

**FAITH AND DOCTRINES
OF THE
EARLY CHURCH**

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Introduction

A terrible problem exists within each of us that we must recognize before we begin to learn about the Church as it was in the first few years after Pentecost. This problem stems from all the sins that have been committed against you and me in the name of religious education. Each of us has been molded and formed to some extent by the religious beliefs of those around us. No matter how small the differences between two religious denominations we have been impressed to some degree that one outlook is totally right—and the other totally wrong. More than likely no reason was given why the one idea was right; and most assuredly we were not taught why the other denominations believe as they do. As a result, the minute we further approach religious education or books, we either turn off all our critical faculties and slavishly submit to the information and ideas presented, or we blindly reject everything to do with it. By doing this we immobilise ourselves to much spiritual growth. The idea seldom occurs to us to question why we have the religious doctrines that we adhere to from early childhood. The diversity of opinions around us today regarding the Bible and what it has to say to us have a definite effect upon the weight which most of us as individuals place upon it. Everyone seems to have different opinions about the great teachings of Scripture. How shall we know who is right? How may we objectively evaluate the meaning of a scripture when one interpretation of this scripture has been implanted within our minds since childhood?

In the following pages these questions will be answered. Historical origins of man's doctrines will be discussed, with attention given to how these doctrines have effected Biblical doctrines and their applications in our lives. It is the objective of this book to accurately portray the basic tenets of faith as held by the EARLY CHURCH, show their relevance and application in our lives today, and expose the shortcomings and fallacy of "man's" religion.

This book won't work for you if you cannot accept the Holy Bible as your one rule of faith and all of its pages as the inspired Word of God. But it also won't work for you if you accept everything in these following pages in the name of education and miss the point that this book is about changes in your way of living; not just changes in your way of thinking. You will not be directed toward any particular denomination or church; only away from doctrines and teachings which are contrary to God's will for us, as outlined in His Guidebook—the Bible. We shall learn that there are no contradictions in God's Word. When we find scriptures that appear to contradict, this should indicate to us that we don't understand what these scriptures mean. Then it's time to dig deeper to see where we have failed to understand one or both scriptures.

A number of concepts contained in this book you may never have considered before. Remember to ". . . examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21 NASB). By examining and proving for yourself, through Bible and history study, these truths become real and living principles to live by. You have not even been fair to yourself by stating "I accept" or "I reject" without first doing your own research.

You can try all these doctrines and truths out at once and turn your whole life upside down and suffer-and fail miserably. Or you can take an idea out, see how it fits and then take the next idea and repeat the process. Then go back and look at the first idea again. When we accept the Fathers' Son as our Messiah, through the proper steps outlined in the Scriptures, we become God's spiritual children. More correctly we are spiritual babies. Babies are expected to grow, and must grow; but they can't grow up all at once. Growth takes time. Most all of us as children were impatient to grow; but try as we would, we could hurry the process just so much-by the proper diet and mode of life. These ideas and principles we are talking about have revolutionised other peoples' lives. And they can revolutionise your whole

life too. So you need time to think, time to reflect, and time to compare one thing with another.

Stilted language and "seminary length words" won't be too evident here. Our purpose is real communication that will lead to spiritual growth, not the refined language evident in prominent Bible schools which is calculated to impress the layman with the writers' command of technical words. English teachers and status seekers have tried to take away our speech, and too often they have succeeded well enough that we can't speak as truly as we should.

The Lamb of God said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:16). In other words, if you wish to be a child of God, if you wish to become an heir of God, and to enter the Kingdom of God, this must be done through the Messiah. Part of what He said is: "I am the truth. No man cometh to the Father but by truth."

In other words, if you reject truth you reject the Messiah. If you reject the Messiah or truth, you are lost. This is not just human reasoning, for the Holy Scriptures say: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth" (II Thess. 2 :10,1 1).

There are many, many false doctrines being taught in the circles of Christianity. Because we are admonished to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), and because Messiah said: ". . . in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9); and because the Messiah said: "Every plant which my Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13); some of us have found ourselves called to this very ministry, pointing out how very important it is that we build our faith and practices of Christianity solidly upon the Rock— the Messiah.

There are many prophecies in the Scriptures. Not all of them have to do with big upheavals among nations, nor with spectacular signs in the heavens. One such prophecy has to do with the general attitude of man toward the truth. Here it is: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 4:3,4).

Men ridicule people of old times for believing in superstitious accounts of incidents and very foolish explanations of what happened and what caused it to happen. Our present generation is doing the same thing in the name of science . . . turning to fables about the origin of things, and seriously proposing their fables for truth. The Scriptures say "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." That time is here! Don't ever expect to be able to judge truth by a Gallup Poll or by a popularity contest.

"But continue thou in the things which thou has learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect (or complete), thoroughly furnished unto all good works (II Tim. 3:14-17).

"Rejecting truth" is not necessarily refusing to believe it, but may also be refusing to do anything about or with the truth even after believing it. It is good to awaken to truth, and to acknowledge it, but it (the truth) becomes a curse to the man who will not accept it when he

learns it, for both his way of living and his thinking.

The Messiah said: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin" (John 15 :22). In other words, you do not offend a friend if you happen to step backward onto his foot, but if you know he is there, and then deliberately step on him, you have no way to hide your inconsiderateness.

If you do not know the will of God, then God would take your ignorance into consideration and not hold you guilty. Men through the centuries have ignorantly worshipped false gods, which they made with their own hands. They still do in many parts of the world. Talking about this, the Apostle Paul said: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17 :30).

There actually have been people who, when they learned of this fact, have replied, "I wish you hadn't told me about it. Then I wouldn't have to be worried about changing." Others have actually replied, "Wouldn't it be better not to teach this doctrine, for it is so hard for people to accept. They are not guilty until we tell them. Then they become guilty, just because we have told them. Why tell them about it and bring condemnation upon them?"

The answer is this: Our Lord came into the world for a specific purpose. This purpose was so dear to Him that He gave His life for it. The Scriptures say this about it: "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin" (I John 3:5). He came to make us know what sin is, and to take it away—He did not come just to take away the punishment for sin. He came to take away sin itself! The same chapter, verse eight says: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." The Lamb of God came to destroy sin, not to allow us ignorantly to continue in it. If we love the ways which are not pleasing to Him, then we do not love God. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3).

This does not mean it will be easy for you to be obedient to them. They are not grievous in that they do not, of themselves, bring trouble to mankind, but rather a blessing. Not only does it make life more peaceful and prosperous when people are true followers of God, but God has promised: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 2:17).

The Bible says, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes," so the majority go their merry way—through the wide gate and the broad way "that leadeth to destruction" (Matt. 7:13). Likely it is supposed that the majority are very nearly doing all right. Doing the popular thing is important to not a few. At this point one might recall the words that "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Seldom is the way that seems right carefully thought through; it isn't given a good second thought. To be sure, human beings need guidance—guidance that is superior to human instinct and common intellect. As a child grows up it is in constant need of instruction and guidance from its parents. Good parents know that the best instruction for their children comes from the Bible; and they also know that they themselves need adult guidance found in the Word of God.

The way that seems right but ends up with undesired results with all hope shattered takes in both religious and non-religious folk. We know from Scripture that people can be religious and yet lost. In Messiah's time some of the most piously religious people were sharply condemned by the Master (see Matt. 23).

Jesus also warned in Matthew 24 that "many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ (holding Him up as the Christ), and shall deceive many." There are dozens of churches that preach about the Messiah and that declare Him to be the Saviour, and at the same time teach various doctrines He did not teach. To proclaim Him "Lord" and not do the things He taught (Luke 6:46), isn't what the Father wants. Wouldn't you say that those who set aside any of God's commandments, or who substitute man-made doctrine displacing Bible doctrine are deceived? Are those who follow them also deceived?

Isn't it true that many church people take for granted that what they have been taught from childhood and up is all truth and sufficient to bring them salvation? And isn't it true that the large percent of these folk never really study in depth to see if what they have been taught is actually in harmony with the Holy Scriptures? However, we know no one who has a full understanding of all the Bible. There is more to learn. We must be openminded and tolerant toward others. We should know the Scriptures well enough so we will not be misled.

But most people are no longer willing to be martyrs for truth. They, in fact, are not willing to suffer for anything, much less for the truth.

Most of the people of the world would find it very inconvenient to learn the truth about their religion. It is one thing to think you are willing to give up any or everything for our Lord— it is quite another thing actually to begin to make the changes that are sometimes necessary to conform to the will of the Almighty. The time will come when people will not "endure" sound doctrine. Endure means suffer in order to uphold it. You do not "endure" pleasant things. This implies the fact that for many people it is a task to be obedient to the truth. You should not be surprised, then, to find it very difficult to do the will of God at times.

The Holy Scriptures say: "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour: Who will have all men saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:3,4).

Prove the things in this book. When you put it down, you'll still have to face this old world. But the world will be a different place than it was when you picked it up—if you'll do your part.

May the Holy Spirit accompany the reading and study of this book, as scripture is compared with scripture. May every heart be drawn nearer and nearer to God, through the precious truth of His infallible Word.

Chapter One

Mystery Babylon

Carved on tombs of long forgotten men of an age sunken in oblivion are yet to be found inscriptions such as "Reborn for eternity" and "Be of good cheer." These claimed spiritual rebirth through belief in a saviour and a supreme creator—yet their god was not the God of Abraham, and their 'saviour' was not the Hebrew Messiah. They had been baptized and initiated into the brotherhood or fellowship of their faith, made confession of their sins to their priest, offered prayers and pilgrimages, partaken of sacramental meals, and believed themselves, through faith in a 'saviour', to be promised immortality. These were the adherents of what were and are called today the Mystery Religions.

Their saviour-gods were gods of "sympathy." Aesculapius was styled "the greatest lover of men," as was also Serapis. Lucius addressed Isis in this manner, "Thou bestowest a mother's sweet love upon miserable mortals . . . thou dispellest the storms of life, and stretches" out thy right hand of salvation to struggling men." The Great Mother of Pessinum was by her loss and grief brought near to suffering mothers. The religious rites of almost all the numerous mystery religions were centered around a symbolic passion-drama that represented the trials and sufferings of the deity, in which joy succeeded grief and life was born of death.

These religions, present in the times of the apostles, were doubtless what Paul referred to in II Thessalonians 2 as the "mystery of iniquity." Their influence within the Roman Empire was seeking, by their very similarity to Christianity, to undermine the doctrines, laws, faith, and very existence of the Church of God.

In Revelation 17 the Apostle John was given a vision of what this influence would ultimately do to the vast majority of "so called" Christianity. Here this apostate church is called "Mystery, Babylon the Great." In Revelation 18 God's children are commanded to come out of the apostate church, and in Revelation 14 is found the fate of all those who do not come out of this false religious system.

When the message of Christ first went out, the Greeks had begun to abandon their religion (Polytheism) in search of a more rational faith.¹ Roman religion was a practical and patriotic "state" religion. Also a religion of Polytheism, it was a religion of the educated, both cold and formal. It became an instrument of government in the hands of the nobility.

Both Romans and Greeks, having largely lost faith in their national and ancestral gods, looked toward the religions of the East to satisfy their yearnings. They sought a personal religion to satisfy personal ends without reference to the State. Rome's interference in the affairs of the East brought her armies and merchants and officials into contact with the mystery-religions of the orientals, of which the "Great Mother" was a leading initial example. Thousands of orientals who travelled westward brought their mystery-gods with them. The Roman Senate sanctioned the energy of these cults, which the masses had accepted. Oriental mysticism and emotionalism gained official entry, and with them they brought astrology. ² "Such was the picture of the religious condition of Rome about the time when Jesus was born." ³

"The Chaldean Mysteries can be traced back to the days of Semiramis, who lived only a few centuries after the flood, and who is known to have impressed upon them the image of her own depraved and polluted mind. That beautiful but abandoned QUEEN OF BABYLON was not only herself a paragon of unbridled lust and licentiousness, but in the Mysteries which

she had a chief hand in forming, she was worshipped as Rhea, the Great "Mother" of the gods. With such atrocious rites as identified her with Venus, the Mother of all impurity, she raised the very city where she reigned to a bad eminence among the nations, as the grand seat at once of idolatry and consecrated prostitution."⁴

It would be tedious indeed to describe in detail all that has been handed down to us from different lands about the various names, rites, and legends of Nimrod, Semiramis, and Tammuz. It may be seen from the pages of history that all this mystery religion had to do as it gravitated from one culture to the next was to change her names and adapt to the local legends slightly— and she was "in business" again.

Semiramis, for instance, has been known in various countries as: The Great Mother, Venus, Astarte, Ishtar, Eostre, Aphrodite, the goddess of fertility, Cybele, Rhea, Dinogmene, and Isis. Tammuz has been known as Adon, Adonis, Horus, Kore, Deoius, and Jupiter.

Semiramis was the wife of Nimrod, who was the founder of Babylon, as we learn in Gen. 10:10. She taught the people that after he died he would take possession of the sun. She claimed that a full grown evergreen tree sprang overnight from a dead tree stump, which symbolised the springing forth unto new life of the dead Nimrod. She also claimed that on each anniversary of his death, Nimrod would visit the evergreen tree and leave gifts on it. The Christmas tree, exchanging gifts at Christmas, the burning of the yule log, the hanging of the mistletoe, the eating of the boar's head, and the Christmas goose all had their origin in Babylon.

Semiramis did not marry again after the death of Nimrod, but a few years after his death she gave birth to a son called Tammuz. She claimed that the spirit of the sun, her husband Nimrod, was the father of Tammuz. And so . . . he was considered the "son of the sun." He became a great hunter like his supposed father Nimrod. Adam Clark states that Tammuz (called Adonis in the Vulgate) was fabled to have been a beautiful youth beloved by Venus (Semiramis), who was killed by a wild boar in Mount Lebanon. The women of Phoenicia, Assyria, and Judea worshipped him as dead with deep lamentation. Tammuz signifies "hidden" or "obscure," and hence the worship of his image was in some secret place.⁵

The forty days before the time of the celebration for the moon were set apart as days of weeping for Tammuz, (see Ezekiel 8:14). Dr. M. F. Ungar states that "He departed to the nether world, being recovered by the wailing Ishtar. Bursting buds of springtime marked his return to the upper world. The Greek counterpart of Tammuz was Adonis and the Egyptian, Osiris. Tammuz cults are thought to be referred to in Jer. 22:19; Amos 8:10; and Zech. 12:10."⁶

"The Babylonians in their popular religion, supremely worshipped a goddess mother and a son, who was represented in pictures and in images as an infant or child in his mother's arms. From Babylon, this worship of the Mother and the Child spread to the ends of the earth. In Egypt, the Mother and the Child were worshipped under the names of Isis and Osiris. In India, even to this day, as Isi and Iswara; in Asia, as Cybele and Deoius; in Pagan Rome, as Fortuna and Jupiter-puer, or Jupiter, the boy; in Greece, as Ceres, the Great Mother, with the babe at her breast, or as Irene, the goddess of Peace, with the boy Plutus in her arms; and even in Tibet, in China, and Japan, the Jesuit Missionaries were astonished to find the counterpart of Madonna and her Child devoutly worshipped."⁷

Pagan Festivals

The winter solstice was celebrated in Babylon as the birth date of Tammuz . . . the winter solstice being the beginning of winter when the sun is the maximum distance from the

equator, (the latter part of December). This was the time when Nimrod would visit the evergreen tree and leave gifts upon it. This was the shortest day of the year and the time when the pagans celebrated the return of the sun, as the days would begin to grow longer. Semiramis would be worshipped as the "Queen of Heaven" and her son as the "Divine Son of Heaven." This festival became known as the Saturnalia, when friends and family exchanged gifts.⁸ The winter solstice, or the "nativity of the sun" was also celebrated by the Persians as the birthday of their god, Mithra. When the festival began to be celebrated at Rome it was called the feast of Saturn, and lasted five days. In both Rome and Babylon it became a drunken festival.⁹

The spring festival, (at the time of the vernal equinox when the day and night are most nearly equal), was the celebration of Tammuz' return from the underworld. His mother was so evil that it is said that she married her own son! Inscribed on the monuments of ancient Egypt are inscriptions saying that Tammuz (the Egyptians called him Osiris or Horus) was "the husband of his mother." According to the legend, when Tammuz was killed, she was grief-stricken and followed him to the underworld to the realm of Eresh-Kigal, queen of the dead. In her absence, the earth lost its fertility, crops ceased to grow, and animals ceased mating—all life was threatened. Then Ea, god of water and wisdom, sent a messenger from heaven to the underworld to bring back Ishtar, or Semiramis. The messenger sprinkled her and Tammuz with the water of life, giving them power to return to the light of the sun for six months of the year. Each year, therefore, Tammuz would again return to the realm of the dead for six months, Semiramis would pursue him, and her grief would move Ea to rescue them. The legend underwent many changes in its passage to other countries, but the essential theme of autumnal death and vernal resurrection remained.

On the eve of the celebration of this legend the people offered sacrifices to Semiramis (or Ishtar) and then retired until early morning. On this morning, a Sunday, sometime before dawn, everyone would meet again outside with their faces to the East—toward the rising sun—praising their goddess for bringing them the long-awaited first day of spring. ¹⁰

The weekly festival of the keeping of the "Day of the Sun" and sun worship is also among the most ancient of festivals. The 1971 World Almanac mentions on page 769 that this worship was introduced into Egypt in 1360 B.C. 'The Hebrews must have been well acquainted with the idolatrous worship of the sun during the captivity in Egypt, both from the contiguity of On, the chief seat of the worship of the sun as implied in the name itself (On—the Hebrew Beth-shemesh, 'house of the sun,' Jer. 43: 13), and also from the connection between Joseph and Potipherah ('he who belongs to Re'), the priest of On (Gen. 41 :45). After their removal to Canaan the Hebrews came in contact with various forms of idolatry, which originated in the worship of the sun; such as the Baal of the Phoenicians, the Molech or Milcom of the Ammonites, and the Hadad of the Syrians."¹¹

It is noteworthy that even before Israel became a people, God had given His laws to Abraham (Gen. 26:5). However, after the long captivity in Egypt, where slaves worked on the Sabbath and the sun was worshipped; the Israelites had to be reminded of what day the Sabbath was—even before the Ten Commandments were given on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 15:26; 16:25-30). We find however, in 2 Kings 23:4,5 and Ezekiel 8:13-16, that a portion of the Israelites returned to keeping Sunday after having been instructed to keep the seventh day again on Mt. Sinai.

Webster's Unabridged Dictionary defines Sunday: "So called because this day was anciently dedicated to the sun or to its worship. The first day of the week; the Christian Sabbath; a day consecrated to rest from secular employment, and to religious worship, the Lord's day." The old edition of the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia states: "Sunday (Dies Solis of the Roman Calendar, the day of the sun; because dedicated to the sun), the first day of the week, was

adopted by the early Christians as a day of worship. The 'Sun' of Latin adoration, they interpreted as the Sun of Righteousness. . .

"Towards the end of the first century A.D., Mithraism began to make its influence felt in Rome and the western provinces, and from that time it spread with great rapidity." Mithraism contested with the other mysteries and with Christianity for the religious hegemony of the Roman world. The Church Fathers were astounded at the resemblances. It is said that Roman roads were dotted with Mithraic sanctuaries, attested by inscriptions like "Soli invicto Mithrae," (to the sun, invincible Mithra).¹²

Pagan Worship

The Mysteries were religions of symbolism. Through myth and allegory, iconic representations, blazing lights and dense darkness, liturgies and sacramental acts, and suggestion, the heart was quickened and a mystical experience was felt by the individual.

The Mysteries were also religions of redemption which professed to remove estrangement between man and God, leading to a hope of life after death. They procured forgiveness of sins and furnished meditation. They tried to satisfy the desire for the knowledge of God. Every mystery religion imparted a "secret," a knowledge of the life of the deity and a means of union with him. They appealed primarily to the emotions. "To understand the quality and intensity of the impression, we should borrow something from the modern experiences of Christian communion service, mass, and passion play, and bear in mind also the extraordinary susceptibility of the Greek mind to an artistically impressive pageant."¹³

Individuals were admitted into the fellowship of the Mysteries only after an initiation. They were sworn to perpetual secrecy as to what was said and transacted behind closed doors. It was a crime of the most heinous character to divulge the Mystery-secrets. ¹⁴

Confession was also a part of the Mysteries. There is ample evidence that the Samothracian, Lydian, Phrygian, Syrian, and Egyptian Mysteries anticipated the Catholicism in the establishment of a Confessional.¹⁵ The priests acted as representatives of the Mystery-god, exacting confessions which were sometimes even made public or recorded on a public stone.

Baptisms or lustral purifications were required. Tertullian states that "in certain Mysteries, e.g. of Isis and Mithra it is by baptism that members are initiated . . . in the Apollinarian and Eueusianian rites they are baptised, and they imagine that the result of this baptism is regeneration and the remission of the penalties of their sins."¹⁶ Both the "bath of purification" and the "baptism of sprinkling" were used.

The Purpose of Mystery Babylon

These early forms of "Mystery-Religions," as they existed in the beginning years of the Christian Church, naturally exerted an influence upon the whole empire-and also upon the vast majority of the "Christian" community.

The Scriptures speak of different mysteries; such as the mystery of godliness, the mystery of the faith, the mystery of the Kingdom, the mystery of iniquity, the mystery of God, and finally, the mystery of Babylon, or "Mystery, Babylon the Great." But one by one these mysteries are resolved in the Holy Scriptures themselves. They are not suggested and

introduced and then left unsolved and unanswered, leaving the reader in a state of unsolved confusion.

It is said, "Unto you is it given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven" (Malt. 13: 11). Unlike the pagan mysteries, whose purpose is ambiguous; the mysteries of the Holy Scriptures have to do with the unfolding of the eternal purpose

Before the Messiah ever came, the counterfeit Christ's sacrifice had been worked out by the devil. This counterfeit system centered around a woman who had no husband, but gave birth to a child. In defending herself she may have said, "Oh, the spirit of the sun-god came down and overshadowed me and I had a child." Do you see the counterfeit of the virgin birth? This son hater was killed, possibly crucified, and later rose again-or so she claimed. Here was a counterfeit right down the line.

By the time the Messiah came into the world, the mysteries of ancient Babylon had already blanketed the entire Mediterranean world and were everywhere holding sway. These mysteries had been sanctified by time and made popular by usage. The purpose of our Lord was not just to die for the sins of the world, but of necessity He also had to be a teacher of true religion. It was His mission to bring the true light of God to the darkened hearts of men. The Lamb of God stated that His doctrine was not His own, but was His that had sent him (John 7:16). In making this statement our Lord made it clear to His hearers that His message had originated in Heaven and that He had NOT BORROWED FROM ANY BABYLONIAN SOURCE. The Messiah and His apostles reflected the pure light of truth from Heaven in a way that man-made systems of human religion have never been able to do.

The purple and scarlet clothed woman that rides upon the Even-headed beast of Revelation 17 is no stranger to the Church of God. God's people today and through all the ages have had to do battle with her in their right to live and worship the One True God. In every age the saints of Old and New Covenant times have been exposed to her wrath and vindictiveness, and her false whose purpose is ambiguous; the mysteries of the Holy Scriptures have to do with the unfolding of the eternal purpose of God.

Before the Messiah ever came, the counterfeit Christ's sacrifice doctrines referred to by John as "the filthiness of her fornication" (Rev. 17:4).

The Pontifex Maximus (High Priest of the Mysteries) and the priests of the religious systems of the world have never found it difficult to switch allegiances. As one civilisation dies, all they (the mother of harlots and the harlots of Mystery, Babylon Rev. 17:5) have had to do was to change clothes and adopt new names, and they were "in business" again. Each succeeding civilisation has had the benefit of the inherited knowledge of the previous age. Thus they have been able to build a more subtle system in their day than in the former.

When one confronts the twentieth century system of Babylon, he is facing all the accumulated knowledge of the past forty-five hundred years, and the false doctrines he seeks to expose have developed over this same period. The Babylon of our day is the fullness and perfection of all the past teachings of the age-old paganisms and the present day papal position.

As one looks upon the "religious " scene today, he is appalled at the confusion that exists among the hundreds of sects and denominations within present day "Christianity." All these groups state that they are right-and that the other groups are wrong. Truly, all their ideas on any given topic put in one bag would not be very symphonic. Because of this confusion, (or Babylon, which means confusion), many have turned away from the Creator and any form of religion-feeling that there is no way for them to learn the REAL truth. Denominations today

seem to be hiding the truth among themselves rather than publishing it. We today must seek after TRUTH, rather than a "good denomination" to belong to. When we have the TRUTH, and hold fast to it, we have become a part of the "Tarry Church"—the Church of God. Only one system of belief will do, and that is the faith delivered to the "Early Church" untainted by the confusion and filth of the Babylonian Mystery system; as it was received from the Lamb of God, and as it came in its fullness in the upper room on the day of Pentecost some nineteen hundred years ago.

No, not many faiths, for the children of the Lord are to be one. Paul said in Romans 15:6 "That ye may with ONE MIND and ONE MOUTH glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." In Philippians 1:27 Paul says that we are to ". . . stand fast in ONE SPIRIT, with ONE MIND striving together for the faith of the gospel." Paul and Apollos were—one! (I Cor. 3:8). Division is the mark of carnality, and "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8:7). Our Lord prayed for oneness and unity in John 17; a unity of hearts, not organisations.

The Way of Truth Shall Be Evil Spoken of

Since God's chief weapon is truth, you may expect Satan's chief weapon to be falsehood. This may be confirmed by John 8:44,45: "You are from the father of accusation, and you want to do the lusts of your father, he who is a murderer of men from the very beginning and who never stands by the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks he speaks his own lie, because he is a liar, and the father of lies. But because I speak the deliver truth, you do not believe me" (Lamsa).

When a man becomes a member of a false religious system— and knowingly accepts the false doctrines of that system—he is apart from the army of the Lord. He becomes a child of the devil, and will have to become a liar in order to do the works of his father. You may expect him to bring false accusations against God's children. Satan has different agencies to lead people astray, discourage and entice them into all kinds of worldliness and then harden them so that they come to believe the lies they have been blight and teach others: "For this reason God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that all who did not believe in the truth but preferred unrighteousness might be damned" (2 Thess. 2:11, 12 Lamsa).

In II Corinthians 1: 12-15 we learn of false ministers: "But what I do, I will continue to do, so as to give no occasion to those who seek an occasion; and that, in whatever they boast, they may not be found equal to us; for they are false apostles and deceitful workers, posing as apostles of Christ. There is no marvel in this; for if Satan disguises himself as the angel of light, it is no great thing if his ministers also pose as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works" (Lamsa). II Peter 2:1-3 says: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord who has redeemed them, and thus bringing upon themselves swift destruction. Many will follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom evil will be spoken of the way of truth. And through covetousness they will exploit you with feigned words, whose judgment from the very beginning has not ceased and their damnation is always active." (Lamsa).

In all their pernicious and crooked ways you should expect to find the ministers of Satan attacking and speaking evil of the way of truth.

The Bible gives us examples of this type of false accusation. In Numbers 16 we find that Korah, with 250 famous men (Princes) confronted Moses and Aaron, saying: "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is

among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

The Lord had chosen the tribe of Levi to be priests, but these men wanted that prestige for themselves. In verse 5 and verse 12 Moses challenged Korah and his leaders for a "show-down" before the Lord the next day. In return (verses 13, 14) Korah blamed Moses for leading them into the wilderness, and accused Moses of lying to the people.

The Lord destroyed Korah and all his leaders (verses 32, 33). But the congregation then accused Moses and Aaron of killing the leaders along with Korah. This brought a plague which destroyed fourteen thousand seven hundred of the congregation. They were put to a second test with rods, and the Lord commanded that Aaron's rod be put in the Tabernacle of Testimony for a witness against the rebels (Numbers 17:1-10).

Because these men gave place to the devil and lied against Moses in order to gain a following, fourteen thousand seven hundred of the people were destroyed and two hundred fifty men of renown in Israel went down with Korah. This was not for just money; but also because of greed for power and leadership. There are many other examples in the Holy Scriptures where Satan has directed his accusations against the children of God, and attempted to pervert the acceptable worship of the Almighty into a travesty. We then, should not expect him to change his tactics in modern times, but look for him to be MORE deadly in his attack of falsehood and false accusation against God's people and their beliefs.

Be always on guard against this adversary and heed the advice given in I Peter 5:8: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

There is to be "One Lord, one Faith, one baptism." This is not Satan's way, he seeks confusion. Confusion hides Truth. Confusion holds multitudes back from salvation. In Revelation 18 we are called to come out of this confusion, this false church, this sick system, this Babylon: "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." God's people (those who have not come out) are within this false system. If they were not within this false system, Holy Scripture would not instruct them to come out. To fail to come out of this system in these last days before Messiah's return is to share the fate of the system itself. These shall "drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev. 14:10).

This false system with its leader, the "Pontifex Maximus," has sought to "change times and laws" (Dan 7:25). Thereby may we identify him today. Over fifty years after Messiah returned to the Father, the Holy Scriptures teach us plainly, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). It would be highly inconsistent and without reason or logic to say this had reference to an abolished law.

It is not sin to disregard an abrogated law, but it is sin to violate the Ten Commandments in these days of grace.

God's Word has nowhere replaced the Sabbath of the Commandment with Sunday, the ancient sun worship. The Almighty has never sanctioned the keeping of Easter, the spring festival instituted by Semiramis, Queen of Babylon. Lent (the days of weeping for Tammuz, son of Semiramis) is not for God's children. Christmas (the Saturnalia, when Tammuz was worshipped on his birthday as the "Divine Son of Heaven") is a travesty of the highest magnitude. Prayers to the Great Mother Semiramis (called the Virgin Mary by those who kneel before her idol) are an abomination.

We shall presently study further to see how these things came about as a departure from the faith of the "early Church." "Here is that patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

Chapter Two

The New Apostacy

Why has God allowed a counterfeit religious system to exist? Why does God permit troubles, trials, and tribulations in this world? Why must God's children suffer? We may blame all the trouble on sin; but where did sin come from? We can blame it all on the Devil, but where did he come from? Did a good God create a bad Devil? Did God know Adam and Eve would yield to temptation? Or was the fall of man a surprise to God?

In seeking to understand these things we must recognize that it was the Father's plan for each of us to have a right to choose. We were not created as mechanical men—as though all of our actions were to be made by remote control—with some higher "Being" at the controls. The Creator desired a people who would serve Him; not because He forced them to, but because they chose to do so. Adam had a choice. We have a choice. Some reject. The Father said: "I have set before you life and death . . . CHOOSE life" (Duet. 30:19). "CHOOSE you this day whom ye wilt serve" (Joshua 25:15).

If one held a book in his hand and said to you: "I will give you either book you want; take your choice," you might answer something like this: "What do you mean 'take my choice?' You only have one book in your hand!" Obviously, if only one thing is offered, there is no choice. But, if someone had two different books, then you would have a choice. You would be able to choose.

So, likewise, in order for us to choose; TWO different systems are very active throughout the world in millions of ways. There is true religion, and false religion; good and evil; light and darkness; filth and purity; right and wrong; truth and error.

We could not know the Lord as our Saviour or Messiah had we not been sinners. We could not be saved if we had never been lost! We could not be healed if we were never sick! Could we attain victory without knowing defeat? We never appreciate the mountaintop until we have been through the valley. We are thankful for the light of day because we have known the night. At times the Lord must even crush His saints to make them more tender and kind. If we are not corrected by the Lord, then we are not really His sons (Hebrews 12:6-11). We are even told that the Son of God was made perfect through the things which He suffered! "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered: and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:8,9). "He was made perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10). Yet we think it strange that we should experience trials as a Christian! Peter wrote that we should not regard such as a "strange thing," but rather as an occasion to rejoice (I Peter 4:12). "For we know that all things"—even trials—"work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Sometimes we may find it hard to believe that all things can work together for good. It may even appear that Satan has dealt a real blow against us. But he can go no further than God allows him. In the end, God gets the glory, Satan is defeated, and we have learned a valuable lesson.

A Biblical example of how misfortune actually worked together for good is seen in the case of Paul and Silas. Being thrown into a dungeon-like prison, falsely accused, and with backs bleeding, it looked as though hope for the future was dim. Who inspired their imprisonment? It must have been the work of Satan—or was it? If so, it could only be because the Almighty permitted it! In jail they would meet a jailer who, after seeing a manifestation of God's power, would cry out for salvation! By natural reasoning, we might suppose a rough and mean jailer would be the last to accept the Messiah. But, being converted, we can see that his

testimony would carry special weight. And this is exactly what happened. The jailer, as well as his family, was converted. This was the beginning of a church that was established there!

In order to reach the jailer, Paul and Silas needed to be in the jail. In order for the jailer to see the miracle of them being loosed, they first had to be bound. It looked at first as though Satan had gained a victory. But God, who knows the end from the beginning, is always a step ahead. In the end, Satan was put down, God was glorified, and all these things worked together for good.

The Lamb of God said: "ALL POWER is given me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). If He has all power—then the only power with which Satan can operate is power the Almighty allows him to use. Since the Father IS ALL MIGHTY, He either does or allows every single thing that has been done, is done, or will be done! He is supreme. No wonder we read repeatedly in the Scriptures that "All things are of God" (II Cor. 5:18). If we can only accept this grand truth, we will have discovered the cure for worry and fear! We can understand how all things work together for good. This is why the Scripture can say: "In every thing give thanks" (I Thess. 5: 18).

But what about world events? We should all have confidence that no nation or ruler can do one thing God does not permit. During our Lord's trial, Pilate said: "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee?" But the Lamb of God replied: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:10,11). Uninspired religionists plotted the crucifixion of our Lord. He was considered an outcast from family, a traitor to country, and a heretic by religion. He who came to bring LIFE was now condemned to death! Finally He was crucified and died. Satan could have said: "At last I have won a great victory; Messiah is dead!" But what seemed to be Satan's finest hour—the death of the Son of God—was actually the very thing which forever defeated Satan and sin! Through His death, burial, and resurrection, we can have life—everlasting.

Some have pictured the Devil as sneaking into the Garden of Eden when the Father's back was turned—as though He who sees all things could not see this! And then some would have us believe that when God came into the garden for His walk, He was horrified, surprised, or shocked His creation had fallen into sin! But the fall in Eden was no surprise to God. The Almighty knew there would be a fall. He knew that sin would enter in. Why else would He have planned our redemption even before the foundation of the world?

Our salvation is the result of "His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus BEFORE the world began" (II Tim. 1:9). Was Satan at any time or place one step ahead of the Almighty? Hardly, for long before the fall—before the world began—it was all in the divine plan how lost men would receive redemption through the Messiah.

GOD DESIRES A PEOPLE WHO WILL DO HIS WILL BY CHOICE.

In order for man to choose, there had to be two different systems. Each of these systems had to have a leader. God is the leader of good, but there needed to be an opposite of God—a devil. Only by understanding this may we understand the reason for the existence of Satan and the false religious system.

The Father still has all things in complete control; and so it is that "all things work together for good to them that love the Lord!"

The Apostasy Begins

For all those of us who DO love the Lord and wish to do His will, it's only logical to investigate the basis of our beliefs and modes of worship; to insure that our worship is acceptable to the Eternal, and will result in our salvation.

If someone approached you and held out his hand, offering you a thousand dollars, you would have a number of questions. You would want to know why he offered the money, who he was, why he was offering the money to you in particular, and what he expected of you in return.

So it is in the Christian life. Every one of the Father's children owes it to himself to know why he believes as he does and why he responds as he does to his convictions. He should seek to know what the Holy Scriptures say about the way he thinks and acts; because the Inspired Scriptures are the Christians' final authority. We do so much without really knowing why. We are born into a world filled with practices which regulate social and religious life. We grow up participating in them, many times never taking the time or trouble to investigate why we do so. We are prone to take things for granted, persuaded that we are meeting with the approval of our Heavenly Father, but since we find that "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12), it would be a good safeguard to re-examine our thinking once in a while.

Looking back to the middle of the second century we find that the relationship between the Jews and Christians, primarily of a social and political nature, was Satan's tool in causing the forsaking of the Sabbath and adopting of Sunday as a new day of worship.

History is Altered

One of the most damaging heresies of this time was the teaching that the Jews had been completely responsible for the murder of the Messiah. To solidify this teaching, Pilate had to be exonerated and all blame shifted to the Jews. This was done by changing the historical records.

The Roman historian Tacitus had plainly said: "Christus, the founder of that name, was put to death as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberias (Annals, 15, 44).

Justin Martyr changed by to under, and declared: "This very Son of God . . . was crucified under Pontius Pilate by your (Jewish) nation" (Dialogue with Trypho).

The Greek writing called The Acts of Pilate has Pilate summoning the Jews and saying to them, "You know that my wife is a worshipper of God, and prefers to adhere to the Jewish religion along with you." Subsequently, Pilate's wife became identified in Christian writings as the Claudia who saluted Timothy from Rome (II Tim. 4:21). About 200 A.D. the noted Tertullian concluded: "And now in fact a Christian in his own convictions, Pilate sent word of Him to the reigning Caesar, who was at the time Tiberias" (Ante-Nicene Fathers, III, p. 35). With Pilate exonerated, the Jews could be fully blamed for the death of Messiah. Since the Council of Nicea later determined Him to be "very God of very God," the Jews were branded as "God's murderers."

Hebrew Church and Synagogue Separated

After the army of Titus had levered Jerusalem and sent the Jews into the Diaspora, the bond of a mutual heritage and faith held both the Jews and the Messianic Jews together.

Believers in the Messiah continued to meet and worship in the Jewish synagogues of the Diaspora.

These Jewish colonies revolted during the reign of Emperor Hadrian about 113 A.D.; only a few years after the book of Revelation was sent by the apostle John to the churches in Asia. This rebellion against Rome was led by Simon bar Kochba.

Bar Kochba, spurred on by Rabbi Akiba, won battle after battle; even defeating General Severus' 35,000 crack troops in Palestine.

On the strength of this victory Rabbi Akiba declared bar Kochba to be the Jewish Messiah. At this point the Jewish believers in Yeshua (Jesus) refused to fight under bar Kochba's banner and pulled out of the war-refusing to fight for one of the prophesied "false christs." In this manner the Church and the Synagogue were finally separated. From this time on, Hebrew Christians were ostracised, expelled from the synagogues, and forced to live outside the Jewish communities. Not for nineteen centuries, until 1976, did there exist a Hebrew synagogue, built by Jews, where Yeshua was worshipped as the Messiah.

General Hatred Presides

Gentile Christians began to malign the Jews who had rejected their Messiah and in return, the Jews in their synagogues, began to daily pronounce a curse upon the Christians. Justin Martyr reminded Trypho: "To the utmost of your power you dishonor and curse in your synagogues all those who believe in Christ. . . In your synagogues you curse all those who through them have become Christians, and the Gentiles put into effect your curse by killing all those who merely admit that they are Christians."¹

Such strong resentment against the Jews led Christians like Justin to strike out against things sacred to the Jews like the Sabbath and the Holy Days. These Sabbaths and Holy Days came to be MARKS ON THE JEWS, used to single them out for punishment, supposedly because they had rejected and killed the Messiah. The Gentile Christians felt themselves driven to search for a new day of worship and also to seek another time to remember the Passion of our Lord which would not fall on the "Jewish" Passover.

Initially, the faith in the Messiah was a completely Jewish faith. All the believers were Jewish; even the writers of the New Testament were Jewish; the Apostle Paul himself being a Jewish rabbi. Both the New Testament and history records that these Messianic Jews continued to be Jews, remaining highly loyal to their land, people, and God-given laws.

The question at that time was not whether a Jew could believe in the Messiah, but whether a Gentile could follow Him without having to convert and become a Jew! It took a great vision to Peter, and a spiritual giant of a man named Paul to finally open the doors to the Gentiles. The members of nearly every nation in the Roman Empire poured into the faith, accepting the "Jewish " Messiah.

The Jewish believers soon became a minority, and many of the Gentile believers began to raise questions concerning the "Jewishness" of the faith and God's covenant relationship with His people. Eventually a strong "de-Judaizing" process set in which would not only strip the faith of its Jewish roots, but would also lead the majority into an apostate form of Christianity.

Until this "de-Judaizing" process set in, both the Hebrew and Gentile Christians had observed the Sabbath, and had observed the time of the Passover in memory of the Lord's suffering and sacrifice. It was at this time, Passover, that the early Christians had observed

the Lord's Supper(see appendix "A," Easter).²

The Babylonian Mystery religion had already blanketed the empire. Satan had paved the way for the entrance of "Sun" day worship, and the observance of the pagan Spring Festival. The Mystery Religion had again begun to change her names and adapt to a new culture.

When the heathen found that all they would have to do in order to become a part of the prevailing church of the time was to accept different names for their rites and modes of worship, they became ready "converts."

It was probably in Rome that Easter Sunday originated in order for the "Christians" to separate themselves, as Constantine said, "from the detestable company of the Jews, for it is truly shameful for us to hear them boast that without their direction we could not keep this feast."³

Easter was probably first observed in Rome as a "Christian" day about 120 A.D. because Irenaeus (see appendix "B") mentions Bishop Sixtus (116-125 A.D.) as the first non-observant of the quarto-deciman Passover at that time. Victor, Bishop of Rome (189-199 A.D.), later intensified the controversy with Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus. Victor held to the observance of Easter Sunday, while Polycrates, representing the churches of Asia, held strongly to the observance of the quarto-deciman Passover. Quarto-deciman was the term given by the Sunday-keepers to those keeping the time of the Passover on the 14th of the first Jewish month as prescribed in Exodus 12:2; 12:14; 13:4 and Luke 22: 15, 16. Polycrates claimed to possess the genuine apostolic tradition transmitted to him by the apostles Phillip and John, under whose guidance he had accepted the Faith.

Polycarp, the venerable bishop of Symrna, visited Rome to try to induce Anicetus to keep Passover in the quarto-deciman manner as he also had learned from the apostle John 4 (see appendix "C"). As a disciple and companion of the apostle John, he contended for the practice of celebrating the time of the Jewish Passover regardless of the day of the week. Polycarp was martyred February 23, 155 A.D.

Truly had the apostle Paul written "Except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition . . . For the mystery of iniquity cloth already work: only he who letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way" (I Thess. 2:1-7). Paul also declared: "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29,30).

The controversy between East and West continued within the Church across the span of two centuries, with Rome continually growing in power and leadership. Their arguments Culminated in the first general church council, called by Emperor Constantine in 325 A.D. at Nicea. The emperor wanted to use the rapidly expanding Christian Religion, with its great potentialities' to strengthen the Roman Empire. He presided over the council, expressly proclaiming that his will was ecclesiastical law. The three hundred and eighteen bishops participating in the council accepted him as "Universal Bishop," even though he was uncrowned.

Constantine was completely ignorant of the Messiah's teachings. He was a follower of one of the most widespread MYSTERY CULTS himself-the cult of MITHRAS (the god of soldiers), who was portrayed on coins as the "invincible sun" and worshipped until far into the "Christian" era. Mithra had been declared "protector of the empire" in 304 A.D. In 307 A.D. Diocletian declared Mithra "patron" of the empire. Mithraism remained the religion of

the State until 321 A.D. when Emperor Constantine declared himself a "Christian" and that religion the religion of the State.⁵ Five years after the Council of Nicea, when he gave his name to the old Greek city of Byzantium and made Constantinople the capital of the Roman Empire, Constantine had a mighty column erected for the ceremonial opening of the metropolis with the Emperor and the INVINCIBLE SUN on top of it (forgetting all about the "Christian" religion). The Pontifex (Constantine) ordered that slaves caught pilfering food have molten lead poured down their throats; he also allowed parents to sell their children in time of need.⁶

Until the Council of Nicea, the doctrine of Arius of Alexandria that "God and Christ were not identical, but only similar," held good. The Emperor forced the Council to proclaim that "God the Father and Jesus were the same essence."

Rome, being stronger in numbers and in anti-Judaic motivations, was also able to place the time for the observance of Easter on the Sunday after the Passover (see appendix "D"). The Eastern churches had until this time observed the Passover once a year on the fourteenth of the first Jewish month, (Eusebius, Encyclopedia Britannica, and Mosheim's History of the Church). Observance of Easter at this new time was enjoined on all by the conciliar decree of the Council of Nicea: "All the brethren in the East who formerly celebrated Easter with the Jews, will henceforth keep it at the same time as the Romans, with us and with all those who from ancient times have celebrated the feast at the same time with us."⁷

This edict followed only four years after Constantine's decree in 321 A.D. concerning the observance of the "Venerable Day of the Sun;" as opposed to the Sabbath: "Let all the judges and town people, and the occupation of all trades, rest on the venerable day of the sun but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty attend to the business of agriculture because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines; lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted by heaven."

Only fifteen years after this "Sun-day" blue law was enacted by Constantine; the Roman Church, in the Council of Laodicea (336 A.D.), "transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." ⁸ Herein lies the conducive proof that "Sunday worship" comes to us directly from the Mystery cult of Mithras.

In Daniel 7:25 we learn that there would be a power rise that would "think to change times and laws." This power was to rule I for 1260 years. The Romish Church claims this power and cites the "change of the Sabbath" to prove it.

What kind of distortion takes place between academic teaching in theological schools and what is preached from the pulpit? Where does the brainwashing take place that causes the facts to be forgotten? Can this not be the "mystery of iniquity" in its latter day workings?

Summary

1. Satan inspired the ancient Queen of Babylon to institute a counterfeit of the true religion and plan of redemption.
2. The Scriptures in many places warn against accepting this counterfeit system of worship.
3. This counterfeit's prominent characteristics were: false worship of the sun and the "madonna and child."

4. Babylon's festival's were cantered around the sun: spring festival on the vernal equinox, winter festival on the winter solstice, and weekly sun worship on the first day of the week primarily honoring Tammuz (the Babylonian messiah) and his mother, Semiramis.
5. This form of false worship had spread over the entire Roman Empire by the time the apostles went out preaching the Gospel.
6. Satan had thus largely inserted a camel, human counterfeit into God's program of redemption.
7. God's word recognises this fact and admonishes us to choose the good rather than the evil.
8. The Father, by this means, allows us to become sons and I daughters by choice.
9. The ancient "Christian" leaders of Rome (just as the majority of today's clergy) failed to rise to this challenge-and thereby have perpetuated the mystery religion.
10. One by one the festival and doctrines of Mystery-Babylon were adopted by nominal Roman Christianity-the saints (both Hebrew and Gentile) being martyred for their opposition.

Chapter Three

Does Easter Commemorate the Resurrection?

It has been taught for centuries that our Lord was crucified on "Good Friday," laid in the tomb just before sunset, and that He arose very early on "Easter Sunday" morning. Tradition has so firmly planted that belief into the minds of most Christians that it is generally taken for a fact without serious investigation. This THEORY, although believed by many people, makes Messiah's only prophetic sign untrue.

Who Was Easter?

Surprising as it may seem, Easter was observed thousands of years before the advent of the Saviour, as we have already seen.

It is nothing more or less than the ancient spring festival of the Babylonian Mystery-Religion. "Easter" is merely the slightly changed English spelling of the name of the ancient Assyrian goddess Isobar. The word is pronounced today exactly as the Assyrians pronounced it then. Webster's Dictionary affirms that "Easter" comes from the name of the old Teuton goddess of spring. He states that the early Anglo-Saxon spelling was Eastre, the name of the "goddess of light or spring, in honor of whom a festival was celebrated in April." Catholic authorities agree. Hislop advises in *The Two Babylons* that Easter "bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the 'queen of heaven,' whose name' as pronounced by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country."

In the Holy Scriptures God condemns the worship of Astarte, the "queen of heaven," as one of the MOST ABOMINABLE OF ALL pagan idolatries. In Ezekiel 8:13-18 God SPECIFICALLY condemns sunrise services. Even the making of Easter "hot cross buns," is condemned in Jeremiah 7: 18-20; 44:19. Revealing the truth of Easter worship is an important piece of unfinished business—business that should have been finished by Martin Luther and others during the Reformation.

Would you consider it pleasing to the Almighty Father to use the names of pagan gods or goddesses, integrating them with Christian worship as long as we first somehow "Christen" or "sanctify," them—giving them a new meaning? Suppose we decide to make a holy day out of the day the Saviour was baptized? We don't know when that day was any more than folks know the day He was born; so we'd select a day the pagans used to hold a feast on, and call it "Dagon Day." Or we could change it a bit and call it "Dagoon Day." Maybe call it "Baal" or "Baalah Day" since Baal is supposed to mean Lord or Master. Would that be all right?

In reply to these questions you should observe that the Almighty plainly told His people, Israel, not to "mention of the name of other gods" (Ex. 23: 13 and Josh. 23:7). His people were to destroy all their (the heathen) pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quickly pluck down all their high places Num. 33:52). The Lord did not intend for Israel to then salvage the names of idols and use them in worshipping Him.

Since we have earlier in the text of this book identified Astarte, Ishtar, and Eostre as Semiramis, the Queen of Babylon, it should be obvious that Easter has come to us directly from Babylon. Does it now not come to be more obvious the already past fulfilment of the prophecy in Revelation 17:5,6? "And upon her forehead was a name written that not all could understand: BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND

ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great amazement" (Lamsa).

"Beware the Ides of March"

Easter isn't like other anniversaries and national holidays; to most people it's a "mystery" how its observance is computed. One usually needs some reference to know which "Sunday" is Easter. Last year's date for Easter is no clue as to when it will be observed this year. The Jews celebrated the Passover on the 14th of the first lunar (or Biblical) month (Lev. 23:5-7). As we have shown, the early Church adhered to this rule. Gentile Christians, however, wishing to divorce themselves from any seeming Hebrew custom, soon found it convenient to observe a different date (see appendix "D"). The Council of Nicea ordained in A.D. 325 that the celebration of Easter should henceforth always take place on the Sunday which immediately follows the full moon that happens upon or next after the day of the vernal equinox. Should the 14th of the first lunar month (Passover), which was regarded as the day of the full moon, happen on a Sunday, then the celebration of Easter was deferred to the Sunday following— in order to avoid concurrence with Jews and Christians keeping the time of the Passover. Previous to this Easter (marked on the calendar of Philocalus as *canna intrat*) had fallen on the Ides (15th) of March. The 25th of March (*Hilaria*) marked the resurrection of Attis.¹

Notice that observance of this rule of computation makes it necessary to reconcile three periods which do not have a common measure: the week, the lunar month, and the solar year.

Since this can only be accomplished approximately, the determination of Easter is an affair of considerable complication.

The Eastern churches, including the Orthodox and Africa's Coptic and Ethiopian Christian, compute Easter in a slightly different manner. In 1976 the Roman Catholic churches and Western Protestant churches observed Easter on the 18th of April, while the Eastern churches observed Easter one week later on April 25.

By coincidence, in 1977, both means of computation indicate Easter be marked on April 10th. Early in 1976 Msgr. Charles Moeller of the Secretariat for Christian Unity stated: "The proposal is to make it the rule from next year that Easter falls on Sunday following the second Saturday of the month." ² In May of 1975 Jan Cardinal Willebrands, of the Secretariat for Christian Unity had written to Catholic bishops, the World Council of Churches, and other Christian groups, asking for a single Easter date. This letter was published in the Vatican's Latin language gazette *Nortitiae*: "The Holy Father . . . has instructed me to inform the Orthodox churches, the Anglican Commission and the various creeds with a concrete proposal, that in 1977 all Christians according to their different calculations will celebrate Easter on April 10, the Sunday following the second Saturday of April."

The Pope (this time Pope Paul VI) has once again proposed to "change TIMES AND LAWS" (Dan. 7:25), proving further that he is the popover of the "anti-christ."

When Was The Lord Crucified and Resurrected?

If our Saviour was crucified on Friday, as is commonly taught, why do people believe that He was resurrected on Sunday? How can He have died on a Friday evening, remained in the grave THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS, and resurrected at sunrise on Sunday

morning?

First of all, people assume that Jesus Christ was crucified on Friday because Luke 23:54 tells that the day Joseph of Arimathaea took the body of Jesus off the cross (the same day He was crucified) was a preparation day. The Scriptures say of that day: "And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." Two verses later, the 56th verse says, "And they (the women which followed when He was crucified) returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment."

Next, people assume that our Lord was resurrected on the first day of the week because Mark 16:9 says: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."

Most all people would say: "Well, that ought to be plain enough for anyone! Everyone knows that the Jews were forbidden to do any work on the Sabbath, so they had to prepare for the Sabbath on Friday. This was what was meant by the 'preparation.'"—"And now when even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath" (Mark 15:42). Everyone knows what is meant by "resting the Sabbath day according to the commandment." Exodus 20:8-11 gives the commandment about the Sabbath: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work . . ."

At this point we would only caution that things which seem MOST obvious are not always the way they seem.

Mark 16:9 says simply, "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week..." In view of such very plain statements, why should ANYONE ever question whether Messiah was crucified on Friday and resurrected on Sunday?

The question might not come to mind except for Scriptures such as: "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign of thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall NO SIGN be given to it, BUT THE SIGN OF THE PROPHET JONAS: For as Jonas was THREE DAYS and THREE NIGHTS in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:38-40).

Some people will say "Didn't the Jews count part of a day as a whole day or part of a night as a whole night?" Whenever you have the expression "day and night" mentioned together in the Hebrew Scriptures, it ALWAYS means a full day and a full night (see Esther 4:16; 5:1; I Sam. 30:12-13).

The Son of God defined what a day is. If you will turn to John 11:9, you will find that Jesus our Lord said, "Are there not twelve hours in a day?" Well, if there are twelve hours in a day, then there are twelve hours in a night. Three days and three nights would have to be seventy two hours. Anything short of seventy two hours would not fulfill the type of Jonah or the words of our blessed Lord. If He were crucified on Friday, and Joseph of Arimathaea "when even was come," got the body of Messiah from the cross and put it in his own tomb, then the Messiah was in the heart of the earth (or in the tomb) only Friday night and Saturday night—two nights instead of three. He was in the tomb only Saturday, one day—

instead of three. This would be only ONE HALF the amount of time He was supposed to be there, according to His own prophecy!

Read further and notice from the account in John 20 that not even all of Saturday night could be counted, because "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, WHEN IT WAS YET DARK, UNTO THE SEPULCHRE, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre" (v. 1). It was still dark. This meant that since Messiah was then resurrected already, before the night was past, that it wouldn't even be HALF the time which the Messiah had prophesied! Note that: "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish THREE DAYS and THREE NIGHTS" (Jonah 1 :17).

Looking further, more information about the time of the "preparation day" may be observed: "And it was the preparation of the PASSOVER, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!" (John 19:14). This sheds more light on what was meant when the Scriptures state: "And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is the day before the Sabbath" (Mark 15:42).

Going to the Old Testament to find out what instructions were given about keeping the Passover, Leviticus 23:4-8 states: "These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their season. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: YE SHALL DO NOT SERVILE WORK THEREIN. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein."

Reading further in the same chapter: "Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; . . . And ye shall DO NO WORK in the same day . . . It shall be unto you a SABBATH OF REST, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath." "Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: ON THE FIRST DAY shall be a r SABBATH, and on the EIGHTH day shall be a SABBATH" (Lev. 23:27, 28, 32, 39).

This was MOST interesting: HERE was a commandment to keep a SABBATH-not just ONE Sabbath, but SEVERAL sabbaths. Now WHICH of these sabbaths did the women obey when they " . . . returned and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56)?

Since it may be seen that there was a "preparation day" for something other than the seventh day Sabbath, return to the nineteenth chapter of Luke and read: "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."

Here is an exciting clue! THAT SABBATH was an HIGH DAY! In other words, this was not just the seventh day Sabbath after all! What day was it? ". . . It was the preparation of the Passover . . . (John 19:14). According to Leviticus 23:7 the first day of "Unleavened Bread" was a SABBATH day

Now notice Matthew 28:1: "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." Since the Sabbath begins and ends at sunset, how could it be "in the end of the Sabbath" while it was

getting daylight Sunday morning?

Since this Scripture very evidently needs clarification, observe how the direct interlinear translation reads: "Now late on Sabbath, as it was getting dusk toward (the) first (day) of (the) week, came Mary the Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." 4

Perhaps a study of the Greek words which were translated in this verse would help. Two phrases in particular are of interest: "in the end of the Sabbath" and "as it began to dawn." The Greek words for the first phrase were: opse de sabbaton. The word opse was a word denoting time, or at the end of the time which might be named by another word. The word sabbaton was in the possessive case, like saying "the house of the president," showing that it belonged to the president. This obviously meant then, "the late part of the Sabbath." There was nothing wrong with that translation—"in the end of the Sabbath" was right, according to the usual usage of the word.

One Greek lexicon says about the word opse: ". . . followed by a genitive seems always to be partitive, denoting LATE IN THE PERIOD specified by the genitive" (and consequently still belonging to it). Hence in Matthew 28:1 "late on the Sabbath"—Thayer's Greek Lexicon, p. 471. The "genitive" means a form of a word in the Greek which equals "possessive" in English. In English, possession is usually shown by adding apostrophe "s," while the Greek and some other languages change the spelling of the word. Sabbaton in Matthew 28:1 makes that change.

The Greek words for the second phrase were: "te epiphoskouse eis." Epiphoskouse is used only twice in the New Testament. The other place it is used is in Luke 23:54: "And that day (when the Lord was crucified) was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." The words "drew on" were from epiphoskouse.

This verse stated definitely what it meant—that while one day was ending, the evening when Joseph of Arimathea placed Messiah's body in the tomb, another day (that Sabbath which followed the preparation day) was "drawing on" or approaching.

Now we must consider why Matthew 28:1 is translated "as it began to DAWN TOWARD the first (day) of the week." The matter is simple. Just as we say in our times, "It just dawned on me," meaning that we were just getting an idea but didn't have it clear yet, so it was that the Greeks used this word to mean that something was approaching but not there yet. Just as we have borrowed many things from Greek civilisation, so have we borrowed the expression "It just dawned on me" or "I see the light" meaning "I understand."

As "dawn" means the approach of day, so it began to mean the approach of anything. "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week" really makes good sense after all. "In the end of the Sabbath, as the first day of the week approached" was the real meaning. The way the word was used in Luke 23:54 to say "the Sabbath drew on" proves the meaning.

Now let's attempt to understand Mark 16:9, which states: ". . . Jesus was risen early the first day of the week." By comparing the four Gospels we learn:

How Many Women?

Matthew tells of TWO women going to the sepulchre: Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Mark tells about Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, THREE women going to the sepulchre. Luke tells about Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and OTHER women (there would have to be at least two more to be "women")

which meant at least FIVE women. John tells about Mary Magdalene only—ONE woman. That was strange—two women, three women, five or more women, and one woman.

Time of Visit

Matthew tells about an event which happened "in the end of the Sabbath." Mark tells about an event which happened "when the Sabbath was past" very early in the morning the first day of the week at the rising of the sun. Luke simply said, "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning." John said, "The first day of the week . . . when it was yet dark . . ." At least three definitely different times are mentioned: in the end of the Sabbath, while it was still dark Sunday morning, and at sunrise Sunday morning. The other statement—"very early"—could have been either while it was still dark, or at sunrise.

The Angels

Matthew tells about one angel sitting on the stone (outside the tomb), which he had rolled away. Mark tells of one angel sitting inside the tomb, on the right side. Luke tells about two angels appearing beside the women, standing, after the women entered the sepulchre. John tells about two angels, one sitting at the head, and the other sitting at the foot of where Messiah had lain while dead. Is this not peculiar: one gospel tells about an angel sitting on the rolled away stone, another gospel tells that one angel sat inside, another tells of two angels standing, appearing after the women came in, and the other tells about two angels sitting inside when Mary looked in!

Why the Women Came

One gospel, Matthew, tells that the women merely came "to see the sepulchre." Mark says that the three women came to anoint Messiah with spices. Luke says the five women came with spices to anoint Him. John simply says that Mary "came."

One thing is evident: if all these men were trying to tell the same story they certainly got it mixed up!

Is there any reason to assume that they ARE telling the same story? Are they not, in fact, telling about a most natural thing— that these women who went to the tomb in the afternoon of the Sabbath decided that they had not really seen our Lord after all. John 20:9 says: "For as yet they knew not the scriptures, that he must rise again," and "For he taught his disciples and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, shall rise the third day. BUT THEY UNDERSTOOD NOT THE SAYING, and were AFRAID TO ASK HIM" (Mark 9 :32).

It is not true that these women went repeatedly back to the tomb to see; each time bringing others more than before? The two Marys even saw Messiah in the end of the Sabbath, and went away rejoicing to tell the disciples. But when He did not appear with the disciples, Mary resumed early the next morning while it was still dark to see for sure what the situation was. She decided that the Messiah had simply been carried away and wondered where they had laid Him. She went and told the disciples that this was what had happened. Two of the disciples came to the sepulchre, saw that He was not there, and went away. Mark remained after they left, and the Lamb of God appeared to her again.

The Lord had even allowed her to touch Him the afternoon before, but at this time He would not. Evidently, unbelief is not even cured by sight or touch when it is too strange a thing

causing the disbelief. "

Messiah explained that He had not yet appeared in the presence of the Father, so He would not allow her to touch Him any more until He had.

Mary had been there Sabbath afternoon; she came while it was still dark next morning. She went to tell the disciples and returned. She saw the Lord as Mark 16:9 says: ". . . when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week he appeared first to Mary Magdalene . . ." Mary went again to return with the other women-once with the mother of James and Salome and another time with these women, Joanna, and others. This is NOT a discrepancy in the stories; it is merely the telling of details remembered by one and details remembered by another. Put together they make a picture of what we too would do to verify so unusual an experience-the raising of the dead!

But that scripture, Mark 16:9: how does one understand it? If you noticed, while quoting it above, the commas were left out.

When the Greek manuscript was written, there were NO punctuation marks of ANY kind. Punctuation, a much later invention, can make a DRASTIC difference in the meaning of a statement. SOMEONE had to decide where all the periods colons, semicolons, commas, and parentheses were to be placed.

You may have noticed that at the time the King James version was written, quotation marks were not yet invented, and our Bibles are still written that way. Let's experiment with punctuation a little in Mark 16:9 and see what happens. If this results in making agreement between this scripture and the plain teaching of the rest of the Scriptures, it is legitimate to make the change. HOWEVER, one should make a VERY careful distinction between doing this to find the truth and harmony of one scripture with another and doing this to harmonize the Scriptures with his OWN thoughts. THAT is NOT legitimate.

Here is the King James version of Mark 16:9: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."

Compare that with this punctuation: "Now when Jesus was risen, early the first day of the week he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils." The King James way tells when Jesus was resurrected. These saw Him first on Sunday.

This would agree with Matthew 28, for that scripture says that two women saw Him in the end of the Sabbath, which would not harmonize with the statement in Mark 16:9 as punctuated in the King James version, for the King James punctuation clearly implies a Sunday morning resurrection - not at all possible if He had already appeared to the two Marys on Sabbath afternoon.

If each Mary saw Him at the same time on Sabbath afternoon, then He could not have appeared "first " to Mary Magdalene on Sunday morning.

But, if this refers ONLY to who saw Him first on Sunday morning, and NOT to who saw him FIRST, then perfect harmony exists.

To this point we have established the fact that Messiah was resurrected in the end of the Sabbath, and not on Sunday morning. This was the proposition we offered to substantiate; but if we stop here we leave a very big question unsolved: what about the three days and

three nights?

We have noticed two things which make sense: Jesus was placed in the tomb in the afternoon, and He was RESURRECTED in the afternoon. THAT is what a person should expect, for three days and three nights later would come out at the SAME TIME OF THE DAY.

It really didn't make sense to expect Him to be resurrected in the morning, if He was crucified in the afternoon, anyway. A day and a night later would be the first afternoon later-three would be the third afternoon later.

Look back now to a prophecy relating to the crucifixion of the Lord. Daniel 9:27 says: "And He (the Messiah mentioned in verse 26) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the MIDST of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease . . ." Since there are seven days in a week and Sunday is the first day of the week-naturally WEDNESDAY is the "midst of the week."

Those who teach a Friday crucifixion and a Sunday resurrection can only harmonise this scripture by saying that it applies to the "antichrist," and that its fulfilment is yet to come. Yet it does apply to the Messiah, and He actually caused the "sacrifice and the oblation to cease" at the time of His death. When Messiah came, He came to be our sacrifice. Paul wrote: "And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after their death, the judgment; So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; so that at his second coming he shall appear without our sins for the salvation of those who look for him" (Heb. 9:27, 28 Lamsa). In other words when our Lord had been slain for our sins, He had no other sacrifices to make, and according to Daniel 9:27, this "caused the sacrifice and oblation" to cease, "in the midst of the week."

That God did not recognize the sacrifices being made in the temple any more was very graphically illustrated by events which happened when Jesus died: "And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst" (Luke 23:45). The significant or important thing about this is the veil being torn. This was an act of God, exposing the Holy Place, which was to be viewed by no one but the high priest and by him only once a year. This was God's sign to the people that they should trust in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the remission of their sins. It was by this means that the "sacrifice and oblation" were caused to cease.

Easter Observance Is Pagan

Some people may say that the observance of Easter is taught in Acts 12:4 where we find the word used in the King James version. But is this verse talking about Christians? No, it is talking about the Roman King Herod. Herod was considering a holy day of the Jews and had decided to wait until after this holy day to bring Peter out of prison for trial; this annual holy day was the Passover. The word rendered "Easter" should be "Passover" and is so rendered in the Roman Catholic version and in all revisions and modern speech versions of the Scriptures.

The colored "Easter" eggs children hunt each year, as symbols of the renewal of life, were part of a custom that goes back centuries before the birth of Christ. They were a symbol of fertility in many lands-easily traceable to ancient pagan lore. The same goes for the famous "Easter bunny." Because of their rapid breeding and multiplying habits, rabbits are an ancient symbol of fertility. Modern children, hunting for "Easter eggs" they were told were laid by rabbits, are unknowingly following an ancient fertility rite. Even the "Easter parade" can be traced back to similar rites in ancient Germany, Greece, and India. Hot-cross buns

were eaten by pagan Saxons in honor of Easter, the goddess for light and spring (see Jer. 7:18;44:17-19). Easter sunrise services go back to the pagan custom of prostrating before the rising spring sun (see Ezek. 8:13-18). Lent is nothing more than the "days of weeping for Tammuz." Even the custom of wearing new clothes on Easter comes from Babylon. The pagans would go high up on the mountain and there at a "sunrise service" they would strip off their clothing, take part in the naked dances and rites, and then put on new clothing.

The Gentile Galatians, who had been aforesaid pagans, were warned by the Apostle Paul relative to these pagan customs: "Ye observe days, and months, and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Gal. 4:10-11).

The Early Church

There is no record in the Holy Scriptures of the early Christians, or the early Church observing Easter. There IS evidence in abundance that, as our Lord commanded, they continued observing the Passover each spring. It was observed on the 14th of Nisan, commemorating Jesus' sacrifice for our sins! At the Last Supper (on Passover) the Messiah instituted the ordinance by which we should remember His sacrifice. He changed the emblems of the ancient Passover. The Passover lamb, symbolizing the Messiah, was no longer to be killed. Rather, the taking of the wine and the unleavened bread now symbolise Christ's suffering and death for our sins. These emblems were taken on Passover, annually, as Paul instructed the Corinthians: ". . . For our Passover is Christ, who was sacrificed for our sake. Therefore let us celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of evil and bitterness, but with the leaven of purity and sanctity" (I Cor. 5:7,8 Lamsa).

Chapter Four

The Mark of the Beast

It may now be easily seen that the observance of Easter is but a mark that an apostate form of "Christianity" placed upon herself; as she bent to conform to the customs, rites, and beliefs of a pagan civilisation. What we think and do is as much a part of our identity as our name. What we think, say, and do marks us for what we are. A "mark" on or in our foreheads illustrates how we think. A "mark" on our right hands indicates what we do or how we do it.

Holy Scripture further places an identifiable "mark" upon "Mystery-Babylon" so that we may have NO DOUBT whatsoever as to her identity: "And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free man and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead, and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is six hundred and sixty-six" (Rev. 13:16-18 NASB).

Churches today discipline their members according to their creeds. Early in the history of the papacy, at the council of Nice they formed and adopted the "Nicene Creed" against Arianism. The Arian Christians were "anti-Nicenes" and they bitterly opposed this false creed. Note that this creed was adopted by the Roman Empire (the beast), and maintained through the twelve hundred sixty years prophesied of the beast. Any one opposing it, who would not recant, was put to death. One must receive the mark (creed) in his right hand, or in his forehead (willingly or by force). Excommunication and interdicts were used to force acceptance. Enforcing a set creed (as a mark) has superseded the Mithraic custom in Rome of branding a mark upon the forehead. Angus informs us that upon initiation into the Mithraic Mystery-Religion, after baptism, each of the members were branded with a mark upon the forehead prior to partaking the "sacred meal." 1

Later, if one opposed the teaching of the Roman church, he was rendered unable to BUY or SELL. If this failed to break his will, then death followed; see Fox's Book of Martyrs. To cite two examples: King Henry IV came under this ban and was forced to recant. Later he took the Pope prisoner, but still later Henry died in disgrace. Jerome recanted, but afterward repented, and as a result he was burned at the stake. The mark in the hand was received by both of these men, but never in the forehead. Myers General History, speaking of the excommunications and interdicts used by Pope Gregory VII says, "the chief instruments relied upon by Gregory for enforcing his decrees were the spiritual weapons of the church . . . excommunications and interdicts. The first was directed against individuals. The person excommunicated was cut off from all relations with his fellow men. If a king—his subjects were released from their oaths of allegiance, and anyone providing the excommunicant with food or shelter, incurred the penalties of the church. Living, the excommunicated person was to be shunned as though tainted with an infectious disease—and dead, was to be refused the ordinary rites of burial.

"The 'interdict' was directed against a city, province or kingdom. Throughout the region under the ban, the churches were closed; no bell could be rung, no marriage celebrated, no burial ceremony performed," (page 404, section 567, revised edition).

Excommunications were used throughout all of Catholic history from first to last. The Pope used it on Napoleon with sad results, because Napoleon had destroyed the last vestige of power that the Church had to rely on to carry it out. Anyone with an open mind, candidly

studying the beast and his image, can't help but see that the papacy, and no other, met every specification of the two-horned (church-state) beast.

The Number of The Beast

Every letter in the Aramaic and Hebrew alphabets is also a numeral. For instance, the letter alep is equivalent to the number one, teeth to two, gammel to three, dales to four, yoth to ten, kap to twenty, lamerh to thirty, mem to forty, hoop to one hundred, resin to two hundred, and law to four hundred.

"Code writing was common in biblical days, just as it is today. The name of any person can be written in figures instead of letters. The reader deciphers the numerals and reduces it into letters. 2

At the time that the book of Revelation was written, Hebrew was a dead language. Our Lord and His apostles and the early Christians spoke and wrote in Aramaic, a dialect of Hebrew. This was the language of the land in which they were born and reared, and also the language of the synagogue.

"Nero Caesar in Aramaic is Nron Ksr. Vowels are interpolated for English use. Aramaic letters have numerical values as follows:

N 50
R 200
O 6
N 50
K 100
S 60
R 200

666 Which is the number of the beast or Nero.

"In Hebrew, the figure would be 676. This is because Hebrew has an extra yoth, equivalent to ten. But Hebrew was not spoken at this time as it had been superseded by Aramaic after the Babylonian captivity." 3

John had seen this vision many years before it was written. This prophecy began being fulfilled during the severe persecutions instigated by Nero, and continued through the dark ages to even remain to this day.

Just as Nero fulfilled the prophecy as the leader of Rome, so did the papacy during the prophesied 1260 year reign of the "beast," when church and state were combined and the pope ruled front Rome. Even today, as before, the popes are coronated using the title "Filius Vicarivus Dei" in Latin. This title means the Vicar of Christ. When a priest is ordained, the very wording of the official invitation makes this claim: "A Priest Is Ordained To Be Another Christ." The latest pope was coronated with these words: "I crown you Pope Paul VI, Vicar of Christ, King of heaven and earth and hell." The "Catholic National" of July 1895 stated: "The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under a veil of flesh."

The word "vicar" is a Latin form from which we get vice president, or vicar president—the one who takes the place of the president—the substitute president. The pope claims to take the place of Christ, to be a "vice-Christ." Is this not what God predicted? Exactly! In II John 7 God predicted the coming of the anti-christ. Most people believe that anti-christ means one

who is an atheist. The amazing thing is that this Greek word anti does not mean one who is against, but means "one who substitutes for another." In other words the term anti-christ in Greek means the same thing as the term "vicar of Christ" means in Latin. It means one who usurps the place of another, or who takes the place of another.

Note how Vicarivs Filii Dei corresponds to the number of the beast:

V 5
I 1
C 100
A
R
I 1
V 5
S

F
I 1
L 50
I 1
I 1

D 500
E
I 1

666 Which is the number of the beast or the pope.

(The remaining letters f-a-r-s-e have no numerical value as Roman numerals.)

It is interesting, and perhaps significant, to notice that the six letters that make up the Roman numeral system when added together total exactly 666!

D 500
C 100
L 50
X 10
V 5
I 1

666

The Pope and the Romish church are, of course, very closely associated in history—both ancient and modern—with Rome. According to Hislop, the original name of Rome was Saturnia, meaning "the city of Saturn" (Shobab Anishah) and Saturn was but another name for Nimrod! It was the secret name revealed only to the initiates of the Chaldean Mysteries, which—in Chaldee—was spelled with four letters—STUR. In this language, S is 60, T is 400, U is 6, R is 200, a total of 666.

The Greek letters of "Lateinos" (Latin), the language of Rome in all its official acts, amounts to 666! In the Greek, L is 30, A is 1, T is 300, E is 5, I is 10, N is 50, O is 70, S is 200. These figures total exactly 666. This same word also means "Latin Man" and is but the Greek form of the name Romulus, from which the present city of Rome is named! And—adding to the

significance— this name in Hebrew, Romiith, also totals 666.4

Progression of Dogma

The following is a list of "marks" adopted and perpetuated by the Roman Catholic Church. Many of the dates are approximations, as many of the "marks" had been current with the church years before, but only when they were officially adopted by a church council and proclaimed by the pope as "dogma of faith," did they become binding on Catholics:

A.D. 120—Easter Sunday began to be observed at Rome. A.D. 310—Prayers for the dead, and the sign of the cross.

A.D. 317—The word "trinity" first formally used at Synod held at Alexandria.

A.D. 321—First edict, by Constantine, concerning "Sunday" observance. Wax candles introduced in church.

A.D. 325—Nicene Creed adopted. Easter decreed to be the first Sunday after Passover, and enjoined on all Christians. Doctrine of the "trinity" formally stated.

A.D. 336—Roman Church officially switched from Sabbath to Sunday.

A.D. 353—Christmas first observed at Rome on December 25.

A.D. 354—Observance of Christmas ordered on December 25 by Bishop Liberius.

A.D. 375—Veneration of angels and dead saints.

A.D. 394—The mass, as a daily celebration, adopted.

A.D. 431—The worship of Mary, the mother of Christ, and the use of the term, "Mother of God," as applied to her declared by Council of Ephesus.

A.D. 500—Priests began to dress differently from the laity.

A.D. 554—The union of church and state (or beast power) which was to continue 1260 years, constituting the "tribulation" period. 2

A.D. 593— The doctrine of purgatory was first established by Gregory the Great..

A.D. 600--- The Latin language was imposed by Pope Gregory I. Prayers began to be directed to Mary and to the dead saints.

A.D. 610—The title of pope first given to the bishop of Rome by Emperor Phocas.

AD. 709—Kissing the pope's feet began. It had been a pagan custom to kiss the feet of emperors.

A.D. 788---Worship of the cross (a pagan symbol) and images and relics authorised—idolatry.

A.D. 850---Holy water, mixed with a pinch of salt and blessed by the priest was authorised.

A.D. 890—Veneration of St. Joseph began.

- A.D. 965—The baptism of bells instituted by Pope John XIV.
- A.D. 995 —Canonization of dead saints begun by Pope John XV.
- A.D. 998—Fasting on Fridays and during Lent were imposed.
- A.D. 1090—The rosary, or prayer beads, introduced by Peter the Hermit.
- A.D. 1184—The inquisition of heretics was instituted by the Council of Verona.
- A.D. 1190—The sale of indulgences, commonly regarded as a purchase of forgiveness and a permit to indulge in sin, began.
- A.D. 1215—The dogma of transubstantiation was decreed by Pope Innocent III.
- A.D. 1215---Confession of sins to the priest at least once a year instituted by Pope Innocent III, in the Lateran Council.
- A.D. 1220—The adoration of the wafer (host) decreed by Pope Honorius.
- A.D. 1229---The Bible forbidden to laymen and placed in Index of Forbidden Books by the Council of Valencia.
- A.D. 1414---The Roman church forbade the cup to the laity (communion), Council of Constance.
- A.D. 1439—The doctrine of purgatory proclaimed dogma of faith by Council of Florence.
- A.D. 1545—Tradition declared to be equal authority with Bible by Council of Trent.
- A.D. 1550—"Secret rapture" theory taught by Jesuit Catholic scholars. I
- A.D. 1854—The "immaculate conception" of the virgin Mary proclaimed by Pope Pius IX.
- A.D. 1870 -Dogma of "papal infallibility" proclaimed by Pope Pius IX.
- A.D. 1951—Pope Pius XI reaffirmed the doctrine that Mary is the "Mother of God."
- A.D. 1960—The dogma of the assumption of the virgin Mary proclaimed by Pope Pius XII.

It is because of the many reasons listed above and elsewhere in this book that such men as John Foxe, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, William Tyndale, King James, Sir Isaac Newton, and John Wesley have all recognised the papacy to be the fulfillment of the anti-christ. 5

Chapter Five

The Change of the Sabbath

Perhaps the most prominent "mark" the Romish church has placed on modern day Christianity is the "change of the Sabbath," in which they say that Protestants allow of their authority—by following them in observance of a purely Romish festival. By reading their literature, one may find that Catholics set Sunday up as a "sign" to mark their power—and BOAST that they have changed the day of worship for all Christians:

"The Catholic Church of its own infallible authority created Sunday a holy day to take the place of the Sabbath of the old law." 1

"The Catholic Church . . . by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday." 2

"Question-Does the Catholic church acknowledge that it has changed the Sabbath?

The answer—It does.

The question-How prove you that the church bath power to command feasts and holy days?

The answer-By the very fact of changing the Sabbath into Sunday which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feast days commanded by the same church."3

"Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her, she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no scriptural authority." 4

"You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and you will not find a single line authorising the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify." 5

It seems a proper question to ask: "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition" (Matt. 15:3)? But these attitudes are nothing new, we find in Ezekiel: "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them" (Ezekiel 22:27).

Here we find another fulfillment of prophecy, for the changing of "times and laws" was to be one of the acts of the anti-christ: "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall THINK TO CHANGE TIMES AND LAWS: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan 7:25).

Common Texts Used Against the Sabbath

When all of the New Testament texts bearing on the question of the Sabbath are carefully analyzed, we find there is no warrant for keeping any other day as a day of REST excepting the day blessed by the Creator at Creation (Gen. 2:1-2) and later incorporated in the Commandments of God (Ex. 20:8-11). In Exodus 31-15 we learn that during the six days WORK MAY BE DONE. Therefore we are not breaking the commandment if we do not work

the six days. To work all six days is not the intent of the precept, but the object is that we may be patriotic and obedient to the Father in commemorating His great work of creation, and His blessing of the seventh day. It is altogether fitting and proper to worship and praise the Father on ANY DAY of the week—but the commandment is to REST on the seventh day.

I Corinthians 16:1-2

A commandment was given to churches in Corinth to make a CERTAIN contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem (I Cor. 16:1-2). When we examine this same commandment where it was repeated to the other churches, we find that it was just for one special purpose: the collection of dried fruit which had to be carried with the help of others to Jerusalem for the poor. It was a collection at each home and not in an assembly. In II Cor. 9:1-5 it is called BOUNTY. In Acts 11:28 we learn that the reason for this contribution was a dearth (hunger, want, famine) which was very severe in Jerusalem. In Romans 15:25-28 it says it was JUST A CERTAIN contribution, and it also says it was fruit. In I Corinthians 16:3 it says others would need to go along to carry it. As it required WORK to gather and lay by at each house, it was a COMMAND TO WORK ON THE FIRST DAY, just as God did in the beginning.

Acts 20:7

Another text used in support of Sunday observance is found in Acts 20:7. We are told the disciples came together on the first day of the week TO BREAK BREAD. "Jesus and his disciples and their followers kept the Sabbath. They fasted and went to the temple to pray like other Jews. The Christians broke bread on their first day of the week, Sunday, because they could not meet for instructions on the Sabbath, which was a holy day. The Jews rested from all their labors on that day. Some of them even refused to walk, or to answer a call. Their food was prepared on Friday, so that they need not do any manual work on the Sabbath. The disciples had their followers meet for instruction at the homes of certain converts. They brought their food with them, and after the instruction they broke bread together. The Eastern term 'breaking bread' means 'EATING TOGETHER.', " 6

From Acts 2:46 we find then; that they "broke bread" (or ate), every day. The purpose of their coming together on this occasion was to take the common meal after the Sabbath on the dark part of the first day of the week just as people do now in Jerusalem. Read the whole passage carefully and you will find that evidently they had observed the Sabbath, followed that evening by a meal and sermon. The next morning (Sunday) Paul did much walking, after which he and the others sailed a ship-requiring much physical labor (manipulating sails, etc.). They were NOT taking the Lord's Supper; this was kept annually, on Passover, as a memorial of Christ which is our Passover.

New Testament Sabbath Command

Many contend that nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament-but that the Sabbath Commandment is not. This is a shallow excuse indeed for teaching the breaking of the Ten Commandments, and easily disproved. Turning to Hebrew 4:9 we find: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." If your Bible has marginal notes you should notice a reference by the word "rest" in this scripture referring you to the margin. In the margin (KJV) you will find the "marginal reading" for "rest" is: "keeping of a Sabbath." Perhaps the meaning of this scripture is more faithfully translated in the Lamsa translation from the Peshitta (The Authorized Bible of the Church of the East): "It is therefore the duty of the people of God to keep the Sabbath." So it is that we find that the New Testament enjoins the keeping of the seventh day Sabbath on all Christians.

Jesus taught that the Law of God, which includes the observance of the seventh day Sabbath, is the unchangeable will of God—even to the minutes" "jot and little" (Matt 5: 17-19). Only those who do the will of God shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 7:21). This obedience is the one sure proof of our love for the Master (John 14: 15, 21; 12: 50; 15: 10) Our attainment of "eternal life" requires full and unconditional obedience to the commandments (Matt. 19: 16, 17; Heb 4:9; Mark 10: 17-19; Luke 10:25-28; 18:18-20). We must not only obey, but also TEACH the commandments in order to attain complete recognition in the Kingdom (Matthew 5). Those who teach and follow the traditions of man instead of the Law of God WORSHIP THE SAVIOUR IN VAIN (Mark 7:7-9; Duet. 4:19; II Kings 17:16). The Saviour observed the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). The Apostles (Acts 17:2) and their followers also (Luke 23:56; 24: 1) all kept the Sabbath.

As has been said before, Sabbath reform is unfinished business. Business that should have been taken care of at the time of the Protestant reformation. Many honest Protestants have had much to say about "Sunday keeping" since that time. Among them are LUTHERAN "We have seen how gradually the impression of the Jewish Sabbath faded from the mind of the Christian Church, and how completely the newer thought underlying the observance of the first day took possession of the church. We have seen the Christians of the first three centuries never confused one with the other, but for a time celebrated both" (The Sunday Problem; 1923 edition, a study book of the United Lutheran Church, p. 36). "Because it was requisite to appoint a certain day, that the people might know when they ought to come together, it appears that the Church did for that purpose appoint the Lord's day" (Augsburg Confession, part 2, ar. 7, in Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom Scribners, 4th ed.], vol 3, p. 69). "The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect; far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday" (Dr. Augustus Neander, The History of the Christian Religion and Church, p. 186).

The METHODISTS have stated: "it is true there is no positive command for infant baptism . . . Nor is there any for keeping holy the first day of the week" (Methodist Episcopal Theological Compend, by Amos Vinney, pp. 180,181).

Alexander Campbell, founder of DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, has had this to say about the Sabbath: " 'But,' say some, 'it was changed from the seventh to the first day.' where? When? and by whom? No man can tell. No; it was never changed, nor could it be, unless creation was to be gone through again: for the reason assigned must be changed before the observance, or respect to the reason, can be changed!! It is all old wives' fables to talk of the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day. If it be changed, it was that august personage changed it who changes times and laws ex officio—I think his name is DOCTOR ANTICHRIST" (The Christian Baptist. Feb. 2, 1824, vol. 1, no. 7).

Many more Protestant sources could be quoted, but space does not allow for more. The matter should be concluded with a quote and offer of a reward from a Romish source:

\$ 1,000.00 Reward

"My brethren, look about you upon the various wrangling sects and denominations. Show me one that claims or possesses the power to make laws binding on the conscience. There's but one on the face of the earth—the Catholic Church that has the power to make laws binding upon the conscience, binding before God, binding under the pain of hell fire. Take, for instance, the day we celebrate—Sunday. What right have the Protestant churches to observe that day? None whatsoever. You say it is to obey the commandment, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' But Sunday is not the Sabbath according to the Bible and

the record of time.

“Everyone knows that Sunday is the first day of the week, while Saturday is the seventh day, and the Sabbath, the day consecrated as a day of rest. It is so recognized in all civilized nations. I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to anyone who will furnish any proof from the Bible that Sunday is the day we are bound to keep, and no one has called for the money. If any person in this town will show any scripture for it, I will tomorrow evening publicly acknowledge it and thank him for it. It was the Holy Catholic Church that changed the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday, the first day of the week. And it not only compelled all to keep Sunday, but at the Council of Laodicea, A.D. 364 anathematised those who kept the Sabbath and urged all persons to labor on the seventh day under penalty of anathema.

"Which church does the whole civilized world obey?" ("and all the world wondered after the beast") "Protestants call us every horrible name they can think of—anti-Christ, the scarlet colored beast, Babylon, etc., and at the same time profess great reverence for the Bible, and yet by their solemn act of keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the power of the Catholic Church.

The Bible says: 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' But the Catholic Church says, 'No, keep the first day of the week' and the whole world bows in obedience." (Father T. Enright, Roman Catholic Priest, Kansas City, Mo.).

It was only thirty-three years after the first Sunday "blue-law" by Constantine that Bishop Liberius ordered the observance of Christmas on December 25 in A.D. 354.

Chapter Six

The True Meaning of Christmas

The Romish church teaches its adherents that "The Mass is the same sacrifice of the Cross." Then when the word Mass is attached to Christ, you can understand what word is coined by this combination. Now the word Christmas is used in connection with December 25, which has been set by MAN as the date of our Saviour's birth. The Bible doesn't tell us the date of His birth. Doesn't it sound strange to say, "Merry sacrifice of the Cross?" Furthermore, why greet one another with a word that means death (Jesus' death in this case), in connection with a birthday? People do strange things without thinking, don't they?

But beyond the name, Christmas cards, parties, and presents— beyond Santa, reindeer, and church bells—lies the origin of Christmas. The chances are that you've never understood its real meaning.

Have you ever wondered how Santa Claus fits into the story of Messiah? Or wondered how the decorated and brightly lit Christmas tree fits into the worship of God? What about holly wreaths, mistletoe, and greeting cards? Why do people consider December 25 the "birthday of Christ"? Let's find out what some well-known sources have to say about Christmas:

"Christmas-it was according to many authorities NOT celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian Church as the Christian usage in general was to celebrate the DEATH of remarkable persons rather than their birth. A feast was established in memory of the birth of the Savior in the FOURTH Century. In the Fifth Century the Western Church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman Feast of the birth of Sol. The holly, the mistletoe, the yule log and the wassail bowl are of pre-Christian times. The Christmas tree has been traced back to the Romans. It went from Germany to Great Britain." 1

"The wassailling bowl of Christmas had its precise counterpart in the 'Drunken Festival' of Babylon," says Hislop; "and many of the other observances still kept up among ourselves at Christmas came from the very same quarter. The candles, in some parts of England (and America), lighted on Christmas-eve, and used so long as the festive season lasts, were equally lighted by the pagans on the eve of the festival of the Babylonian god, to do honor to him . . . The Christmas tree, now so common among us, was equally common in Pagan Rome and Pagan Egypt. In Egypt that tree was the palm tree; in Rome it was the fir." 2

"Christmas Day-a festival of the Christian church, observed on the 25th of December, in memory of the birth of Jesus Christ. There is, however, a difficulty in accepting this as the date of the Nativity, December being the height of the rainy season in Judea, when neither flocks nor shepherds could have been at night in the fields of Bethlehem." 3

The New Standard Encyclopedia informs us under the subject "Christmas: " "Among the Romans, certain practices were adopted from an older pagan feast in honor of the birth of the sun, or Sol.

"The prejudice against Christmas observance, as too strongly tinged with the heathen traditions, was so strong in Scotland that, until recently, children in Presbyterian families had no Christmas. Even yet it is not a popular holiday in Scotland.

"The custom of making presents at Christmas time is associated with the gifts presented to Christ by the wise men of the East; but, in reality, at least so far as English-speaking people are concerned, it is derived from an old heathen usage.

"Many of the usages of the Germans and Romans were adopted from heathenism to Christianity."

We have already seen in a previous chapter that Christmas had its origin in the Chaldean Mysteries founded by Semiramis, and that December 25 was the birth date of Tammuz, and not of Christ. Santa Claus is but another form of the name St. Nicholas, and reliable reference books explain that Old Nick is a term for the devil.

Hislop spoke of the Mithraic celebration—from whence we also directly received the observance of Sunday when he stated: 'The 25th of December, the day that was observed at Rome as the day when the victorious god reappeared on earth, was held at the *Natalis invicti solis*, 'The birthday of the unconquered Sun.' Now the yule log is the dead stock of Nimrod, defied as the sun-god, but cut down by his enemies; the Christmas tree is Nimrod redivivus—the slain god comes to life again."⁴

'There can be no doubt then, that the pagan festival at the winter solstice—in other words, Christmas—was held in honor of the birth of the Babylonian Messiah.' S

Even the abbreviation for Christmas, "X-mas," bears the mark of Babylon. "X" is the ancient letter Tau, and by the ancients this very lettering would read as Tau-mas. Be it Tau-mas or Tammuz, it has ever been a symbol for the Babylonian Messiah. 'x-mas', is a communion of the Romish church. In light of all this, is it hard to discern with what "lord" this season of "X-mas" is a communion?

"Although in the early centuries of the Christian era the exact date of the nativity was not known, by the third century some had been observing the event on these varying dates: January 6, February 2, March 25, April 19, May 20, and November 17 . . . Finally—according to St. Chrysostom—at the request of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Julius I (Pope or Bishop of Rome from A.D. 336 to 352) made an investigation into the matter of the date. In A.D. 350 December 25 was set as the most probable time. The Feast of the Nativity was first observed on this day at Rome, perhaps in A.D. 353; and from then on the custom spread eastward 6

Has your minister ever shown you that the Holy Scriptures condemn the use of the Christmas tree? Note the following scripture: "Learn not the way of the heathen . . . for the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not . . . But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities . . ." (Jer. 10:24, 10). Here you have a perfect description of the Christmas tree, called by God "the way of the heathen." We are commanded not to learn that way or follow it; it is viewed in this passage as idolatry. The green tree is mentioned fourteen times in the Bible, and in every instance it is linked with idolatry.

There are several ways of proving that Jesus the Messiah was not born in December. Let's consider some of the proofs.

The Saviour's Birth

From the Bible records we can compute the approximate date of the Master's birth. The facts are given in the gospel according to St. Luke, the "beloved physician:" "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia (Abijah in Hebrew): and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron and her name was Elizabeth" (Luke 1:5).

Zacharias, being a descendant of Abijah, would seine in the course of his forefather in the priesthood, which was in the eighth course, as we learn from I Chron. 24:7-19. The priesthood had been divided into twenty-four courses by David. Each of these twenty-four courses began seeing at noon on a Sabbath and continued their senice until noon the next Sabbath, a one week period.⁷ Each course sewed in succession, the first course beginning on the first Sabbath in the first Hebrew month (Nisan) of the Biblical year. The first month begins with the new moon on or next after the spring equinox, or near the 21st of March (Ex. 12:2; Lev. 23:5-11). On the beginning of the civil year, in the autumn, the first course would again begin to seine. In this way forty-eight of the fifty-one weeks of the Biblical year are fulfilled. In the other three weeks of the year all twenty-four courses of priests sewed during the three major Holy Day periods. These three periods were: the Passover in the beginning of spring, Pentecost in late spring, and Tabernacles in the early autumn. During these three Holy Day periods there were large crowds at the Temple, and all the priests were required. Seven times in a nineteen year period a thirteenth month had to be added so that the months would fall in their proper season. When this thirteenth month occurred the priests who officiated in the twelfth month repeated their senice. ⁸

Understanding the above, it becomes possible to know when Zacharias was seeing in the Temple. Since the course of Abijah was eighth in order, Zacharias would be ministering in the ninth week of the new year. He ministered in the ninth week rather than the eighth week because during the third week all the priests were ministering the Passover season.

Since Herod was dead before the spring of 3 B.C. these things must have occurred 5 B.C. The first day of Nisan in 5 B.C. was a Sabbath. The first course, then, began seeing on that day (6 April Roman time). Zacharias, seeing in the ninth week, would have been serving from Iyar 27 to Sivan 5 (1 June to 8 June). This was the time, then, that the angel told him that his wife would conceive and bear a son named John. Zacharias could not have returned home on the 9th of June however, because that week began a Holy Day week (Pentecost) in which his course, along with the other 23 courses would minister. This extra senice kept him in Jerusalem until 12 Sivan (15 June). At that time he could return home. We find in Luke 1: 23, 24 that he did return home and his wife conceived. This would have been in the middle of June (12 Sivan to 19 Sivan). Knowing when Elizabeth conceived, we can compute the time of birth for John the Baptist. Since the human gestation period is 280 days, we can go forward this amount of time to arrive at about the 1st of Nisan (27 March, 4 B.C.) when John the Baptist must have been born.

Now, by knowing the approximate date of John the Baptist's birth, we should be able to arrive at the time of the birth of Christ. Luke 1: 26, 27, 36 tells us that Christ was just six months younger than John the Baptist. So, by adding six months to the 1st of Nisan we arrive at about the 1st of Tishri (or near mid September) for the birth of Christ.

Also noteworthy, relative to Messiah's birth being at the time of the fall Holy Days, is the fact that the "inn" in which Joseph and Mary were to stay was not an ordinary caravan hotel. This word in the Greek is used only two other times in the Bible— Mark 14:14 and Luke 22:11. In both places it refers exclusively to temporary "guestchambers" which housed people in Jerusalem for the Holy Days. It is therefore readily understandable why such "guestchambers" would be in Bethlehem also. These "guestchambers" were primarily in private homes of those who opened up their rooms to those coming from out of town for the Feasts.

Further proof of the time of Messiah's birth may be found in noting that Joseph was going to be taxed. Taxation would come just after the fall harvest. The time of the fall Festivals was just after the harvest, when tithes were paid to the priests.

Another definite proof for the establishment of the time of Messiah's birth may be seen by considering the fact that He was just thirty when He began His ministry (Luke 3:23). He preached for 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years, being crucified when He was 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ years old. The truth for this is established by Daniel 9:27, where we are told that He was to confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week He was to be cut off, or slain. This has a literal as well as a prophetic application. But let us at this time consider the prophetic phase. In prophecy we are to take each day for a year (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:5, 6), and as He was to confirm the covenant for a week of seven days, or seven years, then be cut off in the midst of this period, or at the end of 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ years, we could readily understand that this would be the period of the Master's ministry.

It is an established fact that Messiah was crucified in the spring of the year, at the time of Passover. The Passover occurred each year on the 14th of the first Biblical moon, or month. Recalling the illustration and noting that the Passover normally occurs in the latter part of March to the first part of April; count back six months then to His 33rd birthday and you will find that the results agree with His computed date of birth.

Having confirmed that Messiah was born in mid-September, near the 1st of the Biblical month of Tishri, note that: Tishri, being the seventh month of the year is a Sabbatical month. What the seventh day is to the week, Tishri is to the year. Hence the first day is celebrated as a Sabbath, a day of rest and a memorial of blowing of trumpets, with a holy convocation." 9

"First, the trumpet sound called to repentance. It was as a call to the dead to arise and live again, to wake up from sin to regeneration through repentance . . . and so the Yom Kippur solemnities are completed by blowing of the Shofar, the ram's horn, the trumpet which heralds the coming of the Messiah. Here the Hope of Israel and the Hope of the Christian converge. Israel waits for His first coming, while the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ knows that He already came and saved him. He now looks forward to His Second Coming when He shall establish His Kingdom on the earth." 10

During the six-day war in June, 1967, the chief rabbi of the Israeli army blew the shofar at the Western Wall after the liberation of the Wall by the Israel defence forces.

The shofar was used to proclaim the Jubilee year every fifty years, and to proclaim "freedom throughout the land" (Lev 25:9, 10). It is a portion of this Old Testament passage that is engraved on the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia.

The shofar is blown to announce ten days of repentance which begin with Rosh Hashanah and end with Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). Rosh Hashanah is also designated as Yom Terutah which means, "a day of blowing" (Num 29:1). During Yom Kippur a final call to repentance is issued, and the following prayer is recited: "Open the gate for us, for the day is nearly past; the sun is low, the day grows late. Open Thy gates, at last . . . We are happy and hopeful that our prayers have been answered, and that we are indeed on the threshold of a good year."

This solemn assembly, this Sabbath, and this proclamation by the blowing of the ram's horn trumpet must have announced the birth of the Saviour to the world (and all the hosts of angels) about mid-September in 4 B.C. Only a few wise men, by reading the book of the law, the book of Daniel, and seeing the sign of the Messiah in the sky, were able to understand and come to worship the new King.

In the Book of the Law we read: "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh

month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation" (Lev. 23:24).

Most ministers of the entire religious world will quote Colossians 2:16, 17 and say the Feasts of Leviticus 23 were fulfilled in the Messiah. If His birth did not,, fulfill this day, then where else in the Holy Scriptures can we find it fulfilled? And yet, the final fulfillment of this day is yet to come: "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" (I Thess. 4:16, 17).

Chapter Seven

The Doctrine of the Trinity

In the same league with the Roman teachings on Sunday, Easter, and Christmas is the Romish dogma of the Trinity.

This dogma is so widely acclaimed that it scarcely requires definition. Yet few people, if any, seem to understand it. Most people feel that belief in the trinity simply affirms their faith in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. In truth, belief in the trinity actually affirms belief in a certain relationship existing between these three. This relationship is so cardinal in the doctrine and teachings of the average church that it does not need to be proven; it simply IS. Hymn books state plainly: "God in three Persons, Blessed Trinity."

Bible scholars, in their attempt to illustrate this relationship use phrases such as: "transcending finite comprehension," "implicit rather than explicit," "mysterious," "incomprehensible," and "absurd."

Dr. Herbert Lockyer states this about "The sacred mystery of the Trinity:" ". . . natural reason may not be able to grasp and explain the Trinitarian conception . . . because the Three-In-One God is beyond our understanding, the truth should not be doubted on account of its mysteriousness . . . Are we not surrounded by mysteries? . . . the one God in three Persons is an audacious conception . . . a divine riddle . . . Granted that there is not presented a formulated definition of the Trinity . . . the term Trinity is not found in the Bible . . . IT IS AFFIRMED THAT THE WORD TRINITY ITSELF WAS FIRST FORMALLY USED AT THE SYNOD HELD AT ALEXANDRIA, IN A.D. 317 . . . TRIADS OF DIVINITIES CAN BE FOUND IN MANY RELIGIONS . . . In the Nicene Creed of A.D. 325 we have a Trinitarianism in which the three Persons are divine and are of one substance . . . this sacred doctrine is above reason." 1

When we hear opinions, history, and admissions such as the above—then we should be able to better evaluate the worth of this dogma, and to reject these "traditions of men" who, by their own admission, don't know what they are talking about. We should rather seek "sound words," "understanding," "the simplicity that is in Christ," and knowledge "hid . . . from the wise and prudent" and "revealed . . . unto babes."

Of course man is finite, limited; and God is infinite. But should we feel that the knowledge the Almighty has seen fit to give us in Scripture is totally beyond our comprehension? No, we shall presently see how the doctrine of the trinity has been an instrument to HIDE AND REPRESS THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

The Shema (Duet. 6:4-9) has always been one of the basic tenets of the Jewish faith: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all shine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in shine house, and when thou walkest by the way, And when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon shine hand, and they shall be as frontiers between shine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates "

These words are from the same inspired Hebrew Scriptures Hat promised a Saviour, a Messiah The Hope of the Hebrew faith was toward Yeshua ha Messiah (Jesus Christ). The apostle Paul, after his conversion, remained a firm adherent to this Hebrew monotheism

which is reflected in the Sh'ma. To Paul, as to Abraham, Moses, the other apostles, and Christ-God was "the Father." "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5).

Paul distinguished the Messiah from God, as a personal and spiritual Being, inferior and subordinate to the supreme Deity. The Son of God, being God's Son, is of the Family of God; but is not the Father. Paul's faith rested on "One God, and one mediator between God and men." More than one hundred texts in the New Testament speak definitely of our Lord being the Son of God. On the occasion of His baptism, the Father in heaven spoke these words: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God spoke again at the mount of transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5). When Messiah ascended to heaven He "Sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19). The Father and the Son were and are always in harmony with each other; as a father-son relationship should always be. The Son said in the Lord's prayer recorded in John 17: "Holy Father, keep through shine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

Matthew 28:19

Some point to this text for proof of a trinity: ". . . baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." But does the text of the Scripture suggest that they together, as a trinity, constitute or form one Supreme Deity? Does the text state that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are "coequal?" No, there is nothing in the Scripture to indicate this. Some Bible scholars even question that ". . . the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" was actually a part of the inspired Scriptures, Eusebius, a third century Christian apologist, quoted the text in a shorter form: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in my name" rather than using the form now found in the Scripture: ". . . baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." W.C. Allen states that 'where is much probability in the conjecture that it is the original text of the gospel, and that in the second century the longer clause supplanted the shorter 'baptising them in my name.' An insertion of this kind, derived from liturgical use, would have rapidly been adopted by copyists and translators." 2

There is no recorded instance where the apostles baptized using the "Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The personal name of the Father was very sacred to the Hebrews indeed. During the time of Messiah, and before, this name was spoken only once a year and by only one man: The high priest on the Day of Atonement. When the Scriptures were read, the word Adoni (Hebrew for Lord) was substituted for the name of the Father. The parallel passage in Mark 16:15-18 omits the phrase in question. Mark is believed to be the oldest of the four gospels.

I John 5:7

Another text used by those who teach the trinity is I John 5:7: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost:- and these three are one." Adam Clark states that this verse is very likely not genuine. "It is wanting in EVERY MS., one excepted." 3 It is omitted from most newer translations (including the New American Standard, Moffatt, Goodspeed, Williams, New English, and the RSV).

The Real Relationship

Let's use a literal illustration that may help to understand the real relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is the powerhouse from which all power is created. Jesus the Messiah is between us and God as a Mediator, and is the One through whom the power

flows to us who are the light that illuminates. This is the same as the electric power plant creating electricity which comes into our homes by the wire that connects the power house (God) to the light bulb (person) so it can illuminate and give light. Messiah is the wire through whom the power flows.

Thus, the real relationship is, God the Father, Christ the Son of God, two entities; and the Holy Spirit which is POWER from God that flows into us through Jesus and illuminates us. This is why the Master said, "Ye are the light of the world . . ." (Matt. 5:14).

Origin of the Trinity

Since the word "trinity" is not found in the Bible, and its teachings of three co-existent and co-eternal Beings forming one God are also not in the Scriptures, where did the idea originate?

The idea of the trinity is first identified by Mr. Layard in his book *Babylon and Nineveh* on page 160. He writes: "The ancient Babylonians, just as the modern Romans, recognised a triune godhead."

The idea of a trinity is recognisable in most all religions of the ancient nations of the world, but it can be traced back directly to the ancient Babylonian Mystery Religion. It began with Semiramis "the mother of god." She, her husband the sun, and their child Tammuz, made up the triune belief. "To symbolize that doctrine of the Trinity, they employed, as the discoveries of Layard prove, the equilateral triangle, just as it is well known the Romish Church does at this day." 4 The Babylonian belief evolved later to a faith in the "father," "the spirit of the father incarnate in the human mother," and "a son, the fruit of the incarnation." This meant that the mother became like god the father and went to live with him after her son was born. This concept of the trinity came to be accepted by the early Roman Catholic Church, and was accepted as dogma after much controversy in 325 A.D. by the Council of Nicea.

From the ancient Babylonian trinity of Nimrod, Semiramis, and Tammuz also came the Roman trinity of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva about 509 B.C. 5 In 493 a temple was built in the Circus Maximus to the Greek trinity; Demeter, Dionysus, and Persephone, under the Latin names of Ceres, Liber, and Libera. 6

Those familiar with history know the Roman Kingdom to be the one represented by the "ten-horned beast" of Daniel 7. This kingdom (Dan. 7:23, 24) was to subdue three kings. The Roman Church was responsible for the plucking up of these three "horns," or "kings." These three kingdoms were the Vandals, Heruli, and the Ostrogoths. The last of these three to be overcome by Rome was the Ostrogoth kingdom in 554 A.D. These kingdoms are spoken of in history as the Arian kingdoms, deriving their name "Arian" from Arius of Alexandria, a noted theologian and teacher of his day. It was this man, Arius of Alexandria, who fought against acceptance of the doctrine of the trinity at the Council of Nicea. The majority of the Council believed, as do the Catholics today, that Mary was the mother of God, and that Jesus was God the Father upon the earth. They believe that while present on the earth, God was absent from heaven. Arius believed that "The Father, the Word (Son), and the Holy Ghost" (I John 5:8) were one in purpose, one in belief, one in object, and deed. But Arius also believed that while Messiah was upon earth, His Father was in heaven-to whom He prayed. It was Arius' belief that the Messiah was God on earth, only to the extent of His being the Son of God. He did not object to Messiah being called God, for He was and is the Son of God-and therefore takes upon Himself, not only the likeness and power, but may have also the name of His Father.

The three Arian kingdoms stood behind Arius against the Babylonian doctrine and held to the faith of the "early Church." The Roman Church considered them to be heretics. Arius was excommunicated and the Arian kingdoms were uprooted. By this means the Babylonian/Roman dogma held sway: "That the virgin Mary was the mother of God, that Jesus was actually God upon earth, and while here was ABSENT FROM HEAVEN. When He ascended back to heaven, Peter took His place on earth-and thus the succession of popes from St. Peter down." They claim that each pope has stood in the place of God on earth.

So it is that in yet another way the Romish Church has proven itself the fulfillment of Bible prophecy relative to the false and evil power which was to arise; for in II Thessalonians 2 we find: "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God . . . so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

From Catholic Works of the 16th Century, London; we find these boasting words of blasphemy: "All of the twenty-eight titles ascribed to Jesus in the Scriptures are ascribed to the pope. To make war on the pope is to make war on God, for the pope is god, and god is the pope."

Uncounted multitudes have followed the path that the popes Of Rome have directed them upon. This path has always been the broad and well travelled course that the MAJORITY have taken. The Lamb of God taught that: ". . . wide is the door and broad is the road which leads to destruction, and many are those who travel on it" (Matt. 7:13). He taught that it would be the MINORITY who selected the narrow door and the difficult road which leads to salvation: "O how narrow is the door and how difficult is the road which leads to life, AND FEW ARE THOSE WHO ARE FOUND ON IT" (Matt. 7:14 Lamsa). Truth today, as when He spoke those words, will not be proven by a popularity contest or a Gallup Poll. Messiah never expected the true Church to be large, He called it a "little flock."

Chapter Eight

The Doctrine of Death

In Romans 6:23 we learn that ". . . the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." This Scripture is plain enough to be easily understood. The wages of sin is death," but what is death? For thousands of years man has pondered this question. As children, most of us learned both at public school and at church that the main difference separating man from the lower animals is the fact that man has a soul. Animals, we were taught, lacked a certain thing that man was born with. This thing in man, called a soul, caused him to live on after death. Sometimes this soul would be called a "ghost." Churches, it seems, don't too generally agree on what becomes of the soul or "ghost" at death. To many people death is a fearsome departure into some "other world" from which no one can return. Some churches teach that there are two places a soul may go at death; either heaven or hell. Some teach there are three places: heaven, purgatory, and hell. A few teach there is only one place the soul goes at death—the grave. These believe that a resurrection is necessary for one to leave the grave. Still others believe that at death the soul enters another body (either human, animal, or vegetable) and continues to live.

It would appear that amid all this confusion (Babylon) that man really doesn't understand death, or the soul, at all.

Today's religious community has been taught that the soul is immortal. Common sense and scripture should be able to show us the value of this teaching. It would appear from the above Scripture (Romans 6:23) that death and eternal life are opposites and do not exist together within a soul. Scripture teaches that eternal life is a gift, and must be given us from above.

Satan's Lie

It was in the Garden of Eden the idea originated that in death we go on living. It was in the Garden of Eden, at the tree of knowledge of good and evil, that Satan first told man, "You won't really die, you've got an immortal soul. Go on and eat the fruit. It may seem that you die; but really, you'll be liberated. You'll have a wider experience than before. You'll know things you don't know now; when you are liberated from this body, when you live in the spirit world." This has been the devil's lie ever since, and people have been believing it and selling it ever since.

Only God is Eternal

Much of the confusion about one's state in death will be resolved by finding out what the Holy Scriptures teach us a soul is. The first book of the Bible sheds much light on the subject for us: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man BECAME a living soul" (Gen. 2: 7). We find that man, rather than being GIVEN a soul, BECAME a living soul. Man IS a soul. Ezekiel had this same understanding: "The soul that sinneth, it (the soul) shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). Death is the absence of life. When the Almighty breathed life into Adam—Adam BECAME a living soul. The result of sin, then, is to sooner or later become a dead soul.

Original Meaning of Soul

The word translated soul from the Hebrew Scriptures is nephesh. Nephesh means "a

breathing creature." Nephesh is a word for a mortal (breathing) creature, never an "immortal creature." In Genesis 1:24 nephesh is translated dead body!

In the New Testament the Greek word psuche is translated 14 times as soul. Psuche is translated fifty-eight times as the life of man, which could be lost, destroyed, saved, and laid down. It may be seen then that the words life and soul may be used interchangeably.

Yes, we really can die, even though Satan has been telling us otherwise since the Garden of Eden where he told Eve ". . . Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). A good way to prove these things to your own satisfaction is to check them in a good concordance, either Young's or Strong's. They give us conclusive evidence that the word rendered soul may be also rendered dead body. When the Father breathed life into Adam, his dead soul became a living soul; that soul became subject to death, and later did die. We learn in Hebrews 11 that all the faithful who have died remain in this state to this day. Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and all the rest who have died remain in this state to this day, not having received the promise (of eternal life). They are still waiting in the grave, that ALL the faithful may receive the promise at the same time (Hebrews 11:13, 39, 40). We must await the resurrection to be born a new creature.

Socrates, the Greek philosopher, and his student, Plato, both taught the pagan doctrine of the immortality of the soul. They taught that death was the separation of the body and the soul. The Egyptians before them were among the first to teach the soul's immortality through the mystery religion. Eternal punishing of an immortal soul was a doctrine anciently used to control the "common" people. Since false religions and the mysteries were unable to convert the individual to obedience and acceptable social standards by love toward God and fellow man— then fear of eternal punishing in "hell fire" were used to restrain man to acceptable standards of conduct.

In the latter part of the second century both Origen and Tertullian accepted the pagan doctrine of Plato that "Souls are immortal" and introduced it into the teachings of the Roman Church. The simple truth of the Scriptures were slowly rejected in favor of this doctrine until in 1513 A.D. the Roman Church issued a decree against those who still "dared to assert concerning the nature of the reasonable soul that it is mortal." Those who maintained that the soul was mortal were to be punished as heretics. The Roman Church had, in this too, turned from Scripture to pagan tradition. They discounted Solomon who said: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they all have one breath; so that a man bath NO PREEMINENCE ABOVE A BEAST: for all is vanity. ALL GO UNTO ONE PLACE: ALL ARE OF THE DUST, AND ALL TURN TO DUST AGAIN" (Eccl. 3:19, 20). "For the living know that they shall die; BUT THE DEAD KNOW NOT ANYTHING" (Ecc. 9:5). David said of man: "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; IN THAT VERY DAY HIS THOUGHTS PERISH" (Psalms 146:34). Make no mistake about it, those who teach otherwise are not in accord with the Holy Scripture.

The Soul in Hell

In the Life of Ingersall's Early Days the story is told of what made Robert Ingersall one of the most notorious infidels the world has ever known. His Sunday School teacher told his class of children if they were not good children they would go to the lake of Hell Fire, and be tormented and tortured forever. He asked the teacher what "forever" meant, and how long it would be. She gave this illustration: "Suppose a little bird would come from one of the stars down here and take a pebble of sand and carry it up there once every year. You will be in Hell just as long as it would take that bird to carry this whole world up there to that star." Then he asked her who made this place of torment. She answered, "It was God the

Creator."

Little Robert, it is said, resolved to be an enemy to that God and to His Book, the Bible, as long as he lived . . . and he was. His books against the Bible are everywhere, in many languages. The result was that this unscriptural defamation of our loving Creator has IN THIS ONE CASE destroyed the faith of countless thousands and robbed them of their eternity . . . certainly something for a "Satanic" being to "jump for glee" over.

The doctrine of purgatory was introduced by the Roman Church. It is supposedly a lake of fire where sinners and others are declared to go for "purification." Their length of stay depends supposedly on the prayers of the priests; who claim to have the power to "pray them out" and get them through to the "other side" safely. These Romish priests charge immense sums from the rich for getting their loved ones out quickly and thus lessening their suffering.

The Protestant clergy also teach that "hell" is a lake of fire where conscious people suffer. But instead of these ministers praying the sinners out for a price, they frighten the people by preaching "hell fire sermons" to increase their congregations and keep the people supporting their ministry. If they don't attend and contribute—they are sure to go to hell and suffer the pangs of torment forever.

These are doctrines of lies, taught for the purpose of robbery. They are used to swindle widows and orphans, to feather the nests of priests and clergymen. They thrive on the wrong interpretation of certain texts of Scripture; which when so interpreted, involves the whole Bible in direct contradictions. This destroys the faith of honest intelligent souls, giving birth to thousands of infidels.

Frightening people to join the church and remain loyal to the Work of the Master is just the opposite of His teachings, and gives birth to "church members," but not to "begotten of the Spirit" Christians. The Scriptures teach us that it is the goodness of God that leads people to repentance. It is the love of the Father that prompts obedience, not the fear of a god who is a monster more depraved than our worst criminals. It is "The goodness of God (that) leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. 2:4). "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation" (II Cor. 7:10). "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not difficult" (I John 5:3 Lamsa).

How shall a person accept that God is LOVE, when taught this devilish heathen idea that sinners are bound for eternal punishing in "hell fire?"

The Fate of The Wicked

Here are just a few of the many Scriptures describing the final fate and end of the wicked: "But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away" (Psa. 37:20). "While they are drunken as drunkards they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry" (Nahum 1:10). " . . . all the wicked and all who do iniquity shall be stubble; and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them NEITHER ROOT NOR BRANCH . . . they shall be ASHES UNDER THE SOLES OF YOUR FEET IN THE DAY THAT I SHALL DO THIS, SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS" (Malachi 4:14:1-3 Lamsa). "They shall be punished with everlasting destruction" (II Thess. 1:9). "No murderer bath eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:15).

What would the "Eternal Torment Preachers," who claim to believe all of the Bible, do with Scriptures such as these? Why do they never use them in their sermons? The answer is

obvious. They teach that the wicked have eternal life in hell, which many of them know is a lie. Eternal life only comes through the presence of the Holy Spirit in the person. Life and death are opposite terms. Eternal life for the righteous and death (eternal) for the wicked is stated over and over throughout the Scriptures.

A correct understanding of this subject is almost a necessity to Christian steadfastness. For centuries it has been the teaching of "orthodoxy" of all shades that God, before creating man, created a great abyss of fire and terrors. This great abyss is supposed to be capable of containing all the billions of humans which He purposed to bring into being. They teach that this abyss is named Hell, and that all of the promises and threatenings of the Scriptures were designed to deter as many as possible (the "little flock") from such wrong-doing as would make this awful place their perpetual home. Christian people have so long been taught this awful blasphemy against God's Word that to whatever extent their belief in "hell" is shaken; their belief in the Bible is also shaken. But the Bible, rightly understood, does not teach this "burning torment in hell" doctrine.

The Meaning of Hell

The word hell is an English word sometimes selected by the translators of the English Bible to express the sense of the Hebrew word sheol and the Greek words hades, gehenna, and tartaroo. Over a long period of years a number of words in our language have acquired different meanings and shades of meaning. So it has been with the word hell. The word hell in old English usage simply meant: to conceal, to hide, or to cover; hence a concealed, hidden or covered place. In old English literature, records are found of the "helling" of potatoes-putting potatoes into pits; and of the "helling" of a house-covering or thatching it. The word hell was therefore properly used synonymously with the words grave and pit. These words (grave and pit) translate the words sheol and hades and signify the secret or hidden condition of death.

The Hebrew word sheol occurs sixty-five times in the Old Testament. In the KJV it is translated hell thirty-one times, grave thirty-one times, and pit three times. If the translators Of the RSV had been thoroughly disentangled from error, they would have done more to help the English student than merely substitute the Hebrew word sheol and the Greek word hades, as they have done. They should have translated the words, but they have left us sheol and hades untranslated, and thus permitted the inference that these words mean the same as the Word hell has become perverted to mean. Yet anyone can see that if it was proper to translate the word sheol thirty-one times grave, and thirty-one times hell, it could not have been improper to so translate it in every other instance.

A peculiarity to be observed in comparing these cases, as we shall shortly see, is that in those texts where the torment idea would have been an absurdity, the translators of the KJV have used the words grave or pit; while in all other cases they have used the word hell. The reader, long schooled in the idea of torment, reads the word hell and thinks of it as signifying a place of torment, rather than the grave (hidden or covered place or condition). Examples of these instances are Job 14:13 and Psalm 86). The second reads: "Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell (sheol)." Since the Hebrew word is the same in both cases, there is no reason why the same word grave should not be used in both. How absurd it would have been for Job to pray to God to hide him in a hell of eternal torture!

As was noted, the word hell occurs thirty-one times in the Old Testament, and in every instance it is from the Hebrew word sheol. It does not mean a lake of fire and brimstone. Quite the opposite, sheol is described as a place of "darkness" (Job 10:21). Instead of a place where shrieks and groans are heard, it is described in the context as a place of "SILENCE" (Psalm 115:17). Rather than representing a place of pain, suffering, and

remorse; the context describes it as a place or condition of "forgetfulness" (Psalm 88:11, 12). "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge in the grave (sheol) whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:10).

The meaning of sheol is the "hidden state," as applied to man's condition in death, in and beyond which is all hidden. All is hidden, except to "the eye of faith." Hence, by proper and close association, the word was often used in the sense of grave (the tomb, the hidden place, or place beyond which only those who have the enlightened eye of understanding can see resurrection, or the restitution of being). In two scriptures (Isa. 14:9 and Jonah 2:2) translating sheol into hell was so obviously absurd that scholars have felt it necessary to explain in the margin of modern Bibles that the word actually means grave. In the latter case (Jonah 2:2) the hidden state, or grave, was the belly of the whale in which Jonah was buried alive.

The Scriptures state that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), not eternal life in a different location. The scriptural "hell fire" is going to be a lot hotter than the clergy realize or admit; since it will consume the wicked to nothing more than ASHES (Malachi 4:3). The words translated hell in the New Testament also bear this out.

This burning to ashes takes place AFTER THE RESURRECTION. The Messiah himself explained: "Do not wonder at this; for the time is coming when all those who are in their graves will hear his voice, and they will come out; those who have done good works to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil works to the resurrection of judgement" (John 5:28-29 Lamsa).

When the Messiah returns to earth at the end of this age, the patriarchs and truly converted children of God will be raised from their graves. At that time the Messiah will reward the righteous, and they will then rule with Him "as kings and priests" over the earth for 1,000 years (I Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 20:4; Daniel 2: 44; and 7: 27).

The rest of the dead, the wicked, will not be resurrected until the end of the 1,000 years. They will be resurrected to judgment and destruction in the "lake of fire" (Rev. 21: 8).

In the New Testament the Greek word hades corresponds exactly with the Hebrew word sheol. As proof, see the quotations of the apostles from the Old Testament, in which they render it hades: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (hades), Acts 2:27 which is quoted from "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (sheol), Psa. 16:10. "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave (hades), where is thy victory?" I Cor. 15:55) is an allusion to Isa 25:8, "O death I will be thy plagues; O grave (sheol), I will be thy destruction."

Now notice Mark 9:47, 48: "If shine eye offend thee pluck it out, it is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where the that if it was proper to translate the word sheol thirty-one times grave, and thirty-one times hell, it could not have been improper to so translate it in every other instance.

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When the Messiah returns to earth at the end of this age, the patriarchs and truly converted children of God will be raised from their graves. At that time the Messiah will reward the righteous, and they will then rule with Him "as kings and priests" over the earth for 1,000 years (I Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 20:4; Daniel 2: 44; and 7: 27).

The rest of the dead, the wicked, will not be resurrected until the end of the 1,000 years. They will be resurrected to judgment and destruction in the "lake of fire" (Rev. 21: 8).

In the New Testament the Greek word hades corresponds exactly with the Hebrew word sheol. As proof, see the quotations of the apostles from the Old Testament, in which they render it hades: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (hades), Acts 2:27 which is quoted from "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (sheol), Psa. 16:10. "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave (hades), where is thy victory?" a Cor. 15:55) is an allusion to Isa 25:8, "O death I will be thy plagues; O grave (sheol), I will be thy destruction."

Now notice Mark 9:47, 48: "If shine eye offend thee pluck it out, it is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." If you have a Bible with references along the margin, as many Bibles have, you will notice that there is a small figure by the word "hell" which you may trace to the margin. There you will find hell was translated from the Greek word gehenna. Any Bible dictionary will tell you the word gehenna is the name of the valley joining Jerusalem on the South, known also as the Valley of Hinnom. It was in this valley the garbage of the city was dumped. Also into the city dump were thrown the bodies

of dead animals, and the bodies of dead convicted criminals. Fires were constantly kept burning to consume them. Around the edge where the fire did not burn, the maggots (or worms) were constantly eating the flesh that remained. Webster's New World Dictionary tells us about gehenna: "The valley of Hinnom near Jerusalem where refuse was dumped and fires were kept continually burning to prevent pestilence: hence a place of burning." Here children were also burned to death in sacrifice to Moloch. Gehenna then, as occurring in the New Testament, symbolises death and utter destruction. In no place does it signify a place of eternal torment.

In Matthew 25:46 we learn that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous unto life eternal. The punishment inflicted upon the wicked is to be everlasting in duration; but the text of the KJV does not make it clear as to the nature of this everlasting punishment. In the Emphatic Diaglott this punishment is clarified: "These (the wicked) shall go forth to the aionian (everlasting) cutting off; but the righteous to aionian (everlasting) life." God's Word explains further in II Thess. 1:9 that the wicked "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." Also see Psa 92:6, 7; 68:2; 104:35; 37:20, 38; Isa. 1:28; Nahum 1:9, 10; Rev. 20:9; and 21:8.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Possibly the favorite text of modern "hell fire" preachers is Luke 16:19-31. These ministers claim the account of the "Rich Man and Lazarus" is a literal fact rather than a parable; thus lowering the character of the Almighty who is declared all through the Scriptures to be a merciful and loving Creator.

The rich man lived in luxurious splendor, while at his gate lay a beggar who would have been content with no more than the crumbs from the rich man's table. The beggar's only comfort came from dogs who licked his sores.

The rich man died and was buried. The beggar died and was carried by angels to "Abraham's bosom." In hell from flames of torment, the rich man cried to Father Abraham, ". . . have mercy on me, and send Lazarus (the beggar), that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue . . ." The response brought a reminder that in their lifetime the situation was reversed. Before death the plutocrat thought nothing about the need for one man to help another.

Pleas persisted, asking that Lazarus be sent to warn the rich man's brothers, lest they also end up in torment. Abraham advised that they had Moses and the prophets. The rich man insisted his brothers would believe one who came from the dead, but Abraham was unconvinced.

Is this a literal, factual incident; or is this another of the several parables found in Luke's account of the Gospel? Many claim it is a literal incident, and that it applies to all of the righteous and the wicked people. However-not a word is said about one of the two being righteous and the other wicked. One was rich, and one was poor. If the story is literal; then it outlines the fate of all the rich and all of the poor men in the world, not the righteous and the wicked!

In chapter 15 and verse one we find: "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and the sinners to hear him." In Matthew 13:34 we are told the Messiah spoke only to the multitudes IN Parables. How then can anyone conclude that the "Rich man and Lazarus" is anything but a parable?

Naturally the story is a parable. The symbolism in the parable is used to reveal an integral

part of the plan of God. It is a parable of the Jew and the Gentile, full of meaning and importance for us now as the end of the age approaches.

In the parable the rich man who died was spiritually the Jewish nation. The rich man had five brothers (v. 28). Judah, from whom the Jews are called, also had five full brothers. Also note that during the time of Messiah's ministry there were five religious sects among the Jews: the Pharisees, Saducees, Herodians, Essenes and the Nazarites.

God's lavish concern for the Jews is reported throughout the Old Testament. The riches and stewardship were taken away from the Jewish nation and they were "Led away captive into all nations" (Luke 21:24). They have been under the fires of persecution, plundered and murdered, destroyed in gas chambers, shot and maimed. In Deut. 32:24 we find "They shall be burnt with hunger and devoured with burning heat and with bitter destruction." This has all happened to them. They truly went into a world of punishment, just as was stated in the parable.

Lazarus, the beggar, stands for the Gentiles. The Hebrew name "Lazarus" is a contraction of the word Eliezar, which signifies the "help or assistance of God"—a name properly given to a man who was both poor and afflicted, and had no help but that which came from heaven.¹ "Wherefore remember that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh . . . That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:1 1, 12).

In the parable Israel is spoken of as wealthy (the rich man), and the Gentiles as having no hope and without God. But then salvation through the Messiah is offered to the Gentiles, " . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:28). In Eph. 2:14 we read of the "middle wall of partition" between the Jew and the Gentile (just as it is spoken of in Luke 16: 26) as a gulf fixed so that one can't pass to the other.

The death of the rich man and Lazarus in the parable represents the changes brought about in the relationship between Jew and Gentile by the Gospel. Israel appeared to be the logical recipient of the grace of God. It did not turn out that way. The Gentiles were more receptive, while the Jews rejected the Son of God.

The information that poor Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom confirms the symbolism in this parable. Abraham's bosom has reference to the Abrahamic promises made available to the Gentiles. They are now the children of Abraham, heirs of promises made to him, through faith in the Messiah. 66 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28, 29).

The last two verses of the story again affirm that it is a parable of things then to come. One did go to the five brothers (Pharisees, Saducees, Herodians, Essenes and Nazarites) from the dead—the resurrected Messiah—and they would not be persuaded, nor repent.

It is for us to shun the profane and vain babblings of so called "orthodoxy," and accept God's word which treats death as the cessation of life, offers you a resurrection from the dead, and immortality upon the condition that you "by a patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Rom. 2: 7).

Tradition says the dead are "not dead but gone before." But the Scriptures say of the faithful: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises" (Heb. 11:13), and that if

there is no resurrection of the dead, "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (I Cor. 15:18).

Tradition would make the Word of God of no effect. For if the wicked go to their punishment at death and the righteous go to their reward, what need would there be for a resurrection?

Tradition says men are recompensed at death; but the Holy Scriptures say they shall be "recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14).

Death, then, is the cessation of life, resulting in dissolution; and resurrection is the reformation of man and the renewing of life.

The Thief On The Cross

Someone might ask, "But what about the experience of the thief on the cross? Didn't Jesus tell him that he would be in Paradise that day? No, He really didn't tell the thief that. Scriptures just don't teach that a man goes to paradise at the time of death. The fact is that the thief didn't ask to go to Paradise THAT day. He said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The Master replied to him, "Verily I say unto thee to day, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:42,43).

Someone might exclaim, "But you read that differently than other people do. Other people say, 'Verily I say unto thee, TO DAY shalt thou be with me in Paradise.' " Well, how we say it whether we say, "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise," or "I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise" depends upon what the Scriptures tell us about the thief, the Messiah, and about death. Remember:

When the Greek manuscript was written, there were NO punctuation marks of ANY kind. The placement of the comma was a matter of translation, not inspiration.

Since Christ was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights we do not understand that He was in Paradise contrary to what He said in Matthew 12:40 as to where He would be at that time. Further proof that Messiah did not go to Paradise that day is found in John 10:17: "Do not come near me; for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God" (Lamsa translation). Revelation 2: 7, 22:1,2 How that the Father's throne is in Paradise, so Messiah had not yet gone to Paradise on Sunday morning.

To make it even plainer where Christ was after His death, turn to Acts 2:31. Peter was speaking of Christ and quoting the prophet David: "He (David) seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." This verse proves that the Master was not in Paradise, but in hell. The word here rendered hell should have been translated "grave."

The Translation of Enoch and Elijah

What about Enoch and Elijah? When Elijah was caught up "by a whirlwind into heaven" (II Kings 2:11) he could not have been taken to God's abode. The Son of God stated that no man, except Himself, has ascended into heaven (John 3:13). We find, in Hebrews 11:5, Enoch is mentioned. We find the prophets (Elijah was one) referred to in verse 32. From Hebrews 11 :13-16 we may see that both Enoch and Elijah "died, not having received the promise! "

Enoch and Elijah were "raptured" into the first heaven but later finished out their physical lives on this earth. Scriptures speak of three heavens; the air around us, outer space where the planets and stars are seen, and the abode of the Father. A study of II Chronicles 21:12-15 gives evidence of Elijah's later life.

The Deception of Spiritism

We may be delivered from the pitfalls and deceptions of spiritism by believing what God says about death. Interest in Witchcraft and spiritism is sweeping the world these days, and is one of the great deceptions of the last days. Someone might ask, "But if the dead are asleep in their graves, who is it, then, that appears in the seance chamber in the form of our loved one? Who writes on the slates and speaks through the Ouija board? Who is it?"

Well, the Bible says that the spirits of devils work miracles and deceive the whole world (Rev. 16:14; Matt. 24:24). Men can masquerade in the form of other men and imitate their voice; and if men can do this, certainly evil angels can do as much. They can look like and sound like our deceased friends and relatives. These beings have existed and observed man for thousands of years; why should they not know of past events, and speak of them to us, to convince us that they are our departed friends?

There is nothing they would rather deceive man about than his own nature. They would love to try to substantiate the lie that the devil told in the Garden of Eden, "You'll not really die." Make no mistake, but be wise to the deception of Satan and don't allow yourself to be deceived by this hoax of life after death without the Messiah. There's only one way to live after we die and that is through the Lamb of God, who will bring us from our graves at the time of the resurrection.

The Lake of Fire

All through the Scriptures the final fate of the wicked is described as being burned up by fire. It's this "lake of fire" that is described as being the "second death," from which there will be NO resurrection. The wicked are to remain dead forever this is their eternal punishment. Look back to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. As Jesus spoke to the Pharisees, what did He want them to understand? There can be little doubt THEY understood what He was telling them. In Luke 13:27, 28 He had told them: "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." These Pharisees were going to be the "rich man" in the parable. They were going to be THRUST OUT into the LAKE OF FIRE, as Malachi 4:1 explains: "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall BURN THEM UP, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." All the proud and the wicked are going to be thrown into the lake of fire! When they are resurrected and lift up their eyes, they'll know they are doomed—doomed to be burned up.

We may learn from the Master's words that the everlasting fire is prepared for the devil and his angels. In Matthew 25:41 Christ said: ". . . Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The wicked, who never were immortal, will be destroyed when thrown into this fire after the second resurrection.

Only God is eternal. To be eternal you have to be part of Him—a child of God.

The apostle Paul stated: "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not that we should be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (II Cor. 5:40).

In verse 1 of the same chapter Paul spoke of "our earthly house." We understand he is thereby speaking of the temporal or mortal, fleshly body—that it will be dissolved. That is, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Then hope is given by telling us of the eternal house or body "not made with hands," because the Lord will supply it.

Notice that in Romans 8:19-23 Paul says we were made "subject to vanity" (one version says "decay") but gives us hope that we shall be "delivered from the bondage of corruption" (or decay). I Corinthians 15:16 informs us that this deliverance and new body will be at the resurrection. We are "Waiting for the redemption of our body." This is not the redemption that now comes at conversion, when our sins are blotted out by faith in Messiah. Notice that nothing is said about any desire to be in any spirit world when the mortal body is in decay or in the process of returning to dust while waiting for the immortal body we bug for.

In II Corinthians 5:4 Paul says we "groan ('we sigh' another version says) being burdened . . ." Indeed this life has its burdens which should help cause us to long all the more for immortality. not for that we would be unclothed, but that mortality might be swallowed up of life." It is clear in I Corinthians 15 that this life that swallows up mortality will come AT THE RESURRECTION when at the Saviour's return "the trumpet shall sound."

The desire is not to be unclothed (to die), but to be clothed with an immortal body from the Lord. If folks "went to a spirit world" at death to wait until the resurrection, why didn't Paul mention it and have a desire to be there where the old body of flesh couldn't suffer pain and anguish? The fact is—when believers are laid to rest they are not in some spirit world, but rather they are "asleep in Christ" as the Scriptures plainly teach.

As we wait for and seek the return of the Lord, and the resurrection to life—how shall we understand the teaching of the Scriptures as to His return?

Chapter Nine

A Secret Rapture?

The commonly accepted viewpoint, taught by most Bible scholars today, and illustrated by the recent book "The Late Great Planet Earth," is that the return of the Messiah will be in two separate events. First He will come in the rapture and take the Church to heaven; then seven years later (some indicate a three and one-half year period) He will come again, this time in glory and power. The interval between these two events, according to this view, will be the great tribulation period during which the anti-christ will come to power (as this writing has already begun to show, however, THIS tribulation period has already been fulfilled).

There are definite scriptural objections to the idea the Messiah will return in two separate comings. One might also note that this idea is of very recent origin. The Holy Scriptures plainly teach that our Lord came the FIRST time and He will "appear the SECOND time" (Heb. 9:28). Nowhere do we read of a THIRD coming of our Lord. Neither do the Holy Scriptures in any place tell us the second coming will be in two stages!

What we are told is the second coming, the resurrection, and the catching up of believers to meet the Lord in the air will not take place until the END of this age. This is why the Lord gave the promise: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the END of the world (age)" (Matt. 28: 19, 20). This promise would not have been made to be with the Church until the end of the age if seven years before the end of the age they would have already been caught up to be with Him. This very doctrine of the secret rapture may be Satan's own invention to hide the identity of the false church and the anti-christ; whose powers have been working among us already. Naturally if the power of the anti-christ be among us, he would strive to hide the fact of his identity.

According to Peter, our Lord's promise to come again, and the time for which we as Christians are looking, will come ". . . as a thief in the night in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (II Peter 3:4-12)—another reference to the very end of this age.

To properly understand a Bible verse or statement, you must see it in its context.

Because some of the Holy Scriptures liken the Lord's coming to "a thief in the night," some have supposed this is talking about a secret and quiet coming, as compared with a later coming in open glory and power. Take care to notice that Peter places our Lord's coming "as a thief in the night" clear at the end; certainly not seven years before the end. It is also clear by his use of this expression that he did not mean a secret and quiet event, for he said the day of the Lord (the Lord's Day) would come as a thief in the night in which the heavens would pass away with a GREAT NOISE!

A study of the "thief" passages shows the coming of the Lord would be when the "world" was not expecting Him. The People of God must be awake both to reject anti-christs, and to accept the real Messiah when He returns. The exact TIME of His coming is not revealed. But there is nothing to indicate the event itself be secret or quiet. Notice, for example, the words of Paul when he taught that the day of the Lord would come "as a thief hi the night" (as to time), but the event itself is described in the following terms: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a SHOUT, with the voice of the archangel, and with the TRUMP of God" and believers will be "caught up to meet e Lord in the air" (I Thess. 4:16,

17). Such terminology certainly does not seem to indicate a secret and quiet event.

Our Lord taught that the righteous and evil, the wheat and tares, would not be separated until the end of the age. He said Hey "both" would grow "together" until the "END OF THE WORLD (age)" and THEN they would be separated (Matt. 13:2~39). We further learn that the dead carcasses of the "tares" will be left to the "eagles," or vultures (Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37; Ezek. 39:4). Messiah had told His disciples: "Two will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left" (Luke 17:36). The next verse explains the fate of those who are "taken:" "They answered, saying to him, Our Lord, to what place? He said to them, WHEREVER THE CARCASS IS, THERE WILL THE VULTURES GATHER" (Luke 17:37 Lamsa). These are the ones mentioned in Revelation 19:17, 18.

The parable following in the next verses explains that those "taken" are the "tares"—they will be killed, and the vultures will feast upon them. This is the vengeance which the Lord takes against those against Him at His return—Armageddon. This death will come upon the "tares" as death came upon Lot's wife (verse 32).

Those mentioned as being "left" in verses 31, 34, 35 and 36 are those who "meet the Lord in the air" and return with Him at that time to remain on the earth with Him. "Such will it be in the day when the Son of man appears" (Luke 17:30 Lamsa).

In Matthew 24:27, 28 we find that an evidence that Messiah has returned will be the vultures gathered around the dead: For just as the lightning comes out from the east, and is seen over in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man. For wherever the carcass is, there will the vultures gather."

According to the two-stage teaching, both would NOT grow together until the end of the age, for in this case the righteous would be separated from the wicked seven years BEFORE the end!

Separating a scripture from its context leads to doctrinal misunderstanding and error.

Those who uphold the "secret rapture" doctrine support their teachings by saying it is indicated in the Greek. They teach that first there will be the Rapture (the parousia), a secret coming; then seven (or three and one half) years later will be the Revelation (apokalupsis), His coming in power and glory. But instead of the Greek teaching two separate events by these words, these terms are actually used interchangeably in the Scriptures!

Paul used the word parousia in the noted rapture chapter (I Thessalonians 4) in speaking of the "coming of the Lord" and "our gathering together unto Him" (II Thess. 2:1). He then went right on to show that the parousia will destroy the man of sin: "The Lord shall destroy (the man of sin) with the brightness of His Coming (parousia)" (II Thess. 2:8). This clearly marks the reign of the man of sin, not an escape rapture BEFORE the reign of antichrist begins.

The other Greek word, apokalupsis (revelation), is used in such a way as to show it is not a separate coming from the time when believers are gathered. Peter said to be "sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the REVELATION (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:13). Why would Christians be exhorted to hope for the grace to be brought to them at the REVELATION of the Lord, if their real hope was a secret rapture seven years BEFORE the revelation?

Looking at the following parallel passages clearly shows parousia and apokalupsis refer to

the same event. In Matthew 24:37 we read: "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming (parousia) of the son of man be." Luke's account of the same passage says: "As it was in the days of Noah . . . even thus shall it be in the day when the son of man is revealed (apokalupsis)" (Luke 17:26, 30). This shows the coming (parousia) of our Lord and His revelation (apokalupsis) are the same event. There is no basis for placing seven or three and one half years between.

There are those who teach that the rapture is not actually the "coming" of the Lord. His "coming" they say, is when He returns in power seven years after the rapture. This explanation is, however, very weak; because many Scriptures show that Christians are to be waiting and watching for the coming of the Lord. James 5:7, for example, says "Be patient then, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord."

Revelation 3:10 is often quoted in support of an extra coming of our Lord and secret escape rapture: "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." Compare this verse with the words of our Master in John 17:6, 15. The wording is very similar, yet the passage in John speaks of the Father's keeping power to those who keep His word-WITHOUT TAKING THEM OUT OF THE WORLD! "They have kept thy word . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

If those who "kept the word" can be "kept from the evil" without being taken out of the world, why should we expect a "secret rapture" before the Lord's return? The evidence is apparent that things have been read into the Holy Scripture which simply are not there.

Luke 21:36 speaks of escaping "all these things." The Lord said to His disciples: "Pray always that ye may be accounted Worthy to escape . . ." How then may we escape? By a secret rapture to take the saints to heaven seven years before the end of the age? Apparently not, for in the prayer that Messiah prayed He said: "I pray NOT that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). Would He pray one way and then tell His disciples to pray another way?

True Biblical doctrine must be based upon CLEAR statements, not upon verses which can only offer a possible inference.

You have already seen that the "Beast" has already revealed itself. Today's "Bible scholars" commonly say that the resurrection and rapture of the saints will occur at the time of the "first resurrection" and will take place BEFORE the beast is revealed. This causes these "scholars" quite a problem, explaining how this resurrection includes those who refused to worship the beast! (See Revelation 20:4-6). How could those in the first resurrection be martyrs for refusing to worship the beast if this is a literal resurrection that will occur BEFORE the beast is revealed?

Instead of the Holy Scriptures teaching that the Church would be gathered to meet the Lord before the "man of sin" is revealed, Paul made it very clear that the day of the Lord's coming and "our gathering together unto him . . . will not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed" (II Thess. 2:1-3). Paul exhorted: "Let no man deceive you!" Each of us, then, should beware of a teaching which says the saints will be raptured to heaven BEFORE the man of sin is revealed in power, for such is the EXACT OPPOSITE OF what Paul taught! How else, but through false doctrines (inspired by the "man of sin"), would the world and "Christian" peoples be induced to fight against our Lord at His return

(Revelation 16:13-16; Zech. 14:1-3). "For the time will come when THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, AND SHALL BE TURNED UNTO FABLES" (II Tim. 4:34).

Though the Holy Scriptures teach that the "Kingdom of God" and the "Kingdom of Heaven" are one and the same (Matt. 19: 23, 24, etc.), the teaching that Messiah will return in two second comings has gone hand in hand with the teaching that there are two kingdoms; or that the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God are different!

The Bible teaches that Jesus has broken down "the middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile, thus making all saints, regardless of race, ONE in Christ (Eph. 2:11-19). The teaching that there will be two second comings of our Lord splits the people of God into two different groups with two different gospels, for whom God has two different plans! thus Hey say that saints against whom the beast will make war are not "church saints," but a different kind of saints, a different people. Some even go so far as to say we are saved by the blood of Christ through grace . . . but after the rapture men will be saved by giving their own blood in martyrdom!

Origin of Rapture Theory

We need to recognize when and where this doctrine of the "secret rapture" originated. As we evaluate it, we must also evaluate its source. The doctrine is of relatively recent origin. It was in the sixteenth century that JESUIT CATHOLIC scholars Joseph Ribera, Cardinals Ballerine and Alcasar) began teaching she secret rapture theory.¹

More than fifteen hundred years after Messiah ascended into heaven the secret rapture theory was born—brought into the world by the Romish Church. The Protestants learned the theory from them. About 1825 Samuel R. Maitland, the Archbishop of Canterbury's librarian, accepted aspects of the secret rapture and anti-christ belief. Soon the belief began to be accepted by Protestant churches. "In a church pastored by Edward Irving, a Miss Margaret McDonald gave what was considered at that time to be an inspired utterance. She spoke of the visible, open, and glorious coming of the Lord. But as the utterance continued, He spoke of another coming of the Lord: a secret and SPECIAL coming in which those that were truly ready would be raptured.²

It was soon after this time that William Miller, a Baptist minister, predicted the return of the Lord in 1844.

It was John Nelson Darby, a Brethren minister and writer of the time in England, who was largely responsible for introducing this "secret rapture" doctrine on a large scale. The teaching spread to the United States in the 1850s and 1860s. There it was to receive its biggest boost when Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, a strong believer in Darby's teachings, incorporated it into the notes of his "Scofield Reference Bible" which was published in 1909.

Since that time the view has been widely accepted, often by people who are completely unaware that this was not the belief held by Christians over the centuries.

Oswald Smith, noted minister and author of Toronto, says in his booklet "Tribulation or Rapture-Which?" that he "once held the two-stage teaching," but when he began to search the Scriptures for himself, he discovered there is not a single verse in the Bible to uphold this view. "Naturally I thought of II Thessalonians 2:7," he continues, "but there is no mention of the Holy Spirit at all. That is a Scofield Bible assumption. The Holy Spirit and the Church remain to the end of the Age . . . I had been taught that the Greek word 'parousia'

always referred to the rapture and that other words were used for the coming of Christ in glory . . . but I found that this is not true . . . We might go through all the writers of the New Testament, and we would fail to discover any indication of the so-called 'two stages' of our Lord's coming . . . That theory had to be invented by man. Search and see. There is no verse in the Bible that even mentions it."

It should be of interest, and provoke thought, to compare the thinking concerning Messiah's FIRST coming about 2,000 years ago with that of today dealing with His SECOND coming.

During the era of our Lord's first appearance there was considerable anxious expectation concerning the Messiah. Among the Hebrews there were those who were looking for the "Promised One." As to HOW He would appear, who really understood?

We believe that John the Baptist understood. He said, "There cometh One mightier than I after me, the lachet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose" (Mark 1:7). In Matthew 3 John spoke of the Savior as the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Then in the first chapter of John we read, "Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." However, in Matthew 11 a question comes up. John the Baptist "sent two of his disciples" to Messiah to ask, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Whether John asked this question because he wasn't sure, or merely for the sake of his disciples who wondered about the Master, is a matter to wonder about. John was not in prison and it was time for his disciples to become followers of Messiah.

Going back to the time of Christ's birth, King Herod heard about it and was troubled. He called a council of the religious leaders and "demanded of them where Messiah should be born." The reply they gave him was correct. "In Bethlehem of Judaea," they informed him. Yet these same leaders did not recognize the Saviour when He was born. In one sense He came the first time "as a thief in the night" to them. Apparently they did not expect Him to come as He did—from obscurity—"as a root out of a dry ground" (Isa. 53).

It is interesting to note the discussion that is recorded in John 7:40-53. There was a division among the people as to who Messiah was. Some believed Him to be the Prophet that was to come; others didn't. The Master asked His disciples, "Whom do MEN say that I the Son of man am?" The reply was that some thought He was Elias, or Jeremiah or one of the other prophets. Peter had special information because the heavenly Father had given it to Him.

Could it be that the Father will also reveal to "His very own" special understanding of the Scripture so that they will be among the wise of Matthew 25, ready and prepared to meet the Master, not too surprised when He comes?

Returning to Matthew 3, we read of some whom the Bible and history give almost no information, and yet they knew far more than the religious leaders of the time about the Saviour's first appearance. "There came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him." Who were these wise men? We don't know much about them except that they were wise enough to know the times and to understand about the coming of the King of the Jews and recognize Him. That was knowing much.

In Luke 2 we read of the shepherds just common folk—to whom the angels revealed where to find the long looked for Saviour. They became believers. Simeon and also Anna, by special revelation, recognized the Messiah when they saw Him as a babe.

The Scriptures state that in the time of THE END "the wise shall understand!" It may be that the "wise men" and those few others—are a special example to us of these last days who

are looking for Messiah's SECOND coming. To the humble, dedicated and devoted servants of God—growing in spiritual knowledge: to them it may be that the Almighty wit give more understanding of the Scriptures concerning our Lord's return as time goes on.

Summary

1. Easter is a pagan holiday and was not kept by the early Church.
2. The Friday crucifixion and Sunday resurrection theory is false and denies the sign our Lord gave that He was the Messiah.
3. Easter very slowly replaced Passover observance; which in the early Church was the time designated by the Scripture as a memorial of Messiah's death for us when the "Lord's Supper" was observed.
4. Our Lord died on Passover, a Wednesday; and rose from the dead in the latter part of the Sabbath.
5. By accepting the pagan teaching and rites of the mystery religions, many church leaders have taken upon themselves the "mark of the beast."
6. Those who became thus marked persecuted and martyred those of the early Church, fulfilling the prophecies of the "Great Tribulation."
7. The Pope's very title means "anti-christ."
8. The Catholic Church boasts that the most prominent "mark" of authority is the "change of the Sabbath" in which the Protestant churches have followed her.
9. Christmas, also, like Easter and "Sun" day worship are pagan and condemned in the Bible. The Babylonian messiah was born in the winter. The Son of God was born in the early fall of the year.
10. The early Church believed in "One God, and one mediator between God and men." Thus beast power perpetuated the pagan dogma of the "trinity" which had originated in Babylon.
11. The early Church believed the truth; that "the wages of sin is death (not eternal life in 'hellfire'); but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Spiritism entered the Romish Church through the Mysteries.
12. The idea of two "second comings," or a "secret" rapture are of Romish origin-neither taught by the early Church or the Scriptures.

Chapter Ten

Repentance

The Bible tells us in no uncertain terms that repentance is the **FIRST STEP**, and a **NECESSARY STEP**, toward salvation. No one shall be saved without it. Repentance is to be preached among all nations (Luke 24:47). Without repentance our sins will not be forgiven us (Acts 2:38). Baptism, Scripture memorization, a good reputation, and all else are worthless to us without repentance. This is a fact that Satan has long well known. Would it not be then an obvious work of Satan to confuse the meaning of this doctrine in our minds—so that we would then continue to be his children, and not God's children?

To repent is to have a "godly sorrow" for our sins (II Cor. : 10). But what then, is sin? Sure, you have heard people talk about sin, and how bad it is. But have they told you what the Holy Scriptures say that sin is? That's where the catch is! You can only repent of your sins when you know for sure what God says your sins are. How and why would you be sorry for something if you didn't know that thing was wrong in the first place? Will you learn to please God if you don't know what He dislikes and says is wrong? Is sin doing something that **YOU** feel in your mind (using you own reasoning) is wrong? That's what the ministers today are teaching. But only the Holy Scriptures have the answer. Romans 3:20 tells us that "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Perhaps that might not be plain enough for some, so it's repeated elsewhere: "whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4).

Now if the devil can convince you that the Law is done away with—then repentance can have no meaning for you, and you cannot begin to follow the path that our Heavenly Father would have you to walk. It's as simple as that.

To repent is to truly recognize how you have fallen short of what God expects of you, and to truly be sorry for this—seeking from then on to obey God by keeping His Laws that you have broken in the past. Only real repentance works. If you pray to God to forgive you for your sins—and keep right on committing them just as before—then you weren't really sorry for your sins. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). For this reason man rebels against the things of God. It is his nature to be rebellious against God. Man must, and shall, be delivered from this natural state of rebellion. God set in motion a law of the mind that causes a person to rebel. Paul recognised this law working in his own mind when he said: "I find then a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" (Rom. 7:21). When Paul said: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (v. 22), then and only then he could "see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (v. 23).

We, like Paul, must get this Law of God working in us to reveal the sin in us and the evil that confronts us in this present world.

Someone once said "The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change." You don't change by concentrating on change, or defining what change there is going to be. You don't change by making excuses for your shortcomings and hiding them from yourself, either. This is just the opposite of the "power of positive thinking," where you decide what you want to be, and then be it. Now don't jump up and shout "No, no I can't! I've got this and that quality and I can't accept it all." God will accept you just as you are,

provided you accept yourself for just what you are. Only then can the change take place. We do not know what we should be. We do not know what we should do. We don't even know what we ARE very well. That's why the Lord promised to send us a Comforter, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can then guide us as we seek to do God's will. Self-acceptance is just a part of repentance. If we can't accept and admit that we really are the screwed-up mess that we really are—how can we go to the Almighty in prayer and ask Him to forgive us? Then how can we know what to ask for forgiveness for if we don't even know what sin is? Well, we can't. If there were no law, there could be no sin. And if there were no sin, we wouldn't need forgiveness. Since we were born after Calvary, and we do need God's Son as our Mediator and our Saviour; our very existence proves that the Law had not been done away with.

Once you have learned what repentance is all about, and have learned to accept yourself, some things really happen. Other people are easier to understand and are more "real." When we recognize our own faults it's easier to accept the faults in other people. We don't have to like their faults but we can accept them better even though they have these faults. So it's easier for us to love . . . and love is the fulfilling of the law. Just about every one of us can look back and remember a few people who have taken us just the way we were. No deals, no bargains. They take you because you are you, unconditionally: not "If you will shave your beard" or "If you will fix your hair differently" or "If you will believe just like me." These people saw our faults and loved us anyway—that's what the Master did.

Our transgression of the Law must be acknowledged, and we must have a "godly sorrow" in our hearts because of this transgression: this is repentance. When we find true repentance we also begin to accept ourselves. When we truly accept ourselves as we really are, then we can begin to be molded into what the Father would have us to be.

Never Look Back

Once you have come this far you have made a commitment never look back. A man once told Jesus: ". . . I will follow thee, but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house" (Luke 9:61). The Master answered him: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

We should give careful study to the Noah-Lot comparisons Messiah made with our day. AS it was in the days of Noah, SO shall it be ALSO in the days of the Son of man. AS it WAS in the days of Lot . . . EVEN THUS shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed, or "Such will it be in the day when the Son of man appears" (Luke 18, Lamsa).

Now look at Matthew's record of the "Noah" comparison: "Just as in the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man. For as the people before the flood were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark, And they knew nothing until the flood came and carried them all away; such will be the coming of the Son of man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken away and the other left" (Matt. 24:37-40 Lamsa).

Jesus was stressing the point that the people were glutting themselves in their indulgences up "until the day that Noah entered into the ark." His warning was about what they were doing before the flood.

"Likewise as it was in the days of Lot." The warning is about what they were doing before the fire and brimstone fell. "But the SAME DAY that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone." Lot was safely out of Sodom and THEN the fire fell. Noah and Lot were in their places of safety before any part of the judgments fell.

Christ added an important detail to the comparison between Lot's day and ours when He admonished: "REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it" (Luke 17:32, 33). What might it be about this woman that the Master wishes us to remember? She wasn't involved in the sodomitical sins. She wasn't a mocker about the impending destruction like her sons-in-law. She held the hand of the delivering angel as she was escaping the doomed city, and she got part way to the place of safety. Then, she was lost while she was being saved. The sin and unbelief of her heart that brought God's punishment upon her is expressed in two words: she "looked back" (Gen. 19:26).

In remembering her, did Jesus mean that if we don't look back, the coming judgment will not fall on us as condemnation fell upon her? Did He mean that she WOULD have escaped with her husband BEFORE any part of the fiery condemnation fell upon Sodom if she had not looked back?

In Lot's day, as in Noah's, the people made gods of their possessions and pleasures. To them, as with multitudes today, these things are "life." "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it." The Master taught much about life, and when Lot's wife looked back, it was with an intense yearning for those things that were life to her. Messiah called it "stuff in the house" (Luke 17:31). Lot's wife lost both her stuff and her life. She looked backward to Sodom, but Lot's heart was in Zoar.

Lot's wife represents a multitude of professing Christians who are not living in obedience to our Lord's warning: "but take heed to yourselves, lest your souls be weighed down with self-indulgence and drunkenness or the anxieties of this life, and that day to me upon you, suddenly, like a falling trap; for it will come on ~1 the dwellers on the face of the whole earth" (Luke 21: ~ 35 Weymouth).

This present world offers many attractions—some good, some bad. Some lawful ones may become a snare unto us if we are not very careful. Some bad ones may appear all right. Isn't it true that many "things" and much "stuff" we possess become very dear to us, and many hours are devoted to that which we ordinarily suppose is harmless? Many scriptures warn us of a too close attachment with "stuff:" "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). Paul said in Galatians 6:14 that: "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world," I John 2:15 states: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." If we do not heed these warnings we may become " . . . lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:4). Paul brings many of these scriptures into focus when he states: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (II Cor. 6:14, 17).

An understanding of the Almighty's Eternal Law will help each of us to understand how to "come out" and "be separate" to the Lord.

Chapter Eleven

The Two Covenants

The Creator's little-understood 7,000 year plan for the perfecting of mankind into His image began nearly 6,000 years ago. This "pattern" or plan is given in the first two chapters of Genesis. It is the week of seven days. In Scripture, seven denotes perfection or completeness. Note that II Peter 3:8 states: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." In Hebrews 4:4-11 the seventh day is pictured a "type" of the peaceful "rest" which will follow the Messiah's return. Revelation 20:4 specifically calls this time a "thousand years" period.

A key to understanding the progression of the Almighty's plan for this world is in understanding the covenants He has placed with man through the ages and their relationship to each other; leading to a more complete understanding of His will. The apostles did not fully understand the plan of the Father while Messiah was with them. They thought the Kingdom of God was to be established in their day. But after Pentecost, when they had received the Holy Spirit, they began to perceive that Messiah was to return at a much later date. Peter said "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise (of Messiah's coming), but is longsuffering. . . ." (II Peter 3:9). Man has been given 6,000 years to come to the understanding that his Own ways lead to nothing but suffering and death

Since Abraham was obedient to God, God called him out from his people and set him in the land of Canaan. Here God made a special promise to him: ". . . I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, and all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. . ." (Gen. 17:8). ". . . Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18).

In the fifteenth century B.C. God caused a great leader, Moses, to arise among the Israelites. Through the miraculous help of God, Moses was able to deliver them from their oppressive Egyptian taskmasters. God had called them out, as a chosen people so that He could teach them His ways. They, in turn, were to witness to the whole family of man of the God who has created us all. So that Israel might learn of God's deep spiritual ways; Moses was given the Law, written in stone by the Creator. As is evident, Israel was carnal, as we all are. They were unable to keep the Law of God. Therefore, soon after the Law of God was given on Mt. Sinai, God inspired Moses to write for the people another law, which was to be their "schoolmaster" or "Guardian" in the Law of God. This law (or schoolmaster, Gal. 3:24, 25) would give enough understanding of the Law of God through blood sacrifices, temple worship, and levitical priesthood—that at least "a chosen few" of Abraham's seed would be able to accept Messiah and understand the meaning of His sacrifice. The Messiah was to take the place of, or fulfill, this "schoolmaster" law.

Since we today have never been under this "schoolmaster," it is difficult for us to comprehend. Error has "crept in unawares" (Jude 4) among us to turn "the grace of our God into lasciviousness." For when we do not understand and accept what Messiah - me for, and what He did; and teach other doctrines instead we are denying Him. Most theologians today accept that ". . . Sin is the transgression of the Law" (I John 3:4), but few today fit seem to understand what the Law is. Some would cite the two great commandments the Messiah gave in Matthew 22:37-39; Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." They would say surely these two laws of love are new and do away with the "old Ten" and the entire Old Testament ("the law and the prophets" v. 40). But these too, were quoted by Jesus directly from the "Old Testament." Deuteronomy 6:5, expounding the Almighty's Ten Spiritual

Commandments says: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all shine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," and Leviticus 19:18 teaches: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; I am the Lord."

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep His commandments. . . But whoso keepeth His word, in him is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. He - that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment (that is, renewed, fresh) I -write unto you . . . because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light . . ." (I John 2:3-11). Also read I John 3:4,8,11-12 where John shows that God's commandment to love one another has been "from the beginning." The Messiah was The Word" of the Old Testament (John 1:1-2, 14) who created all things in Genesis 1 and 2 (John 1 :3; Col. 1 :16) and who spoke he Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:20). No wonder Paul wrote that ancient Israel "did all eat the same spiritual meat (God's SPIRITUAL teachings and instruction, the SAME as we have in the New Covenant); and did all drink the same SPIRITUAL drink (not something totally physical and different):for they drank of that SPRITUAL Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. Yeshua he Messiah (Jesus Christ) was THEIR guide and teacher . . . as He is ours today. And He is the same yesterday, today, and forever regarding His spiritual teachings, laws, and ways.

". . . The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it, surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever" (Isa. 40:6-8; I Peter 1:22-25). Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets" (Watt. 5: 17).

The Ordinances

The Law is confusing to many people because they think that the "Law" is the same as the "ordinances." In Genesis 26:5 we find that Abraham ". . . kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Through Moses, the Almighty gave Israel the Law, and also ordinances (or judgements)—for the reconciliation of those who had broken the Law. The ordinances for reconciliation had to do with the priesthood, temple, and sacrifice.

Let us examine the subject of ordinances. Some scriptures which deal with the ordinances are as follows: "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (Eph. 2:15). Lamsa's translation of this scripture gives much help, "And he has abolished by his commandments the ordinances of the law, that he may create, in his person, from the two, a new man, thus making peace." In Colossians 2:14 we find: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." Lamsa's translation also aids in understanding this scripture, " And by his commandments he cancelled the written bond of our sins, which stood against us; and he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

The ninth chapter of Hebrews lists the carnal ordinances and "types" which were fulfilled and done away by Messiah.

These are called in verse one the "ordinances of the first covenant." Verse one lists the

"divine service" and the worldly sanctuary." Verse two lists the tabernacle, the candlestick, the table, and the shewbread. Verse three adds the veil of the sanctuary, and the physical holy of Holies. Verse four lists the golden censor, the Ark of the Covenant, the golden pot, Aaron's rod, and the "tables of the covenant." Verse five lists "the cherubims of glory." Verse six again implies the Aaronic Priesthood. Verse nine includes the high priest, his gifts and sacrifices. Verse ten defines these sacrifices and gifts as meat and drink offerings, "divers" washings, and carnal ordinances "imposed until the time of reformation." The remainder of the chapter defines how the Messiah replaced all these things. Galatians 3:19 calls these ordinances the "LAW ADDED BECAUSE I OF TRANSGRESSION."

Were there divine ordinances in the beginning? In Genesis 4:3-10 we read about Cain and Abel sacrificing. This was an ordinance. Was it to be finished in a certain length of time? Yes, for . in Genesis 3:15 the Messiah and His Gospel was promised to take the place of this ordinance. There was no Hebrew or Jewish race this early in history; yet there were laws and ordinances, for Abraham kept them as did all the patriarchs. We can't say that ordinances belong to the Jews only.

Let us consider the Aaronic priesthood, which was part of the old covenant. A different set of ordinances were given that were not recorded before this time. These laws were for Jews, and even for Gentiles who would accept the worship of the Almighty, (Num. 15:14-16). All the laws that God ever gave before, and new ones as well were included in the laws and ordinances given to the Hebrews. Much detail is given in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers describing all of these ordinances. Galatians 3:19 informs us that some of these ordinances were called temporary "... till the seed should come" (Messiah).

These "temporary" ordinances were those which regulated the Aaronic Priesthood in making atonement for the sins of the people until replaced by the Melchisedec Priesthood of Messiah (Hebrews 5, 6 and 7).

The New Covenant in the Messiah is the completion and the fulfillment of the old because the High Priest we now have is perfect. Melchisedec is Hebrew for "my king is righteous." Nothing He has not fulfilled has been done away with. Only those things that were a "type" or "shadow" of Him are done away with. An example of what is meant is found in the dietary laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14:3-21.

These laws defined what was filthy and unfit to be eaten by man. The prime example of these unclean foods was the swine, a scavenger ("animal which feeds on carrion"). Since the pig was NOT a "type" or "shadow" of Messiah and His Work; and since His Work was to cleanse people, and not pigs: the dietary laws remain for us to keep even today. Only a warped and twisted mind could invent such a diabolical idea as to teach that the Master's death made pigs clean to eat. His Work was a spiritual Work of redemption—not a physical work of anatomy, anyway. Common sense rather than tradition should always be used when studying the Holy Scriptures.

Messiah died to make PEOPLE kosher (clean), not pigs!

Jesus Christ said in Matthew 5: 17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law . . ." The ordinances He fulfilled and completed for us were the ones which were shadows, figures, examples and patterns of His Work in its entirety. These included the sacrifice, the blood, the priesthood, and the tabernacle. Of all these Messiah was the fulfilling agent forever.

Few of us today have come to realize the depth of spiritual teachings contained in the ordinances of, for example, the Aaronic Priesthood. These men were called to serve unto the EXAMPLE and SHADOW of heavenly things" (Heb. 8:5). This was the beginning of the enigmatic testimony of the Kingdom Gospel.

"Before a man was accepted as a priest he had to be stripped of all his old garments and then be washed in pure water (baptized) by the high priest (Ex. 29:4). Here we have the type of the cleansing of the repentant sinner who comes to Christ, the High Priest. The blood of lambs justified the sinner in ancient days, for it was a SHADOW of the blood of Christ."¹

By these examples we may come to understand that the ordinances concerning these things were a promise (or prophecy), or a shadow of the true plan for our redemption. The Saviour fulfilled these laws perfectly and completely for each of us for all time; as we may find in Hebrews 9:10-12: "Which stood only in meats and drinks (offerings), and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Messiah has so perfectly fulfilled the laws relative to the priesthood and sacrifice for each of us-that we are redeemed from them (Gal. 3:13).

When we are resurrected and are born spiritual beings in the Kingdom of God-we will no longer need physical food. At that time the ordinances relative to what we eat will have no meaning. They too, then, will pass away. Unless one is obedient to the Almighty's Laws and thereby shows and proves he believes in the message of the glad tidings, he is no more a believer than the demons that believe yet fear and tremble.

The Eternal Law

Many people will agree that the Father counts some of the ordinances given in the Old Testament as abolished, or fulfilled for us. But were all the laws that were in force from the beginning of time (the laws that Abraham kept, the law that Noah kept and the law that was written by the finger of God) changed or fulfilled by Messiah (Matt. 5:17, 18)? Was there a law at the beginning of creation? The absence of law is the absence of sin and sin was from the beginning. Romans 7:7 says, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law said Thou shalt not covet." Romans 6:23 reads, "For the wages of sin is death . . ." Death was from the beginning. In the words of Leighton Ford, associate evangelist with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association: "God help us to turn to Christ in faith and by the power of His Spirit to show that His commandments are not grievous burdens, but the gateway to freedom that is freedom indeed."

The Ten Commandments Not Contained in The Book of The Old Covenant

Many today would have us to believe that both the Law and all the ordinances were part of the Old Covenant, and are passed away. But the Ten Commandments were not even a part of the "book of the Old Covenant." By reading Exodus 24:3-8 and Hebrews 9:19, 20 we learn that the book of the covenant, which Moses wrote, and read, and sprinkled with the "blood of the covenant," did not include the Ten Commandments. This is easily found to be true because not till AFTER the reading and sprinkling, etc., do we read in Exodus 24:14, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest

teach them."

It seems that when God spoke the Ten Commandments, no one wrote them down and so the complete exact wording was not remembered at that time. God told Moses to come up on Mt. Sinai and receive the tables on which God had written the Ten Commandments "THAT THOU MAYEST TEACH THEM."

Now If Moses had already included them (the Ten Commandments) in the book he had written, and which was called the book of the COVENANT and which had been sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, then he could have taught them from that book. But note that God said that Moses should come to get the wording of the Commandments, so that he, Moses, would be able to teach them.

This proves conclusively that the Ten Commandments were NOT included in the writing of the book of the Law which Moses wrote first. The book of the law is called the "first testament" (or old testament), in Hebrews 9:18. It was DEDICATED with the blood of animals-calves and goats. But once again, THAT book did NOT include the Ten Commandments.

The Two Administrations of The Law

Paul, in his second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 3, aptly explains the relationship of these two administrations of the Law to each other, and to the Messiah. Under the old covenant the Jews were brought into the right relationship to God, after breaking His Law; by the ordinances of blood sacrifice. In II Corinthians 3:7 we find this type of atonement called the "ministration of death." (Note that the Scriptures are very plain as to what the Ten Commandments were written on—two tables of stone—not "written and engraver in stones;" it is always stone—singular.) We find in verse 13 that Moses represented the "ministration of death" to the people. The Lamb of God has now fulfilled this ministration by His death. By His resurrection we are offered the free gift of eternal life. We are then no longer under the "ministration of death" but under the ministration (of the Law of God) of LIFE—represented for us by the Messiah. Our love for Him allows Him to put the Law inside of us and write it upon our hearts. Jeremiah prophesied this very thing in Jeremiah 31:31-33.

Perfection Has Replaced Imperfection

Since we have all broken the Law and since if we do this we are guilty of all the Law; we can find much peace in the "so great salvation" offered by Messiah. For the "ministration of death" (law contained in the Mosaic ordinances for remission of sin) could never:

1. Justify man (Gal 2:16).
2. Make perfect (Heb. 7:19).
3. Give the Holy Spirit (Gal. 3:1-3).
4. Give strength for holy living (Rom. 8:3).

The Scripture says that the law (contained in ordinances of sacrifice, Temple, and Aaronic Priesthood) was our "guardian" until Christ should come (Gal. 3: 24).

"The word (guardian) translated "school master" is the Important word here. It is "paidagogos." The word "schoolmaster" could better be the translation of "didaskalos" which means "a teacher." It is true that our word "pedagogue" comes from the Greek

"paidagogos," and that it refers to a schoolmaster. But the Greek word did not have that meaning. The word designated a slave employed in Greek and Roman families who had general charge over a boy in the years from about 6-16. He watched over his outward behavior, and took charge over him whenever he went from home, as for instance, to school. This slave was entrusted with the moral supervision of the child. His duties were therefore quite distinct from those of a schoolmaster. Furthermore, the metaphor of a "paidagogos" seems to have own out of the word "kept" (phroureo) of verse 23, which means "guard to." Thus the word refers to a guardian of a child in its minority rather than to a teacher or schoolmaster."¹

These ordinances were therefore the guardian of Israel, keeping watch over those committed to their care, accompanying them in a condition of dependence and restraint, and continually revealing to them sin as a positive transgression of the eternal Ten Commandment Law.

Lamsa's translation from the Peshitta describes these ordinances as "our pathfinder."

The Nature of The Commandments

The very nature of the Ten Commandments makes it possible to elaborate on the meaning of each separate one. The wording however, does not allow us to deviate from the knowledge of its intent. Any deviation from their intent would have to be deliberate. It is God's nature to never alter His words (Psa. 89:34). Any change in the Law, even to a bit of punctuation, is only implied in the mind of the person who is not in tune with God s will. THINKING to change it in any way does NOT make a change.

The idolater is one who substitutes for the TRUE WORSHIP of the Almighty a corrupted, unclean pagan worship.

Our Lord summarised the Ten Commandments when He spoke of the duty to love God and to love your neighbor (Mat. 22:3639). But—read verse 40, where He said "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets." He could only be referring to the two commandments just mentioned, to keep it In context. To hang, in this sense, is "to be suspended or dangle from an upper source of support." This may be illustrated by a balance scale, on which something at one end of the bar must counterbalance something on the other end. This bar is held at the center by a support from above.

Here we have, at one end, the first four commandments which concern our duty to God, to show our love for Him. At the other end are the last six commandments which relate to our love for our neighbor; in other words, for our fellowman, or mankind. The support from above is the Almighty.

Since it is obvious that the prophets were not literally hung here, it is clear that Jesus referred to their message. The prophets In their work brought out the small details; the branches of the law which apply in various ways according to the situation.

To show the completeness of the picture, God supports the two main branches of His Law in a general grouping; on which all the lesser branches depend. The prophets utilized these lesser branches In their work, explaining each rule. The ordinances done away were the ones relating to the PENALTY for breaking the Law. Messiah has paid that penalty for all time for those who accept and follow Him.

"Not under the law, but under grace." This phrase is often used to contend that the law has been done away. Properly understood this phrase is correct, but it should be accompanied by the companion phrase, "Not under the law, but subject to the law." Civil laws in our community environment are made for our guidance and protection. Suppose a man were to break one of the laws of the city or state in which he lives. Authorities would place him UNDER the law, or under the penalty for breaking that law. Until he broke that law he was only SUBJECT to the law, to its power and influence.

Instead of accepting the Bible truth that we are not under the penalty of the law, most are teaching that we are not under any OBEDIENCE to the law.

In the same manner, mankind is not under the Law of God, or the penalty of that law, unless he breaks it. When he does, there is one difference between this and civil law; the grace of God can keep him from being under the penalty of the law—Praise God for the gift of His grace, a covering shield!

The law that "was ADDED because of transgressions of all the rest of God's laws consisted of THE JUDGMENTS which were the "WORKS OF THE LAW." These were the ORDINANCES "that were against us." THESE were the laws replaced by GRACE.

Examples of laws that were NOT "added because of transgression," and were therefore NOT replaced by grace are:

The Ten Commandments: Ex. 20:1-17.

The Laws of Worship: Deut. 6:4-8; 6:9; 7:26; 18:10,11; Lev. 23:32b.

The Laws of Social Conduct: Lev. 18:22; Deut. 6: 7; 24: 14; 22:10; 25:4; 22:4; 22:5; 7:3; 27:20; 27:23; 27:21; 27:22; 24:1,2; Lev: 19:3; 19:32; 19:4; 19:16; 19:14; 19:29.

The Laws of Charity: Ex. 22:26, 27; Lev. 25:35-57 18:26, 28; Deut. 15:7, 8, 24:10, 11; 24:19-22; 27:19 10: 18; 23:7,8.

The Laws of Diet: Deut. 12:23; 14:3; 14:4, 6; 14:9; 14:11-20; 14:21; Ex 22:31.

The Laws of Sanitation: Lev. 15:11; Deut. 23:10-12; Lev. 15:24; 15:13; 15:5-10 Lev. 15:28; 15: 19; 12:2-5; 15 24; 20:18; Deut. 23:13; Num. 19 11-13; 19: 14; 5:2, 3; Deut.23:14

The Laws of Business: Deut. 25:13, 14; 23:19, 20; Ex. 22: 14, 15.

CONTRAST OF THE TWO LAWS

The Law of God

1. Spoken by God—Ex. 20: 1 Deut 5:22
2. Written by God—Ex 24: 12 31: 18; 32: 15-16

The Judgements

1. Spoken by God through Moses- Deut. 1:1-5
2. Written by Moses-Deut.24

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| 3. Written on stone—Deut. 4: 13;9:10 | 3. Written in a book - Deut.31:24, Gal. 3:10 |
| 4. Contained Ten Commandments—5:22 | 4. A law contained in statutes and Deut ordinances - Deut.4:14, Eph. 2:15 |
| 5. Placed in the ark—Deut 4: 13; Heb 9:4 | 5. Placed in the side of the ark - Deut. 34:26 |
| 6. Called "His" covenant—Deut. 4: 13; Ex. 19:5 | 6. Called Book of Covenant or law - Ex. 24:7, Gal.3:10 |
| 7. Remained on tables of stone—Deut. 9:9, 11, 15 | 7. Transferred also to whole stones - Joshua 8:30-35; II Cor. 3:7 |
| 8. Perfect, converting the soul -Ps. 19:7; James 2:12 | 8. Made nothing perfect-Heb. 7:19 |
| 9. Is holy, spiritual, and good Rom. 7: 12, 14 | 9. Was carnal-Heb. 9: 10; 7:16 |
| 10. Defines sin—Rom. 3:20; 4:15 | 10. Provided penalties and atonement for sin—Lev. 20:10; Ex. 29:36 |
| 11. Violation is sin-I John 3:4 | 11. Violation is not now sin Gal. 5:1-3; Col. 2:16 |
| 12. Not grievous-I John 5:2-3 | 12. Yoke of bondage-Acts 15:5-11; Gal. 5: 1 |
| 13. Contains no shadow | 13. Shadow & Guardian-Gal. 3:24, 25;Col. 2:17 |
| 14. To stand fast forever—Ps. 111: 7-8 | 14. Till seed should come—Gal. 3:19 |
| 15. Law magnified by Christ—42:21 ;Matt. 5:21,22,27,28 | 15. Blotted out, nailed to cross-Col. Isa. 2: 14; II Cor. 3:7, 13 |
| 16. Transferred to tables of heart—3:3;Rom. 2:15 | 16. Passed with ministration of Moses II Cor. -II Cor. 3: 9-11; Heb.8:13 |
| 17. Not destroyed by Christ—20; Luke 16: 16 | 17. Abolished by Christ—Matt.5:17; Matt. 5: 18- Eph. 2:15 |
| 18. Is a royal (kingly) law — James 2:8-12 | 18. Is a law of servitude and bondage -Gal. 4: 1-5, 9 |
| 19. Leads to eternal life—Matt. 19: 16-22; Rev. 12: 17; 22: 14 | 19. Observers fallen from grace —Gal. 5:4 |

There is always harmony in the Scriptures, therefore the inescapable conclusion is that the above texts describe two separate and distinct codes of law. Of the ceremonial laws of rituals and sacrifice (,judgments) Paul said, ". . . It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come . . ." (Gal. 3: 19-20). It was added because of transgression of God's

Eternal Law, because " . . . where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15), and 66 . . . sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4) Salvation from sin can be gained only by accepting Christ as our Messiah, but after we are saved, we are told to " . . . depart from iniquity" (II. Tim. 2:19). Iniquity is sin, and sin is the transgression of God's law, as we have seen. Therefore, the law of God becomes the rule of conduct for Christian people.

Believers who understand what it means to be a SERVANT of the Lord, also understand something about obedience. as for those who would say that trying to keep the Ten Commandments is an attempt to retain salvation through legalistic self efforts—we all know that Christian living doesn't come automatically. We need the Almighty's help every day. We don't seize the Lord merely in our own strength.

We are not saved IN sin to remain in sin. One can't serve two masters. We are not baptised merely to START a new life. Like marriage, there's more to it than the ceremony and the honeymoon. Brother, sister, if you are having trouble living for the Lord and overcoming sin—get down on your knees and really pray for heaven's help. Hold fast the "Law of the Spirit of Life In Christ." Mean business with the Lord. Cooperate with Him. There IS victory in Christ!

Chapter Twelve

The Power of Prayer

Romans 8:1 tells us that 'The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ bath made us free from the law of sin and death.'

There is a divine law, a law governing the Spirit. It is just Remits a law as that of gravitation or any owner law us science,, that man ever discovered. This law, however, is not one discovered by scientists; for they are, generally speaking, seeking far from this channel of life and thought. This law will operate with any individual when applied correctly—according to the example given in the New Testament.

The miraculous demonstrations of the use of this law, given by the Messiah, were of such astonishing nature that the apostles exclaimed: "Lord teach us to pray." These men had doubtless prayed all their lives-after the common fashion of repeated and memorized prayers. But there was no definite or miraculous of that powerful Holy Spirit: by which Jesus even raised the dead, and through which this World was set in order.

Through biblical revelation and by the influence of His Holy Spirit, the Almighty speaks to us. But these ways are not enough—We must also speak to HIM!

Jesus had spent a night in prayer on the Mount of Olives (Luke 12): "He came down and stood in the plain, a great multitude of people out of Judea and some from the sea coast of Tyre came to hear Him and to be healed of all their diseases" (v. 17 & 18). "The whole multitude sought to touch Him, for there WENT VIRTUE OUT OF HIM and HEALED them all" (v. 19).

Here we find that divine law operating: with the most powerful demonstrations ever witnessed, before or since. These events caused the apostles to ask Him to: "TEACH US TO PRAY" (Luke 11:1).

There is a certain law governing the proper construction of the generator in your car, and also the large power plants that furnish electric power to our cities. This power is unlimited and inexhaustible. It is everywhere in overflowing abundance, but the law for gathering this electric power must be strictly applied to the construction of the generator. Just one crossed wire, or one circuit obstructed—and it is worthless, no power will be gathered.

A like principle must be applied to the human body which is a temple for the indwelling of divine VIRTUE, the Holy Spirit. If there is one obstruction or one crossed wire, your efforts will be In vain. Wrong thinking, bitterness in your heart, evil thoughts, an unforgiving nature, something in your life that has not been made right, some sin you have not confessed to God, or some wrong you have not made right-possibly open rebellion against God in refusing to keep one of His commandments. Perhaps there is some truth you understand the Bible teaches, but you refuse to accept. These things can be the "crossed wires" that keep you from gathering the power or virtue you may seek in prayer.

Prayer is the opening of your heart to the Almighty, as you might open your heart to a very close friend.

The beloved apostles were able to receive this virtue and put it to use because they had been properly taught by the Master. Our human bodies are just the same today as those of the ancients. They are temples for the indwelling of this Holy Spirit (Virtuous power), by which mighty works can be performed, and ARE being performed. Strive to grasp the correct understanding of what the apostles craved when they said to the Master: "Lord, teach us to pray."

Many people pray only when they are sick, frightened, or possibly want some worldly thing. But prayer is not a constant asking for physical benefits. It must be the expression of a heart that is grateful to the Almighty for all the many rich benefits one is daily receiving from His bountiful hand.

Prayer is your period of WORSHIPPING the Creator who caused you to be, and has surrounded you with this wonderful world and all of its benefits. Your heart must be grateful, and your mind full of love and praise for the giver of all good and perfect gifts. We are told to: "Set your affection (or mind) on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).

We should have a spirit of life and forgiveness in our own hearts if we wish to receive His mercy.

In the example given for prayer by the Saviour, He spent the whole night in prayer. This was not a night of asking for "stuff" or anything temporal. It was a night spent with His mind off of little things of this world, with His affections set on things above. His thoughts were "heavenward." His mind was filled with love and praise for the Father. He was tarrying before heaven with words of praise. The Hebrew word hallelujah means praise YAH, of praise God (Psalms 68:4). Hallelujah is a good word to use when you are all alone praying and waiting in praise and thanksgiving to the Father—as He charges this human magnet with divine virtue and heavenly power with which you can control yourself and guide your life pleasing in His sight. You may also gain an overflowing of this VIRTUE from above with which to supply others as you contact them. You will become a person who "has power with God and with man." This means power with God in prayer and power with men and women to make them better. Your presence with them, your words, and your scriptural instructions will become weighty. What you say will always ring in their ears. It will hold them steady, for it was planted there by the Spirit. Divine virtue sealed it in their hearts as it flowed out from you, through the Word.

The secret of prayer is the secret of POWER, and that's why the apostles were so anxious to know and better understand it. They wanted to understand the power the Master used to perform His mighty works. They had repeatedly witnessed the miraculous operation of his "Law of the Spirit of Life" as the sick were healed, demons were cast out of the insane, and the dead were even raised. They coveted this gift of the Spirit and said: "Teach us to pray."

"There went out virtue, OUT OF HIM, and healed them all" (Luke 6:19). He was our example and we are told to "follow His steps" (I Peter 2:21). Jesus Christ said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). The beloved apostles followed in His steps. He taught them how to pray; by spending whole nights in prayer (Luke 6:12), and by withdrawing into the wilderness to pray (Luke 5:16). He was alone praying and His apostles were with Him (Luke 9:18). He took Peter, John, and James up into a mountain to pray (v. 28).

Why do you pray so little when there is so much need? He is always ready and willing to hear your prayers.

The apostles being with Him in these prolonged seasons of prayer were taught how to pray, not just asking, asking, asking for physical benefits ("the stuff in the house" Lot's wife sought), but worshipping the Father; thanking Him over and over for all benefits, and praising Him for life, health, food, and clothing. Above all thank the Almighty for the great things He has in store for the children of men. Seek earnestly after the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22, 23). Pray to the Father for the Spiritual gift He would have you to receive: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, greater faith, the gift of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, the means to distinguish the true Spirit, different languages, and the interpretation of languages (I Cor. 12:8-10 Lamsa). Paul tells us in the next chapter (I Cor. 13) that the first and best of all these things to pray for and seek after is LOVE. Others would teach that the FIRST thing to seek after is tongues, but this is plainly not in line with Paul's teaching. How can TONGUES compare with LOVE?

When we take our thoughts away from this old world and keep our mind stayed on heaven and the glories there-THEN our bodies are supplied with that same spiritual power of which heaven is filled. In this way we are imparted unity, oneness of accord, and love for everyone, even our enemies, with all variance gone and dismissed from our minds. "Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2: 5).

The Saviour performed mighty miracles in Galilee, where we find Him repeatedly going on board a ship to get away from the multitude, after His body had been largely exhausted of this virtue acquired through prayerful contact with heaven. It was after one of these occasions where He had spent time alone on a ship crossing the sea, that the multitude thronged Him (Luke 8:41). A woman who had been afflicted for twelve years and had spent all she had on doctors determined to see Him. She said "If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole" (Mark 5:28). So pressed through the crowd and touched the hem of His garment. He exclaimed immediately: "Who touched me?" The apostles were surprised, and wanted to know why He asked "who touched me," when surrounded by such a crowd. He said "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me (Luke 8:44-46). The woman was instantly healed and He said to her: "Daughter be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole." Here we find another example where there was a substance He called virtue departing from Him by which people were healed. It was the healing power of the Holy Spirit, which can be acquired only by a correct understanding of the Law of the Spirit of Life," mentioned in Romans 8:2; which makes us free from the "law of sin and death."

We are free because by understanding and putting this law into operation, the fleshly desires are killed.

The "old man" or the "carnal nature" is destroyed (Rom. 6:6). It therefore becomes our very nature to observe all of the Ten Commandments. It is the nature of the apple tree to bear only apples, so will it be the nature of the person who understands the "law of the Spirit of Life" to spend a few minutes at least three times a day alone in prayer to the Almighty. This person will, by nature, bear the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control (Gal. 23).

After the woman touched the hem of Jesus' robe He Immediately felt weakness or physical exhaustion. The healing strength and power stored up in Himself had departed to the extent that He felt it. His compassion and interest in suffering humanity, and a strong desire to help people; together with the pith of the woman brought the result. She had tuned in on the right wave length" of real faith; and He was prepared to give her that which she desired and needed most.

There are thousands today who were once spiritually strong, but are now very weak. They did not understand the "law of the Spirit of Life" that the Master taught and displayed by His life. They are like dead batteries and are removed from a place of real service. The cares of this world" have brought them away from a real Christ centered life. They did not follow the Master because they did not understand this "Spiritual Law" of continual contact with heaven in prayer—therefore their power has ceased. Such people need to read and re-read about the wonderful miracles performed by the Saviour, and soon comma Prince of Peace. They should go alone to some quiet and peaceful place away from distractions and the cares of life often; to meditate, contemplate, and communicate with the Heavenly Father. He is then willing and able to send a divine refilling of the Holy Spirit. Only in this way can a person be recharged again for service in the vineyard of the Master, to await His returning with joy.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5 :6). The trouble is that most people are hungering after the same sort of things that Lot s wife was looking back to-land, property, money, social position ... just about everything but righteousness.

We are to covet earnestly "the best gifts" (I Cor. 12:31). The Master said "Ask and it shall be given you. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. Everyone that asketh receiveth and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone, or if he asks a fish will he for a fish give him a serpent? . . . If ye, then being evil, know how to give good gifts to you children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke 1 1:1 1-13).

Satan will try in every way to keep you so busy during all the 960 minutes of your waking day that you will not even have one minute to kneel before heaven in earnest prayer. Don't allow him to deceive you and rob you of this very spiritual "virtue" which we all need. DON'T ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE TOO BUSY TO PRAY. This "virtue" acquired through prayer will keep you in the "narrow way," give you victory over yourself, and wisdom to help others. It is very near and can be easily acquired.

Though the way is rough and thorny
Yet Thou art ever near:
Thine arm of power sustains me,
Thy voice alone can cheer.
Keep me, my Saviour, keep me
Close to Thy riven side;
And then I'm safe and happy,
Whatever may betide.

Chapter Thirteen

Acceptance with God

Many today would not accept the teaching that prayer is so important as we have seen. They have been told by their ministers that a "profession of faith" and "church membership" render them "eternally secure." Satan would not have you realize the necessity of spiritual growth and a godly life. Don't bust in your "church membership" to save your soul. When you die you may be given a nice funeral, and your poor remains allowed to lie in the church cemetery—but if "church membership" is all you have, your soul will be eternally lost. Salvation is not bestowed through the institutions of men. Only in the KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD abiding in ourselves can we feel secure. SALVATION IS CONDITIONAL. Of we walk in the light . . . the blood of . . . His Son cleanseth us" (I John 1:7). "Ye are my friends, IF ye do whatsoever I Command you" (John 15:14). "Teach all nations . . . to observe ALL THINGS whatsoever I have commanded you . . . unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19, 20). This was the last command of the Master. Belief is not enough—the devils believe and tremble.

As our Lord sat at the table with the disciples after the Last Supper was past He made a wonderful promise to them—He was about to leave them; but before He left them He promised the Holy Spirit, as we find in John 14:16, 17: "And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even the spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him BUT YE KNOW HIM; FOR HE DWELLETH WITH YOU AND SHALL BE IN YOU."

The "world" would not know, recognise, or understand the Holy Spirit. Only those who the Holy Spirit was SENT TO would be able to recognise Him because He would dwell WITH them and IN them.

Do you think ALL of us who call ourselves "Christian" today have the Holy Spirit? What are the EVIDENCES that the Holy Spirit is within us? How are we assured that we have found acceptance with God? Can we have the Holy Spirit within us, and not know it? The Holy Scriptures very plainly answer these questions, so that there should be no doubt.

The Evidence of Peace

Turning to John 14:27 we find that the Lord gives PEACE to each of His followers: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." This peace is "Not as the world giveth." In John 16:33 Jesus tells us " . . . in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

All of us are having our trials and troubles, every one of us. Yet some folks seem to rise above their troubles in anticipation of what is to come for them. Others try to get attention and sympathy. Are you one of these people? It's because you get your eyes on yourself and your "stuff in the house," instead of the Lord—"introspection" instead of "heaven-spection!" If you've got your eyes on yourself Satan can really work on you. He'll tell you how bad you've got it. He'll tell you that you and the situation are both hopeless—a lost cause.

Even King David was discouraged at times, like when he said, "Someday I shall surely die at the hand of Saul!" He might have said: "Some day I shall surely die, someday I will be defeated, someday the Devil will get me, someday my enemies will kill me, I'm a failure," etc.—which is exactly what Satan wants to persuade you to do by sending this barrage of

doubt and self-pity. The book of Samuel records David's discouragement, but it was only a brief outburst prompted by Satan. All David's life he had a positive attitude. In his Psalms and in his way of life he continually defied his enemies, and "praised God anyhow," in spite of his troubles; knowing that in the end the Almighty would work things out the way they SHOULD BE worked out. David had that PEACE in his heart that comes of being right with God. Surely he had to fight Satan, but with the Almighty on his side he always won out in the end.

You're going to be positive or negative—one or the other! You can't be just a little bit of both. Satan will try to tell you: "It doesn't hurt to be just a LITTLE down, a little bit sorry for yourself. After all, you desire to enjoy a LITTLE bit of discouragement, so you can get a LITTLE bit of sympathy from others. Why not, misery loves company? Let's make every body else a LITTLE miserable too, so we can all enjoy it. But no, the minute you start listening to Satan a "little bit" he has a hold on you. Faith in the Lord to work things out is what gives us His peace.

Others are going to see this peace in you if you possess it. When Paul said "Bear ye one another's burdens" he didn't mean for you to share your discouragement with others. He meant to get under the load someone else has and help THEM to lift it -not dump yours on top of someone else who is already overloaded! That's the way some people like to share-dump all the work on someone else and then sit down and enjoy all the benefits. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6: 2) means to help lift, not hinder; to ease the load someone else has.

Paul said that "every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal 6:S). You can do all things through the Master who will send you strength. We may receive that strength through PRAYER. Ask God for help, and if you're really overloaded, He'll help you. If you really need help, tell it to your Heavenly Father through His Son. Seek the Lord. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee" (Psa. 55:22). Give your burden to the Lord in prayer and then don't worry about it any more. Make yourself realize that the problem is in the Father's hands—and if you are one of His sons-He will work it out better than you would know how, anyway. Everyone of us is a mess, and if we don't keep our eyes on the Lord, and our minds on His Word, we're doomed to defeat, doubt, and disillusionment, and final failure. You've got to have some faith and belief in God-or you're sunk! For without Him, you can do nothing. Remember:

The evidence of belief and faith is PEACE. Peace in your heart, peace in your mind, peace enough to share with others especially when those others need that peace.

The Evidence of Obedience

If we truly belong to the Lord we will obey Him! Paul said in Romans 7:22: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." The Psalmist, in Psalms 1:2, 3 speaks of one of God's children in this way: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord: and in His law cloth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Most everyone has heard ministers teach that the law was abolished at the cross. The belief is that in this age our only command is to "love one another." Truly, love is the fulfilling of the law—upon examination you may see for yourself that the first four commandments teach us love toward God and the last six teach us love toward our fellow man. You can create a lot of confusion in the mind of some of those who believe the law is abolished by asking them

to define sin. They will speak of the need for forgiveness of our sins, seek to win lost sinners, and at the same time deny the law. BUT—I John 3:4 defines sin as "the transgression of the law." Romans 3:20 tells us: ". . . for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Paul makes this clearer later in the chapter where he states: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: Yea, we establish the law." It has not occurred to these poor misled souls that if we don't have the law, we have not sinned! And if we have not sinned, we don't need a saviour. And if we don't need a saviour, then Christ died in vain . . . God forbid!

In Luke 16:17 we find: "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one letter of the law to pass away" (Lamsa). Those who teach otherwise have never found the love for the TRUTH which they should have for their salvation. These false teachers are spoken of in II Thess. 2:9-12; "Even he whose coming is due to the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceitfulness of unrighteousness in those who perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved thereby. For this reason God will send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, That all who did not believe in the truth but preferred unrighteousness MIGHT BE DAMNED" (Lamsa).

Jesus advised people to "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). The only Scriptures there were when Jesus spoke these words were the books of the Old Testament . . . He taught from these writings. The Hebrew people commonly call the Old Testament Scriptures the Torah. Torah means law in Hebrew.

We have all sinned (broken the law), and salvation doesn't really count for you until you truly repent of that sin. Repentance can never be ANYTHING but your very own act. God will use forces to draw you but will never force your will. Only you can turn the rudder of the "ship of life" into waters of OBEDIENCE. Neither God nor man can repent for you.

Salvation without true repentance is ABSOLUTELY impossible and anyone who thinks it is possible is "seeking refuge in lies."

There has to be a "revolution for Christ" in your heart. Your ideas about God, self, sin, and your will must change. God is not going to remake you into a being capable of ruling with the Messiah as kings and priests for a thousand years" until you truly repent, and begin to obey.

Repentance has been defined as a complete turning away from being a rebel, from foolish and ungodly friends, from conformity with the world, from secret sins and habits of the flesh, from dirty stories and unclean jokes, from the "stuff in the house," and from anything and everything that would hinder you from being a 100% follower of Christ.

"I repent" is more than two little words prayed when under the influence of an emotional experience. That's why ministers who beg and plead repeatedly at the close of each service do their congregations a disservice . . . If you're ready to repent and follow Christ then you won't need to be begged. If you go down the aisle and don't mean it—it doesn't count. It's as simple as that.

You're going to have to ask God for the faith to do this. Faith is the power that initiates and continues your conversion. The only way to get this faith is by personal Bible study and prayer (remember "The Law of the Spirit of Life"). No preacher, friend, or relative can give you this gift, only God.

To be obedient to God you must seek Him, ask Him for the faith necessary, repent, THEN

God will help you be obedient by sending you His Holy Spirit to guide, protect, encourage, and teach you—then you're in the REAL "revolution for Christ." There are no shortcuts to salvation, just one path: conviction, faith, repentance, and obedience.

The Evidence of Love

We can also know God's Holy Spirit dwells in us if we "love one another." I John 4:12-13 tells us: ". . . if we love one another God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit."

Luke 10:27 exhorts us to love our neighbor as ourself. Romans 13:10 tells us that love is the fulfilling of the law. Have you learned to weep for others? Have you prayed for boldness to tell others what Christ can do? Or do you figure that's the preachers' business? The people you meet every day don't all come to hear a preacher. So YOU are their witness, by the way you live, talk and act. Are you letting them down? If Christ is in you, you'll let Him be seen in you by others.

EXPECT: To be persecuted and rejected by those who are still in darkness.

EXPECT: To be discriminated against for rejecting pagan teachings God's Law condemns.

EXPECT: To find many hypocrites, even in the best churches.

LEARN: To love others, even if they attend other churches that teach different doctrines.

LEARN: To praise God for being in a very small minority group—His Church, the "little flock."

Dr. F.W. Cox had this to say about doctrines: "Some say it does not matter, others place their all on it, and if you do not believe as they, you are consigned to hell. Doctrine is what you believe, what you understand, so it is important, but remember, you are saved because you belong to Christ; you gave yourself to Him, I Cor. 6:19-20. How correctly you understand has nothing to do with it; how correctly you WANT to understand might. Many have hardened their hearts to seine their own doctrine, and how they enjoy it.

"You could be mostly wrong, but if your heart is right, you be right. On the other hand, you could be mostly right but have a stubborn heart. God is not pleased with this. To obey is better than sacrifice (I Sam 15:22). When you judge your brother who does not see as you do, be careful! He may not be as far down the road as you, or you may not be as right as you think you are. Prove all things" (I Thess. 5:21).

Paul, in I Corinthians 12, lists a number of "gifts of the Spirit." Then in the 13th chapter he lists the most important ones as faith, hope, and love. But he then tells us that "the greatest of these is love."

He tells us that without love we're nothing. God is love. If we have not love in us, real love, then we are not of God.

"For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father in heaven forgive you your trespasses!"—and let's face it, we have ALL fallen short.

We've got to learn to love people even when they are WRONG. The Master loved us when we were yet in our sins—and laid down His life for us. "Greater love bath no man" than this,

and Christ is our teacher.

Did you ever, perhaps as a child, sit in a darkened room where only a few rays of sunlight filtered across the room and onto the floor, and watch the tiny particles of dust as they passed through that ray of sunlight? Those little particles of dust would float on the air, reflect the sunlight, and shine like diamonds; diamonds of dust. You and I are dust, we are all dust. If we are in the light of God's love we can reflect that light, and we can shine like a diamond! It's not our light. Christ is the light of the world. It's our responsibility. If we don't reflect that light it won't be seen by others. Don't ever think that because there's so much darkness, that even one little "diamond of dust" won't make a difference; because even one candle can be seen a mile away when it's dark enough. Even a grain of dust, little as it is, can shine like a diamond: if it just gets in the light. The darker it is, the brighter the reflected light will be. A little speck of dust in a ray of sunshine shows up best when the room's very dark because "where iniquity cloth abound, grace cloth much more abound."

A reflection of God's love—this is the evidence of the Holy Spirit within us.

The Evidence of Chastening

We've all seen people who seem to be able to do almost anything, and get by with it. Perhaps politicians would have been a good example, except that a lot of them are getting caught up with lately. Then there are others who complain that they "never get away with anything."

When we have a personal experience with the Lord, and become aware of the laws He has ordained for us, and the attitudes we should have in our minds: then begins a "father-son" relationship. We begin as "babes in Christ" (1 Peter 2:2). We are expected to grow. Our Lord actually begins to train us to be the kind of children He wants. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent" (Rev. 3:19).

This punishment may seem very grievous: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11).

We are chastened so that we may learn the way into God's Kingdom: "For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. 12:10).

Be very sure—if you are one of God's children, and you do wrong, God will punish you. He'll punish you until you repent. Praise God, He'll punish us NOW and NOT LATER. Others, who are not the Lord's may not be punished now, but will be punished later. As God's children, we are judged day by day. For others, judgement will come all at one time. Paul had a "thorn in the flesh" to keep him humble. His reward in the Kingdom will be so much the greater because of it.

A human father soon learns that he can't train all his children in the same way. One child may be corrected by just talking to him; another child may be totally different and require spanking. Perhaps another child must be denied some privilege. As a child grows, the method of training will probably change.

Our heavenly Father knows the best method to use on each of us: and He'll use it. Maybe at first we won't realize what's going on, but sooner or later the lesson will strike home. He will use reproach, suffering, or other consequences to chasten us and bring us back to Him. We should be able to find comfort and assurance in God's chastening; because it is God's assurance that we are His, and that He is instructing us in righteousness.

The Evidence of Christ in Our Hearts

The Master tells us in Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." He knocks at the "door of your heart." If you open your heart to Him-then He will come into your heart.

Once again, we must realize there is a difference in just acknowledging Messiah-and in letting Him into our heart.

Many people, it seems, might hear the Master knocking and merely acknowledge, "Yes Lord, I hear you knocking, I know you are out there." The devils know He's out there! Those who are in Christ and have Christ in them have heard the Master's knock, gotten up, set their house in order, opened the door, let Him in, and sat at the table with Him. Quite a difference don't you think? LETTING CHRIST IN makes the difference.

In the 24th chapter of Luke we find Jesus had risen from the grave. Not knowing this, two of the disciples were on their way to Emmaus. The Master joined them on the path, but His identity was hidden from them so that they did not know Him. Jesus spoke with them again, explaining the Scriptures. Finally when He sat at the table with them, broke bread and blessed it, they recognised Him. As they recognised Him, He disappeared.

What did they do when they realized it was the Master who had been with them? "And they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).

Christ in us today will open the scriptures, as we read them. When we read scripture with the understanding that the Holy Spirit gives us-we find in our hearts a burning love for God's Son.

No matter what "gifts of the Spirit" we may possess, or what amount of knowledge of scripture we have; there can be no substitute for the Bible evidences of acceptance with God:

Peace

Obedience

Love

Chastening

Christ in Our Hearts

These are indeed gifts to be cherished, in a world gone mad all about us.

"Peace I leave with you, MY peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14: 27).

Chapter Fourteen

The Purpose of the Sabbath

Our heavenly Father has given us a means to increase the peace within ourselves which He promises. He gives us a means to show the "world" the obedience He requires of His children. He also gives us a SPECIAL time to move further away from worldly matters and manifest the love He teaches us to have towards Him and our fellow man. We may receive these things through the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, but we must observe it with the correct attitude and submission in our hearts.

We find in Mark 2:27 that the Sabbath was made for man. The Sabbath was created at the time man was created. There were no Jews at that time. This Holy Day was created for the purpose of keeping man in the TRUE knowledge and WORSHIP of the Almighty. Before one can appreciate the value of this gift from God he must understand HOW IT WORKS.

Our Heavenly Father created the Sabbath; and He never does anything in vain, or without purpose. All God's laws, both physical and spiritual, work together and have coherent meaning. In what condition would we find ourselves without the law of gravity?

God—through "The Word" (John 1:1-3) who became the Messiah MADE the Sabbath. The Lamb of God, who made the Sabbath, stated that it was made for man. A separate covenant the SABBATH COVENANT (found in Ex. 31:12-17), explains how ". . . My sabbaths you must keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am the Lord your God who sanctifies you . . . You shall keep the Sabbath; for it is holy to you . . ." The lord calls the Sabbath HIS; the Sabbath then is the "Lord's Day"—not Sunday. Our Heavenly Father calls both the tithe and Sabbath HIS, something we owe Him. The Sabbath is a space of time. This space of time is not OURS, it is HIS. They are not "Jewish" Sabbaths. They are not "Gentile" Sabbaths. The Almighty said "MY Sabbaths ye SHALL KEEP." In Exodus 20:8 He tells us how to keep the Sabbath: "keep it holy." God made the Sabbath holy, WE are to KEEP it holy. "It is a sign between me and you throughout your generations." The Sabbath is a SIGN, a sign of WHO our LORD is. For further proof of this see Ezekiel 20:12, 19, 20; and 22:26.

We all know what signs are. Signs identify things. The Hebrew word translated sign is 'owth, which means: "a signal, as a flag, beacon, monument, evidence, etc.-mark, miracle, token." Flags identify nations. A beacon is a signal to announce the existence of something warned about. A token is a visible sign.

God has commanded His people to keep the seventh-day Sabbath as a SIGN—a sign between man and the One True God. The keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath IDENTIFIES WHO YOUR GOD IS.

Man has worshipped many gods. Many "false christs" have come into the world. Satan, the "god of this world," has blinded most, as we may learn from II Corinthians 4:4; ". . . the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." In II Corinthians 11:14-15 we may learn of how Satan has done this: ". . . Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his MINISTERS also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." The Mystery-religions taught the worship of the sun, their SIGN is SUNDAY—the first day of

the week. The seventh-day Sabbath points back to the Creator who created in six days and rested the seventh day. Creation is the proof that God exists. Sabbath keeping acknowledges the Creator as your God.

Sabbath keeping points back to Creation and identifies your God as the Creator of the universe. The Sabbath also was given as a SIGN which identifies WHO are the people of God; and who are not. " . . . that ye may know that I am the Lord THAT DOTHTH SANCTIFY YOU" (Ex. 31:13b).

Sanctify means "to set apart for holy use or purpose." Our Heavenly Father sanctified the Sabbath at creation, and sanctifies US through obedience in keeping the Sabbath holy. "Do you not know that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are; for you obey him, whether it be to sin or whether it be of obedience to righteousness" (Rom. 6:16 Lamsa)?

How does the Sabbath sanctify, or set apart those who keep it from those who are following false gods and the Mystery-religion? Well, if you have begun to keep God's Sabbath holy, as He commands, you have found the answer already, by actual experience. If you haven't, just start keeping God's Sabbath holy as He commands you-and you'll soon learn that you are automatically SET APART from all other people! Yes, Sir!

The Sabbath is God's SIGN, which identifies not only God as the Creator, but also identifies those who are truly His.

A Time of Rest

The Sabbath was also given to man for his physical and spiritual rest and rejuvenation. Sabbath MEANS "rest." The Fourth Commandment may even be proven to be a SCIENTIFIC law: "For instance the infidels of France, after the revolution, changed the Sabbath, or rest day, from the seventh to the tenth day. However, their horses and mules could not stand this unnatural arrangement. They soon became diseased and died so rapidly that scientists were appointed by the government to investigate the cause. They found that a return to the seventh day principles was necessary to physical welfare, health and long life. These animals broke down because they were taken out of the harmony of God's law that was written into the very fiber and fabric of their being. And so as someone has said, 'The donkeys taught the atheists a lesson in practical theology.' " 1 So it is then that one day of rest in seven is a physical requirement, while selecting the seventh day of the week is a spiritual requirement.

God's Promise to Sabbath Keepers

In Isaiah 56:2 we find the Almighty's BLESSING on those who will keep His Sabbath: "Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that taketh hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil." Further, in Isaiah 58:13-14, the Almighty makes a PROMISE to those who keep His Sabbath: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing shine own ways, nor finding shine own pleasure, nor speaking shine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord bath spoken it."

These are not just promises and blessings for the Jews, as some ministers would teach—they are for gentiles also: "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, EVERYONE that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; EVEN THEM will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer" (Isa. 56:6-7).

All of the Father's Commandments are meant for positive blessings to mankind. The Sabbath, as we have seen, is no exception. The Jews tried to expand and define the Sabbath law. When the Master came, He emphasised the full spiritual intent of the law.

We must all physically rest every day, and should worship God every day, but the Sabbath is a special day God set aside specifically for that purpose. It is a day when our Heavenly Father and His children can join in special communion and fellowship—a day which God sanctified by His own example.

A Family Day

The Sabbath is a day of freedom. Man is free from the mundane, routine responsibilities that encumber him throughout the rest of the week. Sabbath is a time to be free to draw closer to our Heavenly Father in prayer, study, reflection and meditation. It is a time for families to be together, enjoy each other, and spiritually grow together. All week long, jobs, school, and responsibilities keep the family pulled apart in different directions. Too often the result is strained relationships, misunderstandings, and broken homes. The Sabbath offers us an opportunity to grow closer as a family unit—a time to grow in love and understanding. Anytime is a proper time for these things. The Sabbath has been set aside as a SPECIAL time for these things, lest we -forget them. The Master, by His example and ministry, showed the proper attitude we should have for the Sabbath. It is a time for YOUR ministry to others, not just the pastor's ministry to you. Each of us is to have his OWN ministry, not just the preacher. Our personal ministry is dictated by which of the spiritual "gifts" the Holy Spirit sends to us. If we prayerfully ask the Father for these gifts, He will send the one suited to us, the one He wishes us to have.

The Beginning and Ending of the Lord's Day

In studying the resurrection we found that the Interlinear Greek-English New Testament gave Matthew 28:1 in this manner "Now late on Sabbath, as it was getting dusk toward (the) fast (day) of (the) week, came Mary the Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." This is because the calendar God gave to the children of Israel always began each day at the going down of the sun. It had been so in the beginning: "and the evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen. 1:5). Here we have the beginning of the first "day" of creation. The beginning is called evening, which begins at the setting of the sun. This division of God's time called day was divided into two parts: "And God called the light DAY, and the darkness He called NIGHT" (Gen. 1:5). The night or darkness preceded the light or day. "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:2, 3).

Therefore the common expression of evening (even) as applied to the close of the day is incorrectly used, according to God's Word. The even or evening of any day is the beginning and not the ending. Leviticus 23:32b informs us: "From EVEN UNTO EVEN, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath." The Sabbath then, begins at sunset Friday, and ends at sunset Saturday. Only recently has man begun to begin and end the day at midnight Sabbath evening is always recognised as the beginning of the Sabbath just after the end of Friday. The world still recognizes this fact, for the so-called "Christmas eve" is the evening or night

preceding "Christmas day." Within the early Church, and also among the Jews, Sabbath eve was always the high point of the week for the family. Mothers spent Fridays (the preparation for the Sabbath) cooking and getting ready for the evening family circle and meal. As the sun went down, the mothers lit the Sabbath candles and said a prayer. After this the fathers would lead a devotion, which would be followed by the Sabbath meal. Children knew and understood that this time was FAMILY time, made holy by the Lord.

The Messiah, Jesus Christ, KEPT THE SABBATH while He lived as a human on earth. And whole CHAPTERS in the four Gospels are devoted to recording HOW He taught us to keep Sabbath.

The Pharisees of Jesus' day observed some 65 stern regulations of "do's and don'ts" which the human rabbis had instituted to make Sabbath observance a "yoke of bondage." The Master swept those human regulations aside.

The Bible scholar George Lamsa wrote: "The fourth commandment decrees that the seventh day must be observed as a day of rest. This is because God completed the creation of heaven and earth in six days and on the seventh day rested from his work (Gen. 2:2) . . . The Eastern text [Heb. 4:9] reads, 'It is therefore the duty of the people of God to keep the Sabbath.'

"The Sabbath is to be kept until man enters into eternal rest and dwells forever with his Creator. Palestine is symbolical of heaven, and the Sabbath is a symbol of everlasting rest. The Hebrews, after entering into the promised land, rested from their many desert difficulties and trials. They found food, wine, honey and other comforts and luxuries which are not within the reach of desert dwellers. In other words, they found some physical rest, but were far off from the new Jerusalem and eternal rest. And even after their conquest of Palestine the Hebrews were often harassed and defeated by their enemies.

"Joshua brought them into the land of promise, but because it took them many centuries before they were able to subdue some of their enemies, Joshua could not give them eternal rest. David, four hundred years later, spoke of another day.

"Therefore, it is necessary for the people to keep the law of God and observe the Sabbath until they enter into the kingdom of God. The law and prophets remain as of yore until all things are fulfilled and the forces of evil destroyed. Jesus did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them. Christians must labor hard in order to hasten God's reign, so that they may enter into his kingdom and his eternal rest." 2

The Christian Passover

Today we understand that in the early days of the Christian era, the first Christians were primarily Jews. Each one of the twelve disciples of Christ was a Jew. On one day alone, the Pentecost following the ascension of the Messiah into heaven, 3,000 souls were begotten of the Spirit and became children of God through faith in the Messiah as their Saviour. It has been estimated by some that no less than one million Jews became followers of Jesus in the first century of the Christian era.

As we have already learned, the synagogue in the first century of the Church era was not so harsh and cruel (at first) in its attitude toward such Jews as had confessed their faith in the Messiah. The old-time synagogue back in the first century accepted the believing Jew as a part of the consist of the synagogue. In the makeup of the synagogue in those days there were Pharisees, and Sadducees; there were Hellenists and there were Essenes, and many others shades of belief and unbelief; each making up its own group and yet each a

component part of the synagogue. And so when such large numbers of Jews began to accept the Messiah, they were still allowed to stay in the synagogue, but they were known as "Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5). They were given respect and attention, because many times we find that Paul and the other apostles, "reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue."

Now, while the other Jews celebrated their Seder (Passover meal) with the Passover Lamb according to the ordinances and judgments, these Hebrew Christians celebrated the same occasion with the Seder of the Matzo (unleavened bread) and Wine, depicting in their ceremonial the suffering, death, and burial of the Messiah. Thus there were TWO KINDS of Seder celebrations in Israel side by side: the Jewish Seder with the Passover Lamb, and The Christian Seder with its unleavened bread and wine.

With the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D.; And finally with the Bar Kochba incident about 114 A.D. (mentioned on page 27); the Jewish Seder all but ceased. "The only dander which survived within the Jewish nation was that of the Hebrew Christians, who (until 114 AD.) continued to be an integral part of the Jewish community. Thereupon, this Seder, the chief elements of which were the bread and wine, became the nucleus of the Seder celebrations of all Israel (in the Diaspora), which by degrees adopted it and made it their own, unconscious of the real story it told, and the real message it conveyed." 3 Rabbi Leopold Cohn, in his autobiography, tells how this very ritual or celebration was a powerful means in helping him to understand the Messiah's work of redemption. He explains how the understanding of this Jewish celebration helped to win his wife to faith in Christ: "Another help to her was that of a thought the Lord gave me at the time when for her sake I observed the ceremony on the first Passover night after she reached Scotland. Among other sacred rites performed on the first night of the Passover feast are the following ones: Three cakes of unleavened bread are placed on the table, one above the other with napkin between them so that each is separate from the other. The head of the family who is performing the ceremonies takes the middle cake and breaks it in halves, concealing one-half under the pillow of the lounge on which he reclines at that meal. Reclining is a symbol of the freedom the Jews gained at the time when God brought them out from the bondage of Egypt. At certain intervals, four cups of wine are served to those seated at the table and at the third cup, the father takes out the half cake from between the pillow, and divides it among the family. I used to perform that ceremony year after year without considering the real reason for doing so, but with the light of the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ in my mind and heart, it suddenly dawned upon me what it all meant. The three cakes (of unleavened bread) represent Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the middle one, the Son, broken in halves, indicates the body of the Son of God broken for our sins. Concealing it under the pillows signifies the burial of the broken body, and bringing it forth again at the third cup indicates strikingly the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ on the third day.

"When the Lord gave me that thought, I at once with great joy in my heart, explained it to my dear wife and children showing them that this custom which is being performed by all the Jews over the world from time immemorial, has in it the memory of death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ...The early disciples of the Lord were Jews and they must have instituted this ceremony among their people so that Christ should never be forgotten among them."

As the Master reclined for the last time at the Passover Seder with His disciples He took up the Matzo and broke it, and gave pieces to the disciples and said to them, "Take, eat: this is MY BODY, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me." The Master had instituted a memorial of his death, that we might better remember His sacrifice. Memorial services usually take place once a year-on the anniversary of the event being remembered.

There is much to be learned from what Rabbi Cohn has told. From him as from many other

sources other than the Scripture, we may be SURE that from the BEGINNING of its observance Christians held the Lord's Supper annually at the time of the Passover.

Only after the "falling away" (II Thess. 2:3) was the papal anti-christ, through the mystery-religion, able to replace the scriptural Passover observance with a pagan Easter festival. Since that time Protestant ministers and denominations have never been able to decide among themselves when the Lord's Supper Service should be held. Some churches hold communion every month, some every three months, and some hold communion every Sunday.

One might be tempted, on seeing such confusion, to repeat the old saying, "When everything else fails, read the instruction book." Our instruction book is the Bible. We may easily see that the Lord's Supper Service replaced the Pascal Meal (which was a "type" of, or "shadow" of Christ's redemptive work on Calvary). Leviticus 23 informs us of the correct time—the 14th of the Hebrew month of Nisan. Because of the frequency of leap years and other considerations which govern the calculations of the Hebrew calendar, it is not possible to state a simple formula by which the date of the Passover can be figured. The date to observe the memorial service that Messiah instituted on the Passover can only be determined precisely by using the Hebrew calendar. The following dates correspond to the Passover on the Hebrew calendar:

1978 - 21 April 1982 - 7 April
1979 - 11 April 1983 - 28 March
1980 - 31 March 1984 - 16 April
1981 - 18 April 1985 - 5 April

Since we have learned that the Scriptural beginning of a day is the evening, after the sun has set; it follows that the time for observing the Lord's Supper in 1978, for example, is just after the sun has set on the 20th of April (which, scripturally speaking, would be the beginning of the 21st of April). This time coincides with the night that the Master instituted the Lord's Supper in the upper room. It was all within the same scriptural day that the Master instituted the Lord's Supper, was arrested, tried, crucified, and died. He became the perfect fulfillment of the Passover Lamb, replacing the Passover Seder with the emblems of His blood and broken body—which grant us a refuge and escape from the "death angel."

It was at the time of the Last Supper that the Master washed the disciples' feet, saying to them ". . . If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (John 13:8). After completing the task, our Lord instructed His disciples: "...Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:12-15).

"Footwashing" is definitely a part of the Lord's Supper Service. The Master instituted it along with the presentation of the emblems of His Body—the unleavened bread and wine. It is a part of His "New Commandment." After He washed the disciples' feet He told them "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34, 35).

Footwashing is an act of faith which produces love. This faith comes also by obedience to the Messiah and by following His example. In footwashing we find fulfillment of the Master's words: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13: 17).

Chapter Fifteen

The Divine Family

Mystery-Babylon has tried to teach us that the nature of God is a "trinity." We have already learned that this dogma is false. Satan has used this teaching to obscure the wonderful Gospel that the Messiah came to earth to teach. In Matthew 24:14 Jesus gave this prophecy: "And this gospel of the kingdom all be preached throughout the world as a testimony to all the nations; then the end will come" (Lamsa). Catholic and Protestant missionaries have gone to the four corners of the earth, O caching their doctrines. Bible societies have translated the ; Holy Scriptures into hundreds of languages, and distributed them all over the world-and yet the "end" has not come. Yet, Jesus stated that when the Gospel of the kingdom had been preached throughout the world-the end would come. Evidently the message the Master spoke of has not yet gone as a witness over the whole world.

In Genesis 1:1 the scriptures begin by saying "In the beginning God . . ." The word here translated God is the Hebrew noun is Elohim. On page 412 of Young's Analytical Concordance we learn that Elohim is at the same time both singular and plural This word is what is known as a "uniplural" noun. Examples of "uniplural" nouns in English are: FAMILY, CHURCH, TEAM, etc. "Elohim" is used some 500 times by Moses and some 5,000 times in the New Testament. It is not the proper Name of the Father. The proper name of the Father is usually represented or translated in the King James Translation as "Lord God," or "Jehovah," (which is now acknowledged as an incorrect transliteration). The first syllable of the Father's proper Name may be found more properly transliterated in Psalms 68:4; "Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him." This proper Name for the Father is also found in the Hebrew word Hallelujah, which means in. English: praise ye Jah. The King James translators rendered hallelujah "praise ye the LORD" numerous times. Usually when we find "LORD" all in capital letters in the King James Bible it represents this proper Name of the Father.

In John 10:34 we find that the Master said " . . . Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? " He was quoting Psalms 82: 6; "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High." The word here translated god is elohim.

Turning now to John 1:1-3 we find: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." By these scriptures we may be sure that the Messiah was IN THE BEGINNING with the Father, and was part of the Elohim. This noun, Elohim, reveals the oneness of God, but also denotes plurality. The certainty of this truth is confirmed by such scriptures as Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7 - "And God said, Let US make man in our image, after OUR likeness." Paul speaks of the Son of God in this manner: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him" (Col. 1:15-16).

Christ, as part of the Elohim, is the "Spokesman" or "The Word" of the Father. He stated: " . . . I do always those things that please him" (the Father) (John 8:29). The power that the Son has is only the power which the Father gives Him. The Son prayed to the Father that the Church might be "one" in e same sense that the Father and the Son were "one:" " . . . that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:22b). They are "one" in purpose, mind, and

Spirit. This is true because the Master "is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1: 15-16).

The Son did the actual work of creation—under the power, authority, and direction of the Father. Both Father and Son existed from the beginning. TOGETHER they form the Elohim found in Genesis 1:1.

The FAMILY RELATIONSHIP of Elohim is shown in its proper context in Ephesians 3:14-15; "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, OF WHOM THE WHOLE FAMILY IN HEAVEN AND EARTH IS NAMED."

Long before the world was created God had an object in view. He formulated a plan for the achievement of that object. That object is "eternal life, which God, who cannot lie promised before the world began" (Titus 1: 2).

"Eternal life" then, is THE promise of the Father, and it is FOR THE PRODUCTION of this particular quality of being that God designed the world. The astounding thing about this characteristic is that it is attributed ONLY to the Most High God. Divinity, or the "divine nature," is characterised by PERFECTION, INCORRUPTION, and IMMORTALITY.

Think of it, God created man so that through a process of growth—man might share the glory of the Father's own nature. God is presently a "Family." The desire and Plan of our Heavenly Father is to ENLARGE His Family. He seeks children like unto Himself. The wonderful TRUTH is that human beings may be born into this same ONE God Family (Elohim) as distinct, separate personalities through the Plan of Salvation. The attribute of love in the nature of God causes Him to seek companionship, for love is fraternal, and requires that those loved be sharers and partakers of the abundant resources of God.

A purpose of the Plan of Salvation is the teaching to us of God's love for us, and a building of that same love within us for Him, and those around us. We must willingly receive and share this love to be a part of His Family.

Let this major premise be firmly established in the mind of each of us: The object of all of earth's activities is the creation of a DIVINE FAMILY.

Conversion is a necessary step to salvation. "The law of the Lord" is the instrument which God has chosen to "convert the soul." It is the will of God that His Word express His law—these three are one: His will, His Word, and His law. It is impossible to separate the will of the Lord from His law, for all of His laws are the expression of His will; this is why the law is "holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). To deny God's love, or His law, is to deny yourself of a place in His Family.

The apostle Paul knew that the sole object of God's work among men in this world was that they might be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8: 29). He also said that we ". . . beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (II Cor. 3:18).

Before a child can be born he must be physically begotten by his physical father. He must grow and develop within his mother before he can be physically born a human being. While he is within his mother he is ALREADY a child of his father. Aborting this child has been judged to be murder, for he is ALREADY a child of his human mother and father. When the

time comes for his birth he enters into a new and wonderful world, but his system has already been prepared for this new existence. This is an illustration of the spiritual birth that the Holy Scriptures must guide to into.

Before a person can become a spirit being and member of the Divine Family he must be begotten of the Holy Spirit. Repentance, acceptance of Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, and willingness to obey God lead to this spiritual begetting. The new child of God may then begin to grow and develop within the Church, the spiritual body of Christ, so that at the resurrection he may be born a Spiritual Being and spiritual Child of God. While he is still a physical human, he has already *BEGUN* to be a Spiritual Being or son of God. He is no longer what he was, but is not yet what he is destined to become. He has become a "son of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7). He is part of ". . . the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). All those (regardless of race) are the "circumcision" and chosen people of God, "which worship God in the spirit" (Phil. 3:3 and Eph. 1:4). All those who are begotten of the Spirit are "a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (I Peter 2:9). They have already become part of the "kingdom" (Col. 1:13), and "are the temple of the living God" (II Cor. 6:16 and I Cor. 3:16).

It was Paul's testimony, however, that the Christian's "crown of righteousness" would not be received UNTIL THE RESURRECTION (II Tim. 4:8). At that time our works will be judged, rewarded, and we shall be born into the spirit world—able to come and go as the wind (I Cor. 3:13-15 and John 3:38).

At the resurrection "the stone that smote the image" (Dan. 2:35) will truly become "a great mountain" and fill the whole earth. It is at this time that the saints are made "spirit beings"—judges, kings, and priests in the Kingdom of God: "Then I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those to whom authority to act as judges and pass sentence was entrusted. Also I saw the souls of those who had been slain with axes (beheaded) for their A witnessing to Jesus and [for preaching and testifying] for the Word of God, and who had refused to pay homage to the beast or his statue and had not accepted his mark or permitted it to be stamped on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived again, and ruled with Christ, the Messiah, a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4). ". . . the Ancient of days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the Most High[God], and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom . . . And the kingdom under the whole heavens shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Dan. 7:9, 27).

Today—willful turning aside from the Christian life and the Church, and turning your back on your Heavenly Father leads to SPIRITUAL DEATH. This is aborting the Holy Spirit from one's life. When the time comes for the spiritual birth (resurrection), if the child has followed in the Master's footsteps, he is born into a new and wonderful spirit world that this walk on earth has prepared him for.

Christ was the *FIRSTBORN* of *MANY* brethren (Rom. 8:29). He was raised from the dead a new creature. In Him, we have the same hope. This is the purpose for which you were born! Notice how plainly the Holy Scriptures relate this truth: "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, my brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all die, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed" (I Cor. 15 :49-52).

Jesus said: "Truly, truly, I say to you, If a man is not born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God . . . If a man is not born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of

God. What is born of flesh is flesh; and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be surprised because I have told you that you all must be born again. The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound; but you do not know whence it comes and whither it goes; such is every man who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:3-8 Lamsa).

Job asked: "If a man die, shall he live again; All the days of his youth he waits till old age comes. If thou wouldst call me, I would answer thee; thou wilt think of the work of thy hands" (Job 14:14-15 Lamsa).

The apostle John declared: "Beloved, we are (even here and) now God's children; it is not yet disclosed (made clear) what we shall be (hereafter), but we know that when He comes and is manifested we shall (as God's children) resemble and be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He (really) is" (I John 3:2 (Amplified)).

The apostle Paul added: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first. Then we, the still living who remain, shall simultaneously be caught up along with (the resurrected dead) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so always-through the eternity of the eternities-we shall be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:16-17 Amplified).

What is the result of the process spoken of by Jesus as being "born again?" What will we really be like? Well, the result of this process should, by now have become clear:

Certainly it ought to be clear when Elohim creates mankind in Elohim's "likeness" (Gen. 1:26) and then says to His creation "You are Elohim" (Psa. 82:6; John 10:34-35).

This is the purpose of human life. For this "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together" (labor pains to give birth to the "Sons of God") . . . "waiting for the adoption" (Rom. 8:22-23). "Because man himself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21 Lamsa).

The most glorious event of "the last days" will be "the manifestation of the sons of God." Every entity in the universe will be astonished at the unveiling of the finished product: THE FAMILY OF GOD. " . . . We are the children of God; And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; so that if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him" (Rom. 8:16-17 Lamsa). I Corinthians 15:49 informs us that "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." This means that just as we resemble NOW our physical father, when we become spiritual beings we shall resemble our Heavenly Father. "For you are sons of God now [in the process of being born again]: the live, permanent Word of the living God has given you his own indestructible HEREDITY" (I Peter 1:23 Phillips).

Paul was not encumbered by the heathen doctrines of the "trinity" and "eternal security" (in this physical life) for he said "I press toward the mark for the PRIZE of the high calling" (Phil. 3:14), "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after" (v. 12).

Be careful not to hold the idea that God is about to glorify all professing "church members." Such an idea can easily be disproved by these few words: "A CONSUMPTION is determined upon the whole earth" (Isa. 28:22). "The earth also is defiled like its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the law, changed the ordinance, and nullified the everlasting covenant. Therefore the earth shall sit in mourning, and all its inhabitants shall

be condemned; therefore all the inhabitants of the earth shall be destroyed, and a few men shall be left" (Isa. 24:5, Lamsa).

The human race is about to be decimated. The greater part of mankind is going to be destroyed. These are irrefutable and unchangeable statements of prophecy (see Joel 3:1-2, 9-14; Mal 4:1; Rev. 14:18-20; 16:14; 19:11-21; Zech. 14:14). The Almighty has spoken. If we neglect the salvation offered to us we become as wood, hay, and stubble, and we will surely burn. On the other hand, if we set our affections on things above, and follow the leading of Jesus the Master, we will be among that small number known as that "little flock," who will inherit the Kingdom of God.

No powers of "fate" determine our status before the Almighty. We are not victims of circumstances over which we have no control. Each of us has been vested with the power to choose whom we will serve, and no man can justly claim inability to do the will of our Heavenly Father: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). The Master makes this strength available to all who care to have it. The believer is under obligation to be an OVERCOMER; he is to put forth EFFORT. God supplies the means to him who wills to overcome.

All those who become members of the DIVINE FAMILY will have been placed there because they personally WANTED to be there. You will become a saint because you have applied yourself to God's will, His law, and the example and faith of the Son of God.

Chapter Sixteen

Elijah's Cup

In the preceding pages many things have been discussed. Ideas and facts generally unknown within the circles of modern day Christianity have been brought to the attention of the reader. It has been the purpose of this book to reveal the faith and doctrine of the early Church—and at the same time also give understanding of a message prophesied to be spread over the world just before Christ's return: Elijah's message.

Elijah the Tishbite has been called by some the greatest and most romantic character Israel ever produced. His name reveals much of the message he had for Israel. Elijah means "God is YAH."

Old Testament prophecy reveals that Elijah's message would be sent to us again. The very last two verses of the last Old Testament prophet, Malachi, reveals this promise from God: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he shall turn [and reconcile] the hearts of the [estranged] father to the [ungodly] children, and the hearts of the [rebellious] children to [the piety of] their fathers [a reconciliation produced by repentance of the ungodly; lest I come and smite the land with a curse [and a ban of utter destruction] " (Mal.4:5-6 Amplified).

Because of this prophecy, the Jews were truly looking for someone to come speaking Elijah's message with strength. Elijah had power through God to even stop it from raining. He had told Israel: " . . . As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew or rain THESE YEARS, but according to my word" (I Kings 17:1).

Israel had fallen into SUN WORSHIP, called Baal worship. Elijah had come to PROVE to them WHO God was-and give them the choice (make them choose) WHOM they would worship. He had told them: " . . . How long will you halt between two opinions? If the Lord (YAH) is God, follow Him, but if Baal is god, then follow him" (I Kings 18:21). Here Elijah had almost quoted Joshua when he said: "And if it seem evil unto you to seine the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 14: 15).

Elijah's message was a cry for repentance, and a call to restore I | the true worship of God (Mat. 4:6; Matt. 17:11).

When Elijah the Tishbite had completed his work God allowed Elijah's spirit to rest on another man: " . . . The spirit of Elijah cloth rest on Elisha" (II Kings 2:15). Where Elijah's name had meant "God is YAH," Elisha's name meant "God is Saviour," or "God is Messiah." Jesus taught that this same spirit later rested on John the Baptist (Matt. 11:14). John's Hebrew name, Yohanan, means "Yah is Gracious."

John's commission was to "...go before him (Messiah) in the spirit and power of Elias (Elijah), to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17). Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 foretold John's message, which we again in Matthew 3:1-3: " . . . Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." John was "The voice of one crying in the Wilderness, Prepare ye that way of the Lord, make his paths Straight."

Jesus had recognised that John fulfilled the prophecy of the "spirit of Elijah" in Mark 9:13. In verse 12 however, it seems that Jesus leaves room for a future fulfillment at the time of His second coming.

The unbelieving Jews—even today—set a place at their Passover Seder (meal), complete with Elijah's wine cup, in expectation of the prophet's return.

In the days of the Old Covenant, prophets came alone, by themselves, to offer their testimony. When Jesus came, He sent His witnesses out two by two. In the Book of Revelation we find the prophecy of two last witnesses. These are prophets who gave their testimony in the last days before the Master's return. These two witnesses are given the power to perform the miracles that both Elijah and Moses performed (see Matt. 17:34): to call down fire from heaven (Rev. 11:5), to stop it from raining in the days of their prophecy, and to turn the waters of rivers into blood (Rev. 11:6; Ex. 7). Surely their testimony will also be given in the "spirit of Elijah." The 1,260 days of their prophecy correspond to Elijah's 3 1/2 years (1 Kings 17:1; Luke 4:25; and James 5:1-7).

As to the message of these end-time witnesses found in Revelation—note that the Almighty has never destroyed a city or a nation without first sending His messengers there to warn the people, thus giving them a chance to escape. He warned the world before the flood came, and Jesus tells us in Matthew 24:37-40 that it will be the same when He comes again—as it was in the days of Noah. The Creator warned the people of Sodom and Gomorrah before He rained fire from heaven and destroyed them, and the Saviour says it will be the same when He comes (Luke 17:27-30). The Word of God warned Babylon before destruction came. He sent His messenger to warn Nineveh, Tyre and Sidon: and He also declares there is to be a definite message going forth to warn the whole world before the Messiah comes the second time.

In Revelation 14:6-11 we find this prophecy: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, Serve God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of waters. And another angel, a second, followed him, saying, Babylon has fallen, that great city which made all nations drink of the wine of the passion of her whoredom. Then another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worships the beast and his image and received his mark on his brow or on his hand, He also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed with bitterness in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and before the throne; And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever; and those who worship the beast and his image will have no rest day or night" (Lamsa). In the next verse we find the doctrinal belief that distinguishes the ones who heed this warning:

Here is the patience of the saints; here are they who KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND THE FAITH OF JESUS (Rev. 14:12).

Above are three messages, symbolised by three angels flying through the midst of heaven. One is the everlasting gospel, the next is the cry that Babylon has fallen, and the last is a warning to all the world not to receive the mark of the beast on their brow or hand; telling of the dreadful consequences if they do.

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he told us in Matthew 24:14 that the gospel of the Kingdom was to go to all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end would come.

Later, in the above chapter of Revelation, He divides this gospel into three divisions. The everlasting gospel; the Reformation Message, which was a cry against the corruption of Babylon; and the last message, the final warning against the "mark of the beast." Babylon is described in Revelation 17 as a woman, symbolising a church, and this one church ruled the world at the time of the Reformation, and the message was that Babylon had spiritually fallen, and become the habitation of devils and false doctrines.

The third angel's message has for its theme the commandments of God and the faith of the Messiah.

Daniel, being a key to Revelation, tells us in chapter 7:17-23 that a beast symbolises a kingdom upon earth. These same symbols apply to other parts of the Scriptures, and in Revelation 17:3-5, where a beast carries a woman, we have a figure of the kingdoms of the world carrying a church. It pictures a church riding upon the civil governments of the world, and is exactly what we had during the 1,260 years of papal persecution when the Catholic Church was united with civil power, and the Catholic religion was forced by law upon the people or they were killed. The beast is to be wounded and come to life again, according to verses 8-11, before it goes into perdition or destruction. We can now look back through history and see when it was, then "was not" but the Master says it yet is. It will come up out of the bottomless pit, a place of seclusion, and then go into perdition. The third angel's message is a special warning against it and any of the churches that came out of it but retained its false system of worship-the teachings of the Babylonian Mystery Religion.

Why should you gamble eternity on the "doctrines of men?" If you have embraced a faith that does not teach you to ". . . keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12) the Holy Scriptures instruct you to "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

Turn back to the faith and doctrine of the apostles in the early Church. Allow this Faith to free you from "Babylon" and the "Babylonian Mystery" system. God tells us through the apostle Jude that we should "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

We are living in the last days of this human society this world's civilization. Christ is coming soon! The second coming of our Lord is near. Are you ready?

He has said "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Summary

1. Repentance, a necessary step to salvation, involves both:

- A. A godly sorrow for breaking God's Law, and
- B. A complete turn away from "worldly" things through Christian growth.

2. God's law may be generally divided into two groups of laws:

A. The Ten Commandments and the ordinances.

B. The judgments, also called: the law that "was ADDED because of transgressions," the "works of the law," and the ordinances "that were against us."

3. The judgments which were fulfilled by the Master (which were our teacher or pathfinder) are listed in the ninth chapter of Hebrews. ALL other laws continue to DEFINE SIN. The Messiah has replaced the judgments to become our teacher and pathfinder under the new covenant.
4. A judgment may be defined as a penalty rendered against a law-breaker.
5. Laws defining love, proper worship, social conduct, sanitation, and health standards may not be defined as penalties; and therefore may not be considered abrogated.
6. Prayer, "which is the opening of your heart to the Almighty, as you might open your heart to a very close friend," is a necessary part of the Christian walk.
7. The major evidences of acceptance with God are: peace, obedience, love, chastening, and Christ in our hearts.
8. Seventh day Sabbath observance is a SIGN between God and YOU—OF WHO YOUR GOD IS.
9. The Lord's Supper Service (Communion) was instituted on the Passover, and was kept once annually at that time by the early Church.
10. The object of all of earth's activities is the creation of a Divine Family.
11. The Christian's hope is being born into the Divine Family and Kingdom a "spirit being," to be "kings and priests" with Christ.
12. Revelation 14 reveals three messages to be sent to this earth during the gospel age. The first was the Gospel. The second was that the false church had fallen. The last message to the earth before Messiah's return might be stated as follows:

Have no part of the false church or her doctrines and teachings. These doctrines and teachings will mark you as a part of Babylon. Come out (Rev. 18:4) of this abominable system before it is too late. All those who do not will be rewarded with the fierce anger of the Almighty Creator God (YAH), because He has instructed you differently and warned you aforetime. A curse of utter destruction awaits each and every one, at the Messiah's Return, who do not heed the warning sent out. Repent now and restore the true and acceptable worship (Matt. 3:1-3), by doing so you will be preparing the way for the Lodes return. Eternity hangs in the balance for you—will you be numbered among those "who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus"? (Rev. 14:12)?

To the victor goes the crown.
Amen.

Appendices

Easter

from *Encyclopedia Britannica* (ninth edition)
page 531; vol. vii

"Easter," the annual festival observed throughout Christendom in commemoration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The word "Easter"—Anglo-Saxon, "Eastre," "Eoster;" German—"Ostern"—like the names of the days of the week, is a survival from the old Teutonic Mythology. According to Bede (*De Temp. Rat.*, c.2v) it is derived from "Eostre," or "Ostara," the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring, to whom the fourth month, answering to our April—thence called "Eostur-month"—was dedicated. This month, Bede informs us, was the same as the "Mensis Paschalis," when "the old festival was observed with the gladness of a new solemnity."

The name by which Easter is known among the Romance nations—French 'paques;' Italian, 'pasqua;' Spanish, 'pascua'—is derived through the Latin 'pascha,' and the Greek (Greek fig.) from the Chaldee or Aramean form . . . 'pascha,' of the Hebrew name of the Passover festival . . . "has passed over," in memory of the great deliverance when the destroying angel "passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when he smote the Egyptians," Exodus xii 27 . . .

"The first Christians, being derived from, or intimately connected with, the Jewish Churches, naturally continued to observe the Jewish festivals, though in a new spirit, as commemorations of events of which these had been the shadows. The Passover, ennobled by the thought of Christ the true Paschal Lamb, the first-fruits from the dead, continued to be celebrated, and became the Christian Easter. Thus the human instinct which everywhere craves for the commemoration of marked epochs on the personal, social, ecclesiastical, or national life, found its legitimate gratification in the public celebration of the events which are the foundation of the Christian faith. But though the observance of the Paschal festival at a very early period became the rule in the Christian church, a difference as to the time of its observance speedily sprang up between Christians of the Jewish and Gentile descent, which led to a long-continued and bitter controversy, and an unhappy severance of Christians were left to follow their own instincts. These were naturally different in the Jewish and Gentile churches. The point at issue really was the date of the termination of the Paschal fast. With the Jewish Christians, whose leading thought would be the death of Christ as the true Paschal Lamb, this fast would end at the same time as that of the Jews, on the 14th day of the moon, at evening, and the Easter festival would immediately follow, entirely irrespective of the day of the week. With the Gentile Christians, on the other hand, unfettered by Jewish traditions, the first day of the week would be identified with the Resurrection festival, and the preceding Friday would be kept as the commemoration of the crucifixion, irrespective of the day of the month, the fast continuing with increasing strictness till the midnight of Saturday. With the one, therefore, the observance of the day of the month, with the other the observance of the day of the week, was the ruling principle. The chief point was the "keeping" or "not keeping" the 14th day of the moon corresponding to that of the month Nisan. Those who, adopting the Jewish rule, did so keep the 14th day were called "Quartodecimani," and were stigmatized as heretics. In the absence of any authoritative decision as to the day to be observed and the proper mode of calculating it, other discrepancies arose, which led to controversies and dissensions which, in the words of Epiphanius distracted the church, and became a source of mockery and ridicule to the unbelievers. "Some" he writes, "began the festival before the week, some after the week, some at the beginning, some at the middle, some at the end, thus creating a wonderful and

laborious confusion." This diversity of usage was gradually brought to an end by the verdict of the church of Rome. The Roman Christians adopted the ordinary Gentile usage, which within certain limits, placed the observance of the crucifixion on a Friday, and that of the resurrection on the following Sunday. A decretal of Pope Pius I, c. 147—the genuineness of which, however, is by no means established—pronounces equally firm upon the point.

"Polycarp, the venerable and sainted bishop of Smyrna, who, according to Irenaeus, visited Rome in 159 with this object, failed to induce Anicetus to conform to the Quartodeciman usage, which Polycarp had inherited from his master, the apostle John. Anicetus declined to permit the Jewish custom in the churches under his jurisdiction, but made no scruple of communicating with those who adopted it, and allowed Polycarp to celebrate the Eucharist at Rome.

Between thirty and forty years after this visit (197) the same question was controverted in a very different spirit between Victor, bishop of Rome, and Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, the aged metropolitan of proconsular Asia. This province was the only portion of Christendom that still maintained the quartodeciman usage, which had been dropped even by the churches of Palestine and Alexandria. Victor's despotic demand that the Asiatic churches should adopt the Roman system having been met by Polycrates with a courteous but firm refusal, Victor proceeded to excommunicate him and all who held with him. So sweeping a measure shocked the Christian world. Irenaeus remonstrated with the bishop of Rome, and ultimately the Asiatic churches were allowed to retain their usage unmolested. We still find the quartodeciman usage springing up from time to time in various places, but it never took permanent root, and at the time of the Council of Nicea (325) the Syrians and the Antiochenes were the solitary champions of the Jewish rule. The settlement of this controversy was one among the causes which led to the emperor Constantine to summon that council. The consent of the assembled prelates was unanimous. All agreed the Easter should be kept on one and the same day throughout the world, and that none should hereafter follow the blindness of the Jews. Nothing however, was said as to the determination of the day. This was practically left to be calculated at Alexandria, the home of astronomical science, and the bishop of that see was to announce it annually to the churches under his jurisdiction and to the bishop of Rome, by whom it was to be communicated to the western churches." (The article continues to say that agreement upon time of observance was not completely settled among the Gentile churches until the 8th century.)

APPENDIX "B"

Irenaeus

**from Encyclopedia Britannica (ninth edition)
page 279**

"Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons on the end of the 2nd century, was one of the most distinguished of the theologians of the Ante-Nicene Church . . . Irenaeus, however, was best known by his endeavors to counteract the teachings of the Gnostics, and his attempts to mediate between the bishops of Rome and the churches of Asia Minor in their disputes about the proper time at which to keep Easter. The Gnostic teacher whose views spread to Gaul was Valentinus. He had come to Rome sometime about the middle of the 2nd century, and disciples had tried to propagate his opinions among the Christians in Gaul. It is said that the efforts of Irenaeus resulted in a council held at Lyons, where the opinions of these Gnostics were condemned; but as the evidence for this statement is not probably older than the 9th century, it may be considered doubtful. The Easter controversy, which lasted on to the council of Nicea in 325, and assumed various forms, had a very simple origin,-the question whether in reckoning the days on which our Lord died and rose again, Christians should keep by the day of the month simply, or so arrange it that the day to be observed in commemoration of our Lord's resurrection should always be observed; on the other hand, our Lord was crucified on a Friday and rose again on a Sunday, and the churches of Alexandria and Rome held that the two events should always be commemorated on a Friday and a Sunday respectively. In the time of Irenaeus, Victor, bishop of Rome, made strenuous endeavors to bring about uniformity of celebration; and when he failed to convince the churches of Asia Minor that the Western usage was right he proposed to declare these churches heterodox, and to cut them off from ecclesiastical fellowship. The interference of Irenaeus was intended to dissuade the pope from this hasty action, and his letter is interesting not merely for its peaceloving sentiments, but because of the valuable information it gives upon the usages of the churches of the east and of the west. . . "

"Irenaeus holds the same relations to the theology of the Greek fathers that Tertullian does to the doctrinal system of the church of the west. In tracing back the history of a doctrine, it is common to find it first taking shape in the writings of one or both of these early theologians. Hence the great value of his writings. It is from Irenaeus also that we get the earliest form of the creed which afterwards, through the labor of councils and theologians, became what we now know as the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed."

APPENDIX "C"

Polycarp

from *Encyclopedia Britannica* (ninth edition)

page 428

"The importance of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, for the earliest period of church history arises from his historical position. He was on the one hand a disciple of John and the other apostles and disciples of Jesus; on the other hand he was the teacher of Irenaeus, the first of the Catholic fathers. In his letter to Florinus, Irenaeus says: 'I saw you when I was yet, as a boy, in Lower Asia with Polycarp . . . I could even now point out the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and spoke, and describe his going out and coming in, his manner of life, his personal appearance, and addresses he delivered to the multitude, how he spoke of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord, and how he recalled their words. And everything that he had heard from them about the Lord, about his teaching, Polycarp told us, as one who had received it from those who had seen the Lord, and how he recalled their words. And everything that he had heard from them about the Lord, about his teaching, Polycarp told us, as one who had received it from those who had seen the Word of Life with their own eyes, and all this in complete harmony with the scriptures. To this I then listened, through the mercies of God vouchsafed to me, with all eagerness, and wrath it not on paper, but in my heart, and still by the grace of God I ever bring it into fresh remembrance.'

"These are priceless words, for they establish a chain of tradition (Jesus, John, Polycarp, Irenaeus) which is without parallel in history . . .

"The chief facts to be gathered about the life of Polycarp from the above sources are these. He must have been born before the year 69, for on the day of his death he declared that he had served the Lord for 86 years. He became a Christian in his earliest youth, and was an associate of the apostle John and other disciples of Jesus who had come from Palestine to Asia Minor. What he heard from them he kept in life-long remembrance, and in his manhood and old age he used to gather the young people round him, and repeat to them what he had learned from those who had seen the Christ in the flesh. Amongst these youthful hearers was Irenaeus, who has recorded much of what he thus learned . . . Especially when heresy began to raise its head, the aged Polycarp never ceased to appeal to the pure doctrine of the apostles. He lived to see the rise of the Marcionite and Valentinian sects, and vigorously opposed them. Irenaeus tells us that on one occasion Marcion 'endeavored to establish relations with him' . . . There is no doubt that Marcion wished to be on friendly terms with so influential a man; but Polycarp displayed the same uncompromising attitude which his master John had shown to Cerinthus, . . . stern words are again applied to Marcion in the epistles of the Phillippians; for it is undoubtedly Marcion who is referred to in the following passage: 'He who falsified the saying of the Lord after his own pleasure and declares that there is no resurrection (of the flesh) and no judgement, are the firstborn of Satan' (see "The Epistle of Polycarp to the Phillippians," in the *Lost Books of the Bible*, chapter 8). The steady progress of the heretical movement, in spite of all opposition, was a cause of deep sorrow to Polycarp, so that in the last years of his life the words were constantly on his lips, 'Oh, good God, to what times hast thou spared me, that I must suffer such things.' He never allowed himself to engage in discussion with heretics, but as far as possible avoided their presence. Even in early life he had become the head of the church of Smyrna, where he was held in the highest respect. The congregation looked up to him as an apostolic and prophetic teacher, and consequently as combining in himself all the spiritual gifts which God had conferred on Christendom. In his old age the members of the congregation vied with each

other in providing for his support. How great his reputation was is best shown by the fury of the heathen and the Jews in his martyrdom. He was arrested amidst shouts of his is the teacher of Asia; this is the father of the Christians; this is the destroyer of our gods; this is the man who has taught so many no longer to sacrifice and no long to pray to the gods.' When sentence was pronounced against him, all of the Jewish and heathen rabble hastened to add something to the pile of wood on which he was to be burned. They refused to deliver up his bones to the Christians for burial, for, said the Jews to the mob, 'The Christians will now forsake the Crucified, and worship Polycarp.' The sacrifice of Polycarp immediately quenched the fury of the multitude, and the persecution ceased. All these facts prove the great influence which the bishop had in the city. But his reputation extended far beyond the limits of his own diocese. His letter to the church at Philippi shows how fully his apostolic spirit, his wisdom and justice, must have been recognized even in Macedonia; otherwise he could not have ventured to interfere in the purely internal affairs of the Philippian church . . . But even the church at Rome was to have an opportunity of making the acquaintance of the venerable bishop. It is one of the most interesting and important incidents in the church history of the 2nd century that Polycarp, in the year before his death (when he was about ninety years of age) undertook the journey to Rome in order to visit the bishop Anicetus. Irenaeus, to whom we are indebted for this information, gives us the reason for the journey that differences existed between Asia and Rome, or between Polycarp and Anicetus, 'with regard to certain things,' and especially about the time of the Easter festival, which it was desirable to remove. He might easily have told us what these 'certain things' were, and given us fuller details of the negotiations between the two great bishops; for in all probability he was himself in Rome at the time. But unfortunately all he says is that, with regard to the 'certain things,' the two bishops speedily came to an understanding, while, as to the time of Easter, each adhered to his own custom without breaking off communications with the other. We learn further that Anicetus, as a mark of special honor, allowed Polycarp to celebrate the Eucharist in the church (the Eucharist must therefore have still been celebrated at Rome in the Greek tongue), that many Marcionites and Valentinians were converted by Polycarp in Rome (so that his visit must have lasted for a considerable time), and that Polycarp took leave of Anicetus in peace. On his return to Smyrna he enjoyed only about 6 months of uninterrupted activity. Then, on the occasion of the festival games, these arose, as on so many other instances, an outburst of popular feeling against the Christians, in which Polycarp was to die a martyr's death. From the letter of the church of Smyrna we see with magnanimity and manliness and true Christian spirit the gray-haired bishop conducted himself. It leaves the most vivid impression of a man of dignity and noble demeanor, and at the same time of humble disposition and compassionate love. Every action he does, every word he speaks, in the prosecution and during the trial is noble and great; even that quiet irony which we detect in his answer to Marcion does not forsake him. The Proconsul was anxious to save him, and tried to induce him to recant, but he remained steadfast. He was delivered up to the populace, and his body burned."

APPENDIX "D"

Ecclesiastical Calendar

**from Encyclopedia Britannica (ninth edition)
vol. 4, page 593**

"The ecclesiastical calendar which is adopted in all the Catholic, and most of the Protestant countries of Europe, is lunar-solar, being regulated partly by solar and partly by the lunar year, a circumstance which gives rise to the distinction between the movable and the immovable feasts. So early as the 2nd century of our era, great disputes had arisen among the Christians respecting the proper time of celebrating Easter, which governs all the other movable feasts. The Jews celebrated their Passover on the 14th of the first month, that is to say, the lunar month, of which the 14th day either falls on, or next follows, that of the vernal equinox. Most Christian sects agree that Easter should be celebrated on a Sunday. Others followed the example of the Jews, and adhered to the 14th of the moon; but these, as usually happened to the minority, were accounted heretics, and received the appellation of Quartodecimans. In order to terminate dissensions, which produced both scandal and schism in the church, the Council of Nice, which was held in the year 325, ordained that the celebration of Easter should henceforth always take place on the Sunday which immediately follows the full moon that happens upon, or next after the day of the vernal equinox. Should the 14th of the moon, which is regarded as the day of the full moon, happen on a Sunday, the celebration of Easter was deferred to the Sunday following, in order to avoid concurrence with the Jews and the above-mentioned heretics."

From a recent edition of Encyclopedia Britannica; Art. Polycarp: ". . . The Proconsul Statius Quadratus was present on the occasion and the Asiarch Philip of Tralles was presiding over the games . . . The Quadretus was proconsul of Asia in 155 and 156 and consequently Polycarp was martyred on February 23, 155 . . . ,,

"Eleven other Christians, mostly from Philadelphia, were killed at the same occasion. (It was thought by some historians that Polycarp's death occurred in 166 but this seemed to settle the time)."

From the Encyclopedia Americana; Art. Polycarp:

"One of the apostolic fathers of the church, and styled by his disciple Irenaeus, a pupil of the apostle John, Smyrna, probably about 69 A.D.; died there in 155. According to a legend he was brought up by a noble Christian lady named Callisto, and was consecrated by St. John as bishop of his native city . . . The people desired that he should be flung to the wild beasts but he was sentenced to death by fire. The flames, however, according to legend; played harmlessly around him like a sail, emitting a sweet fragrance. When the judges ordered one of the executioners to run him through with a sword, the flames were extinguished by the blood that flowed from the wound."