of the Netherland's Reformed Church for that government, have the same principles in view when they say:

"We have now seen that the Baptists who in former times were called Anabaptists, and at a later period Mennonites, were originally Waldenses, who, in the history of the Church, even from the most ancient times, have received such a well-deserved homage. On this account the Baptists may be considered, as of old, the only religious community which has continued from the times of the Apostles; as a Christian Society which has kept pure through all the ages the evangelical doctrines of religion. The uncorrupted inward and outward condition of the Baptist community affords proof of the truth contested by the Romish Church, of the great necessity of a reformation of religion such as that which took place in the sixteenth century, and also a refutation

(See **SMYTH** on page 18)

Why The Baptist Preacher's Baby Was Not Sprinkled!

J. B. Jeter's third wife was a Presbyterian. A baby was born in that home. His wife said something about like this: "Mr. Jeter, you knew I was a Presbyterian, when you married me. As an honest Presbyterian I believe that our baby ought to be baptized." He consented on condition that she would consent to his holding the baby while the ceremony was performed. She thought it would be a feather in her cap to have the most prominent Baptist preacher in Virginia and one of the best known Baptist editors in the South to hold their baby, while a Presbyterian preacher baptized it. So she consented.

J. B. Jeter announced in his church in Richmond, that he would be out of his pulpit to be present at the Presbyterian church and why. That church was jammed and packed. The scholarly and dignified Presbyterian preacher preached and then announced that those who had babies to be baptized would please bring them forward.

Bro. Jeter and his wife arose and he took the baby in his arms and they walked to the front. He was careful to get at the end where they were to begin. Quite a number of other parents had children present for that purpose.

Just as the honored pastor of that Presbyterian church raised his hand to say the baptismal formula and baptize Bro. Jeter's baby, Bro. Jeter said something like this:

"My brother, you and I have been good friends for many years. My wife has been a member of your church for years and I have never tried to proselyte her to my faith. But as a Baptist I believe that we ought to be able to give a

TWINS...

(Continued from page 11)

baptism is the converting act. That shows conclusively there is no such thing as conversion in their whole system of theology. They substitute a "moral process" and a "physical act" for Bible conversion. But what saith the Scriptures? The Bible says, "*And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places*" (Eph. 1:19-20).

Are Campbellites such rank materialists that they will say that the resurrection body of Jesus was "physical?" Paul said the resurrection body of Jesus is "spiritual" (1 Cor. 15:42-50). That was seen in His passing through doors without opening them. Now Paul equally plainly says the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion is just as mighty, just as real, just as spiritual as it was in the resurrection of Christ. In Christ's resurrection the Spirit gave Him a spiritual body; in conversion the Holy Spirit, with the Word, imparts to sinners a new spiritual nature, which the Scripture calls "a new spirit" (Ezk. 36:25-26; 2 Cor. 5:17).

3. The third falsehood in the words quoted from the Advocate is the denial by the Advocate that conversion is a miracle. Take the dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-14. Wasn't that a miracle? The Holy Spirit put breath in 'Thus saith the Lord for all that we do. This is my baby as well as my wife's. Before you sprinkle my child, I want you to take your Bible and read out of the Book your authority for what you are about to do.'

The scholarly, old-school Presbyterian preacher slowly

(See **JETER** on page 17)

them. Take the resurrection of Jesus. Wasn't that a miracle? The Holy Spirit quickened Him: and Paul says so we believe through the working of His mighty power. Take the birth of Isaac. Wasn't that a miracle? Paul plainly says in Galatians 4:28 that we like Isaac are "children of promise." Campbellites and Modernists are twins, when it comes to their infidelity about the miraculous.

4. The fourth falsehood of the Advocate is in denying the "direct operation of the Holy Spirit" in conversion. Their rank infidelity and unvarnished materialism is clearly seen in that they say a bodily act can convert the soul or an outside washing can impart a new nature. But what saith the Scriptures? The Scripture says: "*Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart*" (2 Cor. 3:3).

The Scriptures could not put it more clearly. Just as truly and as clearly as ink comes in contact with the paper on which the writing is done, so the Holy Spirit comes in direct, immediate contact with the heart of man in conversion. The Scripture says so and that settles it for all who believe the Scriptures.

5. The fifth falsehood of The Advocate is in saying that the "power exerted by the Holy Spirit" in working miracles is physical. When Jesus cast out demons by the Spirit, was that physical (Mt. 12:28). In Matthew 8:16 Jesus cast out evil spirits by His Word. Was His Word physical? When the Holy Spirit came on Jesus was that "physical power?" When the Holy Spirit was given to the disciples was that physical power? (Lk. 11:13). When Jesus said: "*That which is born of the Spirit is spirit,*" was that a

physical birth? The Advocate knows as little about the new birth as Nicodemus, who thought the new birth was a second physical birth out of his mother's womb. Jesus said: "*It is the Spirit that quickeneth.*" Is that physical? Campbellites know less about the Holy Spirit than they do about the gospel of grace or the righteousness of God. Stupendous, appalling ignorance is that!

6. The sixth falsehood of the Advocate is in saying that only "physical" power can work a miracle. The Word is not a "physical power." Many of the miracles of both Old Testament and New Testament were wrought by God the Father or God the Son simply speaking. Is the Word "physical in its nature?"

7. The seventh falsehood of The Advocate is in making prayer "physical in its nature" or denying in toto the efficacy of prayer. Lazarus came back to life in answer to the prayer of Jesus. Was Jesus' prayer "physical in its nature?"

Fire fell from heaven in answer to Elijah's prayer on Carmel. Was Elijah's prayer "physical in its nature?"

8. The Advocate's contention about the "power exerted by the Holy Spirit is physical in its nature" is not only false both as to conversion and miracles; but it is the worst form of materialistic infidelity. Not only is conversion a spiritual miracle; but back of every miracle is spirit, not physical power. There may be and often is physical power seen in the outward manifestation of a miracle; but the faith, the prayer, the Holy Spirit, the Word of God (and there never was a miracle without one or more of these being present) are the real power back of and in the miracle and they are all spiritual, not "physical in their nature."•

A-MIL...

(Continued from page 4)

and Irenaeus.

Why The Early Church Was Pre-millennial

The early church was pre-millennial because early Christians believed in a characteristically literal interpretation of the Word of God. The departure from the truth of pre-millennialism on the part of the Catholic church, which is so well inscribed on the pages of history, came as a result of the adoption of the allegorizing or spiritualizing method of interpreting the Scripture already referred to. Because of Origen's influence in this respect, Milner, the great English historian, said: "No man, not altogether unsound and hypocritical, ever injured the Church more than Origen did." Other so-called "church fathers" took up this method. From them it passed on to scholastic theologians and was carried over by some Protestant dogmatists.

A-millennialism and Arminianism

Every a-millennialist would be an Arminian if he were consistent. The a-millennialist takes the most positive promises of God to Israel, such as Isaiah 2:1-5 and Micah 4:1-7, and makes them conditional insofar as they are thought to apply to national Israel. If I could consider these positive promises conditional, then I should treat likewise such promises as found in Jeremiah 32:40, Romans 8:29-30 and John 10:27-29.

A-millennialism and Modernism

Just as the modernist has allegorized the first chapters of

Genesis, so the a-millennialist has allegorized Scriptures that refer to the regathering and conversion of the Jews and the personal reign of Christ on the earth. Moreover a-millennialism is like modernism again in that it undertakes to say in a ruthless and arbitrary way what can be true and what can't be true. It arbitrarily decides that God is through with the Jews as a nation. It decides that the sacrificial system of the Jews could not in anywise be restored without abrogating the new covenant. It decides that Christ and the glorified saints could not rule on this earth over men in natural bodies. It makes these decisions, not on the basis of a careful examination of all the Scriptures, but presumptively; and then proceeds to twist the Scripture wherever necessary in order to make it agree. It is no wonder that the modernistic Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is a hotbed of a-millennialism. Modernism and a-millennialism are Siamese twins.

The Meaning of the Term "A-millennialism"

A-millennialism means "non-millennialism." It would have suited a-millennialists much better if the Bible had said nothing about the binding of Satan and the reign of Christ and the saints for one thousand years. In fact, it would have suited them if the book of Revelation had never been written. The only use they make of the last nineteen chapters is to try to explain them away. If they were honest and thought they could get by with it, they would take the position of Dionysius and the Alogi in denying the canonicity of the book of Revelation. It is a thorn in their sides.

But the book of Revelation is with us to stay and a-millennialists must make some

disposition of the prophecy contained in the book. Thus we have non-millennialists telling us about the millennium. That is like having an atheist write on the attributes of God.

A-millennialism Denies God's Word Concerning Christ's Throne

A-millennialism says that Christ is now on His throne, the throne of David, which was promised to Him (Lk. 1:32). But the Bible says that Christ is now on the Father's throne and that He will ascend His own throne when He comes in glory (Rev. 3:21; Mt. 25:31).

A-millennialism Denies God's Word Concerning the Binding of Satan

A-millennialism believes about as much in the binding of Satan as Arminians believe in the sovereignty of God. God's Word pictures in Revelation 20 the complete restraint of Satan during the millennium, but a-millennialists say the restraint is only partial. That is just a plain, outright, blatant denial of the Word of God. A-millennialists need to be stripped of their pious and hypocritical pretenses and made to stand with all other deniers of the Word of God.

A-millennialism Denies God's Word About the Kingdom of the Beast

No doubt A. Pieters represents the consensus of opinion among a-millennialists when he says: "*The Battle of Armageddon, in the nineteenth chapter (of Revelation) means the victory of Christianity over Roman paganism, in the first three centuries of our era.*" But the Bible describes the pagan Roman Empire when it says "*and one is,*" that is, one of the

seven kings or kingdoms. Then it is said of the beast "*he is the eighth*" (See Rev. 17:10-11). By no sort of mental gymnastics can any honest man make out to himself that the empire of the beast was pagan Rome. Pagan Rome was in existence when John wrote, and he plainly says that after it another was to come; and that the beast to come in John's day is plainly Papal Rome. And the empire of the beast is still to come. John plainly said in his day that the beast "*is not*" (Rev. 17:8).

A-millennialism Denies the Teaching of God's Word That the Beast Is a Man

The Bible teaches unmistakably that the beast is a man by declaring his number is "*the number of a man*" (Rev. 13:18) and by revealing that he will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20) where he is still found at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:10). Only a man who is more interested in maintaining his own notion than in accepting the Word of God would ever dream that the Bible here has reference to anything other than a man. But a-millennialism says the beast only represents a system or abstract conception. Thus again it flatly denies the Word of God.

A-millennialism Must Distinguish Between Beast And Man of Sin

Since a-millennialists do not believe that the second coming of Christ is pictured in Revelation 19, saying that the destruction of the beast portrayed therein is but the triumph of Christianity over Roman paganism, they are logically forced to deny that the man of sin in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8, is the same as the beast of Revelation; be-

(See **A-MIL** on page 17)

A-MIL...

(Continued from page 16)

cause the man of sin is to be destroyed with the brightness of Christ's coming. Yet nothing is plainer than that the man of sin and the beast are identical.

**A-millennialism Rejects
God's Place for the Second
Coming of Christ.**

A-millennialism rejects God's place for the second coming of Christ and then substitutes its own. This is typical of a-millennialism as a whole. It says that we have not the second coming of Christ in Revelation 19, where that coming is plainly pictured to all except those who have blinded their eyes by becoming victims of the "philosophy of vain deceit;" and then places the second coming in the latter part of Revelation 20, where God makes no mention of it. God has plainly indicated that Revelation 19 sets forth the second coming of Christ by revealing in Zechariah 14:1-4 that at the time when Christ takes vengeance against all nations in the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:13, 16; 19:17-21), "*his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives.*" How pitiable it is when one a-millennialist says of Zechariah 14:4 "*Some one's feet are to 'stand upon the mount of Olives;' but it is not certain who the person is.*"

**A-millennialism Nullifies the
Imminency of Christ's
Coming**

New Testament Christians were commanded to "watch" and Christ's coming was revealed as always impending. After revealing the millennium, John represents Jesus as saying again: "*Surely I come quickly*" (Rev. 21:20), which means soon

rather than suddenly. This represents the coming of Jesus as the next thing in the prophetic program. This is what the Bible always means by "at hand" or "draweth nigh." But a-millennialism, by representing the thousand years of Revelation 20 as being before Christ's coming and as having extended now for much more than one thousand years, takes all the meaning out of such representations as noted. I doubt that any a-millennialist can say that he is expecting Christ at any moment. One a-millennialist says that the loosing of Satan (Rev. 20:7), which he puts, of course, before the second advent, will be the revival of paganism: and he says that there will emerge "*some kind of collectivism whose paganism embodied in some kind of world state or government will vent its wrath against the saints to stamp out the remembrance of them and historic Christianity in the earth.*" Certainly then he cannot believe that Christ's coming is imminent.

**A-millennialism Flagrantly
Contradicts God's Word By
Teaching a General
Resurrection**

As plainly as language can express it, God's Word describes a resurrection in which only the righteous take part (1 Thess. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 15:21-23; Rev. 20:5-6). Then it tells of another resurrection which only the wicked have part (Rev. 20:11, 15). But a-millennialists think they know more than the inspired writers did about this matter, so they put the two together. The Word of God is not final to a-millennialists. Their pet theory is final, so they presumptively rearrange God's Word to suit that.

**A-millennialism Accuses God
of Repenting**

God says He does not repent of His gifts and calling (Rom. 11:2), but a-millennialism says that He does. They admit that God once called national Israel and bestowed national blessings upon them, but they say that these have now been forfeited forever. Thus according to a-millennialism, there is no such thing as the immutability of God. Did I not tell you in the early part of this article that a-millennialists stand on Arminian grounds? If an a-millennialist is not an Arminian, it is not because of the Word of God for an a-millennialist takes the Word of God only where he wants to.

**A-millennialists Accuse
Jesus and the Prophets of
Falsifying**

A-millennialists say that when Jesus comes again He will not re-establish the Jewish nation in earthly Jerusalem. Jesus and the prophets said that He would. In Matthew 19:28 Jesus said: "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye shall sit on the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Now let any a-millennialist expose his ignorance by saying that the "regeneration" here is the triumph of Christianity over paganism in the first three centuries or at any other time. The apostles have not yet sat on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Moreover, the "regeneration" is represented as coinciding in time with the sitting of Christ on the throne of His glory, and this is to be when He returns (Mt. 25:31). This regeneration connects with the "*restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began*" (Acts 3:21) and with Isaiah 65:17-25, where

we have described a state of affairs in Jerusalem that could exist only in earthly Jerusalem. It is a state that will involve death, sinners, building houses, planting, laboring, and prayer.

The reader perhaps is beginning to feel that I have no patience with a-millennialism or time for it. That is exactly right. I regard it as being wholly and absolutely false and as just another system of deception that has emerged from the bottomless pit to be used of the devil in blighting the lives of individuals and disturbing the peace of churches. I am truly sorry for those who have been duped by it. I urge them to repent and return to their first love. -- Unknown writer. •

JETER...

(Continued from page 15)

raised his hand and pronounced the benediction.

Mrs. Jeter soon became a Baptist. She said that her pastor was one of the most scholarly Presbyterian preachers in all the South. If he could not find infant baptism in the Bible, then it must not be there. If infant baptism was not in the Bible, she had never been baptized, for infant baptism was all she had ever had. With an open Bible she soon was led to the truth and obeyed her Lord in baptism.

The Bible was written to make Baptists and it will do the work in every regenerate heart if they will only read it and obey it.

**Is This Your Last Issue of
The Baptist Challenge?**

This may be your last issue of **TBC** if we do not hear from you. We are presently revising our mailing list. If you wish to receive **TBC**, please notify us before our next issue

PRE...

(Continued from page 9)

He was not declaring himself to be God.

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate” (Dan. 9:27). Daniel’s 70th week is not mentioned until after the events of verse 26. These verses and events are clearly in chronological order. The events of verse 26 are “after” the events of verse 25. The events of verse 27 follow the events of verse 26. The time period that dispensational pre-millennialists believe to be between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel is not only justified by rules of Biblical interpretation, but it is required by those rules!

The contents of verse 27 require a restoration of Israel’s relationship with God which has not taken place since the events of verse 26. Since this restoration has not yet taken place, the temple has not been rebuilt, and the events of verse 24 are not yet completed, we must believe that Daniel’s 70th week is yet in the future. Since this prophecy deals specifically with Israel as a nation, and Romans 11 speaks of a future restoration of Israel we are left no choice but to believe that the future restoration of Israel will occur in the 7 year period of God’s prophecy in Daniel verse 27. Here is the Biblical evidence for a future period of 7 years when God shall save Israel.

The tribulation aspect of this seven year period is not difficult to establish once the foundation of the future fulfillment of Daniel’s 70th week is established. Although it is not difficult it

would take more time to establish this truth than I now have remaining. Daniel chapter 11, 12, then the Olivet Discourse, and The Revelation all tie together with this 70th week to give us a clear view of what will take place during this short period of time. These verses also establish that the literal return of Jesus Christ to the earth is immediately after Daniel’s 70th week.

The interpretation of the Olivet Discourse, The Revelation, and a host of other scriptures rests upon the Biblical evidence for this seven year time period. It cannot be the other way around since Israel’s future is involved in all these passages. This issue is fundamental to a proper interpretation of prophecy.

Now a few words of caution. It is wise to not be so set on the future of Israel that one must force every prophetic verse in the Bible into the future. There are verses that are clearly historical in their fulfillment. Post-millennialists writers justly discredit radical futurists who force verses into the future against their context. Be as dogmatic and firm about the historic fulfillment as you are about future fulfillment!

It has been my experience that Mid and Post tribulational rapture theories breed great confusion. They do not comfortably find support in the Biblical evidence presented tonight. I find many of these arguments fail to take into account the foundational principles of the seven year tribulation. Many proponents of these positions actually use arguments that cut away at the very foundation upon which they claim to stand thus opening the door for post-millennialism.

Foundations are established to build upon. I have presented a Biblical foundation of dispensational pre-millennialism -- build on it. Don’t start the house until the foundation is firmly laid. •

SMYTH...

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of the erroneous notion of the Roman Catholics that their denomination is the most ancient’.”

Dr. David Benedict, “A General History of the Baptist Denomination,” who some say taught that John Smyth founded the Baptist church. Far from it. On page 327 Dr. Benedict says:

“John Smyth, the man who is said to have baptized himself, and thereby acquired the name Se Baptist, is distinctly announced by Mr. Taylor, their historian as the founder of the English General Baptists, and that the society grew out of the division of Robinson’s congregation in Holland, nearly two and a half centuries ago.” On page 326 Dr. Benedict distinguishes between the General Baptists and “their more orthodox brethren,” meaning the regular Baptists. Here are Benedict’s own views, found on page 337, footnote:

“From all the fragments of history, I am inclined to the belief that Baptist churches, under various circumstances, have existed in England from the time of William the Conqueror, four or five centuries prior to those of which any definite accounts have come down to us; and that the more the history of the dark ages is explored, the more this opinion will be confirmed. Baptist churches, in persecuting times, are merely household affairs — which must of necessity be hid from public view. More than three centuries had elapsed before any of the Baptists of England had any knowledge that a church of their order existed in Chesterton, in 1457. Mr. R. Robinson brought the facts to light by examining the MS records of the old bishop of Ely.”

Again, on page 343, Benedict

says:

“Rev. Joshua Thomas, a native of this country (England) in 1778 published a history of the Welsh Baptists from the year 63 to that time.”

I have Thomas’ great history in my library, and can verify the statement made by Dr. Benedict. Baptists were in the British Isles in A.D. 63.

Thus we have shown by historians our opponents often quote and garble that John Smyth had no connection whatsoever with the regular Baptists, the same having come down through the centuries since their origin in apostolic days. Those making the claim that John Smyth founded the Baptists are found more frequently among the so-called “Church of Christ” preachers, whose ecclesiastical father is Mr. Alexander Campbell. Let us hear Dr. Benedict, whom they quote and misrepresent, on the name of their church:

“As long names are inconvenient in historical relations, I have in all my narratives, when this people are referred to, styled them Campbellites, or Reformers, and so I shall at present” (Benedict’s History, page 916).

And let us allow Mr. Alexander Campbell to say how long the Baptist Church has been in existence. This should settle the issue about John Smyth once and for all time. I quote Mr. Campbell, taken from the Campbell-Walker Debate” of 1820:

“I say, while all these sects are of recent origin, not one of them able to furnish a model of their peculiarities, or antiquity, greater than I have mentioned, the Baptists time, and produce unequivocal testimonies of their existence in every century down to the present time; and the model of their peculiarities

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nation that it was, and when America assumed the responsibility of sending out missionaries to all the world. So that was the period of the open door. Now the Lord said, *"Behold, I have set before the an open door, and no man can shut it,"* showing them that it is the Lord who gave them this opportunity of service.

There are two characteristics that denote this age, that represent this period of time. In verse 8 we read *"For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."* In verse 10 we read *"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience."* What we see here is obedience to His word, and it is mentioned twice. All we need to do is to go back in our history, think about our preceding century, the 19th century, and we see that obedience to the word, to a great extent, is that which characterized them.

Secondly, we find the phrase *"faithfulness to his name."* In the latter part of verse 8 it says, *"and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."* Both of these, the Word and the Name, are to be denied in the last days. But during this time period represented by the church of Philadelphia, we find that they maintained the obedience to the Word and they did not deny His name. We find that the rejection of both the written Word and the living Word are to be characteristics of the churches of the last days.

This was not true of the church of Philadelphia. Though they were little in number, their little strength is to be used by the Lord with the keeping of their word and therefore is to be very effective. Again, note what the Lord says in verse 8: *"For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not*

denied my name." Now when you put a "little strength" with obedience to the Word and with the keeping of God's Name, that in itself becomes great strength.

When you just stop and look at New Testament churches, from a human standpoint, all of them had little strength. When you think of the great corporations of our world today, such as General Motors, Sears Roebuck, IBM, or AT&T, we see great strength, and we see the abilities that they have and what they are able to accomplish. On the other hand look at churches, how little they are and how inconsequential they are in comparison to these great giants of commerce. They have no computers; they do not have the facilities, nor resources, either human or financial, and yet somehow, churches with little strength when they are obedient unto the Word and keep the faith, they are able to accomplish much more than either Sears and Roebuck, AT&T, IBM, or any of these great companies of our world today. The reason is that when we take the "little strength" that we have, and put it in the hands of God, then it is able to do great and mighty things.

Sometimes when we think about the task and the work that God has given us to do, we have a tendency to become discouraged and say "We just can't do it." But that's looking to self rather than looking to the Lord. That's looking to human strength rather than looking to divine strength. When we take what little strength we have, and put it into the hands of God, it becomes an effective tool for fulfilling God's commission. It can be done, because it is not us that does it.

There's a song, I don't guess it's ever been sung here, maybe it has, but I have heard it sung called "Little is much when God is in it," and our little becomes

much when it is in the hands of the Lord. *"Thou hast a little strength."*

I preached a message one time on "Little faith," and then referred to the different kinds of faith such as "mustard seed" faith, etc. Really, God doesn't require much faith. All God requires is a little faith on our part, and then God will take that and He'll do much.

Here's an open door that's been placed before this church, and they only have a "little strength," but because they have obedience to the Word, and because they have not denied His name, they were able to accomplish the impossible. They were able to accomplish, (this may not be a good word but I'm going to use it anyway), they were able to accomplish the "unaccomplishable," which would be the impossible of doing. Though little in number and though little in strength, they were able to do it, and that's in spite of their adversaries.

Their adversaries were not little. Their strength was little, but their adversaries were not. Notice He says in verse 9: *"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."* So we see that their opposition or their adversaries were referred to as a "synagogue of Satan."

Now just who are those that composed the "synagogue of Satan?" All right, look at the church at Smyrna. Remember that we found there that these were unsaved church members. They were false professors who clothed themselves with great religious pretensions, but in reality who opposed Christians. They were referred to as the "synagogue of Satan," false professors. These here in Philadelphia are the same kind of

people, the same class of people, and when you are talking about false professors, the Lord uses extremely strong language about them.

Occasionally someone will criticize a preacher because he uses strong language. A preacher would have to go a long way before he used stronger language than that used by the Apostle Paul. He'd have to go a long way before he used stronger language than what the Lord Himself used, and when you're talking about these false Christians, those who form a part of this "synagogue of Satan," these false professors, the Lord used some extremely strong language about them. Notice in Matthew 3:7.

"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers." He accused them of being a bunch of snakes, "a generation of vipers." Next, notice in Matthew 23:23. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Now notice verse 33, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Then in Luke 3:7 "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" In other words, the Lord used some very strong language when He was talking about hypocrites. Hypocrites are church members who are unsaved, and who know they are unsaved, but they still carry a pretense of being saved.

Now a hypocrite is one that knows they're lost, but they seek to deceive others to make them think they are saved when they themselves know they are lost. Now every unsaved church member is not necessarily a hypocrite. Somebody may be a member of the church and may

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be unsaved but they may not know it, and they then are not a hypocrite. An unsaved church member, maybe he's not sure he's saved, or he may not be sure he's lost, that is not a hypocrite. The hypocrite is that person that probably you would never finger as a hypocrite. The hypocrite is one who seeks to live like a Christian, tries to be spiritual in his attitudes, to present himself as spiritual, but in reality, is a lost church member. Some times those who appear to be the most spiritual minded can be your greatest hypocrite in a church. They are the ones that are of the "synagogue of Satan." That's what these Pharisees were.

The Pharisees were religious people; morally they were good people. They would brag about their goodness and their tithes and offerings and how much they gave, how much they did for the Lord, how much they prayed. They would pray in public and pray long prayers so that all might see, and hear, and know how spiritual they were, yet all the time they were members of the "synagogue of Satan." The Lord Himself says, they were simply a bunch of snakes, underhanded, cunning, sly, all out to destroy as we find here in the third chapter of the Book of Revelation. They were the adversaries of the true church, members of the church, yet adversaries of the church. Members of the church, having their name on the roll, being in regular attendance at the church, and yet working against the church from the inside.

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie." They call themselves Jews and yet they were not. The Lord says one day they're going to come and they are going to worship at the feet

of the Philadelphian church. The Lord says He's going to exonerate them. The Lord says that His church yet is going to gain the victory over her adversaries.

Now then let's notice some of the commendations that the Lord has to say about them. He says, and we touched a slight bit on it, but we want to go a little further on it. He says, "*I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength,*" or thou hast a little power. You know the greatest of rewards will not be given because of the greatest of opportunities. Now let me repeat that. The greatest of rewards will not be given because of the greatest of opportunities, but rewards will be given according to one's faithfulness in responding to the opportunities. You may not have great numbers of opportunities. If so, God will not reward you according to great numbers, but He will reward you for your faithfulness in responding to the few opportunities.

It's the same way in the area of talents. There are those who have ten talents, others who have five talents, and then there are some who have two talents, and maybe some who just have one talent. Now God is not going to give rewards to the person with ten talents a greater reward simply because they had ten talents, but He is going to give them their reward as they respond to all of those ten talents, as they use those ten talents for the Lord. But for that person who just has one talent, their reward will be just as great if they are as faithful in using that one talent for the Lord, as will be that person who has the ten talents who uses those ten talents for the Lord.

You see it is not the number of opportunities that determines rewards, but it is your faithful-

ness in responding to those opportunities that God gives you. Their measure of strength may have been little, it may have been small, but this church was faithful in responding to that open door or that opportunity that the Lord laid out before her.

Secondly, "*And hast kept my word.*" We noted that this appears twice, once in verse 8 and again in verse 10. Now one does not keep the Word merely by defending it, but you keep the Word by submission and obedience unto it. This is how you keep the Word. There are some who think that simply because they are ready to defend the Word, that they have kept the Word, but keeping the Word involves more than simply defending the Word. We must submit ourselves unto the Word and we must obey the Word, and only then can we say that we have kept the word.

Now then let's notice verse 8, "*And hast not denied my name.*" Some did, just as there are some today who deny the name.

There are five promises that we find in verses 10-13. "*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*"

The first thing He says is that the enemies of this church are going to be humiliated. In verse 9 He says, "*Behold, I will make them of the synagogue, which say they are Jews, and*

are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." These enemies are then going to be humiliated.

Secondly, we find that the promise is made that this church is going to have deliverance from the great tribulation that is to come. This refers to the deliverance from the Tribulation Period. There are some today that teach that New Testament churches, that is, churches like ours, are going to have to go either halfway through the Tribulation Period, or all the way through the Tribulation Period. Those who claim the halfway mark or called "Mid-tribs" or "Mid-tribulationists." Then there are those that are referred to as "Post-tribs" or "Post-Tribulationists." Finally, there are those (like me) that are called "Pre-tribs," that is, we believe that the rapture will be pre-tribulation. Churches will not enter into the Tribulation Period for the Lord will preserve His children from the Tribulation Period. In verse 10 we have this promise, "*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*"

Now when He says "*the hour of temptation*" this refers to this great Tribulation Period that is described in chapters 6-19, or "*the things which shall be hereafter*" as we find in 1:19. This is called "the tribulation period."

I want to read a verse from the Book of Daniel. In chapter 12 and verse one we read, "*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never*

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was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." When? When Michael stands up! And when Michael stands up *"thy people shall be delivered."* Delivered from what? From that time of trouble which refers to the Tribulation Period.

Notice in the 24th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew beginning in verse 15 concerning this Tribulation Period. *"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."* In other words, the Lord tells them that this does not refer to the normal trials of Christians but refers to the hour, and that identifies it as the Tribulation Period.

Furthermore, He says, *"I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."* Now this does not refer just to ordinary tribulations or persecutions that have been upon all the inhabitants of the earth in previous years. Churches have been persecuted. They have not been preserved from tribulations. However, this one is different from that which occurred be-

fore, because this tribulation period, or this *"hour of temptation,"* shall come upon *all* the world, and there never has been a period like this in history, never one that covered all the world. You'll note that this tribulation is going to extend upon all the inhabitants of the earth, and its object is to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Now the Lord does not tell this church here that they are going to be preserved *in* it or *through* it, but He says that they are going to be preserved *from* it or *out of* it. They will neither go in whereby He will preserve them while they are in it, but He says they will be preserved out of it. They will not go into this Tribulation Period because the saved will be raptured before the Tribulation Period falls upon this earth.

Now verse 11 tells us that the coming of the Lord is imminent. *"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."* The doctrine of the soon coming of the Lord has been held by believers and Christians since the days of the New Testament. Even the believers during New Testament days thought that the Lord would come in their own lifetime. So much so, that at Thessalonica the Apostle Paul wrote the Book of Second Thessalonians to prevent them from going out and selling their houses, because they thought the Lord was going to come that quickly.

We had some like that here in Arkansas a couple of years ago. We had a group of people that sold all their houses and then went to the top of a mountain to wait for the rapture. They all moved into one house, and they all began to pray and wait for the coming of the Lord. It wasn't long until the Health Department had to move in, and then the School authorities had to move in because they had taken

their kids out of school, and they were just waiting for the coming of the Lord.

The Lord intends for us to understand that He can come at any moment, but He also says that no man knoweth the day or the hour when the Son of Man cometh, so we're not to do as the church at Thessalonica. They misunderstood that letter from the Apostle Paul and they thought that He was going to come so soon, that they began to sell their houses and their goods and just sit down and wait for the Lord. Waiting upon the Lord does not mean sitting down and waiting in idleness. Waiting upon the Lord means to get out and be busy working for the Lord, because of the limitation of the time. But the Scriptures do teach the imminent return of the Lord, what might be referred to as the "any moment" coming of the Lord. God does intend for us to live as though it could come at any moment, and we are to expect the coming of the Lord in our own lifetime.

Let us turn over to that book in First Thessalonians chapter 4 for a minute. Now these are the verses that gave this church at Thessalonica the idea that the Lord was going to come in their lifetime and therefore they began to ... well, they just misinterpreted and began to sell everything, etc. but notice in First Thessalonians chapter 4 beginning in verse 13.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or precede) them which are asleep."

Paul indicates here that even he himself might be living when Jesus comes again. He says in this verse *"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain ... unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."* Now you can see and understand how this church at Thessalonica could say, "Well, maybe the Lord is coming that fast, that soon."

Now the Lord intended for all of us to believe that He might come at any moment. It is for this very reason that the Lord has kept us in a nebulous state as to the time of the coming of the Lord. We do not know when the Lord is going to come. But the Lord did say that we are to be ready because *"in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh,"* and this is all through the Scriptures. Everywhere you read in the Scriptures concerning the coming of the Lord, it tells us that we are to be ready because He can come at any moment.

Turn with me to the 21st chapter of the Book of Luke. Though the Lord has not given us any evidence as to a specific time, the Lord has given us certain signs, certain indications that let us know when we get to the general period of time when the Lord might come. I want to show you one right now in the 21st chapter of the Gospel of Luke.

Fifty years ago this sign could not have been fulfilled, but unless I am mistaken, and I could

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be, this sign has been fulfilled in your lifetime. Notice in verse 24 of Luke chapter 21. "*And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations.*" Now that's been fulfilled. That's talking about the dispersing of the Jews throughout the world, and today the Jews were captured and they have been distributed throughout the whole world. So it says, "*And they shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations.*" And now notice this, "*And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*"

Now this is a sign of the coming of the Lord. The Jews were to be captured and dispersed throughout all the world, and remain there until things are ready for the return of the Lord. Then they are going to be regathered back into Israel, as we find in many of the prophecies of both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Here we find this prediction "*And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" Now when the "*times of the Gentiles*" is fulfilled, according to the Book of Romans, Paul tells us that the wild tree that was grafted in was the Gentiles, but that the Lord is going to once again graft back into the olive tree, which is the Jewish nation, the Jewish people, and that will be at the end of the times of the Gentiles when God is going to graft in again, or bring back in, the natural tree, the olive tree, the Jews. When? When the times of the Gentiles end. That is at the time of the second coming of the Lord. This is one of the signs.

As you know, the city of Jerusalem has been trodden

under the foot of the Gentiles all these years, nearly 2,000 years. Even in 1946 when Israel was again formed as a nation, and allowed to have their land, though many did live at the city of Jerusalem, they were in what was referred to as New Jerusalem which was outside the city walls, and the Gentiles still were on the inside of the Old City, and there was no crossing from one side to the other.

Then came the "Six day War." In the Six-day War the Jews moved into Jerusalem, the Old City, and took it over, and today the Jewish nation is in possession of Jerusalem, and the city of Jerusalem is no longer trodden under the feet of the Gentiles.

What does it say? "*And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" Somebody asks, does that mean that is the end? I'm not sure. If you listen to what the Jews say, yes, because they say they will not give up the city of Jerusalem, and if they maintain possession, and if they hold it, and if they do not give it up, or if it is not taken from them, if they hold it, then you can know that this is a fulfillment of this verse of Scripture.

But, there's still the possibility that they might lose it. I don't know. God does not want us to know. He does not give us specific times, but He gives us some general prophecies that are to be fulfilled in the last days, and He says, "*And when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that your redemption draweth nigh,*" so that really you and I can anticipate and expect the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in our lifetime. The imminent return of the Lord. "Behold, I come quickly."

Are you ready if the Lord should come tonight? He could. He could come this very night. I do not know of any thing that

has to take place before Jesus comes again.

You say, "Preacher, do you expect Him tonight?" No. I have plans for what I'm going to do tomorrow. But remember the Lord says "*in the hour ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.*" It's when you don't expect Him, that's when He's going to come. Therefore it behooves us to be ready always. For Christians, it behooves us to be ready always, because we don't know when the Lord is coming.

But how much more important it is for those who are the unsaved to be ready. If Christians are unprepared and not ready, it may be the loss of rewards. It will not be the loss of salvation for the saved person, but the loss of rewards is serious enough for the believer. For the unsaved person, you're not even eligible for a reward, but what it means is the loss of your soul for eternity, and He could come tonight. Are you ready?

This is what the Lord's talking about right here. The time of the coming of the Lord when He is going to bring in the greatest tribulation upon the face of this earth that this world has ever seen, and if the Lord should come tonight, the only thing that you have to look forward to is one of two things. First, you might die an early death in the early part of the Tribulation Period, which will just take your soul right on down to Hell right then.

Secondly, if you do survive the first part of the Tribulation Period, you still must go through the balance of that Tribulation Period, to suffer all the great plagues that God is going to pour out upon this earth, and then ultimately still to die and go to Hell. All because you weren't ready.

As I said this morning, God has now placed an open door

before you. No man can shut it. It is the door of salvation. If you want to be saved, all you have to do is go through the door. It's there. Jesus will save. All you need do is to come to Him by faith, trust Him as your Lord and your Savior. The Lord is coming, and the Scripture tells us He's coming soon, and the signs that we see show that we are now at the very brink of the coming of the Lord. Are you ready? If not, would you trust the Lord tonight. Be saved tonight! Don't wait. Don't postpone it, for Jesus could come at any time.

I want us to sing the hymn "There's a Great Day Coming," and as we sing this hymn, if you're not saved, why not become ready now and not wait. If you are saved, then why not get ready and become busy for the Lord right now, for His coming is soon. •

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the Scriptures themselves afford, as far as the name Baptist is concerned."

That should be heard and respected by all of Mr. Campbell's followers. And as to their own origin, we will let the late Mr. L. L. Brigrance, one of their prominent preachers and writers, speak. As editorial writer of the "Gospel Advocate," one of their own publications, he said in the issue for November 28, 1935, speaking of Mr. Campbell and his associates:

"Being therefore rejected and cast out of the Baptist fold, they were forced into separate religious existence ... Thus it is seen that separate religious movement began to take form about 1830."

While crying Pentecost as the time of their origin, their own authority frankly gives a date for their origin some *eighteen hundred years* this side of Pentecost! •

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America only a few intelligent philosophers would have challenged this fact — and no one listened. The difference is that today we have a whole nation of intellectual philosophers and things like this have to be explained. Truth — error. Right — wrong. Pure — impure. The Bible spells out this fact in one verse.

“Hereby know we the *spirit of truth*, and the *spirit of error*” (1 Jn. 4:6).

In a Christian America truth and error could be defined. Truth was being faithful to fact and reality. Truth was true in relation to being, knowledge, or speech. Truth was right according to divine revelation. In a Christian America the Bible was the accepted truth. It made this claim for itself and was accepted as such.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14:6). Jesus spoke as one having authority when He said, “I am the truth.” The Bible speaks of a God that cannot lie (Tit. 1:2). What God says in the Bible is truth, absolute truth. He cannot lie. How strange this sounds in today’s babel of confusion.

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jn. 17:17). Here is no uncertain sound. The Bible just plainly says that it is the truth and you either accept it as such or are forced to reject it as fraudulent. We are told to “obey the truth” (Gal. 3:1). It doesn’t take much to recognize that the truth can be known if it was to be obeyed.

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:32). What a tremendous promise! “Ye shall know the truth.”

The acceptance of the fact of truth and error made a noticeable mark upon a Christian

America. The knowledge, belief, morals, laws, customs, and opinions of America were predominantly Christian. Let us start at the very beginnings of our nation. One only has to peruse lightly the history of early America to see that at the beginning this country was thoroughly saturated with the influence of Christian teaching. This influence continued strong until about one lifetime ago. The men who wrote the documents upon which the government of America is founded, publicly and repeatedly sought the blessings and guidance of God through the Bible. Their philosophy of government and law came right from the pages of the Bible. No nation was ever conceived that so publicly and openly accepted the Christian guidelines as set forth in the Bible. That this is fact can easily be established by all who care to read what these men wrote.

In early America there was the struggle of different religions and the differences of opinions but because there was the acceptance of the fact of truth and error there emerged the nation that was so blessed of God.

Because it accepted the fact of absolute truth a Christian America found it easy to accept the fact of a truth giver — God. The fact of God’s existence was accepted by a Christian America. Challenges to this fact were rare and treated as suspect. Even those who made no pretense of religion would vigorously proclaim their belief in God and the “good Book.” In the days of a Christian America man made no attempt to deny what his intuitive knowledge cried out was fact. As strange as this sounds today this also gave a cohesiveness and unity to the nation — they all had the same God. This was truth in the abstract if not in particular application.

The Bible concept of the nature of man dominated the thinking of Christian America. It was accepted that the nature of man was evil, inclined to sin, and was getting progressively worse. No one particularly had to spell this out — it was just generally known, maybe because man was inclined to be more honest with himself in a Christian America. And then, no one was trying to publicly deny the obvious: they didn’t do that in those days.

Because it was believed that man was a sinner a Christian America also accepted the fact that he needed a Savior. Jesus Christ was the Savior. Even those who did not accept this in a personal way did not deny the fact. Even in the conflict that existed among different kinds of churches over the necessities of salvation — none denied that salvation was necessary on a personal basis. And certainly none denied that Jesus Christ was the Savior.

The moral teachings of the Bible were accepted as the basis of determining right and wrong in conduct and character. The fact that right was to be rewarded and evil was to be punished was never seriously questioned in a Christian America. The laws of our land reflect the acceptance of the moral teachings of the Bible. It could be said that a Christian America had a Christian conscience.

The books and literature of a Christian America revealed its Christian character. To establish this fact, take the best seller of 40 to 50 years ago and compare it to the one of today. Christian America shut down on Sunday — the Christian day of worship. It was accepted that it was the right thing to go to church and it was wrong not to attend. Even those who did not go, agreed!

To those who still have a memory of America as a Christian nation it doesn’t take much jog-

ging to bring that memory into clear focus. For those who do not have such a memory, it is already almost impossible to convey to them what it was like — even if anyone was trying.

For some it is easy to remember America as a Christian nation but it is difficult to face the fact that our nation has lost that Christian identity — in one lifetime. Too many are content to live on the memory and ignore the reality. It seems to be easier to contentedly remember America as a Christian nation than to face the fact of the continuing slide downward; from Christian to non-Christian, and now, one step away from Satan’s Society.

The purpose of these pages is to scream out one more time for God’s people to look at it as it is — not as they remember. *The fact must be faced that we are now living in a non-Christian America. It can seriously be said that children being born in America today could possibly have no more chance of being saved than if they had been born in China or Russia. Are you listening?*

The pages of history are cluttered with the wreckage of nations that have followed the same downward spiral that characterizes America today. Our only distinction is that we are doing it faster. No nation has ever survived, which, after knowing God, turned from Him. This is the course that America has taken. A nation, which from its very beginning, was characterized by an acknowledgment of its belief and need of God is now engaged in systematically eliminating God from every aspect of its existence. No nation has ever taken the road now being followed by America and turned back. We are possibly less than one-half a generation away from the point of no return.

(See **WELLS** on page 24)

WELLS...

(Continued from page 23)

This is the terrible sense of loss being felt by born-again Christians. The urgency stems from the sure knowledge that this cannot continue without God intervening. And the time is now. The percentage of those being saved continues to dwindle. The influence of Christianity is dying at an ever accelerating rate.

To any honest observer it has to be recognized that on a world-wide basis the same situation exists. There is no nation on earth today that can be called a Christian nation. In America there is the one last glimmer of hope. It will be the premise of this article that a turn around can be accomplished. It has never been done, but, under God, it can be done. The condition must be realized, the remedy applied, and God must be expected to work His miracle — now!

Again it needs to be said so it will be remembered throughout all these pages. In speaking of a time when America could have been called a Christian nation it is not the intent to

imply that there ever was a time when there was a popular acceptance of God, the Bible, Jesus Christ, etc. Neither is it intended to imply that there ever was a time of a real Christian majority in America. True Christianity, in America as everywhere else, has always been a small minority. In a Christian America, however, it was demonstrated that a faithful Christian minority could influence an entire nation and its culture.

All through these pages when we speak of turning America around before it is everlastingly too late, it is not our intent to convey the idea that there is something that can be done that will automatically cause a huge, nation-shaking, movement that will suddenly "Christianize" America. There is nowhere in the Bible where the anticipation of the whole world, or whole nations, "turning to God" is held out. It can be hoped that America will be turned around so that the Christian influence will not be squelched and where souls can continue to be saved — more so, if God so desires, than ever before. •

Pastor Writes From Villahermosa

Distinguished Brother in the common faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This letter is to communicate that, thanks unto the grace of our Heavenly Father, we have much work in the work of the Lord here in the in the First Baptist Church "Prince of Peace" in the city of Villahermosa, Tabasco.

Attached I am sending you a copy of the activities of our church for the present year as well as the program of the fellowship meeting that we had with the churches of Tabasco in August, 1994, sponsored by our church.

At the same time I am including the missions that are affiliated and sponsored by our church here in Villahermosa with the name of the missionary workers and their locations.

1. **"Bethel" Independent Baptist Mission** in Tapotzingo, Nacajuca. Their pastor is José Jesús Luciano Garcia. This mission will shortly be organized into a church.

2. **"Berea" Independent Baptist Mission** located in Subdivision La Manga, Villahermosa, Tabasco. Their pastor is Francisco Almeida Calderón.

3. **"Holy Spirit of God" Independent Baptist Mission** located in Macuspana, Tabasco. The worker there is Miguel Morales Salaya.

4. **"Christ Calls" Independent Baptist Mission** located in Ciudad Pemex, Macuspana, Tabasco. The pastor is Hernán Aguilar Cantoral.

5. **"Christ Is The Truth" Independent Baptist Mission** in the "Trinidad Y Catalina" community in Jonuta, Tabasco.

co. The worker there is Baldemar Hernández Díaz.

6. **"Jesus the Good Shepherd" Independent Baptist Mission** in the Platano community, Third section of Cunduacan, Tabasco. Saúl Savala de Dios in charge.

7. **"Ebenezer" Independent Baptist Mission** in the Arroyo community, Nacajuca, Tabasco. Worker: Federico Rodriguez Alejandro.

8. **"The True Vine" Independent Baptist Mission** in the Casa Blanca Subdivision, Villahermosa, Tabasco. Ambrosio Hernández Montejo in charge.

9. **"Smyrna" Independent Baptist Mission** in the Abasolo community, Macuspana, Tabasco. Rodolfo Hernández Jiménez in charge.

10. **"The Messiah" Independent Baptist Mission** in Jalpa de Méndez, Tabasco. Tomás Hernández Jiménez in charge.

Your brother in Christ wishing you many blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ for you, your family, as also all of the church.

José Hernández Lopez

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