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Firm The Foundation

By S. E. Anderson

Foundations of buildings are, usually obscured from view perhaps that is why the actual foundation of our Christian faith and more particularly the Baptist position, is obscure. Beneath the remains of certain ancient cities archaeologists have discovered still earlier ruins and foundations. For those who may think that Baptist beginnings are confined to Roger Williams or to sixteenth-century Anabaptists, it may be a surprise to discover still older sources.

Back of the Reformation Anabaptists were earlier Baptist people. "This is not to say that an unbroken line of Baptists can be traced to the New Testament times. Apostolic succession is not needed, but it could be profitable to show a doctrinal connection between the New Testament and modern Baptist.

Who was the first Baptist? In looking for him, we need not look for one identical with American, Southern, or Primitive Baptists. Descriptive names, like other words, change meanings in time. But if we locate the first Baptist we might discover the nature of Baptist foundations.

The First So Named

Neither secular history nor Scripture tells of a Baptist prior to John the Baptist. John was the first person so named, and he was probably called a Baptist because he was the first to baptize. Jesus implied that John's baptism was from heaven, and not from any men of a previous generation. The source of John's baptism was equated with the source of Christ's authority namely, from heaven (Mt. 21:23-27).

Of course immersions were common with the Essences and others, but in ways and for reasons different from those of John. They were not "Baptists."

To look more closely at John's role as a foundation of Baptist faith, one should read the prophecies of Isaiah (40: 3-5) and Malachi (3:1; 4:5-6). These ancient blueprints were uniquely fulfilled by John the Baptist. The Fourth Gospel (1:6) identifies this son of prophecy: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John."

John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit, "even from his mother's womb" (Lk. 1:15). Hence his words and actions were divinely inspired. What he preached was infused with the same divine authority as Christ had (Jn. 3:34). True, Christ had

authority within Himself which John did not have, but the same Spirit filled and empowered both. And while Christ preached more than John did, He preached the same things (Mt. 3:2; 4:17).

To change the figure momentarily, John the Baptist was the taproot of New Testament theology. If we reject his message we thereby reject the "counsel of God" (Lk. 7:30). And if a young tree's taproot is cut, it will remain a dwarf. Is that the reason some Baptist bodies do not grow?

Foundations have important functions. Did John fulfill them Yes; he prepared many people for their coming Messiah. He made straight the way of the Lord. He turned many to the Lord their God (Lk. 1:16-17). Then when Christ came to work He found prepared converts who followed him instantly. John prepared them in several ways: he got them to repent and to confess their sins, thus securing their conversion (Mt. 3:6; Lk. 1:69,77); he baptized them, thus signifying their change from old sinful ways to new godly ways (Lk. 7:29); he taught his converts to live right (Mt. 3:18; Lk. 3:10-14); he instilled loyalty to Christ in the hearts of his converts (Jn. 1:29,

33, 36). John was the first New Testament preacher to declare the deity of Christ (Jn. 1:34, 36).

Conveyor of Fundamental Truths

The Baptist was the first to declare foundational Christian truths. He taught the absolute necessity of conversion, or the new birth. That is the meaning of his "Repent ye!" (Mt. 3:2). The Greek, *metanocite*, change your mind, really means be converted!

John taught repentant sinners to confess their sins (Mt. 3:6). He baptized converts right after their conversion (Mt. 3:6). He preached judgment upon persistent unbelievers (Mt. 3:7). He insisted on individual responsibility; no proxy religion, as "covenant theology" would do. Neither Abraham or any other good parent can secure his children's salvation by ritual or vain promises (Mt. 3:9).

John taught the supremacy of Christ (Mt. 3:11). This means the sole Lordship of Christ, with no human authority intervening. He taught the coming and power of the Holy Spirit the one on whom believers are baptized, whom believers are to obey,

(See **FIRM** on page 24)

The Book of Revelation -- Message #29**The Church of Laodicea**

By M.L. Moser, Editor

[This message on "The Church of Laodicea" was preached July 1, 1979, and is printed "as preached." It 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.]

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither

cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I re-buke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will

I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 3:14-22).

We begin our study tonight of the last of these seven churches. There will be this message tonight and I think there will be two messages next Sunday that will be dealing with this seventh church, the Church of Laodicea.

This is the seventh and the last of these seven churches. This church represents that period of time immediately preceding the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It represents that period of time beginning around the 1900's until the coming of the Lord. If we were to title this church or to give this church a name that would be characteristic of it, we would refer to it as the "lukewarm, self-satisfied" church. I think we could also refer to it as the church age characterized as the age of indifference and apostasy. We have looked at six churches already, and as we approach the seventh church, though we have compared our church to each of these other six in order to find out what things about that church might be representative of our church, I believe that this last church is the one that we really need to pay more attention to. This church of Laodicea is representative of the churches of that last dispensation, that last period of time, just before the Second Coming of the Lord. As you and I know, that is the period of time in which we are living today. So that really, as we think of our generation, we should be able to see that the majority of true churches are going to be similar to and like this church of Laodicea.

Now we're not talking about churches that are not true churches. We're not talking about false churches, but this church of Laodicea is representative of true churches of the last days, not false churches, but true churches. So as we read and as we study about this church of Laodicea, this is the church that we ought to think about more than any of the other churches because it is to this church that most churches of this generation are going to have a similarity to.

As we usually do, let us look at the background of this church to begin with, before we actually get into a study of the letter itself. The city of Laodicea is about 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia and about 40 miles east of Ephesus. Again we find that we are in this circular pattern and we have made a complete circuit to where we are now just about to come back to the church at Ephesus, and the church of Laodicea is the last one. It is located in the Lycus valley and it is in the province of Phrygia.

This city was founded by Antiochus II of Syria. He named this after his wife. Her name was Laodike or Laodice. That's where it got its name Laodicea, much as we find cities today. Some cities have their names after important people. As some of you know, they have this huge King Ranch in Texas and he named some of those cities and towns after his daughters. Alice, Texas is one of the cities. I can't remember the others, but there are several of them named after this man's daughters. He named them himself. Stalingrad was named after Stalin, and they do have other cities named that way.

The city itself was destroyed by an earthquake in the year A.D. 60 and when aid was offered unto them, they rejected all aid and said that they would

(See **CHURCH** on page 21)

THE BAPTIST CHALLENGE

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A Perspective On Missions

By David Pitman, Pastor
Temple Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

On the outset I wish to admit that the conclusions I am about to state are emphatically, and perhaps uniquely, my own. However, I obviously believe that they are conclusions based upon Biblical concepts. I would also admit that my exposure and experiences are rather limited; perhaps my perspective is out of focus.

Nevertheless, here are my thoughts. I read recently that 90% of the world's Christian workers minister to less than 6% of the world's population. I have no way of verifying the absolute accuracy of those figures, but I will assume they are approximate. There would be some explanations of course:

1. A great portion of the world's population lives in areas where the gospel is greatly hindered, though not entirely absent (almost one-half of the world's population lives in three nations — China, India, and Russia — where there are the least number of Christians).

2. Included in most totals of "Christianity" are Roman Catholics (565 million), Eastern Orthodox (92 million) and Protestants (324 million). The Catholic Church (both Roman and Eastern) preaches false doctrine; a considerable portion of Protestants (Baptists are *not* Protestants) do *not* preach the true gospel of God's grace. So that 90% is diluted rather quickly, both in numbers and effectiveness.

3. There are probably less than 100,000 Baptist churches in the U.S. Optimistic figures place the total membership at about 28 million.

4. We *do* need more Baptist (Bible-believing, Bible-obeying, Bible-practicing) churches in the United States.

5. We need not be ashamed to invest money and ministers in reaching America with the gospel. The more sound churches there are, the more mission dollars there will be; and more importantly, the more missionaries there will be.

6. I am *for* missions, both foreign and home, but whining missionaries with a martyr complex (a minority I am sure) weary me. A man is no more noble for serving God in Africa than for serving God in America. Is he where God called him to be? Wonderful! So am I.

7. I believe our mission bureaucracies have done more harm than good (but I do not deny that good has been done). They tend to weaken the link between the missionary and his sending church. They tend to confuse the average church member as to where the real responsibility for the missionary rests — it rests in the ordaining, sponsoring church. Other churches may cooperate and assist, but the responsibility is the sending church's responsibility.

8. Mission agencies are unnecessary. There is not a *single* thing that a mission agency can provide for a missionary that a sending church cannot provide — and I have heard all the arguments. I do not believe that the New Testament plan of missions requires *any* formal bureaucracy; rather I think the intrinsic nature of a New Testament church precludes it.

9. We do not need regional representatives and field directors overseas any more than we need them here at home. That's incipient Papalism, and I am stunned that more men do not recognize it as such.

The Church Fight Virus

By Don Moore

[The following article appeared in the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, official paper of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.]

Church conflict and termination of pastors is so prevalent that drastic action is needed. In medical terminology we would say "heroic measures" are called for. It is tempting to compare this epidemic to the scourge of AIDS. Many carriers of the Church Fight Virus (CFV) exist. While this virus may not kill the church, something dies when this virus is active. Vitality, spirit, fellowship, zeal, influence, hope, direction, and momentum — these all die when the CFV is active. Other deficiencies also show up as the disease progresses.

You may ask, "How bad is this problem?" Latest reports indicate that 1,600 pastors are terminated each year in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Those who love the Lord love the Lord's church. They can hardly bear the pain and shame that accompanies church fights. They demonstrate patience and forgiveness in the hope that if the present battle will subside, perhaps there will be no more. Many in frustration and grief abandon the fight. Others keep on keeping on.

An illness calls for early diagnosis. The sooner the cause is found, the better the prospect that it can be treated successfully.

10. I believe that the total missionary enterprise (of real Biblical evangelism) would expand mightily if principles such as these were taught, understood and practiced in our local churches. •

fully.

The causes of the CFV are many. Therefore, it is difficult to isolate one cause and treat it. Two separate surveys of Arkansas Baptist churches indicate that most of their fights revolve around "personality conflicts" and "power struggles" over "Who's going to run the church?" In the last 10 years, more than half of Arkansas Baptist churches have experienced major conflicts. Both laymen and pastors reported these two causes to be by far the most frequent sources of conflict.

The location, size, and age of the church seem not to be major factors in the spread of this virus. The causes and consequences are common to all. However, there does seem to be a set pattern. Both churches and pastors develop a pattern of behavior that results in conflict whoever the pastor may be or whichever church is pastored. The result is amazingly predictable for both pastor and people. Repeat offenders are as real in the church scene as with the Department of Corrections. Neither church nor pastor can plead that they are "without sin."

Several sources have been used to try accurately to determine the chief causes of these problems. A survey was taken a few years ago to see what was happening in our churches. Deacons and Sunday School workers comprised two thirds of those polled, with pastors being the other third.

A research project was completed with churches that had conflict.

A conference of people who serve as directors of missions, counselors, and interim pastors was convened to get their input.

A task force of Arkansas Baptists worked several months addressing the question of

(See **VIRUS** on page 6)

The Drift of the Times

SOUND THE ALARM!

By Charles H. Spurgeon

[This article was written in 1888. It is Spurgeon's statement as to why he separated from the compromising London Baptist Association.]

Separation Not Alone Our Privilege But Our Duty

Friends will have noticed with interest the repeated debates in the London Baptist Association, as to whether there should be "A credal basis" and what that basis should be, if it were decided to have one. There seems to be a current opinion that I have been at the bottom of all this controversy, and if I have not appeared in it, I have, at least, pulled the wires. But this is not true. I have taken a deep interest in the struggles of the orthodox brethren; but I have never advised those struggles, nor entertained the slightest hope of their success. My course has been of another kind. As soon as I saw, or thought I saw, that error had become firmly established, I did not deliberate, but quitted the body at once. Since then my one counsel has been, "come [ye] out from among them" (2 Corinthians 6:17). If I have rejoiced in the loyalty to Christ's truth which has been shown in other courses of action, yet I have felt that no protest could be equal to that of distinct separation from known evil.

I never offered to the Union, or to the Association the arrogant bribe of personal return if

a creed should be adopted; but on the contrary. I told the deputation from the Union that I should not return until I had seen how matters went, and I declined to mix up my own personal action with the consideration of a question of vital importance to the community. I never sought from the Association the consideration of "A credal basis," but on the contrary, when offered that my resignation might stand over till such a consideration had taken place, I assured the brethren that what I had done was final, and did not depend upon their action in the matter of creed. The attempt, therefore, to obtain a basis of union in the Association, whatever may be thought of it, should be viewed as a matter altogether apart from me, for so indeed it has been.

Should The Association Be Exclusive or Inclusive?

I may, however, venture to express the opinion that the evangelical brethren in the Association have acted with much kindness, and have shown a strong desire to abide in union with others, if such union could be compassed without the sacrifice of truth. They as good as said — We think there are some few great truths which are essential to the reception of the Christian religion, and we do not think we should be right to associate with those who repudiate those truths. Will you not agree that these truths should be stated, and that it should be known that persons who fail to accept these vital truths cannot join the Association? The points mentioned were certainly elementary enough, and we did not wonder that one of the brethren exclaimed, "May God help those who do not believe these things. Where must they be?" Indeed, little objection was taken to the statements which were tabulated, but

the objection was to a belief in these being made indispensable to membership. It was as though it had been said, "Yes, we believe in the Godhead of Jesus; but we would not keep a man out of our fellowship because he thought our Lord to be a mere man. We believe in the atonement; but if another man rejects it, he must not, therefore, be excluded from our number." Here was the point at issue: one party would gladly fellowship with every person who had been baptized, and the other party desired that at least the elements of the faith should be believed, and the first principles of the Gospel should be professed by those who were admitted into the fellowship of the Association. Since neither party could yield the point in dispute, what remained for them but to separate with as little friction as possible?

Why Should The New Religionists And Believers Wish To Be Together?

To this hour, I must confess that I do not understand the action of either side in this dispute, if viewed in the white light of logic. Why should they wish to be together? Those who wish for the illimitable fellowship of men of every shade of belief or doubt would be all the freer for the absence of those stubborn evangelicals who have cost them so many battles. The brethren, on the other hand, who have a doctrinal faith, and prize it, must have learned by this time that whatever terms may be patched up, there is no spiritual oneness between themselves and the new religionists. They must also have felt that the very endeavor to make a contact which will tacitly be understood in two senses is far from being an ennobling and purifying exercise to either party.

The Brethren In the Middle

The brethren in the middle are the source of this clinging together of discordant elements. These who are for peace at any price, who persuade themselves that there is very little wrong, who care chiefly to maintain existing institutions, these are the good people who induce the weary combatants to repeat the futile attempt at a coalition, which, in the nature of things, must break down. If both sides could be unfaithful to conscience, or if the glorious Gospel could be thrust altogether out of the question, there might be a league of amity established; but as neither of these things can be, there would seem to be no reason for persevering in the attempt to maintain a confederacy for which there is no justification in fact, and from which there can be no worthy result, seeing it does not embody a living truth. A desire for unity is commendable. Blessed are they who can promote it and preserve it! But there are other matters to be considered as well as unity, and sometimes these may even demand the first place. When union becomes a moral impossibility, it may almost drop out of calculation in arranging plans and methods of working. If it is clear as the sun at noonday that no real union can exist it is idle to strive after the impossible, and it is wise to go about other and more practicable business.

Separation A Duty

Numbers of good brethren in different ways remain in fellowship with those who are undermining the Gospel; and they talk of their conduct as though it were a loving course which the Lord will approve of in the day

(See **DRIFT** on page 5)

DRIFT...

(Continued from page 4)

of His appearing. We cannot understand them. The bounden duty of a true believer towards men who profess to be Christians, and yet deny the Word of the Lord, and reject the fundamentals of the Gospel, is to come out from among them. To stay in a community which fellowships all beliefs in the hope of setting matters right is as though Abraham had stayed at Ur, or at Haran, in the hope of converting the household out of which he was called.

Complicity with error will take from the best of men the power to enter any successful protest against it. If any body of believers had errorists among them, but were resolute to deal with them in the name of the Lord, all might come right; but confederacies founded upon the principle that all may enter, whatever views they hold, are based upon disloyalty to the truth of God. If truth is optional, error is justifiable.

The Army of Intermediates Should Cease Being Politic

There are now two parties in the religious world, and a great mixed multitude who from various causes decline to be ranked with either of them. In this army of intermediates are many who have no right to be there; but we spare them. The day will, however, come when they will have to reckon with their consciences. When the light is taken out of its place, they may have to mourn that they were not willing to trim the lamp, nor even to notice that the flame grew dim.

Our present sorrowful protest is not a matter of this man or that, this error or that; but of principle. There either is something essential to a true faith — some truth which is believed; or else everything is left to each

man's taste. We believe in the first of these opinions, and hence we cannot dream of religious association with those who might on the second theory be acceptable. Those who are of our mind should, at all cost, act upon it. The Lord give them decision, and wean them from all policy and trimming!

The Sixteenth Century Gospel Now Derided

The party everywhere apparent has a faith fashioned for the present century — perhaps we ought rather to say, for the present month. The sixteenth century Gospel it derides, and that, indeed, of every period except the present most enlightened era. It will have no creed because it can have none; it is continually on the move; it is not what it was yesterday, and it will not be tomorrow what it is today. Its shout is for "Liberty," its delight is invention, its element is change. On the other hand, there still survive, amid the blaze of nineteenth century light, a few whom these superior persons call "Fossils"; that is to say, there are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who consider that the true Gospel is no new gospel, but is the same yesterday, today, and forever. These do not believe in "Advanced views," but judge that the view of truth which saved a soul in the second century will save a soul now, and that a form of teaching which was unknown till the last few years is of very dubious value, and is, in all probability, "another gospel: which is not another" (Gal. 1:6-7).

It is extremely difficult for these two parties to abide in union. The old fable of the collier who went home to dwell with the fuller is nothing to it. The fuller would by degrees know the habits of his coaly companion, and might thus

save the white linen from his touch; but in this case there are no fixed quantities on the collier's side, and nothing like permanency even in the black of his coal. How can his friend deal with him, since he changes with the moon? If, after long balancing of words, the two parties could construct a basis of agreement, it would, in the nature of things, last only for a season, since the position of the advancing party would put the whole settlement out of order in a few weeks. The adjustment of difficulties would be a task forever beginning, and never coming to an end. If we agree, after a sort, today, a new settlement will be needed tomorrow. If I am to stay where I am, and you are to go traveling on, it is certain that we cannot long lodge in the same room. Why should we attempt it?

Difference of Spirit Between New Religionists And Old Believers

Nor is it merely doctrinal belief — there is an essential difference in spirit between the old believer and the man of new and advancing views. This is painfully perceived by the Christian man before very long. Even if he be fortunate enough to escape the sneers of the cultured, and the jests of the philosophical, he will find his deepest convictions questioned, and his brightest beliefs misrepresented by those who dub themselves "Thoughtful men." When a text from the Word has been peculiarly precious to his heart, he will hear its authenticity impugned, the translation disputed, or its Gospel reference denied. He will not travel far on the dark continent of modern thought before he will find the efficacy of prayer debated, the operation of divine Providence questioned, and the special love of God denied. He will find himself to be a stranger in a

strange land when he begins to speak of his experience, and of the ways of God to men. In all probability, if he be faithful to his old faith, he will be an alien to his mother's children, and find that his soul is among lions. To what end, therefore, are these strainings after a hollow unity, when the spirit of fellowship is altogether gone?

The world is large enough, why not let us go our separate ways? Loud is the cry of our opponents for liberty; let them have it by all means. But let us have our liberty also. There is a right of association which we do not forego, and this involves a right of disassociation, which we retain with equal tenacity. Those who are so exceedingly liberal, large-hearted, and broad-minded might be so good as to allow us to forego the charms of their society without coming under the full violence of their wrath.

Separation The Only Complete Protest

At any rate, cost what it may, to separate ourselves from those who separate themselves from the truth of God is not alone our liberty, but our duty. I have raised my protest in the only complete way by coming forth, and I shall be content to abide alone until the day when the Lord shall judge the secrets of all hearts; but it will not seem to me a strange thing if others are found faithful, and if others judge that for them also there is no path but that which is painfully apart from the beaten track.

"(17) Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. (18) For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good

(See **DRIFT** on page 24)

VIRUS...

(Continued from page 3)

church conflict and termination. Their areas of concern were causes, prevention, and restoration.

As a staff person for five years and a pastor for 26 years, observation has brought some insight. Then, as Executive Director for nearly 10 years, a further opportunity has been given for insight.

What are the conclusions about the causes? Heretical teachings and immorality or dishonesty are not major causes, according to all sources of information. Tragically, these sometimes enter the picture, but contrary to secular media-hype, these are not common occurrences. Most pastors are sound doctrinally, morally pure, and responsible in their obligations.

According to all the sources, power struggles are at the heart of most church fights. A pastor assumes that he is the leader of the church. The church may even call him to be the leader of the church. Until he begins to exercise leadership, these are safe assumptions. When he begins to give leadership, it comes to light that he has not been empowered to lead. In fact, another individual or group of individuals really controls the church. They have, by influence, position, reputation, risen to a position of power. As soon as the popularity of the pastor, the growth of the church, or the influx of new leaders begins to threaten the power of this individual or these individuals, you can expect trouble to start. The threat of losing control is one of the major reasons cause is found to discredit the pastor, reduce his effectiveness, or counteract the momentum his leadership has generated.

Let me hasten to say that some pastors come with such

domineering, dictatorial, omniscience-oriented attitudes that they force a confrontation. The churches who fail to discover such traits in a prospective pastor before they call him have failed in their duty. You might say, they "bring it on themselves."

The struggle for control will manifest itself early on in decisions related to finances and deacon elections. It definitely will show up in committee selections, building projects, and nominating committees.

However right or wrong a church may be, the pastor who determines to take control by human means such as manipulation, politics, or coercion is destined to have his ambitions thwarted and his church divided. God's plan of demonstrated, sacrificial, servant leadership over a period of time will let the church see that it is safe to trust and follow the pastor. He will be given power by God and the people. Actually, most pastors never stay at a church long enough for such a situation to develop.

Group rivalries that have been carried over from earlier church and community conflicts pose a serious threat to a pastor and church. Unknowingly and unintentionally, the pastor may actually, or be perceived to be, taking sides with one group or the other. Before he knows it, through no fault of his own, he finds himself embroiled in painful conflict. Unresolved conflict always surfaces in battles that are refought with the innocent and unsuspecting being the pawns and the victims. Even this is a matter of a power struggle for control.

Personality conflicts are the next most frequently given cause for conflict. Surveys indicate that 59% of laymen and 66% of pastors believe this is a major cause of conflict. God calls a wide range of personality

types into ministry. His plan is that the variety will make for color, strength, and effectiveness. In other words, the wider the variety, the more types of people to whom the church should be able to attract and minister.

Satan and the flesh always attack the beauty and effectiveness of God's plan. We reject people who are different. They make us uncomfortable, if not mad. We criticize and judge them because they are not like the people in our former church, or like our former pastors. We often draw conclusions about people before we know them. Their expressions, their dress, their voice, their mannerisms, their opinions, any one of these may set us off on a course that will never allow for good, productive relationships. It happens with the church toward the pastor, and the pastor toward the church. Again we ask, "Why could that have not been discerned before the pastor was called by the church?"

Any kind of change may cause church conflict. Financial procedures, buildings, staff, order of service, policies, constitution and bylaws — these are typical occasions for trouble. People like sameness and predictability. Change may create inconvenience, displacement, and fear. People fear the unknown. The effect of change is not known, and so the change is questioned and feared. Most changes are not of such consequences as to cause a fight, but they will if approached without following church procedures, without giving adequate time and information, and without getting adequate input from the congregation in the process.

Leadership styles are often cited as a cause of conflict. While the overbearing are the pastoral types that most often experience conflict, any leadership style that does not respect

congregational government; that does not respect the unique worth and giftedness of every church member; and that will not involve the people in the leadership process, is destined for trouble.

Involved in leadership is planning, communication, trust, decision making, and commitment. The people likely will follow the leader who brings the people along with him in all of the process.

Frustration causes a lot of church fighting. When expectations are so high and those expectations are disappointed, someone is to blame. Both pastor and congregation tend to have unrealistic expectations. Neither wants to accept the responsibility for failure, so they end up fixing the blame on "the preacher" or "the church." Humiliated by failure and irritated by inability to get the church moving, the pastor tends to lash out at the church, and the church reacts with its own emotions of defensiveness, anger, and rejection. The course is set. A confrontational showdown is on its way. The pastor, church, or both will lose. No one wins in church fights.

Cultural diversity sometimes results in a pastor and people being "cross threaded."

Family background, educational or economic background, and social background affect how a pastor and people fit together. One pastor said, "I'll never fit in where I am. I don't drive a pickup. I don't deer hunt. I don't wear cowboy boots or dip skoal." As humorous as that is, the principle is there. It is not a match for happy and effective church life. Cultural background affects one's approach to worship, ministry, administration, and relationships. This needs to be given serious consideration by pastor search committees

(See **VIRUS** on page 24)

Fabulous Facts ‘n Figures

One of the Biggest Arithmetic Miracles in the Wide World

Moses and the people of Israel were in the desert; but what was he going to do with them? They had to be fed, and feeding three or three and a half million people would take a lot of food.

According to some figures released by a man who was a general in the Army, it is reported that Moses would have had to come up with 1,500 tons of food every day just to keep these three million and a half Israelites from starving to death.

And to feed them the way you and I eat, would take at least 4,000 tons of food a *day*. Do you know what that would mean as far as hauling it is concerned? You would have to have two freight trains, each one a mile long, just to bring the Israelites their food each day. At today's prices, it would cost six and a half million dollars a *day*.

Besides, you must remember, they were out in the desert, and they would have to have firewood to use in cooking their food. This alone would take 4,000 tons of firewood and a few more freight trains, each a mile long, to haul the wood each day. And, just think, they were out there for *forty years*.

Oh, yes, they would have to have water. If they only had enough water to drink and to wash the few little dishes, (no irrigation or anything else—just enough to get by with) it would take eleven million gallons every single day and a freight train with tank cars, 1,800 miles long, just to bring it to them. They did not have big lakes out there, and they only found a few wells. How were they going to get water?

And another thing! They had to get through the Red Sea in one night. Its width varies from about 250 miles in the south half to 130 miles at the north where it divides. The mean depth of the Red Sea is about 1,600 feet, varying from the shallow depth of the Gulf of Suez to a maximum of 7,200 feet in the main basin. Now, if they were going to go through the Red Sea in a narrow path, double file, that double file would have to be eight hundred miles long, and it would take them 35 days and nights to get through. So, they had to have a space in the Red Sea that was three miles wide, so they could walk five thousand abreast, they could get through in one night.

But then, there was still another problem. Every time they came to the end of a day, they had to get into a campground somewhere. Were there any campgrounds out there? *No!* Well, then, how were they going to find campgrounds large enough to camp all of these people? Do you know how much space it would take? It would take two-thirds the size of the State of Rhode Island for them to camp just one night or a total of seven hundred and fifty square miles. That is twenty-five miles wide and a hundred and thirty miles long. Thing of it! 25 miles one way and a 130 miles long to camp those people each night!

Do you think Moses figured out all these things before

he left? I do not know whether he figured them out or not, but I doubt that he was paying too much attention to these details. You see, *Moses believed God*, and God was going to do these things for him. God was able to supply all of this.

Church people and Sunday School Teachers, Officers, Workers, and Pupils, that is the kind of God we have. We think our problems are *so big!* Remember what God can do. If you just team up with God, your problems will be cared for by *Him*. Let *Him* run your life, for God says that *He* will take care of you. •

Portrait of a Prospect

Prospects aren't strange creatures whom someone else finds and reports to the church. Prospects are real live people whom you meet every day. The supermarket clerk, the beautician, the bank teller, the school teacher, the close, personal friend — all these may be people whom your church should reach with the gospel.

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The Baptism of John

Was It From Heaven, Or of Men?

By J. A. Hulse

“And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders, and spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: the baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?” — Luke 20:1-4

Scriptural Baptism

What is scriptural baptism? We say (1) it is the immersion in water, (2) of a proper subject, (3) by a qualified administrator.

1. Baptism is immersion in water. “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water” (Mt. 3:16). “And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he

baptized him” (Acts 8:38). “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death” (Rom. 6:4).

2. A proper subject is one who has repented toward God and accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior — a regenerated person. When the Pharisees and Sadducees came to John for baptism, according to the third chapter of Matthew, John required that they bring forth fruits to prove their repentance (Mt. 3:8). While Peter was preaching, on the day of Pentecost, that Jesus was the Messiah, the people were “pricked in their heart” by the Holy Spirit and cried out: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter told them: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). “For,” in this place, means because of the remission of sins. Peter continued to preach and, “they that gladly received his word (of repentance,) were baptized: and the

same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).

After Peter had preached to the household of Cornelius and they had believed, Peter said, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Act 10:47-048). A proper subject, then, is a regenerated, or saved person.

3. A qualified administrator is one who has authority from heaven. John had authority from heaven, according to the Word. “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John” (Jn. 1:6). Therefore, John’s baptism was the immersion of a saved, or regenerated person, in water, by authority of God, who sent him to baptize.

John The Baptist Was Sent From God

“The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?” This text shows clearly that this baptism could not be from God and from man too. John was sent from God to baptize. “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judæa, and

they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins” (Mk. 1:1-5).

John baptized Jesus. “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him” (Mt. 3:13-15).

Jesus Established His Church, Using The Baptism of John

John also baptized many others, some of whom followed him as “disciples,” and who later left John and became disciples of Jesus (Jn. 1:37 — 2:2). Jesus set these disciples together as His church. “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles” (Lk. 6:12-13). Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, said: “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles” (1 Cor. 12:28). So we see that when Jesus ordained apostles he must have had a church. And in the third and fourth chapters of John we see the church baptizing. “After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa; and there he tarried with them, and baptize” (Jn. 3:22). John was baptizing near by and the Jews disputed with John’s disciples

(See JOHN on page 18)

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By Norman H. Wells

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Testimonies From Mexico

We have recently received copies of testimonies of some of the students in the Latin American Baptist Theological Seminary in Cárdenas, Tabasco in southern Old Mexico. I had asked Bro. "Zeke" to ask the young men to write their testimonies out so that we might put them in **The Baptist Challenge**.

Some of you that read **The Baptist Challenge** possibly are not aware of our mission work in Mexico, so I will give you just a few details.

The mission work is under the sponsorship and control of the Central Baptist Church in Little Rock. The work in Mexico began in 1905 by Dr. G. H. Lacy who originally went as a missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention, but they forced him to retire when he reached 65 years of age, and not willing to leave Mexico, he became a member of the Central Baptist Church and was our missionary until he died in 1949. We began direct support of the seminary in Mexico in 1938. Shortly thereafter we became its major support. Following the death of Dr. Lacy, we became nearly the sole support of the seminary with very little help from others.

My family and I moved to Mexico in 1952 as a missionary of the Central Baptist Church and I was placed in charge of the work by the church. Since then the seminary has been located in three states: Morelia, Michoacan, Guanajuato, Gto., Villahermosa, Tabasco, and finally moving to Cárdenas, Tabasco where the seminary is presently located.

We have had several hundred students that received their education in the seminary and they are presently scattered all over Mexico, and some are now preaching in Mexican churches here in the States.

In 1953 we opened up Baptist work in the five states forming the southeastern part of Mexico, and we were the first Baptists of any kind to enter these states and to begin the establishment of missions and churches.

In 1965 the church in Little Rock called me as pastor following the retirement of my father (who had been pastor there 34 years) because of a severe stroke. At the time I left the mission field, we had organized over 65 churches and missions in just the State of Tabasco alone, and had been

instrumental in establishing work in Yucatán, Quintanaroo, Campeche and Chiapas, in addition to the State of Tabasco. The churches that we established, and those established since then, are all self-supporting churches. They pay their own pastors, utilities and other expenses and do not depend upon funds from the United States or other outside sources. Many of them have missions that they themselves sponsor.

Funds that we receive for the work in Mexico are used for the operation of the seminary. We have a Mexican faculty, composed of men who have completed the five-year Bible course in the seminary as well as having been involved in establishing missions as well as pastoring churches. We pay their salaries since they teach full-time in the seminary. We also provide all of the expenses for the students while they are in the school, including their room and board, medical, textbooks, etc. and expenses as they go into new areas to begin new missions. We do not pay pastors of any of the churches as we teach them that they are to be supported by means of the tithes and offerings of members of the mission or church where they work.

Last year it averaged around \$2,900 per month to support the work in Mexico, and we still are dependent upon churches and individuals to help us in the support of this work.

I want to thank the churches and individuals who cooperate with us in the financial support of the seminary because without your support we would not be able to financially continue the work as we are doing.

There is still need for additional funds right now, as a little over a year ago, many of the churches dropped their support of the seminary (at the request of a previous pastor of the church here in Little Rock who wanted to phase out the mission work), but the church here has decided that the seminary is as vital to Mexico now as it has ever been. Therefore we request that if there are any churches who could resume the support of this work it would be greatly appreciated. At the present time, the Central Baptist Church makes up the difference from what is needed and what we receive from churches and individuals, and we appreciate any assistance and help that we receive.

(See **MEXICO** on page 10)

MEXICO...

(Continued from page 9)

Following now are the testimonies of some of the young men of the seminary. They do not always express things exactly as we do, but this will give you some idea of the kind of young men we have studying in the seminary.

M. L. Moser, Editor

* * *

I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my only Savior the 11th of July, 1986, in the Baptist Congregation, "Jesus the Good Shepherd", Cunduacán, Tabasco. I was 13 years old.

I began to study the Bible in order to grow spiritually. I started supporting the work by leading the program in some of the activities and preaching the Word for three years.

During that time, I felt in my heart a special calling of God to preach His Word and to work in His vineyard. I felt that God was speaking to my heart, choosing me for this holy ministry. After analyzing this for a time and having many problems and obstacles to come up, I decided to obey God in this calling, without knowing yet where I would study. My desire was to prepare myself to do the work of the Lord better.

With the help of my pastor, Brother José Hernández López, I began studying in the Latin American Baptist Theological Seminary located in Cárdenas, Tabasco, in 1989, at 16 years of age.

Presently, I am studying my final year in the seminary. During the past years I have been able to see how the Lord has used me in His work; I have seen fruit and blessings in my life and in the congregation

where I labor. In spite of many problems and obstacles that the devil has brought, I have triumphed and felt the power of God and seen His wonders.

I have seen that the Lord does not abandon His own and I can say the Lord is using me in His work and for His glory. Amen.

Federico Rodríguez Alejandro

* * *

Testimony of the conversion and calling to the ministry of Brother Melquisedec Almeida Jiménez.

By the grace of God I grew up and was raised in a Christian home. They taught me basically to walk in the things of God. But I had never felt repentance for my sins until April, 1988, when there was a campaign organized by the young people of the church. The last day of the meetings, God called me to account and I felt something very beautiful that I had never felt before until that moment.

From that moment on, everything in my life changed. I felt something new in my life from that night when I gave myself into the hands of my Savior and I promised to serve Him forever.

Some months later, I started to feel interested in the seminary. I felt the desire to preach the Word of God. At the time I felt this desire, I was studying Junior High School.

I communicated my desire to enroll in the seminary to the pastor of the church. He told me to meditate on my decision and that he would make it a matter of prayer. Of course, by this time I was already baptized.

After what I said to the pastor, several months went by before the director of the seminary

came to our church and took part in the preaching. He made reference to the seminary and I felt a stronger desire to enroll. I spoke to my pastor again and he said he would present this to the church to see if they would back me. By the grace of God, the church approved, arrangements were made, and by the will of God I find myself in the seminary today. The Lord has been using me in the ministry. I have a mission that I am in charge of. And the most beautiful and precious part about it is that it is growing with the help of God our Lord.

I am a laborer of the church of Huimanguillo, Tabasco. My pastor is Brother Audemar Ventura. I feel very content working with the church. Thank you very much for the support you are sending so that we can study in this seminary.

Melquisedec Almeida Jiménez

* * *

Brother Juan Manuel Palma Pérez, from the church in the Ejido "Rafael Martínez Escobar", and who is in charge of the church. He is studying the 4th year of seminary.

In 1987, my conversion was thus: My father, Neftalí, being a member and lay worker for the Evangelical Independent Baptist Church "Son of Righteousness", was commissioned by the church to a mission in a place called "The Four Villages". The commissioning was done on a Sunday night in a business meeting with my father, mother and all of my brothers and sisters present. We left the next day for this place.

Travelling to this place, we were accompanied by Brother Adán Luciano who was over our church and Pastor Ezequiel

Sánchez Martínez, director and teacher of the Latin American Baptist Theological Seminary. That same day about noon, I walked out of the house where the mission's activities take place towards the street, a little upset because of the move we had made. Pastor Sánchez came out of the house and approached me, asking me how I felt. He kept talking until he directed an important question to me, "Juan, do you know the Lord?" When I heard the question I thought for a moment and then I replied, "Not yet." Then the pastor told me, "Juan, you know that the Lord loves you." He began explaining to me that I was a sinner without Christ heading for condemnation. But Christ, the Holy God died for you and for me on the cross where they crucified Him, with nails in His hands and feet and a lance in His side. He shed His blood to save us. Finally He asked me what I thought about all of this. I was greatly shaken and thinking about what he had said about being a condemned sinner but that there was salvation for me.

At that moment, Brother Sánchez asked me, "Juan, don't you want to accept the Lord?" I, without thinking any longer, replied, "Yes, I accept Him." He asked if I really meant it and I told him yes. He asked me to come back into the house with him. He told my parents and brothers and sisters that I had received the Lord as my Savior.

Then everyone was happy. The pastor asked us to pray. So, we got on our knees and he began to pray. So then, with tears in my eyes, I understood that I had been saved and that from

(See **MEXICO** on page 11)

Does The New Testament Teach Tithing?

"Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar. Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:13-14).

It is sadly surprising that some of the Lord's people have the idea that the New Testament does not teach tithing. This failure to see and understand God's Word concerning this important truth has seriously hindered many in their growth in the grace of liberality and has grievously handicapped the Lord's churches in their work of carrying out His commission to preach the gospel to all the world.

A common argument against the Scriptural Plan of "tithes and offerings" is that it is "of the law." But, we see Abraham (Gen. 14:16-20) paying a tithe more than 400 years before the law was given, and Jacob (Gen. 28:20-22) vowed to pay the tithe more than 200 years before Moses received the law on Sinai. Thus we see that such an argument is without foundation of fact.

This principle of tithing was incorporated into the Mosaic Law (Lev. 27:30-33), as was also the "good news" of the coming Messiah (Dt. 18:15-20; Jn. 1:45), and was given to the tribe of Levi as their inheritance (Num. 18:21-32. There was a "storehouse" in the tabernacle (and later in the temple) into which the tithes of the other eleven tribes were brought, and out of which the Levites lived. In addition to the tithes they were also given certain portions of the offerings (Dt. 18:1-5).

No where does the New

Testament condemn this principle and in no place is anything offered as a substitute for it. Jesus (Mt. 5:17-44), etc.) taught His disciples that there were certain things in the law which were to be supplanted by higher teachings, but He did not mention "tithes and offerings." He condemned the scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 23:23; Lk. 12:42) for some of their practices, but He commended them for tithing. This would have been a fine place for the Lord to have taught His disciple another plan if He had not willed the continuation of "tithes and offerings." In the teachings concerning the "better" things of the new covenant nothing is mentioned as being better than "tithes and offerings" for the support of the Lord's New Testament program of gospel preaching.

New Testament Tithing

This principle of "tithes and offerings" is given to the church at Corinth as the Lord's ordained plan for His people in

(See **TITHE** on page 15)

MEXICO...

(Continued from page 10)

then on I would walk with the Lord.

The same day of my conversion, after we had prayed, Pastor Sánchez told me that I could help my father in the work. And wouldn't it be something if someday the Lord called me to the seminary to prepare myself. He asked me to think about it. Then he returned to his place.

My father began working alone in the work. After a short time, I started to help him with

the direction of the services and other things. But, since there was no work to be found where we lived and I had economic needs, I decided to go back to the place we had left from with the idea of earning a little money and returning home again.

I began working to earn some money and at the same time I attended the meetings at church. Being alone on my breaks at work, I felt the desire to preach and I would start preaching as if I were standing in front of a large crowd. Then, I would spend some time thinking about how I would like to speak for the Lord and to prepare myself to preach the Word. However, time went by and it looked like my desire would not be granted.

Then one day I attended a Baptist camp with the man in charge of the work where I lived — David Garduza Sánchez. I had the opportunity to give my testimony at the camp. One of the things I said was that I would like to study in the seminary.

After returning from the camp on Saturday, I ran into Bro. David again at the store. The first thing he asked was if I

really wanted to go to seminary. I assured him that I did and he said he would present the matter before the church the next day. He did and the church agreed that if it was my desire to study then they would approve of my going.

The next Sunday, Brother Ezequiel Sánchez came to the church. He asked again if I was sure I wanted to study. I said "yes" and he then explained the rules to me. He told me that I should prepare to go to the seminary the next day. The next day I left for the seminary accompanied by Bro. David and a few other brethren. And that is how the Lord, in 1991, called me into the ministry.

From that time until now, I am serving the Lord by preaching. Actually, I am working in the church I came out of since it has been without a pastor.

The only thing left to say is that I thank the Lord for this calling in my heart and for this desire for the souls that do not know the Lord. May many of them come to know him through me. I pray the Lord helps me to reach my goal as the Apostle Paul did. Amen.

Juan Manuel Palma Pérez

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Pastor Available. Bro. O. J. Holler has written us stating that he is now available as a pastor. Bro. Holler has been an independent Baptist for many years, pastoring independent Baptist churches in Colorado and other states. His last work was as a home missionary in Idaho. Those wishing to contact him may do so at: 21039 Juniperhaven Ave., Bend, OR 97702 (503)383-2824.

* * *

Proctor & Gamble Hoax.

For several years there has been circulated what purports to be information that the President of Proctor & Gamble appeared on the Phil Donahue Show to announce an association with the Church of Satan. I received one this week in the mail. *This has been proven to be a hoax*, and Proctor & Gamble have taken some to court for circulating this information, and won their case. I urge our readers to help warn our readers against the circulation of this information as it is not true, and Proctor & Gamble has declared that they will take those to court for passing out such literature. We have written of this several times in TBC, but every year some do not get the message and it continues to be circulated.

* * *

Jesse Jackson Appoints Communist As Executive Di-rector. Jesse Jackson has clearly repudiated historic

Christianity, and his Christ is not the Christ of the Bible. His speech at the 1992 Democrat convention was further proof of this. Yet he spoke at a worship service in Jerry Falwell's Thomas Road Baptist Church Sept. 1, 1985. Jackson's record of deceit, extortion, racism, and collaboration with terrorists and communists has long been established (4-88 Conserv. Digest). We now see in the 2-95 AFA Journal that his political organization, the National Rainbow Coalition, has named '60's radical Angela Davis as its new executive director. Davis served on the Communist Party, USA's Central Committee, and ran for v.p. of the U.S. on the Communist Party ticket in 1984.

* * *

Atheism Taught In Elementary Public Schools.

As the result of a policy change, the Madison Metropolitan School District allowed fliers to be distributed to elementary students regarding a free concert and sing-a-long called "We Can Be Good Without God." The flier, a product of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, advertised musician Dan Barker who would perform songs such as "I'm Your Friendly Neighborhood Atheist" and other selections promoting "positive secular values." According to the *Education Reporter*, a message to parents on the flier stated that "no child can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing the importance of reason in forming opinions." It claimed "many childhoods have been shadowed, even devastated, by religious teachings. Children need to be

reassured that there is no supernatural world, no gods, no devils, no flaming hereafter" (Campus Report, 1-95).

* * *

"Target" To Cease Publication.

As bills continued to mount, and promised financing was not forthcoming, Dr. Tim Lee announced that the Feb-Mar-Apr issue of *Target* would be the last. Dr. Robert Sumner had merged his *Biblical Evangelist* paper with *Target* about two years ago. Lee stands strongly against social evils, but causes division within fundamentalism by his unscriptural and new-evangelical stance on separation which leads to "bridge-building" and ties to Southern Baptists and other new-evangelicals. He distorts the position of those who warn of his error, derisively referring to them as "secondary" separatists, impugning their motives, and exaggerating his loss of "freedom." He thus gives a false picture of the debate and the real issues involved, much the same as Jack Van Impe did almost two decades ago when he defected from fundamentalism.—CC

* * *

Russian Lawmakers Bar Religious Groups. Seen As Harmful.

Russian lawmakers have passed a measure that would amend Russia's religious freedom law by barring religious groups deemed harmful to the safety of Russians. The measure was approved 264-0 with two abstentions, according to Baptist Press, the news service of the Southern Baptist Conven-

tion. It must pass two more legislative hurdles before it reaches President Boris Yeltsin. The measure, introduced by Russia's Christian democratic faction, is a compromise framed by evangelical legal experts. Groups that would be barred include those that violate public safety, preach violence and hatred, use unlawful means of coercion, harm the health of Russians and prevent children from getting basic education. The amendment comes amid dissension about the many religious groups that have become active in Russia since lawmakers passed the religious freedom law five years ago. "The Parliament is under a lot of pressure—from the Orthodox Church as well as national leaders—to limit nontraditional confessions and curtail missionary work," said Vladimir Ryakhovsky, president of the Christian Legal Center in Moscow. Ryakhovsky said the amendment was introduced to satisfy those who say there are no laws "to restrict the activities of any totalitarian religious organization."—Christian News

* * *

School Sued Over Confiscation of Bible.

A federal law-suit filed March 27 states that the constitutional rights of 10-year-old Joshua Burton were violated when his fourth grade teacher confiscated his Bible. According to the complainant, the teacher confiscated Burton's Bible on March 8 at Columbia Elementary School in Orange County, Florida, before class began. The teacher reportedly told him, "This is a public

school, not a Bible school." When the boy asked the teacher why she had taken his Bible, the teacher said it was because of "separation of church and state" and warned the boy not to bring the Bible into class again. The next day, Burton brought his Bible to school again, and placed it on his desk with his other books. The teacher called the principal, who told the boy not to read his Bible or discuss the Bible with other students while at school. The following day, when Burton was reading his Bible to himself in the school courtyard before school, two classmates told him they were going to report him to the teacher. When the boy entered his classroom, his teacher sent him to the hall, and a school official asked him to surrender his Bible. Burton was then taken to the principal's office where he sat for several hours. On March 14, when Burton brought his Bible back to school, the principal came to his classroom and demanded his Bible. When the boy began to cry, he was escorted to the principal's office, where a guidance counselor and attorney were waiting. The boy was reportedly interrogated for over an hour, without parental notification. The lawsuit seeks monetary damages and a court order affirming the child's right to read his Bible during recess and before class. The Liberty Counsel, a civil liberties organization, filed suit on Burton's behalf. Matthew D. Staver, lead counsel on the case, said, "Public school students do not shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech and freedom of religion

at the schoolhouse gate. The First Amendment protects Joshua's right to read his Bible before class or during any other non instructional time." Staver continued, "School officials confiscated the Bible like it was some sort of contraband, publicly humiliated Joshua, and then interrogated him without his parents' knowledge, all for the simple 'crime' of bringing a Bible on a public school campus." Staver concluded, "The school officials attempted to intimidate Joshua from bringing his Bible on campus. They will now come face to face with the Bill of Rights. We hope this lawsuit gives the school a geography lesson. We do not live in Tiananmen Square. This is not Iran. This is America."

Abortionist Stripped of License. Mississippi's leading abortionist was stripped of his medical license March 16. The state Board of Medical Licensure voted unanimously to revoke the license of Dr. Thomas Tucker. Tucker was suspended last year after state officials found him guilty on 32 charges, including unprofessional conduct, allowing unqualified personnel to perform medical procedures, and mishandling prescription drugs. Before his suspension Tucker performed about 60% of Mississippi's more than 7,000 abortions annually. During his suspension, Tucker lost his medical license in Alabama after a patient died following the removal of a Norplant contraceptive device; Alabama officials said Tucker's medical practice might "constitute an immediate dan-

ger to his patients and the public." In January, a jury awarded \$2 million to a woman who suffered injuries as a result of an abortion, and he still faces a lawsuit filed from a former client who claims a botched abortion procedure left her sterile and disfigured.—(EP)

Hypocrisy of ABC's Sam Donaldson. Have you heard the latest on ABC liberal newsman Sam Donaldson? Last year Donaldson stated on "This Week With David Brinkley" that he stood firmly "against agricultural subsidies" and further insisted, "I constantly preach it and act it." But in the past two years Donaldson has received \$97,000 in federal mohair and wood subsidies from his New Mexico goat and sheep ranch. This is one of the men Americans trust to tell them the truth on the news daily.

"The Lion King." Walt Disney Pictures' *The Lion King* sold 20 million copies in its first week of release for retail on video, and is becoming the best-selling video ever. Millions of children who watch it will be at great risk. Though it is artistically amazing, its New Ageism, Neo-paganism, Hinduism, pantheism-environmentalism, astrology, and occult imagery is devastating! Adding insult to injury, is a subtle but definite promotion of homosexuality. A homosexual produced parts of the soundtrack. And two "outcasts" (Timon and Pumbaa) represent homosexuals and the

"intolerant" "discrimination" they experience in our society. The person who played one of these admitted: "These are the first homosexual Disney characters ever to come on the screen." Disney is indeed dangerous. Be warned, be wise, beware!—CC

Communist Awarded High Position by UC-Santa Clara. Angela Davis, winner of the 1979 Lenin Peace Prize, has been named to the prestigious Presidential Chair of the University of California's Santa Cruz campus by administrators. This is the highest honor the University can bestow. It carries an extra \$30,000 a year for three years, along with coveted research assistance and other perks. For many years she was a member of the Communist Party who used her to infiltrate the black radical movement in the 60s. She was Gus Hall's vice presidential candidate on the Communist Party ticket in both 1980 and 1984. Angela Davis was not even good enough for the Communist Party, for she was purged by Gus Hall in 1991. Historian Ronald Radosh, author of *The Rosenberg File* and a longtime student of the Communist Party says, "Angela Davis is a fraud. Even the left-wing scholars don't bother to cite her. Nobody takes her seriously." Nobody, that is, but the administrators of UC-Santa Cruz.—BBB.

(See WNR on page 14)

WNR . . .

(Continued from page 13)

Who Wrote The Following?

"This year will go down in history. For the first time, a civilized nation has full gun registration! Our streets will be safer, our police more efficient and the world will follow our lead into the future." Was it Pierre Elliot Trudeau, Kim Campbell, Bill Clinton, Windy Cukier, Allan Rock, etc? This quote was taken from a speech by Hitler to the Riechtag in 1935! — BBB.

* * *

Church Name Change?

At the 1992 World Conference, the First Presidency was directed to select and recommend a new name for the RLDS (Latter Day Saints or Mormon) church. No recommendations were made at the 1994 Conference. During a retreat in Colorado in September of 1994, the Joint Council of First Presidency, Council of Twelve, and Presiding Bishopric approved Community of Christ as the new name for the church. This name will be recommended at the 1996 World Conference (Saint Herald, Dec. 94, pgs. 3,4,7,27 & 28). This new name is not official and has not been approved for use by the church or its members. After the name is recommended to the Conference by the Presidency, there will be debate and a vote, and it is conceivable that the Conference could reject this suggestion. If the new name is approved, the current name will remain the legal designation with the new name going into everyday use. — The Evangel.

* * *

Available For Pastorate.

We have received a request from William (Bill) R. James stating that he is interested in a position as either pastor or

associate pastor. For a resume, he may be contacted at his address: P. O. Box 59, Limaville, OH 44640, (216) 947-0406.

* * *

Proposal Apes Human Rights.

The U.N. Declaration of Human Rights could soon be joined by a new ruling: the U.N. Declaration on Great Apes. Scientists have launched a global campaign to have gorillas, chimpanzees and orangutans declared equal to human beings. It would be the first time the rights of any species other than humans have been acknowledged by the United Nations. The Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, is based on the principle that all people are born free and equal. The Declaration on Great Apes, man's closest relatives, would guarantee their right to life, protection of individual liberty and freedom from torture. In effect, primates could only be killed in self-defense, and charges could be brought against anyone keeping them locked up or causing them pain. The campaign is the brainchild of an English philosophy professor living in Australia, Peter Singer. "This goes further than animal welfare," he said. "The great apes need respect. This recognizes them as nonhuman persons who are not property but individuals in their own right." (Another example of the fuzzy thinking of humanists and evolutionists, the next thing you know they will be sending apes to college and letting them vote. APD) — Maranatha.

* * *

Southern Baptist Woman Preacher Speaks Out.

Amy Mears is Associate Pastor at Buechel Park Baptist Church in Louisville and a Ph.D. candidate in Preaching at Southern Seminary (SBC). The American Baptist

Churches' 4/95 WATCHword (quoting from a So. Baptist Women in Ministry newsletter) quotes Mears thusly: "[The Apostle Paul] displays so many different shades of personality in his writings in the New Testament that sometimes it's difficult to reconcile one with the other. I usually find it hard to get along with Paul. There seem to be many folks around who like to read to me from Ephesians 5 and 1 Cor. 14 and point out for me 'my place' in the church and at home based on Paul's words ..." She adds: "God called me ..." The church 'authorities' support of my preaching and my ministry has got to be irrelevant ..." *Christian News* says there are about 900 Southern Baptist women clergy, compared with 75 in 1978. — CC

* * *

Tammy Bakker's New Husband Indicted.

Building contractor Roe Messner, husband of the former Tammy Faye Bakker, faces up to 41 months in jail if convicted on fraud charges brought by the U.S. Department of Justice. He helped build Jim Bakker's Heritage USA theme park then married the flamboyant Tammy Faye in 1993 after she divorced Bakker while he was in prison. Former televangelist Bakker was released last year after serving nearly five years for defrauding donors in the PTL scandal. — CC

* * *

Mrs. Charles Stanley Re-files For Divorce.

Anna J. Stanley, wife of Radio-TV preacher Dr. Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, and a former Southern Baptist Convention president, has re-filed for divorce. She originally filed for divorce in June 1993 but his attorney got her to amend the lawsuit to seek

a legal separation instead, while seeking reconciliation. — CC

* * *

Correction On Janet Reno.

In a previous issue of TBC we reported a quote attributed to Attorney General Janet Reno on her description of a cult. The quotation has appeared in newspapers and magazines all across the nation, including even our local newspapers here in Little Rock. Apparently this was a hoax. We only quote those whom we feel are reliable, but sometimes even they can make mistakes.

* * *

SBC Declining.

Without the increase in ethnic congregations over the last decade and a half, the Southern Baptist Convention would be a declining denomination. "The SBC would show a negative 3 percent growth rate in number of congregations," said Bill Fulkerson, assistant director of language church extension at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. By the mid-1980s, the SBC's ethnic-minority membership was growing at the fastest rate of any American denomination, according to a United Methodist survey. Southern Baptists led U.S. denominations in establishing new ethnic-minority congregations during the 1975-1984 period, the survey also showed. — Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

* * *

Polls Indicate Fewer Non-Christians Attending Churches.

Fewer non-Christians are attending church and only one in five baby busters regularly reads the Bible, according to two annual assessments of key indicators

(See WNR on page 15)

WNR...

(Continued from page 14)

in American religious beliefs. Both the Barna Research Group and the Gallup Poll have released annual reports of poll findings about religious beliefs and practices in America. Among their findings are: (1) Fewer non-Christians are attending church services, according to Barna. Four years ago, 53% of the people attending church services on a given weekend were not born-again Christians. That proportion has dropped to 45%. (2) Those least likely to read the Bible during the week are baby busters, Barna found. Only 21% of people under age

35 read the Bible during the week, about half the rate of people 65 or older. (3) Nearly 80% of American adults believe in miracles, Gallup reported, while 12% do not believe and 9% aren't sure. (4) 96% of American adults say they believe in God or a universal spirit, according to the Gallup Poll. Just 3% say they don't believe in God. — Arkansas Baptist News magazine.

* * *

Pastor Available. Brother Tim Parrow who has recently returned from the mission field in the Canary Islands is now available as a pastor. He may be

contacted through his pastor Bro. E. L. Bynum by writing the Tabernacle Baptist Church, P. O. Box 3100, Lubbock, TX 79452. (806) 744-4443

TITHE...

(Continued from page 11)

this age. Although no believer in Jesus Christ is "under the law" the Holy Spirit uses the law to teach these Corinthian saints a needed lesson in the support of the Lord's servant (1 Cor. 9:7-12). Then, we read:

"Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things (the common priests) live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar (the high priests) are partakers with the altar? *Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*" Nothing could be plainer than that it is the "ordained" plan of God that the preachers of the gospel are to be supported exactly as the priests were supported "out of the temple", by "tithes and offerings."

The vast majority of liberal Christian stewards began as tithers, and as they have received the accompanying spiritual and material blessings they have delighted to invest more and more of their substance in the Lord's work. Noticeable among the results of following God's plan of "tithes and offerings" are joyful giving, liberal giving, and unpretentious giving.

The Lord openly invites any doubter to "prove me now herewith" (Mal. 3:10). Of the millions who have thus proved Him not one has found the Lord breaking His promise. Happy is the child of God who adopts God's plan of "tithes and offerings," and follows it faithfully out of love and gratitude to Jesus Christ for His wonderful salvation. — Copied•

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Would you like a bundle to be sent so that each family within your church could have a copy? For pastors, we'll be happy to send a bundle to your church, and we recommend one per family.

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A Voice From Hell

You lived next door to me for years,
 We shared our dreams, our joys, and tears.
 A friend to me you were indeed,
 A friend who helped me when in need.

My faith in you was strong, and sure.
 We had such trust as should endure.
 No words between us ever rose,
 Our friends were alike — and so, our foes.

What sadness, then, my friend, to find,
 That, after all, you weren't so kind.
 The day my life on earth did end,
 I found you weren't a faithful friend.

For all those years we spent on earth,
 You never talked of second birth.
 You never spoke of my lost soul,
 And of the Christ who'd make me whole.

I'm lost today eternally,
 And tell you now my earnest plea.
 You cannot do a thing for me —
 No words my bonds will free.

But do not err, my friend, again.
 Do all you can for souls of men.
 Plead with them now quite earnestly —
 Lest they be cast in Hell with me.

— Author Unknown

A Question For Christians

"Is It Nothing To You?"

Is it nothing to you that God, who knows the spiritual condition of all men, declares in the Scriptures concerning the heathen; that they are "without excuse," and that they have "no hope" and are "without God?"

Is it nothing to you that God, who said in His Word: "Whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved," added — with the heathen particularly in view — "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed, and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Is it nothing to you that Jesus Christ, whom you call Savior and Lord, commanded His disciples, in view of the spiritual need of the heathen, to go to the ends of the earth, that those who had not heard of His power to save and keep, might hear, saying: "go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," and, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature?"

Is it nothing to you, in spite of God's revelation concerning the spiritual condition of the heathen and of Christ's command concerning their immediate evangelization, that there are actually more heathen in the world today by over several hundred millions than there were when Jesus died for them, that they now number billions of souls, and that this means that only one person among every five persons on the face of the earth has any knowledge of Him who is Savior and Lord?

Is it nothing to you that the time is rapidly passing when the heathen who are now living may hear of Christ, since they are dying at the rate of one every second, that is, at the rate of

over eighty-six thousand every day, and of over thirty-one million every year?

Is it nothing to you that possibly you are among those who have not done all that might have been done for the heathen, in praying, in giving, and in going, and that thus, consciously or unconsciously, you are one of the many Christians who are responsible for perpetuating this "crime of the ages" in leaving countless billions of needy souls to live and die without the knowledge of God's redeeming love in Christ?

If it is something to you — then for the sake of Christ and of Christless men, arise and do, for "the time is short" and "the night cometh when no man can work."

"When he saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." •

The Fool of All Fools

By W. Lee Rector

Who is the fool of all fools? He is the fellow who says, "There is no God" (Psm. 14:1).

The world is full of planned mystery. One of my college professors in Missouri University said, "There is enough mystery in a hair on a mouse's tail to confound the ages." True. Let the wiseacres explain how corn is made to produce feathers in fowls, hoofs in horses, and milk in cows and then we can begin to believe this Atheistic wisdom. Let them explain how the heavens are hung upon nothing; why their West to East concourse is orderly; and

how such a planful universe can be the product of accidental variation in the laws, or forces, of nature. To attempt these things would condemn one's intelligence. Surely "The heavens declare the glory of God."

The fool next to the fool of fools is the fellow who disbelieves the Holy Bible. If we grant that we can't individually create and operate such a universe as we find round about us — and we have to admit that a planful order does exist — then we must admit that the heavens declare the existence of God, a supernatural being. Granting this, we must also admit that He, being a person, would communicate with people. Accordingly, the Bible becomes the logic of God's very being. The Bible is the way God uses to communicate with, and convey his truth to, the sons of men. He uses the Holy Spirit to disclose His will, His worth, and His work unto us (2 Tim. 3:16). To attempt to discount the Bible is to condemn our intelligence.

The fool next in order is the one who professes to believe in God and then openly discounts the Old Testament while praising the New. Is God a respecter of persons? Has He withheld redemptive truth from Old Testament peoples? Has God poured out more grace upon our age, than ages ago? If so, He doesn't deserve anything but scorn from the hearts of men. No, God is not a respecter of persons. He supplied the same kind, and equal amount of grace to the Old Testament peoples that He supplies to New Testament people. The Old Testament is just as true as the New Testament. It takes both the Old and the New to give us all of God's truth. The Bible is one book, embracing two testaments. God saved every Old Testament saint just like He saves New

(See **FOOL** on page 24)

How To Detect Modernism

There is no set method for detecting modernism for modernism has as many ways as Satan has demons, but the following poem is one example that can be easily and readily seen.

Mary Had A Little Boy

Mary had a little boy,
His soul was white as snow.
He never went to Bible School
'Cause Mary wouldn't go.
He never heard the story of
Christ
That thrills the childish mind;
While other children went to
class
This child was left behind.
And as he grew from babe to
youth
She saw to her dismay ...
A soul that once was snowy
white
Became a dingy gray.
Realizing he was lost
She tried to win him back,
But now the soul that once
was white
Had turned an ugly black.
She even started back to
church,
And Bible School too.
She begged the preacher
"Isn't there
A thing that we can do?"
The preacher tried, and failed
and said,
"We're just to far behind.
I tried to tell you long ago,
But you would pay no mind."
And so, another soul is lost,
That once was white as
snow,
Bible School would have
helped ...
But Mary wouldn't go!

(See **MARY** on page 17)

MARY...

(Continued from page 16)

The above poem is modernism at its best and plain blasphemy at its worst. Within these few verses are denied some of the fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures.

(1) The doctrine of Total Depravity. Notice that the heart of the boy at birth was "white as snow." Progressively it "became a dingy gray" and finally, "had turned" into an "ugly

black." This denies that we are born sinners by nature and teaches that we "gradually" become sinners and "gradually" become lost.

(2) This poem also denies the doctrine of eternal security or conversely teaches the doctrine of falling from grace, for in verse four it read "Realizing he was lost, she tried to win him back." Back to what? His former state of salvation or purity. This is also taught again in the last verse when it says "And an-

other soul is lost, that once was white as snow."

By the way, someone may want to know what Methodist paper this came out of, since these are Methodist doctrines and not Baptist or Bible doctrines. I am nearly ashamed to say so, but this poem has appeared twice in a paper supposed to be representative of independent Baptists, and still another paper of another Baptist leader. How far have Baptists, independent Baptists, gone, when they will endorse a poem like this?•

lack of discipline are the social workers, psychologists and professional counselors. By creating "victims" which only they are qualified to treat, they insure a steady stream of "clients." Some job justification!

Certainly corporal punishment is painful. that's the point of it. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous." Yet many folks, looking back on the sharp discipline of childhood or boot camp, will admit that it was, in the long run, a blessing. And the Bible says that too about chastisement: "Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

I learned that the back of "the hand is quicker than the eye," not from some sleight-of-hand artist, but from sassing my mother.

"Guidance counseling" was the football coach slamming me up against a locker and explaining why I better shape up. He was right.

A young pitcher faced Joe DiMaggio the first time and threw three close pitches the umpire called balls. He fussed and fumed on the mound and finally threw one down the pipe which Joe planted in the stands for a home run.

Strolling out to the mound, the umpire said: "See, Don? When it's a strike, Mr. DiMaggio will let you know."

If we fail to discipline our children, God and not the social workers will let us know. "He that spareth the rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him." — CN•

A Little Talk With Jesus

A little talk with Jesus,
How it smoothes the rugged road!
How it seems to help me onward,
When I faint beneath my load;
When my heart is crushed with sorrow,
And my eyes with tears are dim,
There is naught can yield me comfort
Like a little talk with Him.

Ah, this is what I'm wanting —
His lovely face to see;
And, I'm not afraid to say it,
I know He's wanting me.
He gave His life my ransom,
To make me all His own,
And He'll ne'er forget His promise
To me, His purchased one.

I cannot live without Him, —
Nor would I if I could;
He is my daily portion,
My medicine and food.
He's altogether lovely,
None can with Him compare;
Chiefest among ten thousand,
And fairest of the fair.

So I'll wait a little longer,
Till His appointed time,
And along the upward pathway
My pilgrim feet shall climb.
There in my Father's dwelling,
Where many mansions be,
I shall sweetly talk with Jesus,
And He will talk with me.

Striking Out Parents

By John Parcher

A California teacher asked a class of third-graders: "Have any of you ever been spanked at home?"

One little boy raised his hand and admitted that, yes, he had been.

Social workers showed up at the house and threatened to remove the boy if the parents repeated the crime.

It's supposedly OK if the Human Services department uses force on delinquents. The Director of the local Coulee Region program says:

"Their (parents) hands are tied. If they physically control the child, he will complain of child abuse. So we get paid to do what they aren't allowed to do."

Isn't that clever? The only people who benefit from the

Grace and Truth

By W.P. Mackay

An excellent book on God's plan of salvation with the title taken from John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Order from:

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(See rates on page 22)

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July 14-15, 1995, New Church Dedication. Friday & Saturday (Morning & Evening Preaching on Saturday), Central Baptist Church, 15601 Taylor Loop Rd., Little Rock, AR 72212, B. Lawrence Jones, Pastor.

GARLAND, TX

July 24-27, 1995, Rodgers Baptist Church, 2822 S. Jupiter Rd., Garland, TX 75041, Ron Thomas, Pastor.

LIBERAL, KS

September 18-20, 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.

FORT WORTH, TX

October 2-4, 1995, Pastors School, Lake Worth Baptist Church, 4445 Hodgkins Rd., Fort Worth, TX 76135, Jerry D. Locke, Pastor

LITTLE ROCK, AR

October 23-25, 1995, Central Baptist Church, 15601 Taylor Loop Rd., Little Rock, AR 72212, B. Lawrence Jones, Pastor.

CINCINNATI, OH

November 7-9, 1995, Central Baptist Church, 7645 Winton Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45224, James W. Love, Pastor.

MATTOON, IL

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

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January 23-26, 1996, "The Retreat In the Rockies". Wetmore Baptist Church, P.O. Box 84, Wetmore, CO 81253, Brian Withrow, 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.

Alcohol: A Poison

According to Charles Mayo, alcohol is as much a poison as arsenic, strychnine, or sulphuric acid. Each poison seeks out one part of the body. Lead goes to the wrists; mercury, to the mouth; manganese, to the liver; arsenic to the stomach and intestines; strychnine, to the spinal cord; and alcohol, to the brain.

Telephone:

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mlmoser1@juno.com

JOHN...

(Continued from page 8)

about purifying. They tried to make John jealous of Jesus, but he answered them that that which Jesus was doing was authorized by heaven (Vs. 27); and that Jesus was the Christ, and that group which was with Him was the church or bride; that the Christ must increase but John the Baptist must decrease. John continued, and said he was rejoicing because he was the friend of the bridegroom and was permitted to hear His voice. We see in John 4:1-2, that Jesus Himself did not baptize, but the disciples, or the church, did the baptizing, and that by authority from Him.

Jesus Commissioned His Church

When Jesus met the disciples after His resurrection He again commissioned them to preach the gospel, to baptize and to teach: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt. 28:19-20).

Just before His ascension, which was after He had been with the disciples for forty days after His resurrection, His parting words were: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This was spoken to the "they" and the "them" of the first chapter of Acts. This "they" and "them" was His church — the 120 which received the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. That baptism of the Holy Ghost,

which Jesus had promised them (Jn. 14:16-17; Acts 1:5), made this called-out assembly *a living organism*, and it, and none other, has John's baptism, which is from heaven. Any other baptism is of men and cannot be scriptural. When Jesus Christ had finished giving the disciples (the church) the commission to preach, baptize and teach the doctrines, He added, "And, lo, *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*" (Mt. 28:20). I believe that there has never been a moment of time since then that the Lord has not been present in His churches in the world.

His Church Had None Other Than the Baptism of John

You remember that when John the Baptist was in prison and greatly discouraged, he sent disciples to Jesus and asked Him: "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" (Lk. 7:20). Jesus performed miracles before them, proving who He was, and after the messengers left He spoke to His congregation concerning John, saying: "What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appareled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall I prepare the way before thee. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist" (Lk. 7:24-28). Now what result did this testimony of John bring? "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans,

(See **JOHN** on page 19)

JOHN...

(Continued from page 18)

justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John" (Lk. 7:29). Since John was in prison at that time, who gave them the baptism of John? We say the Lord's church did. These people declared the justice of God by being baptized with the baptism of John at the hands of the Lord's church, the only authorized administrator of scriptural baptism.

John's Baptism Was Never Abolished

Now someone may say, "But John's baptism was done away and we now have Christian baptism," and will give Acts 19:1-5 as proof. We say that these "disciples" did not have John's baptism, even though they thought they had. After Paul told them that John baptized "with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus," they acknowledged their immersion was in error, by accepting valid baptism, believing on the Lord Jesus as Savior. John's baptism is *Christian baptism*. It was good enough for Christ and the apostles, so let's not do away with it.

There is not one bit of Scripture to justify the argument that John's baptism was abolished. The first church, in selecting an apostle to take the place of Judas, laid down this prerequisite to apostleship — that is, "he must have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22). In other words, he must have been baptized by John the Baptist and have been with the company (the church) all the

time since — a charter member, if you please.

True Churches In All Ages Since Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus has had churches with the baptism of John, here on this earth every day — yes, every minute of every day since He established the first one while He was here in person. We believe that for a church to be a true church of His today, it must have come through the genealogy or lineage of the church which Jesus established. Somebody will immediately say, "But you cannot trace the genealogy of your church back to Christ." Suppose I cannot. Neither can I trace my genealogy back to Adam, but I know I am a son of Adam. Baptists have plenty of history which was written by our enemies, which proves that Baptist churches have been here in every century since Christ, and all that we have to do is to prove that we came from a true Baptist church. Yes, we know that we have not been called Baptists all the time. Historians have traced us by various names, but always by the same doctrines since the time of Christ on the earth.

Counterfeits, And Why

Why do we have counterfeit money? Because there is genuine money. If there were no genuine there would be no counterfeit, but since there is genuine money there is imitation money. The same is true with churches. Since there are true churches, there are also imitation churches who have imitation or counterfeit baptism, which looks just like the baptism of John.

Apostate Churches

In the early life of the Lord's churches some became apostate

— that is, they departed from the faith, and in 251 A.D. the true churches declared non-fellowship with those who had departed from the faith and were practicing infant baptism, etc. Those apostate churches lost John's baptism, for John did not baptize unbelievers, infants, as they did.

The Catholic hierarchy grew out of those churches and their first pope was chosen in about 606 A.D. The Roman and Greek Catholic churches are both without authorized baptism, therefore not true churches of our Lord. All other major denominations in the world have come directly or indirectly from the Roman Catholic church, therefore they cannot have the baptism of John. The Lutherans were the first to split off and that was in 1530. The Church of England was established next, by Henry VIII, in 1531, because the pope wouldn't let him divorce his wife and marry another woman. In 1541 the Presbyterian church was established by a reformed Catholic priest. The Congregationalist church came into being in 1602, directly from the Catholic. In the eighteenth century Methodist societies were organized in England and in America, which, in about 1784, grew into what is now the Methodist church. This group came from the Church of England, or Episcopal church, as it is known in America.

In 1810 the Cumberland Presbyterian church came out of the Presbyterian, and in about 1811 to 1827 the Disciples of Christ, or as they call themselves, "The Church of Christ," better known as Campbellites, came on the scene, coming also from the Presbyterians. The Disciples of Christ split into two groups, the other calling themselves "The Christian Church."

There are hundreds of so-called churches which have come into existence in the last hun-

dred years or less, that have direct and indirect connection with these. They are all far too young to be the true church which our Lord established. I don't know if the Lord had this in mind or not, when He had Isaiah pen the following: "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach" (Isa. 4:1).

Some people believe that anything that calls itself a church is all right, and that we should accept it as such. If somebody pops up and calls himself a god, are you going to accept him as such? No! Well, why not look into the church matter and be as careful about the Lord's bride as you would be about the Lord?

One Lord, One Faith and One Baptism

The Book says: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6).

We believe that there is *one* body and only one — not several, so we can take our choice. We believe that there is *one* Spirit who dwells in the Lord's true church. We believe that there is *one* Lord, even Jesus Christ, the head of the *one* body. We further believe that there is but *one* faith — "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." There is not a multitude of faiths that we may take our pick. We believe that there is but "*one* God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all." And last, but not least, we believe that there is but *one* baptism — *John's Baptism*, and it is from heaven. Do you have it? If not, why not? It is available to all regenerated persons. •

The Bible Looks At Divine Healing

By Sam Bradford

This is a day when great emphasis is made on "creature comforts." More emphasis is placed on "How do you feel?" than on "What kind of a person are you?"

That emphasis has easily spilled from the secular over into the religious world. People just want to be comfortable.

Because of that drive to be physically well and comfortable, men and movements have played upon the plight of the sick and afflicted.

This study makes no attempt to examine the validity or effectiveness of any of those movements. In the study, the author seeks only to set forth certain New Testament truths concerning "How God did it." Any movement of person presenting a healing program that is not in harmony with these New Testament principles must defend their program apart from Holy Scriptures.

Question: Are all miracles of God?

Sorcerers of Pharaoh worked miracles. Ex. 7:10-12; 7:20-22; 8:16-18

False prophets of the "last days will work miracles: Mt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9-11; Rev. 13:11-15; 16:13-14; 19:20.

Answer: No!! Satan's agents also perform miracles.

Question: Does God heal all who have faith? Trophimus was left at Miletus sick (2 Tim. 4:20).

Epaphroditus "was sick nigh unto death" because of his devotion, to Christ (Phil. 2:27).

Paul had a thorn in his flesh to keep him humble (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

Answer: No! God some-

times uses sickness and pain for his children's good.

Question: Did Jesus advertise and hold healing meetings?

Jesus healed a multitude and "suffered not the devils to speak for they knew him" (Mk. 1:32-33).

Jesus healed a leper and said, "see thou say nothing to any man." The healed man began to "blaze abroad the matter," and Jesus was hindered in His ministry. He could no more openly enter into the city." There is no record here of a meeting (Mk. 1:40-45).

Jesus healed among a multitude, and "He straitly charged them that they should not make him known" (Mk. 3:6-12).

Jesus raised a dead girl and charged straightly that no man should know it." Jesus went into the home (Mk. 5:38-43).

Jesus healed a deaf mute and charged them that they should tell no man. Jesus took him aside (Mk. 7:31-36).

Jesus healed a blind man and commanded him not to tell anyone. Jesus led the blind man out of the city (Mk. 8:22-26).

Answer: No! Jesus held no healing meetings and forbade advertising healing that He performed. If healing had been central in Jesus' ministry, one command from Him would have healed every sick one in the world.

Question: Did the apostles hold healing meetings.

The disciples healed all who came to them as they passed by on the streets (Acts 5:12-16).

Peter. Peter healed a man at the gate beautiful (Acts 3:1-11).

Notes:

1. There was no meeting.
2. The lame man had no faith.

3. The lame man did not pray for healing.

4. Peter did not pray.

5. Peter healed by the "gift of healing."

6. The people recognized Peter as a messenger of God.

Peter healed a palsied man in his home (at his bed (Acts 9:32-35).

Notes:

1. Aeneas did not pray for healing.

2. Peter did not pray.

3. Peter healed by the "gift of healing."

4. All in Lydda recognized Peter as a messenger of God.

Philip—Philip healed (Acts 8:5-8).

Notes:

1. Demon possessed ones do not pray nor do they have faith.

2. There is no record of Philip praying.

3. "From the least to the greatest, this man is the great power of God."

Paul. Paul healed a crippled man (Acts 14:8-10).

Notes:

1. There was a meeting, but not a healing meeting.

2. The impotent man had faith.

3. The man did not pray.

4. Paul did not pray.

5. Paul healed by the "gift of healing."

6. The people recognized Paul as a messenger of God.

Paul cast out a demon from a Philippian girl (Acts 16:16-18).

Paul performed special miracles (Acts 19:11-12).

Paul raised a dead person to life (Acts 20:6-12).

Paul received a viper bite unharmed (Acts 28:1-6).

Paul healed a man of fever and others of diseases (Acts 28:7-9).

Notes:

1. The father of Publius was a heathen (see vs. 20).

2. Paul prayed.

3. Paul laid his hands on the

sick one.

4. There was no meeting.

5. The others who were healed were unbelievers.

Answer: No! Use of the "gift" of healing was incidental and as credential, rather than a feature of the apostle's ministry. •

CHURCH...

(Continued from page 2)

rebuild the city themselves.

It was a very influential city, not only culturally but economically. It was a banking and manufacturing center. Much soft fine black wool was produced in the valley of Lycus that surrounded the city. Garments of various kinds, and carpets also, were woven out of this choicest wool of that area of the world. This business alone was very beneficial to the believers or the Christians that were there because it did make them one of the better paying areas of the world and the Christians profited and therefore had much wealth as a result of this great manufacturing industry located there. We need to take this into consideration then when we remember that this church of Laodicea was a rich church, because the people that made up that church became wealthy because they lived in a manufacturing and banking center of that area of the world.

Not only that, but they had a very large medical school located in Laodicea, located near a temple of one of their heathen gods. The temple was called the Temple of Men Karou, and he was their chief god. It was this Temple that was the site or the location of the medical school, and many of the medicines of that day and time were manufactured in and around Laodicea, including an especial ointment for the ears, and a black powder

(See **CHURCH** on page 21)

CHURCH...

(Continued from page 20)

that they used for the eyes. Of course, when you get down into the scripture here where the Lord talks about them needing eyesalve, it probably has reference to the fact that this was what many of them maybe manufactured as part of their living. The Lord says that you don't need that kind of eyesalve, but you need some spiritual eyesalve for your own eyes.

As we mentioned, it was a city of bankers, traders, and financiers. It was a great commercial center and brought great wealth to all of its inhabitants and that included those who were the believers and the members of the church of Laodicea as well. But it still was a city that was a center of idolatry. They not only had the worship in the Temple of Men Karou, but they also worshiped a goddess called Askalepios. It was a provincial city for the court where Cicero lived, and Cicero wrote many of his letters from this city of Laodicea.

The name itself, Laodicea, comes from two Greek words. One word *laos* meaning "the people," and *nikeo* meaning "to rule." Combined they mean "the people rule." Now this was the very opposite of the Nicolaitanes which built a hierarchy that dominated and ruled the people. Here we find a rulership on behalf of the people. Here the people rise up and rule themselves just as Paul predicted that they would do. In 2 Timothy 4:3 Paul said: "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.*" Paul said that this very thing would occur, that the people would not endure sound doctrine. They would not listen to the preachers that

God gave them to preach to them the Word of God. They would not heed the sound doctrine, but instead would turn in rebellion against those God had sent them. Instead they would seek out and find preachers who would preach unto them those things that they wanted to hear.

That is exactly what we are to look for and we are to find today. You realize, that in the majority of Baptist churches, (and that's the only kind of churches I'm talking about, Baptist churches), but in the majority of Baptist churches today, this is exactly what has occurred. Preachers who preach the Word and adhere to the doctrines of the Word of God are not welcome in most pulpits of today. The people want those who will preach to them soft soothing syrupy sermons that do not upset them in anyway at all.

Now, the city itself became known as the "city of compromise." This was the reputation of the city. We see therefore, that not only was the city called the City of Compromise, but the church took the same characteristics of the community and became the "church of compromise." This is the dispensation in which we're living today.

Putting it in other words, it's called a "middle of the road" church, a "middle of the road" city. They compromised everything, and they compromised to the extent that they compromised the truth. They gave error equal billing with truth. Mixing them together they became the church of compromise—middle of the road. Of course, you know that the only thing you find in the middle of the road are skunks and a yellow stripe. That's all you get when you go down the middle of the road, but this is the way these churches and this city was known to have been.

And yet, that's not the way

it began. It didn't start that way. Actually, this church of Laodicea had a great beginning. It had a great start. It was one of the better churches during the days of the Apostle Paul. Turn with me to the Book of Colossians chapter 4, and I want you to note that at one time this church was a very strong, spiritual church and that Epaphras was their pastor.

Notice in Colossians chapter 4 and verse 11-12. "*And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*"

Now notice verse 15: "*Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.*" We see then that this church was at one time a very strong church, a very spiritual church, Epaphras was their pastor. In fact, Paul says that they were the recipients of one of his letters. Somebody says, "Well now we don't have that letter here in our Bible," but remember that Paul wrote many letters that were not incorporated into our Bible. They were not the inspired Word of God or else they would have been preserved and incorporated into our Bible. But he did write another letter to them, for if you will notice in verse 13 of this same chapter he says, "*For I bear him record*" talking about Epaphras, "*For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.*" Now note verse 16,

"*And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans.*" And now note, "*and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.*" So we see then that Paul had written them a letter.

From this we learn from which state this church had fallen. They at one time were in a high spiritual state, and now, they have fallen to this place that we read about here in the third chapter of the Book of Revelation. In these few short years, they have fallen from a place of being one of the more spiritual churches, with a great pastor, a letter from the Apostle Paul commending them, and now they have reached the point where Jesus, the Author of this letter here in the third chapter of Revelation, does not have one good thing to say about the church of Laodicea. Do you see how rapidly and how quickly that it is possible for a church to be on a spiritual plane and to fall down to such a place that Jesus could not say one good thing about that church. Just a few short years.

As you read through this letter, we find just one outstanding characteristic of this church, and the outstanding characteristic of that church is something that is not to be emulated or imitated, and that is lukewarmness. Throughout the centuries since that time, it is this church, the church of Laodicea, that has remained the classic example of that quality that is most despised in the Lord's churches, the state of lukewarmness.

Now let us look at the letter itself. Verse 14. "*And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.*" We find here three marks of identifica-

(See **CHURCH** on page 22)

CHURCH...

(Continued from page 21)

tion for the Author of this letter. As we learned in each of the previous six letters, the Author is identified. First, Jesus is the Amen. The word Amen is the Hebrew word for confirmation. It means "so be it," and Jesus here presents Himself as the confirmer of all the truth of God. By Him every word of God is established. Every counsel carried out. Every purpose brought into effect. Jesus did all of this.

The second mark of identification is the phrase "*the faithful and true witness.*" This is in contrast to all of the false testimony. Now, the Amen is expressed here outwardly by "the faithful and the true witness." Amen means "so be it" and "Amen" then would be the outward expression designated by the phrase "the faithful and true witness."

The third mark of identification, is "*the beginning of the creation of God.*" The beginning means "the beginner" or "the author." Who is the beginner of creation? Who is the author of creation? In Colossians 1:16 "For by him" and you read the preceding verses and verses 13 and 14 it shows that it is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. It says "*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist*" (Col. 1:16-17). So we see then that Jesus Christ is identified as the Author of this letter by referring to Him as "the beginning of the creation of God." It is His preeminence over all creation that is emphasized here. So Christ, speaking to them, speaks to them as their Creator.

Now notice the Lord has some complaints to make about them beginning in verse 15. "*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*" (Rev. 3:15-17).

At the very beginning the Lord repeats a phrase that He has used in every case "*I know thy works.*" "*I know.*" This shows God's omniscience. The Lord shows His supreme knowledge of all things, for He knows all things that this church does. "*I know thy works.*"

This church is a working church, "*Thy works,*" and yet, the Lord was not satisfied with their works. They were works that apparently were indifferent works. There was no real aggressive zeal manifested by this church. The Lord had given them work to do, but they went about it indifferently. They, I am certain, continued to have their services. They maintained a church-life. They had their work, but their heart was not in it. It was habit or formality or ritualism. Their works were then simply works of indifference.

You'll also notice here that there was no active opposition to them either. When a church reaches this stage that they are simply content just to go through the formality of working for the Lord, their heart is not really in it, there is no real zeal in their heart for the work, Satan is satisfied. He just lets them alone.

Here is a church that to all outward appearances was a thriving, going church. It might be that the people of the city of Laodicea would have been

pleased with that church to be in their community. Their pastor might be one that they would like to have come down and to speak to their civic and community organizations, or to participate in this ceremony or that ceremony. Maybe to participate in an ecumenical movement, along with the priest over here who was a priest of this temple and the priest of that temple, and the priest of the other temple. Maybe the pastor of this church might be willing to go down there, and yet the Lord says that their works were works that He was not pleased with, and that He was not satisfied with at all. Remember, this is how God judges a church, by their works. Churches are like individuals. They are to be judged by their works.

Notice with me in the seventh chapter of the Book of Matthew. We read in verse 16 of this chapter, "*Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit*" (Mt. 7:16-18). We see then that they are going to be judged by their fruits or by their works, as we read to you this morning in Second Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 10. It says, "*We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*" (2 Cor. 5:10).

So this is our problem with this church of Laodicea, a problem of having works, but works basically of ritualism, formality. They would have a Sunday School. They would have a preaching service. They would have a Training Union. They would have a preaching service Sunday evening. They would

have a Wednesday night service. They might have a visitation program. They might have an Awana club. They might have all of these things, but it was all strictly ritual. Their heart was not really in it. And God says I know all about it.

We need to think about our church in this realm. How much of what we have is strictly ritual? How much of our church life is actually built upon the fact of a zeal to serve God, a zeal to worship God, a zeal to be obedient unto God, and how much of it is just habit. Or we're afraid of what somebody might say if we don't do it. Or our conscience bothers us if we do not do certain things.

Now the religious state of this church is described for us right here. It is a state of lukewarmness. Outwardly, the church may have seemed very strong; may have appeared very prosperous, but on the inside the Lord says you're just lukewarm. And the state of lukewarmness, (and this I guess would be a surprise to most of us), but the state of lukewarmness is actually worse than the state of coldness, the Lord says. Now that's a shocker, isn't it. We would think that a church that is cold would be worse, but the Lord says here that He wishes they were either cold or hot. He'd rather they be cold than just plain lukewarm. The Lord says it would be preferable if that church was cold rather than lukewarm. Of course, He'd rather they be hot, but of the three alternatives, He wants them hot first, cold second, and lukewarmness is last.

Lukewarmness is very inferior to heat, but as far as God is concerned, at least it seems to us, that it is preferable in God's viewpoint to be absolutely cold toward the things of God.

Perhaps there is prospect of

(See **CHURCH** on page 23)

CHURCH...

(Continued from page 22)

revival if you were real cold. Perhaps there is prospect for one to wake up and to realize just how cold they really are, then maybe repent and confess to the Lord and return to the Lord. To have only half a heart for the things of God is really bad, but how could it be worse to have no heart at all for the things of God. And yet, God says He'd rather it be that way. Lukewarmness, according to what it looks like here, is the last state of a church's existence where it will still be recognized by the Lord. Lukewarmness!

Now a church doesn't get lukewarm over night. As I think about this, I am reminded of the illustration that is used concerning the progression from freedom to and communism. We are told that no one ever goes directly, voluntarily and willingly from freedom to communism; that it is done by a slow and a gradual process. Socialism is the means used to transfer us from a position of freedom to a position of communism by having us go gradually through a period of socialism, until, all of a sudden we wake up and find we have no freedoms left at all. Now that is true. For you that are 40 or 50 or 60 years of age, all you need do is to look back at the history of the United States and you can see how much of our freedom has been eroded away just during our generation and how we are already on the road to socialism right here in the United States.

The illustration has been used of a frog. You can take a frog, drop that frog into boiling or hot water, and he'll jump out immediately. But you take that same frog, put him in cool water, and gradually heat the water, and that frog will just sit there and until he burns up and dies, because it is so gradual. That's

exactly the way it works in a nation or a church. A church can be on fire for the Lord, they can be spiritual, they can be on the move for the Lord in a great way, but this idea of coldness for the Lord can come about so gradual that you hardly are aware of it at all. If it came over night, you'd "jump" out of that church and you would really raise Cain. You'd gripe about the coldness that was there. But what happens is that it comes about so gradual that the first thing you know, we look around us and ask ourselves, "Where is our spirituality?" It's gone. Where is all of our warmth. It's gone. Where is all of our fire? Where's all of our heat? Where's all of our evangelistic spirit? It's gone. What happened? It went gradually.

But remember this, it did not go any faster than what we ourselves went, and this is what happened to this church of Laodicea. They are now a lukewarm church. The fire is still there. The heat is still there. It's still lukewarm. It can be rekindled, and the fire and the zeal and the enthusiasm can still be brought back into focus again, but in this church it apparently didn't. So where is that church today? Dead! Gone! What happened to the church at Laodicea can happen to Central Baptist Church here in Little Rock.

I think every one of us can look back in history, if you have been here for any length of time. Maybe I'm speaking to just a few, and maybe not to as many as I might think, but you know I grew up in this church. We came here when I was less than six years of age, so I've been in this church for all these years. I wasn't saved all that time, but at least I remember things that took place, and I can remember how our church used to really be on fire for the Lord. It was not too many years

ago that I can remember that when we met together for visitation on Tuesday night, and we would have many here, and nearly every one of our officers, workers and Sunday School teachers were present. Where is our fire? Where is our zeal gone?

I can remember when we used to have Training Union services that were crowded with people. Where is our zeal for the things of God? Training Union and the study of Bible doctrine is about as important as anything you can find. It is directly a part of the Great Commission where God says that the church is to teach the "all things" which means the doctrines of the Word of God. I didn't get to hear all of it, but I heard one of our teachers tonight in a Training Union class talking of missions, and I can't think of anything more important than this study of missions, as he is giving right now to our church. That's the very heart and core of what being a church is all about. But how few there are of our church who actually were in attendance at our Training Union. Where is our warmth?

As we go through a study of this church of Laodicea it will give you an opportunity to study yourself and to find out just what your temperature is. Just how cold are you? Or, how warm are you? You see, it's when we begin to make it personal that we can begin to understand this church of Laodicea. It's hard to be very critical of this church of Laodicea if we find that they are pretty much what we are. It's hard to be critical of them if that's the way we are. And yet, all of us would be very critical of the church of Laodicea. But are we lukewarm, or are we maybe even a little colder than that?

I don't think I'm going to try to go any further with this tonight. We'll pick it up next

Sunday morning. But you know, this is something to think about. When you go home tonight, what's your temperature? It's a serious matter. This church is not a plaything. When we're talking about dealing with God, we're not talking about playing a game. It's serious, and we ought not to just listen to it with one ear and let it go out the other ear and forget all about it.

It is a serious matter with God. Now I am sure that the church in Laodicea didn't really consider it all that serious. They weren't concerned with it all that much, but we ought to be because God is. Don't just forget it. We need to think this thing through. Where are we? What is our temperature? What is God's attitude toward us? You see, God's attitude toward the church of Laodicea wasn't the same as it was toward the church of Philadelphia. A lot of difference, and the reason was because there was a lot of difference between the two churches.

So next Sunday, the Lord willing, we're going to begin right here with verse 17 and we're going to look at the Lord's attitude toward that church, and then we're going to see what the real problem of that church was. •

You cannot expect to reap a harvest, if you have kept the seed in the barn.

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DRIFT...

(Continued from page 7)

words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. (19) For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. (20) And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (Rom. 16:17-20).

**A Faithful Message From
The Past and A Timely
Word for the Present**

'For there is some danger of falling into a soft and effeminate Christianity, under the plea of a lofty and ethereal theology. Christianity was born for endurance; not an exotic, but a hardy plant, braced by the keen wind; not languid, nor childish, nor cowardly. It walks with strong step and erect frame; it is kindly, but firm; it is gentle, but honest; it is calm, but not facile; obliging, but not imbecile; decided, but not churlish. It does not fear to speak the stern word of condemnation against error, nor to raise its voice against surrounding evils, under the pretext it is not of this world; it does not shrink from giving honest reproof, lest it come under the charge of displaying an unchristian spirit. It calls sin sin, on whomsoever it is found, and would rather risk the accusation of being actuated by a bad spirit than not discharge an explicit duty. Let us not misjudge strong words used in honest controversy. Out of the heat a viper may come forth; but we shake it off and feel no harm. The religion of both Old and New Testaments is marked by fervent outspoken testimonies against evil. To speak smooth things in such a case

may be sentimentalism, but it is not Christianity. It is a betrayal of the cause of the truth and righteousness. If anyone should be frank, manly, honest, cheerful (I do not say blunt and rude, for a Christian must be courteous and polite); it is he who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and is looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God. I know that charity covereth a multitude of sins; but it does not call evil good, because a good man has done it; it does not excuse inconsistencies, because the inconsistent brother has a high name and a fervent spirit; crookedness and worldliness are still crookedness and worldliness, though exhibited in one who seems to have reached no common height of attainment.'—**H.B. •**

VIRUS...

(Continued from page 6)

looking for a pastor.

Differing worship styles, procedural differences, philosophical differences, plus an over-supply of preachers creates a situation in which pastors can be quickly and carelessly rotated in and out of leadership.

At this point, we are challenged to put an end to church fights, whatever the cause. We need to do what the apostle Paul said: "Endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). Jesus has prayed for his; "... that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee ... that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jn. 17:21). It is safe to say that the CFV, Church Fight Virus, has done more to hurt the witness of Christians to the world and to cut off the flow of the Holy Spirit's power than any other single factor. What Satan, the world, communism, and secularism cannot do, we do to ourselves. •

FIRM...

(Continued from page 1)

and, the one who shall cleanse believers as with fire (Mt. 3:11).

John taught converts to be careful about right conduct (Lk. 3:10-14). "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance" (Lk. 3:8). He taught Christians the philosophy of martyrdom (Mt. 14:1-10). He taught fidelity and Christian principles.

By his example, John the Baptist taught effective preaching (Jn. 1:26-36). Unequivocally he declared the deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement (Jn. 1:29), the sole hope of redemption from sin through Christ, the witness of the Holy Spirit, the role of baptism as portraying, though not procuring, the salvation of men through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. He made Christ "manifest" by symbolizing in baptism our death to the world of sin and our rising to walk in newness of life (Jn. 1:31; Rom. 6:4).

Baptists, especially, should be interested in seeing that the word "baptizing" and its cognate forms represent the entire work of John and of Christ in certain places, as John 1:25, 28, 31, 33; 3:22-23, 26; 10:40.

Further study of the verses cited should strengthen the confidence of all Baptists in this foundational man, their namesake, the man whom Christ praised all others. •

FOOL...

(Continued from page 16)

Testament saints. The world's only savior "is the same yesterday, today, and forever." To condemn God by condemning the Old Testament is to discount one's intelligence.

Then the fool next in order is the church member who openly declares he doesn't believe in the existence of hell, or that the whole whale swallowed Jonah,

or that the sun and the moon stood still at the command of Joshua.

For an individual church member to deny Old Testament miracles, then he must deny the New Testament ones. Accordingly, Christ was not virgin born — hence a bastard; His shed blood is not cleansing and pardoning and saving — hence Christianity is a joke. How tragic that any church member can't see that he must believe the whole Bible to believe at all. If the Old Testament is false, the New Testament must be rejected. A church member ought to believe the whole Bible, or take out. One can't divide God by dividing His book and get by with it. Christianity is a faith affair. Faith doesn't argue — it accepts. When and where the Bible speaks, the church member should believe it. If a church member can't believe the whole Bible, he ought to get out and quit shaming his profession and his church. To do otherwise is to one's intelligence. •