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The Angels of God

By A. C. Gaebelein

What is the nature of these wonderful creatures of God? The Word of God answers us that they are spirits. *"Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"* (Heb. 1:14). This fact needs no further elucidation.

Do Angels Have Bodies?

The question is often asked by thoughtful believers, have angels bodies? If they have bodies, what kind of bodies do they possess? The question as to corporality of the angels of God demands a closer attention. Not a few expositors of Scripture maintain that a spirit must be immaterial, that spirituality excludes corporality, and therefore, the angels as spirits are bodiless beings. We know from Scripture that they appeared in visible form, generally in likeness of a human body. It seems these unseen spirits taking on visibility could not always be distinguished from ordinary creatures. In an exhortation to hospitality we read in Hebrews 13:1, *"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."* We learn from this that pious He-

brews in Old Testament times received strangers into their homes, entertained them, only to discover later that they were the messengers of God. We conclude therefore, that they did not appear as pictured in art, with wings and a halo about the head. They looked like as if they were common mortals.

From other Scriptures we learn that their bodies sometimes possessed a marvelous glory. Their garments are described as shining, their faces like the lightning and their whole appearance in whiteness like the snow. How can this be reconciled with the assertion that they are only spirits? It is answered that they possess the faculty of appearing in corporeal form at will; that they can pierce the universe at a speed even greater than the speed of light; that they can come and go unperceived by mortal sense or appear visibly. There can be taken no exception to these statements. We also believe that these holy beings possess such a faculty of taking on bodily form and appear and disappear as they desire.

Are Their Bodies Permanent?

Have they as spirit-beings permanent bodies? It is not the

question of their power to clothe themselves with such a garment that will make them visible to human eyes, but have they always bodies? This question we can answer from the Scriptures in the affirmative. They possess personality and, though spirits, they have their own distinctive bodies. That the bodies they possess are not like our own bodies may be learned from the words of the risen Lord. When suddenly He appeared in the midst of the disciples, they cried out for fear. *"They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them,, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; for a spirit hath not bones and flesh as ye see me have"* (Lk. 24:37-39). Our Lord, therefore, taught definitely that a spirit has not a body of bones and flesh.

What Kinds Of Bodies Are There?

In the great resurrection chapter, the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, different kinds of bodies are mentioned. The Spirit

(See **ANGELS** on page 24)

New Building To Be Dedicated In Little Rock

Great News! Our building contractor has informed us that Central Baptist Church's new building here in Little Rock will be completed in June. We can't wait!

The Lord has been so good to us. Many of you have communicated your love and concern for us during this very difficult time of being without a building. We want you to come and join us in our celebration of God's goodness to Central Baptist Church.

We are planning a week of very special services July 12-19. We will host a fellowship meeting and open house on the 14th and 15th. Bro. Ron Thomas, pastor of Rodgers Baptist Church in Garland, Texas will speak both nights.

Saturday morning from 9:00 till noon I will be calling on brethren in attendance to preach. We will provide meals for all who attend. Plan now to join us. Call if you have any questions: (501) 868-7703.

B. Lawrence Jones,
Pastor

The Book of Revelation -- Message #27**Promises To The Church of Philadelphia**

By M. L. Moser, Editor

[This message on “Promises To The Church of Philadelphia” was preached June 25, 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.]

We are going to complete our study this morning on the church of Philadelphia. We intended to finish it last Sunday but we didn't, but we will finish it this morning. The Lord willing, tonight we will resume our

studies with the Church of Laodicea.

In chapter 3 of the Book of Revelation, we want to begin with verse 7. “*And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will*

keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my god: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev. 3:7-13).

I want us to notice this morning some of the commendations that the Lord mentioned concerning this church. We're just going to mention them and that's about all because we did discuss them in more detail last Sunday morning, but in verse 8 you will notice that it says “Thou hast a little strength.” We should understand that rewards will not be given because of the greatness of the opportunities, but according to our faithfulness in responding to the opportunities. Every one of us can have a great reward even though we may not have many opportunities, or great opportunities. The reward is going to be determined by your faithfulness in responding to that opportunity, whether it be a great opportunity or a small opportunity. It is how you respond to the opportunity that determines your reward so you can have a great reward even though you have few opportunities if you respond in the way God wants you to. Here we see that this church, though their measure of strength may have been small, she was faithful in responding to their open door even with their little strength. Though you may consider that you have a little strength, if

you will use that little strength for the Lord, then God will reward you based upon your giving Him that little that you have. Sometimes the little that you have may amount to more than someone else who gives much simply because they did not give proportionate to the way that you did. I think that I mentioned last Sunday an illustration. When the Lord was standing by the temple, He saw the Pharisee come by and the Pharisee put in a rather substantial offering. Then He saw the widow as she came by, and she put in what we commonly refer to as the “widow's mite.” That, of course, would not be very much, but the Lord said that this widow actually gave more than the Pharisee, though she gave the equivalent of about two pennies. The Pharisee may have put in a hundred dollar bill, putting it in our terms, and yet the Lord said that the widow gave more than the Pharisee because she gave all that she had. This is exactly the way that rewards are to be disbursed. The rewards will not be disbursed in proportion to the quantity of what you do, but it will be in proportion to the response that you give to the opportunities that you have. Just as the widow would have a greater reward because she gave all she had, so if you have few opportunities and maybe what you might think of as small opportunities, the rewards that God gives will be great if you respond with all you have to those opportunities.

The second thing we find that He commended this church for was that He said they did keep My word, verses 8 and 10. We mentioned that one does not keep the word of God simply by merely defending it, but you keep the word by submitting yourself to the word and by obeying the word. This is what it

(See **CHURCH** on page 15)

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The Great Commission Belongs To Churches Not Boards

By Chester Tulga

At the turn of the present century, due to the growing domination of modernism over the great denominations, Bible-believing Christians began to turn away from the denominational mission boards and support independent, fundamental "faith missions."

As the older denominations tended more and more to compromise the gospel or even to

preach a false gospel, God in His sovereignty permitted the rise of independent — non-church related missions to serve as channels for the dollars which were being withheld from the denominational boards. This was more prevalent in the north than in the south, due to the slower advance of modernism in the south. However, modernism is marching forward with giant

strides in the south and many are looking for orthodox channels for the distribution of their mission money.

"Faith missions" became a great movement, getting millions of dollars in contributions and enlisting churches of every variety and hue as contributors, thus forcing a wider doctrinal flexibility and giving rise to an unwholesome essentialism, thereby Christians could unite in what they called the "essentials" in the Bible. The modernist took upon himself the function of deciding what is so and what is not so in the Bible; the fundamentalist the right to decide what is important and what is unimportant in the Bible, thus both cases transferring religious authority from the Bible to the individual.

Today, interdenominational fundamentalism, both at home and abroad, is compromising even the minimum theological position formerly held. Interdenominational fundamentalism, at home and abroad seems to have embraced firmly the principle that believers and unbelievers, modernists and fundamentalists, Baptists and Pedo-Baptists (sprinklers), Arminians and Calvinists, Episcopalians and Pentecostals and a wide variety of fuzzy whatnots, can work together in one happy fellowship. Truth has been sacrificed for unity and the compromising of truth by interdenominationalism steadily grows more serious. It is time for Baptists to decide whether the basis of fellowship is the Word of God or human fellowship. Interdenominational fundamentalism has become a homogenized religion with an evangelical flavor.

It is time for New Testament Baptists to take a new look at the Great Commission and take a new look at their own program and decide whether they are carrying out the Great Commission or an abbreviated version of it.

The Great Commission Is Baptist

This Commission lends no support to those who say the missionary enterprise must be based upon "essentials" (who decides what is essential?), for it specifies the broad principles that are to be carried out. Shall New Testament Baptists settle for a minimum interpretation of the Commission or the Baptist maximum?

1. The Commission was given to the New Testament Church. It was not given to self-appointed individuals, societies over which the churches have no control, or self-perpetuating boards who hold themselves to be empowered in perpetuity.

2. The Commission was not given to false churches or apostate churches. They cannot be trusted to carry out the Commission. No church or individual should support any denomination or agency which cannot be trusted, by designation or otherwise.

3. The Commission was not given to individuals or societies, who insist that we can settle for the "essentials" or who refuse to preach the whole counsel of God, or who found anything but New Testament churches after the New Testament pattern.

The Principles Are Definite

1. The command. Not foreign missions, home missions, but missions. Too many people's hearts bleed for those in foreign lands, who have no interest in the village in the next country that has no gospel testimony.

2. The message is the gospel. Not education, not philosophy, not the speculative notions

(See TULGA on page 22)

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Beware of Wolves

By Norman H. Wells

Every Baptist preacher, with any understanding of the Scriptures, knows that a Baptist church is supposed to be independent. All Baptist preachers claim to be independent and will also state that their church is independent. All Baptists use the word autonomous, sovereign, independent, etc. to describe their churches. The churches of The Southern Baptist Convention, The American Baptist Convention, The Conservative Baptist Association, The Baptist Bible Fellowship, The General Association of Regular Baptists, The World Baptist Fellowship, etc. all claim that their churches are independent. They all recognize that this is what they are supposed to be.

It becomes apparent that for Baptist preachers and Baptist churches to claim to be independent doesn't necessarily make it so! Some, I believe are deliberately lying! What is an independent Baptist Church? The characteristics are easy to see.

1. An independent Baptist church is a *Baptist* church teaching and preaching all the Bible truths for which Baptists have stood since the days of Christ.

2. An independent Baptist church is not associated with any man-made association, convention or organized fellowship such as The Southern Baptist Convention, The American Baptist Convention, The Baptist Bible Fellowship, The Conservative Baptist Association, The General Association of Regular Baptist, The World Baptist Fellowship, etc. *Any church identified with any of*

these is not an independent Baptist church.

3. An independent Baptist church is a missionary Baptist church endeavoring to carry the *good news* of the gospel to every creature. It supports church-sponsored missionaries directly. Any church that does its mission work through a mission board is not an independent Baptist church. God has abundantly blessed independent Baptist churches. In them rests the hope of this generation

There is a detestable, dishonest and dishonorable practice being carried on by some so-called Baptist preachers. I am told that seminaries even encourage some graduates in this practice. These men will learn of an independent Baptist church that is seeking a pastor and will present themselves as an independent Baptist. The preconceived idea is that if the independent Baptist church calls them as pastor they will then proceed to try and lead the church into a convention, association or organized fellowship. Subtly they will begin encouraging support of missionaries sent out by Mission Boards and will drop the truly independent Baptist missionaries. They will specialize in indoctrinating the young people with the idea that the church should identify with some organization.

This is a free country. If a Baptist wants to identify with a Convention, Association, or Fellowship that's his business. However, to deliberately deceive a church in order to lead it into an association with one of these groups is dishonest and unchristian. Let God's people beware of such wolves!

Many of us need to pray this prayer of Sir Jacob Ashley: O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me. •

How Much Can A Church Lobby?

By Attorney David C. Gibbs, Jr.

A church can have its tax-exempt status revoked by the IRS if it becomes too involved in lobbying activities. Churches can protect themselves from this risk by understanding the legal rules and standards which are used by the IRS to decide whether to invoke such a revocation.

Legal Basis for Limiting Church Lobbying

The legal basis for limiting the lobbying activities of churches is Internal Revenue Code §1.501(c)(3) which exempts from income tax any church organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, educational or other exempt purpose and "*no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation.*" Treas. Reg. §1.501(c)(3)-1(c)(3)(ii) states that an organization will be regarded as attempting to influence legislation if the organization "*contacts, or urges the public to contact, members of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation; or advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation.*"

What Constitutes Legislation?

The term *legislation* includes action by the Congress, by any state legislature, by any local council or similar governing body or by the public in a referendum, initiative, constitutional amendment or similar procedure.

What Constitutes Lobbying?

The Internal Revenue Manual suggests that "attempts to influence legislation" includes indirect appeals to legislators through the electorate or general public ("grass-roots lobbying") and requesting executive bodies to support or oppose legislation.

What Constitutes "Substantial"?

Unlike the prohibition against involvement in political campaigns, the prohibition against lobbying is not absolute. Churches and other tax-exempt organizations are permitted to lobby as long as they do not do so to a "substantial" degree. Churches may lose their tax-exempt status by engaging in *substantial* efforts to influence legislation.

One difficulty with this is that there is no way to quantify *substantial*; however, the IRS has made the determination that 5% or less of an organization's activities is considered not substantial and 6% or more is considered substantial. The question, then, becomes, how do you know when your church goes beyond the legally acceptable 5%? The government has decided that if you know the "5% Rule" it is presumed that your tax-exempt organization has not violated the rule.

Where churches get in trouble is when a heated piece of legislation is being heavily debated and churches have rallied to support the biblically

(See **LOBBY** on page 18)

Ten Virgins

By Milburn Cockrell

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour where in the Son of man cometh." -- (Mt. 25:1-13).

This parable is one of the most impressive and beautiful of all the parables of the Savior. In it our Lord is using material things to illustrate spiritual truths. But as is the case with all parables, it is not necessary that everything in the parable be applied in some way. Often the popular mind seeks to make too much of the minor details. Commentators and expositors widely disagree among themselves in their interpretations due to this fact.

Before any correct understanding of this parable can come, the seeker for truth must acquaint himself with the mar-

riage custom of the East. Elder John Gill relates this custom as follows: "The whole alludes to the solemnities of a marriage among the Jews, when the bridegroom fetched home his bride from her father's house, attended with his friends, the children of the bridechamber, and which was usually done in the night: and, at the same time, the bride was waiting for him, accompanied with virgins, or bridesmaids; who, when they perceived the bridegroom coming, went out with lamps, or torches, to meet him and conduct him to her" (**Gill's Expositor**, Vol. VII, p.301-302). Matthew Henry, A. T. Robertson, John Broadus, Benjamin Keach, Albert Barnes, J. R. graves, and C. H. Spurgeon give similar accounts.

The bride's maids were usually ten in number, for the Jews never held a synagogue, circumcised, kept the Passover, or contracted a marriage without the presence of ten persons. When Boaz wanted to marry Ruth, ten witnesses were needed (Ruth 4:2).

A proper definition of the symbols used by Christ in the parable are essential to an accurate understanding. Who is the bridegroom? the bride? the ten virgins? What do the foolish virgins represent? These principle questions must be answered by serious study and earnest research. I am confident my conclusion shall not be received by all candid minds, but perhaps I can be instrumental in causing my brethren to reopen the questions involved and resurvey the parable.

The Kingdom of Heaven

What is meant by the term "kingdom of heaven?" In this parable it refers to the kingdom of Christ in its latter day stage, the time when Christ comes to

give our positions in the kingdom at the Bema Seat. The time is a future reference to a stage in God's kingdom program when Christ appears as the Bridegroom.

Eld. J. R. Graves has well said: "This parable, unlike any other, is introduced by 'then,' clearly implying that the kingdom of heaven is not now, and never has been, but is only at some future time, to be likened unto ten virgins, and that time is clearly designated — i.e., when the Son of Man cometh, then will the events that will take place in connection with His coming be like unto those related in this parable, which is built upon the ordinary circumstances and events connected with a wedding scene not uncommon among the Jews, and still not unfrequent in Oriental countries" (**The Parables and Prophecies of Christ**, p. 246).

The Bridegroom

All interpreters agree that the Bridegroom represents the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah (Isa. 62:5) and John the Baptist (Jn. 3:29) called Christ the Bridegroom. Christ compared His presence with His church to that of a bridegroom in his bridechamber (Mt. 9:15; Lk. 5:34-35). "And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast" (Mk. 2:19). His ascension back to the Father would be like the departure of a bridegroom from the bridechamber: "But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days" (Mk. 2:20).

This title of Bridegroom given to Christ is very suggestive. The usage of this term declares to men and angels that Christ has a bride, who shall live

(See **VIRGINS** on page 6)

A Brief History of the Baptists

By Edward H. Overby

In this book the author traces Baptists from the first century up through 1972. He divides his studies as follows: Introduction; The Period of Establishment, 27-100; The Period of Apostasy, 100-313; The Period of Obscurity, 313-1638; The Period of Toleration, 1638-1960; Baptists In America.

He also gives some history and information concerning all of the major organizations and groups among Baptists. A very important work for the study of Baptists in modern times. Order from:

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VIRGINS...

(Continued from page 5)

with Him in glory forever when He returns from heaven. The solemnizing of the marriage is yet future. The church is His chosen bride-elect that must make herself ready to meet Him.

The Bride

The bride is never mentioned in this parable, yet she is implied throughout. A bridegroom must have a bride. The Jewish custom would indicate she was inside her father's house waiting for the Bridegroom's coming. The attendants of the bride went to sleep, but it is not said that the bride did. The implication is that while the virgins sleep she will be watchful and wakeful of the coming of the Bridegroom.

The bride is viewed in this

illustration of Christ as distinct from her virgin attendants. The same is seen in Psalms 45:13-14: *"The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee."* Thus not all Christians constitute the bride, not even all virgins. The virgin attendants can never be more than honored and invited guests at the wedding.

The Coming of the Bridegroom

What are we to understand by the coming of the bridegroom? Which of the two phases of the second advent is intended? In Revelation 19:11-21 is a picture of Christ's return on a white horse followed by the armies of Heaven. He comes with a sword (Rev. 19:15) to

make war (Rev. 19:11) and is clothed with *"a vesture dipped in blood"* (Rev. 19:13). Can we be so foolish as to suppose He is coming in this attire to get His bride? Most assuredly not! Old Testament law forbade an engaged man to go to war (Dt. 20:7). It also exempted him from military service for one year (Dt. 24:5). Will Christ violate the law of God?

The Scripture teaches the second coming of Christ is to be in two phases. There is the coming to get the bride and the saints in the air by a pre-tribulation rapture. Then some 7 years later Christ comes back with the bride and the armies of Heaven to end the tribulation and judge Antichrist's kingdom. At the first phase Christ comes as a Bridegroom, and at the second phase He comes as a warring King. The coming in Matthew 25:1-13 is the Bridegroom coming, the appearing in the air unseen by the dwellers on earth to take His virgin bride into His Father's house (Jn. 14:1-3).

This position is confirmed by the preceding chapter. In Matthew 24 Christ mentions the precise time of one phase of His coming as *"immediately after the tribulation of those days"* (Vs. 29-30). The day and the hour of this phase is plainly given by Christ and is His post-tribulation coming. But in verse 36 Christ refers to a sudden and secret coming which as to its time is unknown. In this sudden appearing some will be taken out while others are left behind (Vs. 39-41).

Then Christ goes on to speak of the need of His servants watching for His sudden coming (Vs. 42-44). At the sudden coming of Christ there will be two kinds of servants: a faithful or wise servant and an unfaithful servant. This corresponds to the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. In the parable of Matthew 24:42-51

the servants are waiting for their absent lord. In the parable of Matthew 25:1-13 the wise and foolish virgins are waiting for the bridegroom. The word *"then"* in Matthew 25:1 indicates the parable of the ten virgins concerns the sudden and secret coming of Christ as the preceding parable did.

The coming of Christ in Matthew 25:1-13 is His coming after He has tarried a long time (Vs. 5), a coming so long delayed that the virgin companions of the bride are all asleep (Vs. 5). It is the coming of *"the Son of man"* (Vs. 13) to consummate the joy of Christ as a man in marriage to His virgin bride—the faithful members of New Testament churches from the apostolic age until the rapture.

The Virgins

The area of controversy centers around the identity of the virgin companions. There exist no small amount of disagreement among scholars as to just who these ten maids of honor are. I will first consider some unacceptable views.

Dispensational View

Some men like William L. Pettingill, J. D. Pentecost, and John F. Walvoord maintain the virgins represent the remnant of Israel after the saints have been taken. The five wise virgins are the believing remnant, the foolish virgins unbelieving, who profess to look for the second coming of Christ. H. A. Ironside and A. C. Gaebelein, although strong dispensationalists, reject this view.

This view is unacceptable to me for the following reasons: (1) This is the coming of the Bridegroom, not Christ as a warring King. Some versions do add in verse 1 *"and the bride,"* but

(See **VIRGIN** on page 8)

Study Guide To The Book of Revelation Chapters 1-3

By M. L. Moser, Jr.

This study guide to the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation has been prepared after many years of study and from an accumulation of notes gathered during more than a quarter of a century and was preached in the Central Baptist Church of Little Rock, Arkansas. This discusses the Seven Churches of Asia from a Baptist (local church) viewpoint as contrasted with the universal church viewpoint of most studies in Revelation. Order from:

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Why Does God Allow Earthquakes?

By James Harmeling

A Saturday's night rest abruptly ended at 5:00 a.m. when the entire room shook violently and my wife cried out in alarm, "Get the baby!" Whatever I was dreaming was lost in the awakening realization that a major earthquake was hitting the California desert.

My young daughter slept on the floor next to our bed and my infant son slumbered down the hall in his room. I ran there while the house rattled and rolled in the 7.4 temblor centered in the high desert city of Landers. Both kids slept through it all, but my wife and I gathered them on our bed anyway and joined thousands of people around the Coachella Valley in fervent vocal prayer.

I went outside and was greeted by the whole neighbor-

hood on their driveways in nervous anticipation of greater shakes to come. To the north I saw a cloud of dust rising from the middle of a large hill. To the south an explosive fireball arose near some downed telephone poles. Aftershocks of various force commenced rolling the ground under our feet, bouncing cars on their shocks.

A year and a half later, the Northridge, California quake hit. The time and magnitude were similar and my family had moved to within thirty miles of it. I began to wonder about the reality of *deja vu*. As with the first quake, the jolt brought about questions from anxious people, including my own daughter. "Daddy", she inquired, "why did God make an earthquake

bigger over there and not here?" The "there" she referred to was the San Fernando Valley where her young cousin was providentially protected from harm while he slept at his grandparent's house located near the epicenter.

The question my daughter posed is a good one. Why do earthquakes happen? Seismologists can give us all the scientific and geological answers and data we could ever want, but the questions I keep getting from people are directed to God. Why does *He* cause or allow them?

There is nothing so humbling and helpless as being in an earthquake. Whatever one may believe about God is quickly put into action. There is little one can do in an earthquake except to scramble under a table or race to a doorway and hold on. We are powerless to stop the earth from shaking, or even to predict with certainty when one will hit and how intense it will be. There is no strength, wisdom or power to control such things. The recent quake in Kobe, Japan, alerted us to the fact that even the most advanced architectural designs cannot guarantee safety.

We cannot rely on buildings to protect us. We are completely dependent on Someone else. That can be a fearful thing indeed! That is why people ask questions. I went through the Bible in search of answers and discovered many interesting things. In both earthquake situations, I preached to my congregation on the subject. Reporters from local newspapers were quick to pick up on the subject and put our church service on the front page! Why? Because people want answers from God.

Six Reasons God Allows Earthquakes

Surviving an earthquake, especially a major one, is a traumatic thing. Trite answers and

insensitively dispersed verses will be received like a curse, not a blessing. I am cautious in attempting to explain all the biblical data to people at the peak of their pain and hysteria. They would not receive this. Dispensing scriptural insight must be enveloped in love and compassion. God does not leave us without information, but that information must not be abused by those who in their zeal to instruct forfeit the right to be heard. Let us look at six biblical principles which lie behind earthquakes:

1. To Get Our Attention.

In First Kings 19, the prophet Elijah emerged from a hugely successful confrontation of false prophets. God was given the glory, people's hearts were turned back toward Him and the false prophets were all killed. nevertheless, Jezebel's death threat created instant depression in Elijah's mind. He became so preoccupied with his current troubles that God had to act in dramatic fashion to get his attention. He did this by stirring up a hurricane-force wind, an earthquake, and a fire (that sounds like Southern California). Yet, it is stated that God was not in those disasters (vv. 11,12). Rather, God spoke in a "still small voice" which followed all these things (v. 12).

How did Elijah hear God's whisper in the midst of the shouts of his own personal struggles? God got his attention with a wind storm, a quake, and a fire.

Centuries later, a military captain assigned to crucify Jesus was violently yanked out of the routine of his duties by an earthquake (Mt. 27:26-31). The soldiers' gambling preoccupation vanished the moment Jesus died. A massive earth-

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The Case For Separation In These Times

By Chester E. Tulga

This is a call for a restoration of Biblical separation which has been ignored today for the sake of cooperation and so-called unity -- a kind of unity where you have the believer cooperating with the unbeliever, the fundamentalist cooperating with the liberal, when the Bible demands true believers separate not only from evil, but even from the very appearance of evil.

As Dr. Tulga says, the Bible doctrine of separation "is based upon the fundamental necessity for separating right from wrong, to preserve right; to separate truth from error, to preserve truth; to separate the true Christ, that He might not be confused with the false christs of men; to separate true churches that they might not lose their identity in the false church; to separate believers from unbelievers that the world might always have a true witness; to separate the true doctrine from false, that the world may always have a saving gospel."

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VIRGIN...

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these are contrary to the Greek versions and are rejected by most scholars as belonging to this text. (2) This view is not in harmony with Jewish customs in the time of Christ. (3) "Then" in Matthew 25:1 indicates this is the sudden and secret coming of Christ mentioned in the last part of Matthew 24. (4) All the virgins sleep because the Bridegroom tarries. The remnant of Israel will not be able to sleep under the reign of Antichrist. They will preach the gospel and flee for their lives. (5) The Jewish remnant will not meet the Bridegroom, but the King of kings. (6) The virgins go forth to meet the Bridegroom, yet Christ comes to meet the Jewish remnant. (7) It is hard to conceive of any Jewish hypocrites under the rule of Antichrist.

Landmark View

Those who are inclined to hyper-churchism among Landmark Baptists contend the five wise virgins are true Baptist churches, while the five foolish are apostate Baptist churches. Others of this school would make the five foolish Pedobaptist churches.

This view is also incorrect. It is untenable for the following reasons: (1) The entire ten are called "virgins," and the term virgin is applied to a true church (2 Cor. 11:2). A false church is never called a virgin but a whore (Rev. 17-18). (2) It is hard to believe there will be only five true churches when Christ comes. (3) The Scriptures with reference to the marriage of Christ to the church speaks of the church in the singular as "the bride" and a "chaste virgin." (4) It is hard to believe Christ will be a polygamist and marry five virgins at one time. (5) It is extremely difficult to hold that Christ will

marry the virgin companions of the bride rather than the bride!

The Most Common View

Most expositors, regardless of their view of Eschatology, are dogmatic in asserting that the five wise are saved while the five foolish are lost. They tell us oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and the five foolish are without the Spirit, being false professors. It is said that the common grace of God enables the foolish to act like the wise. Most strict covenant theologians and dispensational scholars take this view.

But this view must be rejected also for the following reasons: (1) The kingdom of Heaven is likened to all ten, not merely five. (2) Oil may not be always a type of the Holy Spirit. Is it so in James 5:14? It is to be doubted if oil is ever a type of the Spirit in the New Testament. In the New Testament oil means oil (Mk. 6:13; Lk. 7:46; 10:34; 16:6; Rev. 6:6; 18:13). (3) The margin reading in verse 8 is "Our lamps are going out." If the oil is the Holy Spirit, then the five foolish virgins are seen losing their salvation. (4) The term virgin is never employed of unsaved persons. (5) Common grace is not needed to make men hypocrites. Grace is a Divine perfection which God exercises only toward the elect.

This view is exposed by a careful examination of all the facts in Matthew 25:1-13. The foolish virgins took no extra oil in a vessel in addition to the oil in their lamps (Jer. 40:10). Note especially verses 3 and 4: "They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." Most modern versions make these verses plain. Charles Williams renders verse 4: "But the thoughtful ones not only took their lamps but also extra oil in their oil cans." Some try to es-

cape this by saying the wicks burn for a time in the lamps of the foolish. But can a wick burn until midnight?

A. T. Robertson says on the lamps mentioned in Matthew 25: "Probably torches with a wooden staff and a dish on top in which was placed a piece of rope or cloth dipped in oil or pitch. But sometimes *lampas* has the meaning of oil lamp (*luchnos*) as in Acts 20:8. That may be the meaning here" (**Word Pictures In the New Testament**, pg. 196). The problem of the foolish virgins was the dish on top of their torches was running out of oil. They had no extra oil to put into the dish. More oil would keep a burning torch from going out, but it will not light a torch. The foolish said: "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out" (Vs. 8 Williams' Translation).

These lamps represent the written Word of God (Psm. 119:105; Prov. 6:23; 2Pet. 1:19). How can we conceive of the lamps or oil being the Holy Spirit? Can the Spirit be bought with money as the virgins went to buy oil? The answer is found in Acts 8:19-20. How can we suppose the oil stood for grace in regeneration? Can salvation be bought with man's money at some Arminian store? The answer is found in Isaiah 55:1.

The Best View

I believe all of the ten virgins were saved. The term virgin signifies person morally chaste and pure in the Bible (Mt. 1:23; Lk. 1:27; Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 7:25, 28, 34, 36-37). It is applied to the male sex to show purity (Rev. 14:4). Never is it applied to the unregenerate or enemies of Christ. The kingdom of Heaven is likened unto all ten, not merely the five wise virgins. The foolish are as much virgin as the wise. It is not said they professed to be virgins, but they are all called

such by Christ Himself.

All ten are called virgins by Christ. They all went forth to meet the Bridegroom with lighted torches. They all desire His speedy coming—something no lost person desires. They all had oil in their torches, but only the wise had extra oil in a cruse. They all slumbered and slept—even the wise. They all awoke when the Bridegroom came. Their lamps were all burning, although the lamps of the foolish were "going out."

These virgins are the attendants of the bride. They represent a group of Christians at the coming of Christ distinct from the virgin bride. They are to be guests at the wedding of Christ to the church. Psalms 45:14 mentions "the virgins her companions." In the parable of the marriage of the King's Son it is said that "the wedding was furnished with guests" (Mt. 22:10). In Revelation 19:9 it is written: "Blessed (Greek means 'happy to be envied') are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." The reference in Revelation 19:9 is to the guests.

It is silly to assume the bride is invited to her own wedding feast! Yet this is the position most universal, invisible church advocates are forced to take to save doctrinal dogma. The parable of the ten virgins as well as Revelation 19:9 proves that not all saved people are in the mystical (OOP's! I like to have said "mythical") church. There is to be a bride and her virgin companions at the second coming of Christ.

Some object to this view by saying God never calls His people foolish, but on this point they are mistaken (Lk. 24:25; 1 Cor. 15:36; Gal. 3:1). Still others declare the foolish were unknown by Christ. But observe that Christ said: "I know you not," meaning

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present blessing and enjoyment Christ knew them not as a guest at His wedding. He did not say to them what He will do at the judgment: "*I never knew you*" (Mt. 7:23). The foolish virgins were improvident friends rather than enemies of Christ.

The Central Truth

The primary meaning of the parable is given by Christ in verse 13: "*Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*" All parts of this parable are to be interpreted in view of this admonition. The parable is used by Christ to teach that all Christians are to look for the Bridegroom (Lk. 12:36-37; Heb. 9:29). We live in the time when the Bridegroom tarries, but "*yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry*" (Heb. 10:37).

The rapture coming of Christ will surprise many of those who are saved, for even the wise virgins "*slumbered*" and "*slept.*" The word "*slumbered*" means to "nod or become drowsy." The word "*slept*" means "lying down to sleep." Here is seen two stages of spiritual declension. There is a drowsiness and lethargy which is followed by inactivity. The ten virgins have sunk into a state of insensibility. None of them were watching for the Bridegroom as they should have been. To be always ready for His appearing is not to be in an idle stare into the eastern sky, but to be actively doing those things that are commanded. They are always ready who are always doing His will (Mt. 24:46).

The parable implies that there will be great ignorance about the coming of Christ be-

fore He comes to rapture the saints to glory. The Scriptures will be perverted in such a manner to cause Christians to be so poorly informed about His return that they will be like sleeping virgins. The coming of Christ will surprise these sleepers who claim to watch for Him. The Savior is to come at the midnight hour — when they least expect Him. This is happening in our own generation! Men like George Ladd are teaching throughout Christendom: "Nowhere are we told to watch for the coming of Christ" (**The Blessed Hope**, pg. 115). Such teaching has so confused many that they are looking for Antichrist instead of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe this trend will continue until nearly all Christendom will be ignorant of the rapture coming of Christ. The only exception will be that the true virgin bride will be expecting the Bridegroom. It is the bride inside her Father's house who cries out to the sleeping virgins: "*Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him*" (Mt. 25:6). Let all true New Testament Baptist churches cry far and wide: "Behold, the Bridegroom comes." Let us do it that men not be ashamed before Christ at His coming (1 Jn. 2:28). Let this message be preached to counteract servants of Christ who preach: "*My lord delayeth his coming*" (Mt. 24:48) Woe to those who disobey the command of Christ in Matthew 25:13. Verily "*the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of*" (Mt. 24:50).

The waiting for the Bridegroom is a testing time for all. It is a time of opportunity for the foolish virgins who will not be permitted to be guests at the marriage of the Lamb. It is the time when they should go and buy the oil they need. Our Lord has tarried now for more than

1900 years; what a long opportunity for lamp-trimming! When the wise sleep it is no wonder the foolish become unconscious of their danger. Every day and every hour we must be ready for the Bridegroom. "Therefore be ye also read: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mt. 24:44).•

QUAKE...

(Continued from page 7)

quake hit, creating terror and an awakened conscience of the reality of God (v. 51). The person and work of Jesus Christ took center stage. What caused that change? God got their attention with an earthquake.

Paul's imprisonment in Philippi abruptly ended with an earthquake (Acts 16:16-23). The warden, previously hostile to the gospel, now eagerly embraced it. Why? God used a scary natural disaster.

God attempts to do the same thing with us these days. If He has our attention, we can hear His voice, see clearly who Jesus Christ is and how to respond to Him. I have shared this thought with unbelieving neighbors and other spiritually lethargic people who were greatly shaken by the earthquakes. No matter where you go, the subject of the earthquake automatically arises. I have entered into spiritual conversations with those who prior to the quake would never have been attentive to such a topic.

2. To Promote a Fear of God.

Another reason for earthquakes is to promote a healthy fear of God. A healthy fear of God is simply taking God seriously. As parents desire to promote in their children a respect of authority, so also God desires to promote a healthy fear in us of Him.

This is not a fear of abuse.

That kind of fear is unhealthy. Rather, it is a recognition that there are standards and rules to follow if there is to be peace and harmony in society. Violating those rules brings unpleasant consequences. Fear of those consequences halts errant action.

The first earthquake mentioned in the Bible was for this effect. It worked! Moses brought all the Israelites out of Egypt to the foot of Mt. Sinai to meet their God and receive His commandments (Ex. 19:16-17). As the Israelites approached the holy mountain, a dark cloud covered it, a trumpet sounded louder and louder, and the earth continued to quake (v. 18). God's whole point of scaring the people was to prevent them from sinning (v. 20). They kept it in mind...at least for a while. Earthquakes serve as God's reminders to take Him and His requirements for us to be holy seriously.

During the Great Tribulation period, there will be numerous earthquakes of major proportions. One such earthquake will occur in Jerusalem. One-tenth of the city will be destroyed and 7,000 people will die (Rev. 11:13). In response, the survivors "*gave glory to the God of heaven.*" That is the whole point. When earthquakes come, God wants people to realize that their preoccupation with the things of this world is foolish. They need to turn their attention to Him, surrender their lives to Jesus Christ for salvation, and take God seriously in how they live in this life. Earthquakes are God's alarm clock.

3. To Show His Power

God also uses earthquakes to reveal His power. Job describes earthquakes and other natural calamities to vividly communicate the fact that God

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is mighty (Job 9:5). In His presence, one cannot argue with or accuse Him of wrongdoing. One could only “*make supplication to my judge*” for mercy (v. 15). King David also described how God’s “mighty arm” saved His people (Psm. 77:15). He was so powerful that the waters “were troubled” (v. 16), the skies “sent out a sound” (v. 17), and the earth “trembled and shook” (v. 18) at the sight of Him. An earthquake is seen as the earth shaking in fear and awe at the sight of God! Picture that!

If an earthquake makes you feel small and weak, it is also God’s tool to enlarge our idea of Himself. That can be both humbling and encouraging at the same time. God is bigger than we are, but He is also bigger than our problems.

Earthquakes powerfully portray in the physical realm the power of Christ’s death and resurrection in the spiritual realm. Not only did an earthquake rattle the land during Jesus’ death (Mt. 27:51-54), but one also served as an early-morning announcement of His resurrection (Mt. 28:1,2). That is why Paul was not ashamed of talking about the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was the “*power*” of God to those who believed (Rom. 1:16). It did too Satan’s kingdom in the spiritual realm what major earthquakes have done to cities throughout time in the physical realm. Trying to fight against God is like trying to physically stop an earthquake while it is shaking.

4. To Bring Judgment

This is by far the most common purpose of earthquakes mentioned in the Bible. They are God’s judgment on nations which rebel against Him and His righteousness (2 Sam.

22:8; Psm. 18:7; 60:2). Obedience to God is indeed a matter of national security. Specific nations such as Babylon (Isa. 13:13) and Philistia (1 Sam. 14:15) experienced major earthquakes as judgment for the evil they practiced and the attacks they made on Israel. Israel itself was not above His judgment of earthquakes, when as a nation they disobeyed and would not heed His continual warnings (Isa. 29:6; Jer. 4:24; Amos 1:1,2).

Revelation tells us of four major earthquakes yet to come upon the earth due to God’s judgment (Rev. 6:12; 8:5; 11:13; 16:18). The last one is “the big one.” We have all heard about it coming. It will. Nothing will have ever occurred like this last one. It will literally level major cities and create an incredible amount of casualties.

These are frightful thoughts. God does not enjoy doing this (Lam. 3:31-33), but He is a just God who must be obeyed. No one would ever take Him seriously if He did not follow through with His warnings of such disaster as a result of continued rebellion against Him. Even innocent people get killed in these judgments. This is not a lack of justice on God’s part. It simply reveals the fact that man’s sin do not merely affect himself. It also affects others.

Were the recent California and Kobe quakes God’s judgment? Certainly not. When God’s judgment hits the world nothing will be left standing. What we have seen are but small warnings. We do well to heed them, repent from our sins as a nation, and seek the face of God.

5. To Warn of Christ’s Second Coming

Earthquakes not only bring the judgment of God, but they also serve to warn the world of future judgment when Christ returns. Zechariah prophesied

that the Second Coming of Christ will be marked by an earthquake similar to that experienced during the days of King Uzziah (Zech. 14:5).

Jesus also predicted an increase in worldwide earthquakes prior to His Second Coming (Mt. 24:7; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 21:11). Luke specifically describes these as “*great*” earthquakes. The word used in the original Greek language is *mégas*. “Mega” earthquakes are described in Revelation 6:12, 11:13, and 16:18 as ones that tear apart cities and create heavy casualties. An increase of major earthquakes will occur throughout the world as Christ’s return draws near.

Recent studies by the U.S. Geological Society have recorded a dramatic increase in earthquakes in the world in each decade over the last 100 years. In the 1890’s there was only one great quake. The same total occurred in the ten year span of 1900-1910. It increased to three during the years 1910-1920. By the 1960s, there were 13. The 1970s had an amazing 56. The 1980s had 74. (Statistics from a Tim LaHaye tape, “Twelve Reasons Why Christ Could Come In Our Lifetime.”)

These are worldwide devastating earthquakes and they keep increasing. Jesus told us this would happen right before He returned. Why does He inform us of this? It is so that we will take Him seriously and decide to trust in Him and obey His commands. Since we do not know exactly when Christ will return, Jesus aid we “*must be ready*” (Mt. 24:44). Earthquakes jar us to the realization that Christ is coming soon and those not ready to meet Him will regret their neglect.

6. To Show His Love to Believers

Believe it or not there is a positive reason for earthquakes.

I do not enjoy dwelling on the trauma of earthquakes any more than you do. I do, however, enjoy the outcome of a life which was radically changed by Christ as a result of an earthquake. David reassures those who fear and obey God that while the earth shakes God is present to “*help*” (Psm. 46:5). Earthquakes are God’s wrath to some and God’s rescue to others. He rescues some out of crises to reveal His love for them. This can happen to someone whether or not they follow Him.

What Can We Do When An Earthquake Hits?

It helps to know some reasons God brings about earthquakes, but it can leave one empty if there are not specific actions to take. Let us mention several ways to respond in the midst of an earthquake situation.

Respond to the Spirit of God

In case of emergency, one dials 911. In case of earthquake panic, one consults Psalm 46. Within these verses lie reassurance and comfort. David declares that “*though the earth be removed*” (v. 2) and “*the mountains shake*” (v. 3), he “*will not fear*” (v. 2). Why? Because God is a “*refuge and strength*” and a “*very present help in trouble*” (v. 1), a “*help*” (v. 5), and a “*refuge*” (vs. 7,11). In our stillness, we will know that He is God (v. 10). We can know a stillness or tranquillity in the midst of rumbling ground beneath us. God is with us.

When my wife got a bit jittery after a continued series of aftershocks and constant media predictions of a major quake occurring within a week, she focused in on this verse and similar ones (Isa. 26:3; Psm.

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32:7). She was able to settle her mind and get some needed rest. The presence of God is a reality in which to find comfort.

Renew Your Trust In The Power of God

An additional thought of interest in Psalm 46 is God's invitation to examine the wreckage caused by the earthquake (vv. 8,9). He wanted David to note His power to save and protect him. Earthquakes may alarm us, but they can also illuminate us to the might of God. If He can create major quakes by merely revealing His glory in a small degree (Psm . 68:8; 77:16-18), imagine how able He is to handle our daily concerns! Earthquakes can reaffirm our trust in a powerful God for whom nothing is too difficult (Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:17).

Restore Hope In Others

When death traumatized the church in Thessalonica, Paul reassured people of a future reunion with fellow believers at the return of Christ (1 Thess. 5:13-17). He concluded by telling them to "*comfort one another with these words*" (v. 18). That is exactly what we need to do in earthquakes. We need to assist each other through physical relief and reconstruction as well as with personal words of encouragement and hope (such as that found in Psalm 46). When Paul went through a crisis and found consolation from the Lord he passed it on to others in their times of trauma (2 Cor. 1:3-7). Christ's church can shine the love and compassion of Christ afresh in a point of critical need. Our hope is contagious. Let us use it to reaffirm others during post earthquake stress. — Pulpit Helps•

Matthew Papyrus Threatens Liberal Theories

Three small scraps of the Gospel of Matthew written on papyrus may destroy liberal views on the New Testament, views which have been held for more than a hundred years. German papyrologist Carsten Thiede dates these three small fragments at 75-100 A.D., about 100 years earlier than liberal scholars say that the Book of Matthew was written. Thiede has concluded that the Gospel of Matthew must be an eyewitness account of the life of Christ. If so, that would destroy the popular, but unsubstantiated, Q documentary hypothesis.

Thiede is currently a scholar at the Institute for Basic Epistemological Research in Germany. His article on these three small scraps and their significance will appear in the German "Journal for Papyrology and Epigraphy."

The scraps are from a page of what was once a papyrus copy of the Gospel of Matthew, and they are currently in the Magdalen College's library at Oxford University. They were given to the library in 1909 by an alumnus of the college who acquired them in Upper Egypt near Luxor.

These scraps had earlier been studied and dated at ca. 200 A.D., but Thiede argues that the style and script used to write these papyrus fragments early dates them in the last quarter of the First Century A.D. Thiede told *The Times* of London, "Even a hesitant approach to the questions of dating would... seem to justify a date in the first century about a hundred years earlier than was previously thought." Thiede went on to say that the dating of these three small fragments to 75-100 A.D. "would mean that the original Gospel would be earlier still, since these are copies."

Until Thiede's discovery, the oldest copy of any New Testament book was thought to be a fragment of John 18 which has been dated in the first quarter of the second century A.D., [100-125 A.D.].

Thiede's fragments are part of Matthew 26, the story of Christ's resurrection.

Thiede has made another discovery in these fragments which if correct will destroy another old liberal theory. Many liberal scholars have argued that the belief in the deity of Christ was not developed by Christians until long after the death of Christ; the late second century, or even the early fourth century.

Thiede argues that these papyrus fragments from Matthew 26 prove that first-century Christians believed not only in the resurrection of Christ but also in His deity. Thiede says the name of Christ is abbreviated in these fragments just like Jews used to abbreviate the name of God in the Old Testament.

Thiede's dating of these three papyrus fragment has already come under fire by liberal scholars. Peter J. Parsons, professor of Religion and Greek at Oxford University, called Thiede's dating "sloppy" and said that his conclusions were based on "wrong assumptions." Thiede, however, maintains that his dating is correct, and Thiede is an expert in Greek paleography.

If Thiede's dating proves true, it will sweep away as chaff over 100 years of liberal scholarship on the New Testament. One article in <The London Times calls Thiede's discovery the most important discovery dealing with the Bible since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947.

Incidentally, all early Christian writers state that the Gospel of Matthew was the first Gospel written, and that it was originally written in Hebrew by Matthew

for Jewish believers. For those of our readers who are scholars of New Testament Greek, the Nestle-Aland text lists these three fragments as (P)64.

[This story based on articles from *The London Times*, Reuters, and the Associated Press.]•

Meditate On This

"Baptists have to be Baptists to the limit, or they are not Baptists at all. Protestants can believe anything, and change all they please, except submit to the Pope of Rome, and still be Protestants. But such is not true of Baptists — just cannot be true of them! Such a thing would be as impossible as for a thing to be and not to be at the same time.

Some may think this to be an exaggeration at first glance, but study them. Is one a Baptist who substitutes any baptism for immersion of a believer by a scriptural authority? or when he ceases to believe in regenerated church members? or when he does not hold to the absolute independence and autonomy of each body of Christ, which we call a church? Let us beware of compromise or surrender, for when there is such on fundamental doctrines, a member of a Baptist church is no longer entitled to call himself a Baptist. •

Is This Your Last Issue of The Baptist Challenge?

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

The Editor

Apologies To Our Readers.

We usually like to reply to each of the letters we receive here at Challenge Press, but due to the many, letters we have received during the past few months it has been impossible. I hope that each of you as a reader of **The Baptist Challenge** will understand. Many of you have sent special offerings to help us in the publishing of **TBC** for which we are grateful, but we simply do not have the time to thank each one of you personally. We especially thank the individuals and churches that contribute monthly to the support of **TBC**. Were it not for our regular monthly supporters, we would be unable to continue publishing, but because of the increase of our supporters, we feel that we are able to enlarge the magazine to 24 pages, and as long as we have the funds to do so, we will continue to put out a 24-page magazine. Thanks again to all of you for your support and prayers.

* * *

38 Pregnancies Aboard the Ike. With the carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower returning to Norfolk, there are signs of rough sailing during its historic six-month cruise: Crew members are being removed on the grounds of pregnancy and romance. The Eisenhower last year became the Navy's first carrier with women as permanent crew members; 415 now serve among the 4,967 people aboard. According to the *Virginian-Pilot* a naval official said 38 crew members on

the Ike have reported they were pregnant since the crew first went aboard in Norfolk last April.

* * *

Islam On The March. The deadly Christmas Eve 1994 hijacking of a French jetliner and the exciting French commando raid that followed may have slipped from the headlines, but the impact has not been lost on Southern Baptist workers in the homeland of the terrorists who planned to blow up the wide-body airplane over Paris. They view the episode as part of the bloody struggle by Islamic fundamentalists to take control of Algeria and rid that part of the world of Christian influence. The Armed Islamic Group in Algeria claimed responsibility last year for murdering four Roman Catholic priests and has promised to continue the "extermination of Christian crusaders." Muslim fundamentalists have attempted to take over the country by kidnapping opponents and declaring, "Those who oppose us with the pen will die by the sword." Scholars like Harvard University's Samuel Huntington aren't surprised; they believe the next great world struggle will occur between Islam and the West. Atrocities in places like North Africa, the Mideast, Bosnia, and most recently Chechnya, seem to bear out the prediction, he said. — *The Baptist Record*.

* * *

Gores Host Homosexual Activists. Vice President Al Gore and his wife Tipper held a

reception at the vice presidential home March 3 for 150 homosexual activists. Most were officers or members of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, the country's largest homosexual political organization. In addition, openly homosexual members of the Clinton administration attended, according to an Associated Press (AP) report. "We very deeply share your vision of a society that is fair and free of discrimination for gay and lesbian people, and we want you to know that," Tipper Gore told reception attendees, according to AP. Four days after the Gores' reception, House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., expressed opposition to school programs which present homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle, and to legislation which would grant homosexuals the right to sue based on employment discrimination.

* * *

Beer Commercials Dominate Television. More alcohol commercials appear in televised sports events than advertisements for any other beverage, according to Pennsylvanians Aware (fall 1994 issue. Alcohol accounted for 77% of all beverage commercials.

* * *

"Allah" The Triune God? "Don't say that the term 'Allah' refers to a false or pagan God. Twelve million Arab Christians use 'Allah' to refer to the Triune God, and 'Allah' is also the translation for God in the Arabic New

Testament" Rev. Randall S. Duncan, *Lutheran Witness*, March, 1995. Dr. O. Marc Tanger noted in the November 2, 1992 *Christian News*: "Countless copies of Christian publications exist in Arabic in the way of Bibles, hymnals, devotional material, etc. All of them use the word 'Allah' for the Triune God." — *Christian News*

* * *

Creation Believed Over Evolution. Most Alabamians believe the Bible's explanation for how humans came into existence and think it should be taught in the state's public schools, according to a new study. Most Alabamians shun the theory of evolution in favor of the notion that God created man in a single instant, according to a Mobile Register-University of South Alabama Poll conducted recently. The poll found that 61% of Alabama residents believe "God created humans in the present form at one time in the last 10,000 years or so."

* * *

AT&T Says Suing AFA "an option." AT&T, reeling from American Family Association's exposure of their pro-homosexual agenda, told the Boston Sunday Globe that suing AFA is an option they have to stop the effort. "Burke Stinson, an AT&T spokesman in New Jersey, said the (AFA) ad mischaracterizes AT&T's efforts" regarding their stand on homosexuality, the paper stated. "[Stinson] said the company was not an offi-

cial sponsor of the Gay Games but did have a sales booth at the event. AT&T includes information about gays as part of its inhouse programs on workplace diversity and sexual harassment. Responding to the threat of a suit, AFA president Donald E. Wildmon said that if what AFA has reported concerning AT&T isn't true, they should sue. "We stand by the information we have reported concerning AT&T's promotion of homosexuality. The problem is that AT&T doesn't want the public to know how involved AT&T is in promoting the homosexual agenda." AT&T participated in OUT LOUD, the first annual Lesbian and Gay Cultural and Business Expo, a homosexual "business and cultural expo" in New York which featured "a haunted house where visitors journey through the twisted mind of the radical right," according to the New York Daily News. AT&T has also established a policy of letting homosexual employees place a pink triangle in their work areas. The sticker identifies a homosexual-friendly work area, giving the message that the company approves of this lifestyle and employees who disagree are out of step with company policy. AT&T has promoted a Gay and Lesbian Awareness Week, held "homophobia" workshops to promote the acceptance of homosexuality to their managers and observed a "Gay Pride Month." The company has also sponsored the homosexual musical *Falsettos*; used radical homosexual Brian McNaught's video "On Being Gay" to

indoctrinate AT&T employees; and promoted the use of "comprehensive" sex education programs which advocate homosexuality. AT&T has been among the top sponsors of pro-homosexual programs on television. The National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association in 1993 named AT&T as "progressive" because of their support for homosexual causes. LEAGUE (Lesbian and Gay United Employees of AT&T) is the homosexual organization set up by AT&T inside their company to help support their homosexual employees. [Editor's Comments: For the above reasons, **The Baptist Challenge** has changed its phones to LifeLine, and we urge our readers to do so likewise. Lifeline sends **The Baptist Challenge** 10% of the long distance phone bills of all who subscribe to Lifeline for their long distance service and select **The Baptist Challenge** as their non-profit organization to receive the 10%. Please note our ad on page 3 for more information about this change. If you change it will be of tremendous help to publishing **The Baptist Challenge**.]

* * *

Hollywood Plans New Jesus Film. Film director Paul Verhoeven hopes to bring the "real" Jesus to the big screen. Verhoeven says he wants his future film project to tell the "untold story of Christ's flawed humanity." "He's not a white knight," he said. "Giving people confusion is a good thing. It's time to wake them up. — AFA Journal.

MCI Offers Discount to Homosexual-owned Businesses.

MCI's "affinity" program with the National Gay and Lesbian Business Alliance (NGLBA) offers discounts to homosexual business owners nationwide. As part of the program NGLBA contributes a portion of enrolled customer's MCI usage to charitable causes which impact homosexuals. — AFA Journal. [Editor's comments: All subscribers to MCI should take note of this. We ask that you consider switching to LifeLine since LifeLine will contribute 10% of your long distance bill to **The Baptist Challenge** if you request it.]

* * *

Allstate Insurance Company Recognizes Homosexual Marriages.

Allstate Insurance Company has set aside its definition of family to write a joint homeowners excess liability policy for a homosexual male couple in New York. The men had been living together for over 10 years and registered in New York City as domestic partners in 1993. They had applied for the excess coverage in March 1994 when they were renewing a renter's insurance policy on a Greenwich Village apartment and other property they shared. "We did not discriminate against alternate lifestyles, and haven't for a couple of years," said an Allstate spokesman. "If someone came to us and said they were a couple, whether married or not, we'd insure them." Allstate is owned by Sears, Roebuck and Company, Chrm. Ed

ward A. Brennan, Sears Tower, Chicago, IL 60684, (708) 268-2500. — AFA Journal.

* * *

Nestle, Says No! Nestle, USA refused to advertise on the recent NBC movie **Serving in Silence**. The made-for-television propaganda piece follows Col. Margarethe Cammermeyer's legal battle with the Army when she reveals that she is a lesbian — after leaving four sons with her ex-husband. Laurie MacDonald, Nestle's Vice President of Corporate Affairs, said her company adheres to a policy of not advertising on programs "deemed by a majority of the public to be controversial or not widely accepted." Write Nestle and tell them you appreciate their stand: Chrm. Tim Crull, Nestle USA, Inc., 800 N Brand Blvd., Glendale, CA 91203, (818) 549-6000; FAX (818) 549-6952; 1 (800) 637-8537.

* * *

Politically Correct Bible Published.

The New Inclusive Translation of the Bible, published by Oxford University Press is being labeled the "politically correct" Bible. In it, Jesus is no longer the "Son of Man" but the "Human One." Jesus' divine "Father" has been transformed into the divinely hermaphroditic "Father-Mother." Children are no longer told to "obey," but rather "heed"

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Rush A Liberal?

In the wake of the successful passage into law of "one world government" legislation (GATT and NAFTA) in the U.S., many fans of the popular, conservative talk-show host, Rush Limbaugh, are beginning to wonder just how conservative Rush really is. Not only was Limbaugh surprisingly and totally supportive of both GATT and NAFTA, but his listeners have also noticed a marked "move to the center" away from the "right" of popular conservatism on the part of Rush Limbaugh. For example, where Rush was once outspokenly opposed to homosexuality in general, he has now modified his opposition to include only those politically radical homosexual groups such as Act-Up. Where Rush was once intent upon exposing the feminist agenda across-the-board, he is now merely concerned with blasting arch-liberal, "Femi-Nazi" groups like NOW (National Organization of Women). Some of his listeners even sense that Rush is steadily drifting away from his former anti-abortion fervor.

In the February '95 issue of *Sobran's*, conservative columnist, Joe Sobran, credited Limbaugh for helping to nearly demolish the Democratic Party (the Republic party's political opposition), but then called Rush a liberal: "The only thing really wrong with Rush is that he himself is a liberal. A recovering liberal; a merely residual liberal; even, to give him full credit, a liberal-hating liberal; but still, like so many American conservatives, he remains — a liberal."

According to the January issue of the *Rothbard-Rockwell Report*, Limbaugh's radio and TV programs recently refused anti-GATT advertising from both Phyllis Schlafly and Pat Buchanan for various vague

reasons. That refusal caused even more conservatives to wonder if, despite all his rhetoric, Rush Limbaugh is actually a stooge for the Republican Party and the "One Worlders."

On February 28 of this year, Rush shocked many of his radio listeners when he drew a strange association. During the second-hour monologue of his daily radio program, Rush was lamenting the fact that Americans are forced to live in a liberal, "don't" society. He said that liberals are always telling Americans to stop doing things. Don't eat meat, he said, don't smoke, don't go watch dirty movies, don't do this, don't do that. That Rush included a prohibition against watching pornographic movies in his list of illicit "don'ts" that are unfairly being foisted on Americans by the powers of liberalism struck a sour note for many conservative listeners to Limbaugh's show.

Christian groups have been arguing for years now that Limbaugh's boisterous preoccupation with crude "bits," off-color jokes and rock music renders his program unsuitable for children and adults alike. His critics have called him a "neutralizer" who is attempting to separate Christian morality from conservative politics. And, while he is doing valuable work in dismantling the Democratic Party and the Clinton Administration, he is actually doing damage in the long run by attempting to establish a new and faulty moral base from which to popularize his new brand of what we might label "post-Christian era" conservatism.

Comment: In a situation as delicate as this one (after all, Limbaugh deserves credit for the work he has done in exposing liberalism's more glaring errors), there is one simple test that may help to get to the truth behind the Rush Limbaugh

phenomenon even despite all the rhetoric. We know that the remedy to all the ills that affect society today can only come about through the re-establishment of the Reign of Christ the King in our society. Well, ask yourselves how many times you've heard Rush Limbaugh speak of Christianity as if he believed it to be the only path to follow in the fight against liberalism? In fact, ask yourself if you have ever heard Rush speak of Jesus Christ at all? Is Rush even Christian? He has been divorced at least two times (recently remarried) and he makes precious little of his Christianity if he is, in fact, Christian. If he is truly Christian, then why is it that Christ our Savior or even Christianity's role in the battle against the evils of liberalism are never so much as mentioned by Rush Limbaugh? And if he is not really Christian, then why do so many Christians look to Rush Limbaugh as though he were the great, white hope in re-establishing Christian principles in modern society?

My opinion? Any "conservative" who rises to worldly stardom, fame, and wealth so rapidly and so effortlessly a) did not rise from the dusts of obscurity on his own, b) is to be strongly suspected in his conservatism. His recent, highly-publicized interview in the pornographic "men's magazine," *Playboy*, should leave little doubt in anyone's mind that Limbaugh's "conservatism" is at least subject to question if not outright suspicion.

In this day and age, those persons who truly fight on the side of Christ, and actually love and defend His Truth, do not even make the *footnotes* in *Time* magazine, or *The New York Times* let alone the headlines of such liberal media organs. Rush Limbaugh is "given ink" everywhere in the liberal

press today, and, added to that, has his own successful, nationally-syndicated radio and TV shows.

Don't let the mainstream media's Limbaugh-bashing fool you — controversy is the only thing that really sells these days. Limbaugh needs that kind of publicity to build his empire!

Taken in the least conspiratorial light, Rush is a paid showman. He is a comic. He is somewhat informative on current political events. But, most of all, Rush Limbaugh is an entertainer. Seen in this light — as an entertainer — and relative to the grand scheme of things, Rush is a light weight. Seen, however, as a true conservative voice, with the right philosophy and true moral caliber to cause him to be regarded as a man of sound character, worthy to be followed, adulated, and admired — Rush Limbaugh could indeed become the most powerful "neutralizer" of real conservatism since Barry Goldwater. — Remnant, Quoted in *Christian News*.•

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their parents, while wives are to "commit" to their husbands rather than "submit." — The Pastor's Weekly Briefing.

* * *

Record Number of Martyrs. Steve Snyder, U.S. President of Christian Solidarity International (CSI) has reported that the number of Christians martyred each year is "conservatively" at 150,000. According to CSI, more Christians have been murdered for their faith in the 20th century than in all other centuries combined. [Editor's Comments: History records that millions of our Baptist fore-

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means to "keep the word." It means to submit yourself to it; to obey it. Not simply to keep it in the sense that you hoard it in a corner, or that you store it where it can be protected from those who might ruin or distort it, but to keep the word means that you fully obey the word, and this is something that you and I need to do. The third thing He said in verse 8 is that they did not deny His name.

I want to comment just here about five promises that the Lord makes to this church. Beginning in verse 10 we read through verse 12 these words. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Be-

hold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. 3:10-12).

The first promise that the Lord made to the church was in verse 9 when He said that the enemies of that church are going to be humiliated. He says, "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." (Rev. 3:9).

Secondly, in verse 10 He promises this church a deliverance from the period of tribulation that is to come. In verse 10 He says, "Because thou hast

kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Now this deliverance is a deliverance from the great Tribulation Period that is to come upon this earth immediately after the rapture when Jesus Christ returns to this earth to catch up from this earth all of His saints. This Tribulation Period is described for us in chapters 6 through 19. These are the things that He tells us in verse 19 of chapter one, "the things which shall be hereafter."

This does not refer simply to ordinary persecution, because all churches have had to go through persecution at one time or another. This is a specific persecution. He says "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation." Not just an hour, but this is the hour, showing that He is referring to a specific period of time. Notice also that this hour of temptation is talking about the judgment that is to come, and that it is to come upon all the world. It is to come upon all the inhabitants of the earth, and its purpose is "to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Now notice that little word "from." He says "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation." In other words, the promise is not to be preserved in the temptation, or even through the temptation, but it is to be preserved from the temptation. In other words, this New Testament church is given a promise that they will not have to enter the Tribulation Period, because the rapture is going to take place before the Tribulation Period begins upon this earth.

Then He tells us in verse 11 that the coming of the Lord is imminent. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which

thou hast, that no man take thy crown." We see that the doctrine of the imminent return of the Lord is a doctrine taught right here in the New Testament and has continued even to our very day. The Lord intended it to be that way. The Lord intended that every generation should live in expectancy; that they are to live as though Jesus Christ could come at any moment.

Now its easy for you and me in the 20th century to look back and say "Well, how could these men back in those days, 100 or 500 years ago, maybe a thousand years ago, how could those people have lived and expect Jesus Christ to come at any moment? We have a Bible that talks about signs and things that are to take place in the last days, and they didn't see all of those things, how could they have expected it?" The Lord has told every generation that they are to believe in the imminent return of the Lord, and they did not have as much knowledge as we have; they did not have as much information as we have (I'm talking about in the secular world). They knew that Jesus said they were to be ready at any moment, for He said "in the hour that ye think not, the Son of Man cometh," and they believed that He could come at any moment.

Well, you and I live along time after that. We now are able to understand and interpret some of the prophecies of scripture that they simply did not know the answer to. They could not understand what the Lord meant by them, but now we know. We have seen events take place in our day and time that they could not even know would take place, or if so, they didn't know when they would take place. Like the beginning of the nation Israel. That's already

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occurred. That Jerusalem is now controlled by the Jews has already occurred. One of the last great events that has taken place that is a mark of the Second Coming of the Lord and His nearness, is the forming of the Common Market in the nations of Europe. Until recently, there were only nine members of that Common Market. Greece has now made application, and all the nine are unanimous in the fact that they are willing to accept Greece as a part of this Common Market. That will make up 10 nations.

When you read in the Books of Daniel and Revelation that in the last days there is to be this 10-nation kingdom and that the Antichrist is to arise out of this 10-nation kingdom, this is a prophecy that has been fulfilled within our generation. It is not complete yet, but it is in the process of being fulfilled right now. So there's no way that you and I can avoid realizing that the return of the Lord Jesus Christ... every week that rolls by is getting closer and closer and closer.

Let us turn to First

Thessalonians chapter 4 and we're going to read a couple of verses that we read to you last week, but notice how the Lord intends for us to live in expectancy as though the Lord could even come this very hour.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Here we see that the Lord

intended for us to live as though Jesus could come at any moment. If that was true then, just think of how much more it is true today, for we are that much closer to the return of the Lord.

Now then there's another promise made here in verse 12. *"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name"* (Rev. 3:12). This promise is going to be honored. The first thing we see is a pillar mentioned here, and a pillar is an emblem of strength contrasted with weakness. Our weakness is going to be replaced by strength. In all of this that He speaks of right here, it involves stability, security, fellowship and intimacy with the Lord Himself. The Lord intends to make us such.

Now these saints at Philadelphia, He says, are going to have God's name. What He says of them is true of all those who are saved, for He promises to write on the saints His own name, and by doing such, He shows identification. Also, He's going to write the name of His city and His new name. This is to identify us as a possession of the Lord. Now this expression "new Jerusalem" refers to this future eternal city we find described in chapters 21 and 22 of the Book of Revelation.

So we find three names here, and this triple-name, or these three names, must have been very precious to that church that was plagued by their enemy both on the inside and on the outside. That they knew God had labeled them with their name that they belonged to Him, therefore they knew He would protect them and preserve them. When the time came, they were going

to belong to Him to live in that new Jerusalem, that new city.

Now then, He gives them some exhortations or some instructions and some admonitions, and some counsel or advice. They're directed here to the Lord's Second Coming, for He says to them in verse 11 *"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."*

The first thing He says to them is that their hope is not in this world, but their hope is to be in the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He says, *"Behold, I come quickly."*

The second thing that He exhorts them to do is to *"hold that fast which thou hast."* Rewards are going to be connected with the "holding fast of that which thou hast." Service to the Lord is going to be rewarded. Turn with me to the Book of First Corinthians chapter three. God promises that if we live faithful to Him; if we submit ourselves to His Word; if we obey His Word, then He is going to reward us. Let us read beginning with verse 10, *"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire: and the firs shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's*

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Alien Baptism and the Baptists

By W. M. Nevins

This book not only traces the history of the Anabaptists from 200 A.D. down to the present, but also shows the fallacy of the universal, invisible church, and of the claim of the Roman Catholics that Christ built His church on Peter.

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work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor.3:10-15).

So we find here that the Lord is talking about rewards, and the rewards are for those who have built out of the right kind of material upon the foundation. You'll note that he is writing to believers. These are Christians. Both built upon the right foundation which is the Lord Jesus Christ. You don't build a foundation. This Jesus Christ did. He is the foundation. But in your life, as you live your life, you are constructing a building upon that foundation. Your life is compared to a building.

Then he uses two classifications of building materials. He has those that will endure: gold, silver, and precious stones. Those are the kinds that when the fire of judgment comes, or when the fire of trials come, they will be purified. Fire simply will purify gold. It will purify silver. It will purify these precious jewels. It does not harm them, but it purifies them. So let me remind you of this. If you are a believer, if you are a Christian, if you are saved and you know you are saved, and if there are sometimes things that occur to you and you do not understand why God would allow this to happen to you, why God would permit this to happen to you, this may be God's means of allowing a trial to come upon you whereby it might purify your life so that your life might become something that might be a trophy that God could use for His honor and His glory. If you are building your life as a Christian out of gold, silver and precious stones, then these may be God's methods of simply burning out all the dross, and it should cause you to flee unto the Lord and to draw you closer to the Lord.

This is what occurs when you are building your life out of the right kind of materials upon this foundation.

But on the other hand, if you are building your life out of wood, hay, and stubble, what will occur is that those things will just simply be burned up in the fire of God's trial, and you won't have anything left but the foundation, and be glad that you're saved by grace and that you are being kept by God upon that foundation, otherwise, if your salvation depended upon you, you'd lose your salvation just as you have lost all your works, if you built out of wood, hay and stubble. But the foundation will stand sure. So our service for the Lord is going to be rewarded.

In Second Corinthians chapter five and verse 10 the Lord says that every one of us are going to have to stand before the Lord, and be tried. Our works are going to be tried. "For we" (now the Apostle Paul is including himself), "For 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 every one of us who are saved are one day going to have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Not the great White Judgment Throne for that is for the unsaved, for lost people. But we are going to have to stand before God and give an account to Him for how we have lived our life since we have been saved. God's going to try our life. Now this is where rewards are to be given out, and the rewards are to be given out according to our service. How many rewards will you have? What kind of rewards will you have?

I now want to show you that though you can earn rewards, and you can accumulate rewards, it is possible later on

in life for you to so sin that you can lose all the rewards that you have accumulated. It's just like money in a bank. You can store money in a bank and then you can lose it all, and this is exactly what the Lord tells us.

I want to show you this and we're going to look at some crowns for just a minute. These are crowns that are being talked about here. You'll notice that He says in verse 11, "*Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown*" (Rev. 3:11). The crowns mentioned in the Bible are used as symbols of the rewards for service and not for salvation. This is not talking about salvation. This is talking about rewards.

Now let's notice some crowns that are mentioned in the Bible. In Revelation 2:10. "*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*" (Rev. 2:10).

Now turn with me to the Book of James 1:12. "*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*"

In the Book of Second Timothy chapter 4 we read in verse 8, "*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*"

Now turn with me to First Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 19, "*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?*"

Now turn with me to First Peter 5:4 "*And when the chief*

Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

You see that these crowns are all mentioned as rewards; they are given for service. It is not speaking about salvation at all.

Now let's turn to the Book of Second John and verse 8, and let me show you that you can lose all the rewards you have if you leave serving the Lord and begin to live contrary to the will of God. You could have lived 10 years in service to the Lord whereby you might have accumulated rewards, and yet you can lose all of those rewards. Notice "*Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward*" (2 Jn. 8). In other words, you can lose those things that you have wrought. Sometimes we get the idea that we can live any way we want to. We're saved and therefore, since we're saved by grace, we can live any way we want to, and it won't cost us anything, because we're already saved. It certainly will cost you. It certainly will. You as a believer are not free or at liberty to sin. You do not have a license to live in sin. The freedom that you as a believer have is that you have been freed from the dominion of sin, and you have been freed from the dominion of sin in order that you might serve the Lord Jesus Christ. God holds you accountable, and responsible, so that when you live for Him, serve the Lord, and you work for the Lord, if then later on, something changes and you become one who does not serve the Lord, and you begin to live your life in sin, or you simply begin to neglect the things of God, don't think that you can do it and get by with it. You can actually lose all the rewards that you have accumulated in the

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past. You'll be saved because salvation does not come by what you do. Even keeping yourself saved does not come by what you do. You're kept saved by the power of God through faith according to First Peter 1:5. But you can lose everything, and be saved, "though as by fire."

Let me point out to you one thing in this verse. He says in verse 11 "*Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown*" (Rev. 3:11). The warning is not "let no man take thy salvation." Salvation is eternally secure in Christ, but if one is not a faithful servant, they can lose their crowns. They can lose all of their rewards.

What about you today? I heard somebody say this one time, "I don't care whether I have rewards or not. I'm saved and I'll be satisfied just so I get to heaven." Oh what a terrible sad statement to make, that they do not love the Lord enough to serve Him. That all they want is just to get what God has, but never give Him anything at all. Jesus Christ died for them; He loved them so much that He came down to this earth and suffered all of the abuse that men could heap upon Him, went to the cross and suffered all of the physical agonies that were involved in His trial, the beatings, the scourgings, the mockeries, the spitting, the crown of thorns, finally to be nailed to that cross. He did all of that because He loved sinners. And now, you have trusted Him, and you have been saved by Him, but you don't even care enough about Him that you want to serve Him. What an ungrateful attitude that is! No wonder you're not going to have any rewards — if you're really saved.

I sometimes wonder if a

person who is really saved could have that kind of an attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ. You that are saved here today, what is your attitude toward the Lord? Do you care whether you serve Him or not? Do you care whether you have any crowns or not? Remember, these crowns, as we'll find out later on in this book, are not going to be for you to put on your head and wear around and brag to everybody in heaven how many crowns you've got. These crowns are going to be crowns that when you come before the throne of God, and you see the Lord Jesus Christ, and you see the nail prints in His hands, and you see the thorn-crushed brow, and you look upon that One who loved you so much that He died for you, you're going to take those crowns and present them to Him, and you're going to say "Here, Lord, I give them to You out of love and appreciation and gratitude for all that You have done for me. I have served You. I have earned these crowns for You. Not out of a selfish motive because I wanted them, but I have served You and earned these crowns because I love you. Because I love you for what You are and all that You've done for me, and I want to give them to You."

Christian friend, you talk about sadness. Don't ever tell anybody there will be no tears in heaven. The song says "No tears in heaven" but that's not scriptural. You're going to stand before Jesus Christ and if you have nothing to offer Him at all, they're going to be tears of sadness as you regret the fact that you wasted your life and you have nothing to give Jesus at all.

The Bible doesn't say there'll be no tears in heaven, but it says Jesus will wipe away all the tears. But how much better it would be if you were able to give Him something, present

Him with something. It would be nothing more than a token in comparison with what He did. Don't you love Him a little bit? Don't you love Him at least a little to where you are willing to serve Him? This is how you prove your love. You don't prove your love by simply coming to church and sitting in the services like this. Some people get the idea that this is proving their love to the Lord, but if you're honest, you usually come to church services to "get out" something, and if a preacher never preaches anything at all, you won't come back because you'll say "I just didn't get anything out of it." This is what you're looking for. This is what you want. But what we're talking about is what you can have to give to the Lord — service. Is it worth it? It will be in that day.

For you that are unsaved, what a sad thing to realize that when Jesus died on the cross, that He died for sinners. There was salvation provided right there. The invitation has been extended. He extends the invitation to whosoever will. "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (Jn. 3:16). Ingratitude would make you simply ignore what God has provided for lost sinners. You're not going to have any rewards, and you're not even going to have salvation in that day, unless you trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and as your Savior.

I want us to sing a hymn. I suppose it's mostly to Christians, but I want it to be to the unsaved as well, "Have Thine Own Way, Lord." This is the only way that you're going to have any service for the Lord. It is the only way that you're going to have any crowns.

Wednesday night recently I preached a message upon

what is commonly referred to as "The Lord's Prayer" where it says "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." If you really want God's will to be done on earth, then you must say "Have Thine Own Way With Me." Will you do so? Make it a matter of prayer to the Lord. If there needs to be a time of repentance, repent unto the Lord. If there's sin, confess that sin unto the Lord. •

LOBBY...

(Continued from page 4)

correct side. A newspaper reporter will ask a pastor, "Pastor, are you and your people giving 100% to defeat this legislation?" to which the well-informed pastor responds, "No, we are only giving it 5%." If that pastor responds that his church is giving 100%, he has jeopardized his church's tax-exempt status.

Example Guidelines for Church Lobbying Efforts

Circulating a few petitions each year addressing various legislative issues is certainly acceptable. It must also be remembered that it is the activities of the organization itself, not the individual members, that trigger the scrutiny. If individuals act on their own, their actions cannot be imputed to the church solely on the basis of their membership. Public pronouncements on moral issues not involving a "call to action" on specifically named legislation are acceptable.

The following examples may be helpful to pastors and church leaders as they apply the law to their circumstances.

Example #1. Your church members circulate petitions among the other members following the church services. The petitions are to express support or opposition to specific bills

(See **LOBBY** on page 19)

FELLOWSHIPS

and

CONFERENCES

WICHITA, KS

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

BENTON, KY

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

ARKANSAS CITY, KS

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

LITTLE ROCK, AR

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.

LITTLE ROCK, AR

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

MATTOON, IL

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

WESTCLIFFE, CO

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

LOBBY...

(Continued from page 18)

before Congress, the state legislature or the county board. The petitions do not identify the church; and the church itself has taken no official position on any of the issues addressed. In this situation, there is no violation of the restriction on lobbying.

Example #2. The members of your church are permitted to

post materials addressing legislation on the bulletin board of the church. If the church does not screen these materials, this practice will not endanger the tax-exempt status of the church.

Example #3. Your church adopts a resolution at a church administrative policy meeting, declaring its wholehearted support of a proposed constitutional amendment banning abortions. Again, the restriction is not violated.

Example #4. Your church allows a group dedicated to political issues to use a room in the church for its monthly meeting. You do not charge this group a fee to use your facilities. Although the use of the church facilities by such a group may trigger the consideration of the restriction on lobbying, the use is considered incidental rather than substantial.

Although the vagueness of the term *substantial* makes it difficult to know exactly what the government will allow a church to do in a given situation with regard to lobbying and still maintain its tax-exempt status, I trust the above explanation and examples will help your church understand the issues involved and provide the legal framework for your church's lobbying efforts in the future. — The Sword of the Lord.

WNR...

(Continued from page 14)

fathers were martyred during the Inquisition, many more than Steve Snyder admits.]

More Religious Elsewhere Than the U.S. Since 1980, government-funded schools in England have had the freedom to allow children to worship and pray and to include Christian

teachings as a regular part of the curriculum. In Australia, the teaching of religion is not only allowed, but encouraged. A program in New South Wales has brought dozens of Scripture teachers to government schools, with more expected to come.—EP

How Your Taxes Were Spent.

The lawyers for Rodney King were given taxpayer monies in the amount of \$4.4 million to cover the lawsuit they pursued and won in King's interest. Included in the bill was nearly \$4,000 for television interviews with Sam Donaldson, Phil Donahue, Larry King and a local show. The going rate was approximately \$1,000 per appearance to provide pro-King propaganda when requested to do so by the sympathetic media. In keeping with this rate, they also are collecting \$1,000 for talking to Oprah Winfrey. For a King publicity stunt they charged \$1,625. They collected that amount to accompany King to the theater to view the play "Why is L.A. Burning?" a reference to the aftermath of the acquittal of four L.A. police officers who were accused of using excessive force in arresting King. King's mouth-pieces are charging the people another \$4,000 for countering the "bad publicity" King got when arrested for soliciting a sodomite prostitute and attempting to murder an L.A. policeman by running over him (Conservative Book Club Bulletin, #195 as quoted in the Berea Baptist Banner).

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Should You Believe In Miracles?

By Louis A. Turk

A miracle is an unusual event that goes against the commonly observed laws of nature. The Bible reveals to us that miracles accompanied the prophets whom God used to deliver His Word to humankind. Because of these miracles people knew that these prophets truly were men of God, and that the words they spoke (and wrote) were God's words.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (1 Pet. 1:20-21).

The Significance of Miracles

Humanists, socialists, communists, and other atheists try constantly to discredit the very concept of miracles. Why? Because if there have never been any miracles, then the Bible is just a big lie. And if the Bible is just a big lie, then we had best discard it and look elsewhere for a philosophy to live by. Probably, in such a case, there is no God either, nor would there be a Heaven or Hell, or even absolute rights and wrongs. However, if the miracles that accompanied the writing of the Bible really happened, then the Bible is true, there is a Creator God, and we all had better believe what He says, and obey His commandments. The purpose of this article, however, is not to discuss whether or not miracles have ever happened, *for everybody believes in miracles*, even the people who say they don't believe in them. Even humanists/atheists believe in miracles! *Yes they do!*

Even Atheists Believe In

Miracles!

Humanists, socialists, communists, and other atheists base their lives on some of the most incredible miracles ever imagined. Consider for instance

The Miracle of The Big Bang

The Big Bang Theory is the atheist/humanist doctrine of how the universe began. This theory teaches that in the beginning the matter of the whole universe was compressed into a tiny ball smaller than a pinpoint (Where all this matter came from is seldom discussed). Then (without cause) there was a tremendous explosion which, instead of disintegrating things into particles, assembled particles into things, and instead of destroying life created it! Explosions as observed today never do this; all observed explosions kill and destroy, producing chaos — never do they give life or produce order. Such an event certainly goes against all the presently observed laws of nature, and therefore, if it ever really happened, certainly was a miracle.

The Miracle of Abiogenesis

An especially importance atheist/humanist doctrine is abiogenesis. Abiogenesis is the idea that life sprang spontaneously from dead matter, perhaps at the time the big bang occurred. (The only alternative to abiogenesis is the Bible teaching of biogenesis—that life can only come from life.) Abiogenesis is essential to any philosophy based on atheism. Yet the idea of abiogenesis goes totally against the observable facts of nature. Every living organism ever observed coming into exist-

ence has come out of another living being. No one has ever even once seen life spring from non-living matter. In fact, it was Louis Pasteur's vigorous exposure of the fraud of abiogenesis that made him the father of modern medicine. In Pasteur's day, abiogenesis was called "spontaneous generation" but Pasteur so thoroughly disproved spontaneous generation that humanists are now forced to refer to the idea as abiogenesis to avoid stigma.

"In Spallanzani's time, there was a great debate going on. It was the same debate that, about one hundred years later, would fire Louis Pasteur into the front line of battle, as its fierce warrior, to settle the matter once and for all.

"The question was this: Does every living thing have to have parents, or can living things spring into life spontaneously? The argument was bound up with beliefs about how the world was first formed. (Beverly Birch, *Louis Pasteur: the Scientist Who Found the Cause of Infectious Disease and Invented Pasteurization* [Milwaukee: Gareth Stevens Children's Books, 1989], 12.)"

Pasteur vigorously opposed all pseudo scientists who insisted on publicly teaching abiogenesis. In a letter to Dr. Bastion in July 1877, Pasteur wrote:

"Do you know why I desire so much to fight and conquer you? it is because you are one of the principal adepts of a medical doctrine which I believe to be fatal to progress in the art of healing—the doctrine of spontaneity of all diseases.... That is an error which, I repeat it, is harmful to medical progress. From the prophylactic as well as from the therapeutic point of view, the fate of the physician and surgeon depends upon the adoption of the one or the other of these two doctrines. (Vallery-

Radot, *The Life of Pasteur* [Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923], 256.)"

The fraud of abiogenesis had kept scientists from discovering the cure for communicable disease for hundreds of years. Modern medicine is based on biogenesis. If abiogenesis ever occurred it was certainly a fantastic miracle. Yet this fraudulent miracle is accepted by atheists/humanists in blind faith.

The Miracle of Evolution

Evolution is another miracle essential to atheist/humanist dogma. Evolution is the idea that one kind of being can give birth to a different kind of being. Change within a species, of course, happens all the time (there are, for example, a great variety of cats); but never does a cat give birth to a new kind of animal—which is what humanists/atheists are implying when they use the word evolution.

Evolution, of course, has never been observed. All observed births demonstrate just the opposite—each living being gives birth only to a baby of its own kind, just like the Bible stresses in Genesis chapter one. Nor is there any evidence in the fossil record that evolution ever has happened. The "missing links" Darwin hoped would be discovered in the fossils have never been found. So, in spite of constant atheist/humanist hype to the contrary, evolution is not science, but mere superstition. It is blind faith in a phony miracle which no one has ever witnessed.

The Miracle of Decreasing Entropy

The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that in all energy transformations there tends to be some energy transformed into non-reversible heat energy.

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MIRACLE...

(Continued from page 20)

The term entropy is used in measuring this energy loss. Thus the Second Law of Thermodynamics states that left to itself the entropy of a closed system can never decrease, but always tends to increase.

"It would hardly be possible to conceive of two more completely opposite principles than this principle of entropy increase and the principle of evolution. Each is precisely the converse of the other. As Huxley defined it, evolution involves a continual *increase* of order, of organization, of size, of complexity. The entropy principle involves a continual *decrease* of order, of organization, of size, of complexity. It seems axiomatic that both cannot possibly be true. But there is no question whatever that the second law of thermodynamics is true! (Henry M. Morris, *The Twilight of Evolution* [Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1970], 35).

The second law of thermodynamics can be (and has been) tested in every field of science (including biology), and found reliable without exception. Evolution, therefore, would be a miracle, as evolution goes against all observed events in nature.

The Miracle of Design Without A Designer

For an automobile to be built, there must be a designer of high intelligence to design it, and begin a process requiring great energy to convert simple basic elements into complicated parts which can be finally assembled into an automobile. Never in the history of the universe has an automobile—or any complicated creation—been observed to come into existence by random chance

without a designer. Just the opposite is the case: daily we see designers create things. *Always* it takes a designer. Yet atheists/humanists say that the universe with its myriad solar systems, and the human body with its exceedingly complicated brain, and all the plant and animal life on earth, all came into being by random chance without a designer! How fabulous these atheist/humanist miracles!

Philosophy Is Not Science

Humanist philosophers present all of their doctrines as science. *But the scientific method demands observation.* And the beginning of the universe and the beginning of the first living beings cannot be observed. Only God saw these things happen, and we either believe His testimony or deem Him a liar. Teachings concerning these things are not scientific but religious. Louis Pasteur — that king of scientists — correctly observed that philosophy is not science and could not prove the origin of the universe and life even if it was:

"My philosophy is of the heart and not of the mind, and I give myself up, for instance, to those feelings about eternity which come naturally at the bedside of a cherished child drawing its last breath. At those supreme moments, there is something in the depths of our souls which tells us that the world may be more than a mere combination of phenomena proper to a mechanical equilibrium brought out of the chaos of the elements simply through the gradual action of the forces of matter. I admire them all, our philosophers! We have experiments to straighten and modify our ideas, and constantly find that nature is other than we imagined. They, who are always guessing, how can they know! (Vallery-Radot, 125)."

In Which Miracle Worker Will We Believe?

Since everybody believes in miracles, the important question is not "Should we believe in miracles?" Rather, the important question is, "In whose miracles should we believe?" Or more specifically, in which miracle worker should we believe?

Our choice is this: either we will believe in God, or we will believe in Satan. If there is a God, He certainly can produce miracles. That is entirely believable. But if there be no God, then what mysterious force produces miracles? If God is not the force of creation, then evolution is god. Therefore, belief in evolution is idolatry — worship of a pagan god. And a pagan god by whatever name is really just Satan in disguise. Atheism/humanism is thus a form of the occult. It is pure superstition.

Many atheists/humanists deny believing in Satan, but even such renowned atheists/humanists as Margaret Sanger (founder of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and the recipient of the Humanist of the Year award in 1957 (*The Humanist*, March/April 1992, 4), Madalyn Murray O'Hair (the atheist responsible for the Supreme court decision removing prayer from schools), and Aldous Huxley (atheist/humanist author and brother to the famous Sir Julian Huxley of the American Humanist Association) dabbled in the occult. "Publicly, she [Margaret Sanger] identified herself with the increasingly rationalized world of science and medicine, but privately she maintained a fascination with the spiritual and the occult, frequently stopping between appointments to consult psychics, astrologers, and others who offered specious, but generally comforting, explanations of events and behavior she could not objectively ex-

plain." (Ellen Chesler, *Woman of Valor—Margaret Sanger and the Birth Control Movement In America* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992], 221).

For witness to Madalyn Murray O'Hair participating in the occult, read the book by her son, William J. Murray, *My Life Without God* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982], pages 119-120).

In a personal letter to Juliette Huxley in 1865 Aldous wrote: "Do you find as I do, that the older one get, the more unutterably mysterious, unlikely and totally implausible one's own life and the universe at large steadily become? For practical purposes, one tries to make a little scientific and ethical sense of it all; for non-practical purposes — aesthetic and spiritual — one cultivates Wordsworth's wise passiveness' and opens oneself up receptively to the MYSTERIUM TREMENDUM ET FASCINANS within and without" (Julian Huxley, *Aldous Huxley (1894-1963): A Memorial Volume* [New York: Harper & Row, 1965], 50).

If a person is gullible enough to believe in abiogenesis and evolution, he is gullible enough to believe virtually anything Satan decides to feed him. Faith in evolution is actually faith in Satan, whether the atheist/humanist realizes it or not. A man who will not worship the true miracle worker (God) is by his own choice worshipping the phony miracle worker (Satan).

Some Important True Miracles

Before rejecting the miracles recorded in the Bible, a person should at least give them some serious study. Consider for instance

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MIRACLE...

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The Miracle of the Virgin Birth of Christ

Humanists/atheists laugh and scoff at people who believe the miracle of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, yet humanists/atheists themselves believe in the miracle of some ape-like creature giving birth to the first human — and without God even helping! Considering the preposterousness of such an idea, it is the Christians that should be doing the laughing and scoffing. So consider seriously the importance of the virgin birth.

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Mt. 1:18-23).

From the above verses, we see that the importance of the virgin birth is that God so loved us that He entered into a human body, so that as a human He could live a perfect life as our substitute, and then die to take

the punishment for our sins, so that we could be saved from the damnation of eternal Hell. This is not so hard to believe; if there is a God, nothing is too hard for Him to do.

The Miracle of the Resurrection

“Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” (Acts 26.8). Contrary to what humanists/atheists teach, death is not normal. Humans as originally created by God did not die. But Adam eating the forbidden fruit brought death upon us all. “For by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom 5.12).

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom.5:8-10).

“Now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:20-28).

It is because of the miracle of the resurrection that we

know that Jesus is God our Savior.

The Miracle of the New Birth

You can know that God is real today by experiencing the miracle of the new birth.

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God... For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 Jn. 5.1-5).”

Yes! you can begin a new life today — a life of peace and joy, a life with real purpose and meaning, a life in fellowship with the God of miracles. •

TULGA...

(Continued from page 3)

of men, but the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17).

3. The object is evangelistic: not educational, not sanitation or ventilation. All these things may be helpful, but the objective is evangelistic, through the preaching of the gospel.

4. The command to baptize is definite. In the New Testament, evangelization and baptism are never separated. They belong to New Testament order — repentance, faith, baptism, church membership, the Lord’s Supper.

5. The command is not to baptize according to the mode which is suitable or convenient but in the manner of the baptism of Jesus and after the symbolism of Romans 6:1-11. Baptists who support a commission which leaves out the principles which Baptists believe to be a part of the New Testament are not New Testament Baptists, but one of the 57 varieties.

6. Baptism is to be followed by teaching — not the “essentials,” not the “important”

truths of God’s Word, but *all the things* which Jesus commanded, even the whole counsel of God.

7. The promise of the Divine presence is to those who carry out this Commission, not to those who refuse, not to those who revise, not to those who abbreviate, not to those who select what is expedient, but all of it. Doctrine is not to be determined by contributors, but by the Word of God.

The Great Commission is baptistic, not interdenominational. Its purpose is to win men to Christ, baptize them in the scriptural manner and establish churches after the New Testament pattern. •

My God, My Country, My Party

Should I ever have to choose between my God and my party, I shall stand with my God.

Should I ever have to choose between my Country and my party, I shall stand with my Country.

Should I ever have to choose between my party and my conscience, I shall stand with my conscience.

When my party stands for both God and my country, I shall stand with my party.

When my party breaks faith with its platform, incorporates Socialism in its forms of expression and advocates the killing of unborn babies, I shall break with my party. •

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A Test For Socialism

It takes a clear mind to look all the way through a statement. Take the socialist-communist idea of taking from each according to his ability, and giving to each according to his need. To the untrained mind, this sounds great!

In fact, you can ask almost any group of young high school students what they think of that idea, and they'll tell you it's great! If you doubt this, try it. Just ask what do you think of a form of government which advocates the idea of taking from each person according to his ability, and giving to each according to his need? And see what kind of an answer you get!

You see, this has been tested. Thomas J. Shelly, teacher of economics and history of Yonkers High School, Yonkers, New York, found that the idea was generally accepted without question by most of his pupils. In an effort to explain the fallacy in this theory, he frequently tries this approach with his pupils:

Applying the Principle of Socialism To High School Grades

When one of the brighter or harder working pupils makes a grade of 95 on a test, the teacher suggests that he take away 20 points and give them to a student who has made only 55 points on his test. Thus, each would contribute according to his ability; and since both would have a passing mark, each would receive according to his need.

After the teacher has juggled the grades of all the other pupils in this fashion, the result is usually a "common ownership" grade of between 75 and 80 — the minimum needed for passing, or for survival.

Then he speculates with the pupils as to the probable results if he actually used the socialistic theory for grading papers.

First the highly-productive pupils, and they are always a minority in school as well as in life, would soon lose all incentive for producing. Why strive to make a high grade if part of it is taken from you by the "authority" and given to someone else?

Secondly, the less productive pupils, a majority in school as elsewhere, would, for a time, be relieved of the necessity to study or to produce. This socialist-communist system would continue until the high producers had sunk, or had been driven down to the level of the low producers.

Socialism and Communism Always Lead to Dictatorship

At that point, in order for anyone to survive, the "authority" would have no alternative but to begin a system of compulsory labor and punishments against even the low producers. They, of course, would then complain bitterly, but without understanding.

They had been told that each would produce according to his ability, and each would receive according to his need. Now they would be forced to produce more ... doesn't make much sense, does it?

Finally, this Yonkers High School teacher would return to the discussion of the ideas of freedom and enterprise, the market economy, where each person has freedom of choice and is responsible for his decisions and welfare and his only.

Gratifyingly enough, most of his pupils would then understand what he means when he explains that socialism, even in a republic, will eventually result

Bureaucratic Government

Knowing how hard it is to vacate a Bureau, once it is established, one has said, "The nearest thing to immortality in this world is a governmental bureau." He certainly was seeing things.

In our country, our alphabet has been mixed and scrambled, and combined and clubbed, in order to secure enough letter combinations to name the Bureaus which have grown up under the Democratic Administrations. And for some reason unknown to us, our representatives at Washington have granted authority to many, if not to all, of these Bureaus to make rules and regulations which have the standing of law in their administration but which do not have the standing of law in our courts. The rules and regulations of our Bureaus are not subject to court review, thus we have established in our Bureaus both a legislative and executive arm of government, neither of which is subject to the control of constituted legal authority.

Again, under Democrat Administrations and the administration of the laws enacted, labor organizations have become a law unto themselves. They make and institute laws that are not subject to court review. Our representatives at Washington have played us American people for a fall. I give it as my candid judgment

in a living death for all except the "authorities" and a few of their favorite lackeys.

You might ask your children what they think of the socialist-communist theory. It sounds good only if you don't understand that it cannot work ... and must result in a totalitarian dictatorship before long.

that the American populace will never get relief from our Bureaucratic offenders until we retire every man at Washington who has been a party to building up our uncontrolled Bureaus.

Governments within our government — What a peril!

Now when a move comes to return the inalienable rights our American people have been called to surrender, the multitudes of these Bureaus, with their millions of paid workers, will storm Washington to prevent any change lest they lose their place on the government's payroll. It will take a battle royal, a battle determined, and a battle invincible to upset the present Socialistic state into which we have been plunged — the name of emergency. yes, we have created Socialistic bureaus which will not die until the Lord returns. •

Baptists Ought To Quit Their Lying

Baptists ought to quit lying to God and stealing from God. The man, who does not tithe, steals from God. The man, who does not keep his church covenant and stays away from church and does not support his church with his money, both lies to God and lies to his church.

The man, who moves away from his church and does not move his membership, is a covenant-breaker, both with God and his church.

The man, who takes a part of his tithes to pay his bills is stealing from God.

The woman, who takes part of her tithes to pay her bills is stealing from God.

Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit and God killed both of them.

Many Baptists have stolen their tithes from God and lost their homes or their farms. •

ANGELS...

(Continued from page 1)

of God speaks of terrestrial bodies and of celestial bodies. He tells us that there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. Man received his terrestrial, his natural body, from mother earth. But angels never were clothed with such a body, for that is indicated in the statement of Scripture that man is made a little lower than the angels. The angels, therefore, have spiritual bodies, that is, celestial bodies corresponding to their exalted, glorious, spiritual nature. Apart from this general fact, we have more positive information from the lips of our Lord.

The Sadducees, those infidels of the past, who denied the existence of angels and also the resurrection, came and asked the Lord a question: "*Master, Moses wrote unto us, if any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were, therefore, seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she, for seven had her to wife?*" (Lk. 20:27-36). In all probability the story was of their own invention to ensnare the Lord Jesus Christ. He answered them saying that those resurrected neither marry nor die any more, just like the angels. The logical conclusion is that the angels have bodies, but that these bodies are different from human bodies in that the angels do not marry, nor are given in marriage and that they do not die. Our resurrection bodies are deathless bodies and the earthly conjugal relationship

will no longer exist. The highest revelation concerning the resurrection body of the redeemed is given after the Lord Jesus Christ rose from among the dead. The Spirit of God tells us that our bodies shall be like unto His glorious body. As pointed out, our Lord speaks of only two things in which our resurrection bodies are equal to that of angels. We learn from these words of our Lord that angels have real bodies.

What Kind Do the Angels Have?

What kind of body is theirs? This question is unanswerable. Councils in early church-history held that their bodies were ethereal and firelike, while the scholastics and the Lateran Council decided that their bodies were material bodies. The synagogal literature of the Jews is rich in all kinds of suggestions as to the bodies of angels and strange traditional beliefs. But these are vain speculations. We have to own that we look into a glass darkly in connection with these unseen things. These things are for us in our present state unexplainable and incomprehensible. Beyond what is written we dare not go. The time will surely come when we shall not look into a glass darkly, when faith is changed into sight. Then the unseen things, including angels and their glorious bodies, will be fully known by us.

Where Do They Live?

In the next place we have to ascertain their dwelling places. As we have pointed out before, their number is so great that they cannot be reckoned. The unseen world of angels is a mighty kingdom in which are thrones, principalities, powers and dominions. Inasmuch as they are spirits clothed with bodies they must have fixed dwell-

ing places. Where the angels are is another interesting question which Scripture, at least in part, also answers. A child who has been taught something about the Bible will answer readily the question about the place where the angels are. The child will answer, "In heaven." But heaven is a term of vast meaning. In the Hebrew, heaven is in the plural, "the heavens." The Bible speaks of three heavens: the third heaven is the heaven of heavens, the dwelling place of God, where His throne has always been. The tabernacle possessed by His earthly people, Israel, was a pattern of the heavens. Moses upon the mountain had looked into the vast heavens and saw the three heavens. He had no telescope. But God Himself showed to him the mysteries of the heavens. Then God admonished him when he was about to make the Tabernacle and said to His servant, "*See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mountain*" (Heb. 8:5). The Tabernacle had three compartments, the outer court, the holy part and the holiest. Once a year the high priest entered this earthly place of worship to pass through the outer court, into the holy part, and finally, carrying the sacrificial blood, he entered into the holiest to sprinkle the blood in Jehovah's holy presence. But Aaron was only a type of Him who is greater than Aaron, the true High Priest. Of Him, the true Priest, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, it is written that He passed *into the heavens* (Heb. 4:14). "*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*" (Heb. 9:24). He passed through the heavens, the outer court, the heaven surrounding the earth; the holy part, the immense universes, with their immeasurable distances, and fi-

nally He entered the third heaven, that heaven astronomy knows exists, but which no telescope can ever reach.

Angels Dwell In The Heavens

In the heavens, according to the Epistle to the Ephesians, are the principalities and the powers, the innumerable company of angels. Their dwelling places are in these heavens. God who created them, who made them spirits and clothed them with bodies suited to their spirit nature, must have also assigned to them habitations. But what and where are these habitations? That these dwellings are in the heavens is not only taught in Ephesians. In the prayer our Lord taught His disciples is a petition which tells us of this: "*Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven,*" that is, there are beings in heaven and they do His will. It is also significant and not without meaning that the phrase "the host of heavens" means both the stars and the angelic hosts; the "Lord of Hosts" has also the same double meaning, for He is the Lord of the stars and the Lord of the angels. — Pulpit Helps•