

**THE MYSTERY OF GOD
SHALL BE FINISHED**

**MYSTERY,
BABYLON
THE GREAT**

A STUDY IN THE RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH

No.7

MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT

PREFACE

I am very thankful to the Lord to have finished this study. It brings to an end the long, dreary downward slide from the Church's original experience and knowledge of the living Christ. I wish to emphasise again that the essence of Church history is simply this: the loss and restoration of *the knowledge of the Son of God*.

In a later study I hope to dwell on this theme at length stressing that Church history is not so much the study of the loss and recovery of different doctrines, nor of different historical figures or movements, but of the fulfilment of Paul's prophetic warnings and also the consummation of the burden of his intercession in the Holy Ghost.

I must acknowledge my very heavy indebtedness to A. Hislop's "The Two Babylons", without which this study would be a mere shadow of what it is. I have drawn very heavily upon this excellent work throughout.

Reference has also been made to:

L Boettner "Roman Catholicism" (Banner of Truth)
G H Pember "Mystery Babylon the Great, and the Mysteries and Catholicism"
(Oliphants)

Assistance in considering Catholic miracles has been gained from B B Warfield's "Counterfeit miracles" (Banner of Truth).

Acknowledgements are again due to my wife for her hard work in preparing the original draft typescript in the midst of new responsibilities and to my faithful proofreader.

I have taken advantage of the production of this electronic version to thoroughly revise the content stylistically whilst not altering the substance.

John L Birkin

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4) Conclusion

THE INSPIRATION OF BABYLON'S FOUNDATION AND WORSHIP

a) Introduction

Let us consider the reason why Catholicism came to mirror so perfectly the pagan religion of the Roman Empire. And a reason there most certainly was. This was no chance happening. A mastermind spiritual power was at work. This power is called in Scripture, *Mystery, Babylon the great*.

The term "mystery" is found in several Scriptures. It describes the workings of a purpose and plan made known to those endowed with the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. The *mystery of godliness*, for example, is the working of the Holy Ghost to reveal God in human flesh. Conversely, the *mystery of iniquity* is the spiritual counter-strategy whereby the serpent seeks to fully express *himself* in flesh.

Another mystery is the relationship between Christ and His Church. It is compared to that of a man and his bride (Eph 5:32). Parallel and diametrically opposed to this is a satanic counterpart, *the mystery of the woman* (Rev 17:7).

This woman is described as, *that great city which ruleth over the kings of the earth* (Rev 17:18), and is identified as Babylon (Rev 14:8). It is not so much *literal* Babylon, however. She is also termed ***Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*** (Rev 17:5). By this the Spirit is teaching that the distinguishing features of literal Babylon of old in some way characterise the counterfeit bride the enemy is seeking. Just as God has a pure holy virgin Church Bride, so there is a satanic harlot religious system. So, by studying the distinctive characteristics of ancient Babylon we can understand something of the satanic plan in later years.

b) The need for Spiritual discernment

I have repeatedly stressed in this series the need for Spiritual discernment to properly understand outward historical events. We need eyes anointed with that eyesalve which only Christ can give. The same anointing needed to fully unveil the workings of God in history to bring to fruition His grand objective is also needed to unveil the hidden operations of the evil one. Just as Paul emphasised the need of Spiritual discernment to perceive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:14), so also it is needed to perceive the workings and purposes of the spirit of error.

So, to perceive the true root inspiration spirit and identity of Babylon, the woman and of the beast ridden by the woman, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation is needed.

For example, concerning *the mystery... of the beast* (Rev 17:7), the Spirit says:

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man... (Rev 13:18)

And here is the mind that hath wisdom (Rev 17:9)

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the

prophet stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand).... (Matt 24:15)

Likewise spiritual wisdom is needed to understand the mystery of the woman. Let us illustrate:

the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified (Rev 11:8)

The use of the word *spiritually* is very significant. It means more than “allegorically” or “figuratively”. The sense is that the same spirits at work in Sodom and Egypt were also at work in Jerusalem. This is why Phillips paraphrases this passage, “... which is called by those with spiritual understanding...” So, had you been able to understand aright, you would have recognised exactly the same inspiration spirits at work in Jerusalem as in Sodom and Egypt.

So then, using the same principle, if we discover the nature and objects of the spirits at work in Babylon of old, we shall be able to uncover the true character of the woman described as Mystery Babylon. Let us therefore now examine:

- the motive for founding Babylon, and
- the character and worship of its early inhabitants.

Thereby great light will be shed on the spirit at work not only in those far days but also many centuries later when it seeks to infiltrate the Church.

c) Historical Babylon

The only Scriptural reference to Babylon’s early history is in Genesis 10:8-12 and 11:1-9. Though brief, however, these references are highly enlightening, especially when read in conjunction with secular historians’ remarks.

The motivation spirit of the founders of Babylon may be clearly seen:

Let us build a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth... And the Lord said ... and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. (Gen 11:4-6)

From ancient records it seems that the founder of Babylon was Cush, the father of Nimrod. Although not specifically stated, this would certainly not be out of line with the Biblical record. From Genesis 10:25 and 11:10-16, it is clear that the dividing of tongues took place 101 years after the Flood. In view of the length of the lives of those born immediately after the Flood (which included Cush, son of Ham), this event was certainly contemporary with Cush.

If Cush were the founder of Babylon, then his son extended its power and dominion far and wide. Genesis 10:10 states that Babylon (or, Babel) was the beginning of the kingdom of Nimrod, son of Cush. This was the first appearance of the desire to conquer and rule over other men by force. Before then men had gathered only by tribes and family clans. But of Nimrod Genesis 10:8 (Amp) says: *he was **the first** to be a mighty man on earth.*

So, Nimrod established a kingdom, the beginning of which was Babylon, and three surrounding cities. Thereafter *he went out into Assyria and builded Nineveh* (Gen 10:11, AV Marg). (Hence, Micah 6:5 calls Assyria: *the land of Nimrod.*)

Nimrod was also known by ancient historians as Ninus, hence the name Nin-veh, which means “habitation of Ninus”.

The descriptions of Ninus given by historians confirm and throw further light on the Scriptural record:

“Ninus, King of the Assyrians **first of all** changed the contented moderation of ancient manners, incited by a new passion, **the design of conquest**. He was **the first** who carried on war against his neighbours” (Trogus Pompeius).

“Ninus, the most ancient of the Assyrian kings mentioned in history, performed great actions. Being naturally of a warlike disposition and **ambitious of glory**... (Diodorus Siculus).

So, it seems that Nimrod shared the spirit of his father, Cush, in his rebellion against the Lord. He was the first to gather men together for warlike purposes, to build an empire over others, and to make himself a name. (It sounds just like the Nicolaitan spirit that entered the Church: organise men, then rule over them. And no wonder: it was the same spirit.) This is confirmed by Fausset’s Bible Dictionary, where the name Nimrod is said to mean, “let us rebel”. Also, the Septuagint translation of Genesis 10:9 reads, “Nimrod the mighty hunter **against** the Lord” (AV = “before the Lord”). This is not unreasonable for in Numbers 16:2 the word translated “before” in Genesis 10:9(AV) is rendered “in opposition to”.

The determined, wilful, rebellious nature of the founders of Babylon cannot be adequately stressed. Eastern tradition pictures them as heaven-storming giants chained by God. The Greek myth of the giants’ war with the gods and their attempt to scale heaven is another version of the same truth. One Greek historian recounts the Babylonian account of the destruction of the tower of Babel as follows:

“At this time the ancient race of men were so **puffed up** with their strength and tallness of stature that they began to despise and contemn the gods, and laboured to erect that very tall tower...”

A clay tablet in the British Museum reads:

Babylon corruptly to sin went...
Their work all day they builded:
but to their stronghold in the night
entirely an end God made:
Greatly they wept for Babylon
Greatly they wept

(A strange echo of the lamentation in Revelation following the fall of Babylon) (Rev 18:16-19).

To illustrate the extent of the rebellion of the early Babylonians, consider the great light they rebelled against. Their waywardness was not committed in times of gross darkness. They stoutly and wilfully opposed the Lord in an age within living memory of the Flood, an astonishing display of His might. Noah lived 350 years after the Flood (Gen 9:28) and overlapped Abraham by 58 years. His son Shem did not die until 75 years after Abraham entered Canaan. Yet within living memory of the revelation of the Glory of God prophesied by Enoch, men wilfully rebelled. For example, Abraham’s father, born 222 years after the Flood, was an idolater (Josh 24:2) and by Abraham’s day idolatry was strong. Nimrod had been

deified as the chief Babylonian deity. Such idolatry was not an unfortunate consequence of ignorance, as is so often viewed in civilised lands. It was a wilful rebellion and rejection of Light.

A further indication of the arrogant rebellion of Babylon is seen in the names of its gods. Cush and Nimrod both were deified and worshipped under different names describing different aspects of their lives. Jeremiah referred to two of these when declaring the Word of the Lord against Babylon in his day:

Declare ye amongst the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish and conceal not: say Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces, her images are broken in pieces (Jer 50:2).

Concerning the first name, Hislop (pp 25-28) says the name Bel (or, Belus) signifies “the confounder”, i.e. the one who breaks in pieces or scatters abroad. It is a designation of Cush in his responsibility for the division of tongues and the scattering of men abroad (Gen 11:9). In this capacity, in the various forms and names by which he was worshipped throughout the earth, he was represented as holding a club or hammer. This should throw light on another portion of Jeremiah’s prophecy against Babylon:

How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken (Jer 50:23).

How fitting that the mastermind inspiration spirit which founded Babylon should be rewarded according to its deeds!

As for the second name, the Babylonians described Merodach as the most ancient and firstborn of the gods. In view of Cush’s initiation of the grand rebellion against the Lord, this is wholly in keeping. The meaning of this name is even more enlightening: “that great rebel”.

No wonder Jeremiah termed Babylon, *the land of Merathaim* (Marg = of the rebels) (Jer 50:2). Literally this means, “land of two rebellions” or “doubly rebellious”. Note some of the characteristics of Babylon described by Jeremiah, and see how deeply she had drunk in his day of the spirit of her founders:

she hath sinned against the Lord (Jer 50:14)

thou hast striven against the Lord (Jer 50:24)

She hath been proud against the Lord (Jer 50:29)

Behold I am against thee, O thou most proud (Marg = pride) (Jer 50:31)

And the most proud (Marg = pride) shall stumble and fall (Jer 50:32)

Though Babylon should mount up to heaven and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from Me shall spoilers come into here, saith the Lord (Jer 51:53).

How full a reflection of the character of her founding fathers!

As a final incidental insight into the spirit that inspired the founding of Babylon, let us consider a passage concerning the beast at the end-time, the antitype of the wicked Antiochus Epiphanes:

And the King shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper until the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate he shall honour the God of forces (lit = munitions or fortresses); and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pleasant things (Dan 11:36-38).

Who is this god of fortresses? After all, in ancient history no god is called by that name. But to uncover this will be to uncover the true object of worship of the end-time beast. Let us seek to do this:

- Though there is no god of fortresses, there is a goddess of fortresses: Diana of the Ephesians, whose image is crowned with a turret. And an ancient commentator expressly identifies her with Semiramis, wife of Nimrod.
- Now the renowned archaeologist, Layard, believes (as frequently happened) she was attributed with her husband's qualities. This is incidentally confirmed by the Greek poet Ovid who said Semiramis was believed to have surrounded Babylon with a wall of brick".
- Another ancient historian, however, says that it was Belus (= Bel, = Cush, the father of Nimrod) who, "surrounded Babylon with a wall". As Cush was unable to conclude his work in the city of Babylon due to divine destruction of the tower of Babel, it seems probable that in fact it is his son, Nimrod, the first actual King of the Babylonian empire, who is the god of fortresses.
- Thus the true object of worship of the end-time beast is now clear: Nimrod, he who was famed for his wilful and defiant rebellion against the Almighty. Ultimately, however, end-time worship will be directed to the evil mastermind spirit who empowers the beast to fulfil his wicked designs. In other words, the great dragon, that ancient serpent himself (Rev 13:4), who was the true and grand object of the worship of Babylon. In short, the worship developed in ancient Babylon was no less than the consummation of satanic desires: to achieve worship of his own self.

To illustrate this, it is necessary to consider more fully the characteristics of the worship of Babylon. Before doing so, however, let us review progress thus far.

We have seen the inspiration and motivation spirit of the founders of the literal city of Babylon, and the character of Nimrod who first established an empire from there. We have also seen the defiantly rebellious spirit of its founders and their Nicolaitan urge to enforce ascendancy over other men (cp *The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them....* (Luke 22:25).)

This is the key to understanding the term *Mystery, Babylon the Great*. Cush and Nimrod are now long dead, and physical Babylon is no more. But the spirit that inspired the city and its founders is still with us, having precisely the same objectives as it did then. A spirit does not die; nor does it lose its essential distinguishing features. All through history the same spirit has been at work, in different localities and through different human vessels, seeking to achieve the exact same purposes as in historical Babylon. The externals may vary, but the inner mastermind purpose remains the same.

d) The Worship of Babylon

So far we have considered the spirit of violent and deliberate rebellion against the Lord which motivated the founders of Babylon. There was far more involved here than a mere expression of satanic malice against the Almighty, however. Let us now see how:

- Babylon was satanically designed as a deliberate counterfeit of Zion, the City of God;
- the religion of Babylon was expressly designed as a diabolical copy of God's own grand plan of redemption and restoration, with a counterfeit Messiah to divert men's attention from the True.

Let us firstly consider Babylon as a satanic counterfeit of Zion.

The earthly Zion was but a reflection of the heavenly City whose Builder and Maker is God. It is no coincidence that a perennial stream issues from the heart of the temple mount in Jerusalem, the site of the Holy of Holies, the earthly type of the throne of God. This stream is a shadow of the heavenly Jerusalem in which John saw: *a pure river of water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb* (Rev 22:1).

Consistent with the satanic pattern of aping all God's works, Babylon too had a river flowing through the midst, with the royal palace in Nebuchadnezzar's day at the centre of the city, divided into two by the river Euphrates. Also like the heavenly Zion, Babylon was foursquare.

Incidentally, the desire for counterfeit alternative to God's holy city is also expressed in another form. The devil has a deep-seated longing to occupy the throne of God. Compare for example the words of Isaiah to a later king of Babylon, or rather, ultimately, to the spirit that inspired and motivated him:

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north (Isa 14:13).

It is no coincidence that the unclean longing of this spirit is to ascend *the sides of the north*. This is the site of mount Zion within the city of Jerusalem (Ps 48:2) where Solomon's temple was located. How the evil one covets the place of God.

Those particularly used by the devil to carry out his plans frequently reveal the same deep-seated longing. Consider, for example, the satanic masterpiece, the man of sin:

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (2 Thess 2:4).

This same inner urge leads him to, *plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain* (Dan 11:45). Magnifying himself above all (Dan 11:37), he longs to desecrate that place where the Glory of God was tabernacled (Ps 48:1b), the earthly throne of God, and to occupy it himself. So, when he invades the glorious land, he locates his headquarters on the holy mountain, Zion.

We have briefly considered the satanic yearning to occupy the throne of God, and how Babylon was specifically designed as a counterpart to the Holy City. Let us now examine the worship of ancient Babylon, in particular its objects of worship, remembering that it was founded on wilful rebellion. Paul's words to the Romans could doubtless be applied to those living in the early years after the Flood:

Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened (Ro 1:21).

It is a religion characterised by the desire to rob God of His rightful place. Furthermore, it is an

almost exact parallel of God's perfect plan of salvation to deliver man from sin: justifying, sanctifying and filling him with His Spirit, *being renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him* (Col 3:10). The religion of Babylon offered a false Messiah with all the attributes of the true Anointed One.

The ancient Babylonians, whilst worshipping countless minor deities, acknowledged there was but *one* supreme Almighty Creator. In that one god were three persons, which came to be known as the Eternal Father, the Spirit of God incarnate in a human mother, and a divine Son, fruit of that incarnation. The first person of this Babylonian trinity came to be overlooked in the popular eye, with the main emphasis placed on the goddess Mother and her Son represented, as a child in his mother's arms.

It is believed that the original of that mother was Semiramis, wife of Nimrod (or Ninus). Not only was Nimrod her husband, however, he was also represented as her son (Ninus = son). Mighty warrior that he was and founder of the first empire, Nimrod's influence spread far and wide. But all the evidence of ancient history also points to his leading men into apostasy and active rebellion, breaking the bands of that wholesome fear of God which must have been so prevalent within living memory of the Flood. If this seems strange, consider how quickly men are satanically deceived into joining battle against God even after tasting one thousand years of the benign rule of Christ, with the evil one chained up (Rev 20:7-9).

Though the exact details are shrouded in uncertainty, the circumstantial evidence also points to Nimrod's having met a violent end. His death was remembered annually with great lamentation wherever the Babylonian religion went.

It is referred to by Ezekiel who was shown an awful sight in the temple: *behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz* (Ezk 8:14). (Tammuz is equivalent to the Syrian god, Adonis, and the Egyptian Osiris, both of whom were local variations of their grand Babylonian prototype: Ninus, or Nimrod.)

According to Hislop, his death was a judicial sentence carried out by the godly Shem, who continued to proclaim the one true God in the midst of Nimrod's apostasy. Despite this rude shock to the apostates, Nimrod's wife, Semiramis, continued in the same spirit as her husband. For a period it appears the development of *public* idolatry was checked. Error merely went underground, however, and the secret "Mysteries" were established. In these Mysteries there were progressive levels of initiation into the full revelation of the nature of their objects of worship, under the seal of secrecy.

Nimrod was deified and worshipped as the promised Seed who was destined to bruise the serpent's head. It was also taught that he came back to life, reincarnated in a posthumous son of Semiramis. This son, worshipped in his mother's arms, was looked upon as invested with all the attributes and titles of the promised Messiah. It was taught that Nimrod's death was voluntary for the benefit of mankind, and that from the blood willingly shed a new creation would be formed, the first having been a failure. By his death, the serpent's head was crushed, and sin and the curse removed. In Greece, the same Babylonian god was termed "the sin bearer"; in India, "the Victim-man"; among the Buddhists, "Saviour of the world"; and in Egypt, "King of kings and Lord of lords". Just as Christ is termed the "Branch" (Zech 3:8; 6:12), so Nimrod was celebrated as the "Branch of God".

Initially the mother's honour was derived from her bearing the Seed. But ultimately she practically eclipsed him, and became the favourite object of worship. To justify this, she too was deified and now said to be destined to complete the bruising of the serpent's head which Nimrod had only begun.

Furthermore, it came to be taught that Nimrod's birth was miraculous. She was termed "Alma Mater" (the Virgin Mother). The vast extent of this worship may be gauged from the surprise of Catholic missionaries who found a mother (described as a virgin) and child in Tibet, China and Mexico, where Catholicism had never entered before.

The highest titles were bestowed upon this mother:

- Astarte (= the woman who made towers or encompassing walls);
- "Queen of heaven", which is referred to in Jeremiah (7:13; 44:17-19, 25);
- The "dwelling place of God" aping the pure virgin Bride of Christ who is described as, *an holy temple ... an habitation of God through the Spirit* (Eph 2:20-21).
- She was symbolised as a dove, as representing the Holy Spirit of which she was the incarnation.

Her worship became virtually universal throughout Europe and the Near East even, as seen in Jeremiah, among apostate Jews. In Egypt her worship continued even after Christianity theoretically entered. Effectively, only the name was changed. The Virgin Mary with child was worshipped with the same idolatrous feeling by professing Christians as formerly by avowed pagans. So entrenched was this error that at the Nicene Council the Egyptians held that there were three persons in the Trinity: Father, Virgin Mary and Messiah, their Son.

Nor do Catholics consider this heretical. One of their most celebrated 19th C spokesmen, Newman, exulting over this remark, effectively says that if Christ be admitted to be truly God, His mother too must be worshipped as a partaker of the Godhead. No wonder that in Lisbon there was a church with these words engraved: "To the virgin *goddess* of Loretto, the Italian race devoted to her *divinity* have dedicated this temple". This shows the true character of the Catholic Mary. She is not the Mary of the Bible, but the virgin mother goddess of the great Babylonian rebellion. Not only do Catholics attribute the Roman "Madonna" with the same *titles* as the Babylonian (e.g. "Queen of heaven", "the awful dwelling-place", "tabernacle of the Holy Ghost"); she is essentially the same *in spirit*.

(Perhaps this will explain certain charismatic trends. It is why Cardinal Suenens teaches that Mary is the way to receive the infilling of the Spirit, and that she should be a basis for unity of Catholics and Protestants, in view of the Catholic sympathy for deifying Mary as the incarnation of the Holy Ghost).

As a further proof that the Catholic Mary is merely the Babylonian Semiramis, consider the idolatrous images of Mary. The original madonnas have no Jewish features or complexion. They are declared by those who have personally compared both to correspond entirely with the Babylonian madonnas. How astonishing! The goddess enshrined in papal temples today is in effect none other than the Babylonian queen who set up Nimrod as a counterfeit Christ.

Do not be deceived just because Catholicism employs certain Christian terms. It is sometimes said that it must be termed Christian since it holds the doctrine of the Trinity. So did the Babylonians, Egyptians and Hindus! And in the very same sense as Rome does. Although Catholicism employs names and terms commonly found in Christendom, it will be seen that they are merely masks which disguise their true origin and character: the Roman Jesus is another Jesus.; the Roman Mary is another Mary.

I am going ahead of myself, however. Before analysing in detail how Catholicism effectively became the metamorphosis of the original idolatry of Babylon, I wish to demonstrate how the religion of Babylon is the root of all religions of the earth. Let us first of all examine one further aspect of the worship of ancient Babylon, however.

e) The supernatural character of the Babylonian religion

The religion of Babylon was no mere empty liturgy and external ceremony. It was supernatural, energised by its inspiration spirit with a of living communion between men and their objects of worship. The spiritistic practices of Babylon are abundantly testified to in Scripture. Magic, astrology, sorcery, soothsaying, stargazing and divination by sticks and liver were all practised (Isa 47:12-13; Ezk 21:21; Dan 1:20; 2:2; 4:7). The great extent of Chaldean spiritualism was revealed when Layard unearthed fragments of a vast work on magic in the royal library.

I emphasise that Babylonian spiritualism was not an empty deceit, and its practitioners quacks and charlatans. Scripture speaks of the possibility and reality of supernatural power in the hands of evil men

*If there arise among you a prophet ... and giveth thee a sign or a wonder **and the sign or wonder cometh to pass**, whereof he spake unto thee saying, Let us go after other gods...; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet... (Dt 13:1-3).*

Consider also the Egyptian magicians and sorcerers whose enchantments achieved such startling results (Ex 7: 11-12, 22; 8:7). Moses' power was supreme, but that of the magicians was still real.

Not only is there abundant Scriptural and historical testimony to the magical practices of Babylon. Historical evidence also suggests that it was precisely here that such practices *originated*. Epiphanius, for example, maintains that Nimrod established the sciences of magic and astronomy. Such magical arts were also common wherever this religion spread.

The Etruscans, for instance, derived much of their religion from Babylon, and later passed it on to the Romans. It is from them that the Romans are said to have learned soothsaying and their constant reference to oracles. Interestingly, one of the powers the Etruscans taught was the drawing down of lightning from heaven, similar to the false prophet in the Book of Revelation (Rev 13:13; cp Job 1:16).

There is no scope here to detail the many different magical and occult arts originating in Babylon. Let it suffice to re-emphasise that they were not simply based on illusions and deceit. The religion of Babylon had a vitality about it - it was a living communion with active demonic agencies who both supernaturally empowered their devotees and also entered into a defiling union and communion with them.

Before concluding, let us consider the reality and effect of communion with evil spirits on those involved. Paul clearly warned that it was actually possible to *have fellowship with devils* (1 Cor 10:20). This was obviously a very topical and grave danger because of the tendency of some in Corinth to maintain past links with idolatry. And idolatry is worship of and communion with demons (1 Cor 10:8,14, 19-22).

No doubt it was also greatly to blame for the immorality among certain believers. It is clear from Paul's warnings that not only was there the one notorious case of incest (1 Cor 5:1-2, 9-13); there were also many others who were guilty of fornication (2 Cor 12:21; see also 1 Cor 6:9-11; 7:1-2; 10:8).

With this background we can now consider 2 Corinthians 6:14ff, in a fuller light. This not only warns of the dangers of mixing with unbelievers. It also enjoins separation from any form of

intercommunion with the demonic forces of darkness and idolatry (vv 14-16). Paul not only stresses the absolute incompatibility of the temples of the Holy Spirit holding any communion with the unclean and foul spirits of demons. He also indicates the effects of any such communion.

Firstly there is a general warning of the danger of contamination in the words, *touch not the unclean thing* (v 17), even for those who have already been converted. The fullest insight, however, comes when he sums up the whole issue:

Having therefore these promises (i.e. 2 Cor 6:17b-18), dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor 7:1).

This verse explicitly says what was only implied before: there is a definite need for cleansing when the unclean thing is touched. Its own uncleanness is transmitted to those who touch it. Past references to the frequent connection between immorality and idolatry help explain the need for cleansing *from all filthiness of the flesh*.

The most illuminating feature, however, is the reference to the need for cleansing from *filthiness of the ... spirit*. This is important. When there is intimate contact with unclean spirits, the human spirit of those involved is defiled. And this is the heart of my point. Not only is there a need for recognition of and cleansing from carnal sins. There are acts that defile the human *spirit* in addition to the flesh. These also need specific cleansing as much as any defilement of the flesh.

Observe how, for example, Israel of old needed cleansing, both from their filthiness *and* from their idols:

Then will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you (Ezk 36:25).

Only Paul, however, clearly identifies how intimate contact with demons (a necessary fruit of idolatry) defiles: it pollutes in some measure the human *spirit*. Perhaps this will illuminate another Scripture:

the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1Thess 5:23).

From this verse it is evident that our spirit is as much in need of sanctification as our bodies and souls. It is also clearly implied that it is possible for our spirits *not* to be blameless, otherwise there would be no need for prayer for them.

This explains why Paul prays for the Lord Jesus Christ and His grace to be with the spirits of those to whom he writes (Gal 6:18; 2 Tim 4:22; Phile 25). Also, from Paul's words to the Corinthians, *that she may be holy both in body and spirit* (1 Cor 7:34), it is evident that holiness of spirit is neither automatic nor to be taken for granted.

Although I have strayed somewhat from the subject in hand, I feel it is essential that there be clear understanding of such matters in view of the prevailing haziness and uncertainty.

I wish to emphasise that the defilement of the human spirit spoken of is not so much the fruit of idolatry as of intercourse with unclean spirits. The reason I mention this is to show the relevance to our own day of such matters. Contact with demons, whether via idol-worship or via any of the many expressions of spiritualism or spiritism in our land today, bears the solemn

danger of a defiling of the human spirit of the one involved. Specific cleansing from this is needed (which is more than general repentance) to enable the human spirit to function properly again without the defiling imprint of an unclean spirit.

Neglect of such cleansing will lead to numerous pastoral difficulties.

2 THE WORLD-WIDE SPREAD OF THE RELIGION OF BABYLON

Having considered the essential features of the origin of literal Babylon and its religion, let us consider how the inspiration spirit of these features has affected the whole earth by:

- showing how the Bible teaches this awful fact;
- illustrating from historical records the spread of the influence of Babylon to the ends of the earth;
- in particular, illustrating from the history of pagan Rome.

The latter is important. It shows how the paganism which deeply permeated Christianity after the Church-State union, especially that branch now termed Roman Catholicism, was in essence the very idolatry that originated in Babylon. This will be illustrated in chapter 3, by an analysis showing how detail after detail of the original Babylonian idolatry was reproduced in Catholicism. This grand metamorphosis enables Catholicism in particular to be justly termed, *Mystery Babylon*.

a) The great whore with the golden cup

The spirit of Mystery Babylon is much more than one single historical manifestation. It is a continuing quest by the same spirit to achieve a single, consistent objective in varying historical and geographical settings. Although Catholicism is the fullest expression of the working of this spirit today, it is certainly not the only expression. Furthermore, the same spirit was at work long before Catholicism ever existed.

According to Revelation 17:5 (RV), Mystery Babylon is, *mother of the harlots and the abominations of the earth*. What is the significance of these words: mother, harlot and abomination?

- **Abomination** is frequently used in Scripture to denote a particular false god or idolatrous practice (e.g. 1 K 11:1-8; 14:21-24; 2 K 23:13).
- A woman in Scripture metaphorically represents a pure godly religion. So, a **harlot** is a defiled and debased one.
- A **mother** is a begetter or originator. Babylon then, according to Scripture, is the spring of the many varied idolatries of the earth. The spirit that inspired the foundation and religion of ancient Babylon also inspired all the false religions of the earth. Furthermore, not only did they originate in Babylon. As with Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel, they also partook of the spirit of their mother: *As is the mother so is the daughter* (Ezk 16:44).

The Chaldean Mysteries are traceable to the days of Semiramis. In them she was worshipped as the great 'Mother' of the gods. And truly she was, for from her religious system sprang up the many other daughter idolatries all over the earth of like character and spirit.

It is no coincidence that John saw Babylon as a *harlot* mother. Semiramis has ever been a symbol of unbridled licentiousness. She left upon the Mysteries the mark of her polluted mind. Such was the nature of her religion that Babylon became famed as the grand centre not only of idolatry but of consecrated prostitution.

Now the way Mystery Babylon imparted her foul religion is symbolically described as follows:

Having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication (Rev 17.4b RV).

This cup is referred to in other Scriptures:

... She (Babylon) made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication (Rev 14.8);

... the inhabitants, of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication (Rev 17.2);

... all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication (Rev 18:3).

Thus, Scripture clearly says that all the earth has drunk deeply of the wine from the cup of Babylon (which symbolises her idolatry). No wonder, then, we read of jubilation in heaven at the judgement of, *the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication (Rev 19.2).*

It is no mere chance that the world-wide spread of the idolatry of Babylon is symbolised as the offering of a golden cup.

Firstly, gold was the symbol used by the Lord to represent Babylon:

How hath ... the golden city ceased (Isa 14:4)

Thou art this head of gold (Dan 2:38b).

Secondly, the cup was very significant in the Chaldean/Babylonian religion. For example, there is an idol of Venus (who represented Semiramis) holding a cup with carvings of Ethiopians (i.e. Cushites, the founders of Babylon). Pliny also refers to the gigantic cup of Semiramis that fell into the hands of Cyrus on capturing Babylon.

Now, to drink a mysterious beverage of wine and other intoxicating ingredients was indispensable for those seeking initiation into the Mysteries. How apt, then, to represent this religious system as a harlot offering a golden cup full of the filthiness of her fornication.

How apt also that the judgement of Mystery Babylon shall be as her sin. She shall herself be given a cup to drink:

Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double (Rev 18:6).

Similarly, when prophesying the doom of historical Babylon, Habakkuk proclaimed:

Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look upon their nakedness! Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned unto thee (Hab 2:15-16).

So, as with Jeremiah's and Isaiah's prophecies against literal Babylon, Habakkuk also foreshadows the doom of Mystery Babylon. She shall drink of the cup she gave to others.

Significantly, Babylon's foreskin shall also be uncovered. Why? To demonstrate that Mystery Babylon is an uncircumcised alien from the Commonwealth of Israel despite all her claims. Likewise, although Roman Catholicism claims to stand in the place of Christ, it has no part in Him. Instead, it is the fullest living expression of the foundation spirit of ancient Babylon. How ironic that in 1825 pope Leo XII struck a medal showing Rome as a woman holding a cup in her right hand with the words "sedet super universum" (= "she sitteth on the whole earth"). And truly she does. Revelation 17:1 represents Mystery Babylon as seated on many waters, interpreted in verse 5 as, *peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues*.

b) The spread of the Babylonian idolatry over all the earth

At the time of Christ religious teaching consisted almost exclusively of far-reaching institutions known as the Mysteries. Their rites were held in the utmost secrecy, and admission could only be gained through initiation. In the public worship of the gods open to all, the stories described of the gods were understood literally. But to the initiated there were hidden meanings behind the outward stories, which ultimately revealed the true nature of their worship. The chief objective of these Mysteries was to introduce privately, under the seal of secrecy, a most daring presumption.

The Chaldean (or Babylonian) Mysteries are traceable to the time of Semiramis, who was worshipped as Rhea, the great "Mother" of the gods. (And truly she was! Remember, the harlot of Revelation was the mother of abominations).

To achieve its objectives, all knowledge, sacred and profane, came to be monopolised by the priests, and only revealed to the initiated.

From Babylon the Mysteries spread far and wide throughout every civilised nation, even deeply influencing uncultured tribes at the ends of the earth. Although varying much in outward observances and secondary matters from country to country, the Mysteries as taught in Egypt, Greece, Rome and Phoenicia were intimately connected and essentially one in doctrine.

Just as the Scripture teaches, history and archaeology have concluded that Babylon was the fountain and root of idolatry world-wide. For example, speaking of arithmetic and astronomy (*sacred* sciences monopolised by the priests), Zonaras says they came from the Chaldeans to the Egyptians and thence to the Greeks.

Now according to Pember, the Egyptian Mysteries were introduced from Babylon via India by the Aryans, who migrated there (about 2000 BC) from Babylon through Bactria. Hence the earliest form of religion among the Aryan tribes of India was probably substantially Chaldean. It was corrupted by the Brahmans, but Buddha claimed to have recovered it, professing to be a restorer of old paths. Hence Buddhism in its purest form is thought to be essentially Chaldean. It is certainly identical in its foundation doctrine.

Among the sacred books of the invading Aryan tribes were the Vedas, a collection of hymns which, according to Lillie, "contain the root-idea of most of dogmas and religious rites of the world". Recent archaeological investigation has also revealed clay female figures suggesting the cult of a Mother goddess, and pictures of a three-headed being, suggesting the Hindu trinity in the unity of the one supreme god.

From this early Indian religious background arose Buddhism, and indeed Hinduism and Buddhism have very much in common. Spreading far abroad from India, Buddhism exerted an

extremely wide influence from the Volga River to Japan. There even appears to be an identity between Buddha and the Scandinavian god, Wodan. It also seems that Chinese Buddhism reached America, establishing itself there in the 5th C AD.

Concerning the origin of the religion of the Greeks and Egyptians the archaeologists Bunsen and Layard reached substantially the same conclusion. Bunsen said the Egyptian religion originated in Asia and "the primitive empire in Babel", Layard said: "Of the great antiquity of this primitive worship there is abundant evidence, and that it originated among the inhabitants of the Assyrian plains, we have the united testimony of sacred and profane history. It... was believed to be the most ancient of religious systems, having preceded that of the Egyptians." Another authority writes: "The zodiacal signs... show unequivocally that the Greeks derived their notions and arrangements of the zodiac (and consequently their mythology, which was intertwined with it) from the Chaldees". Ouvaroff, an expert in the Eleusinian Mysteries (i.e. those first celebrated at Eleusis near Athens), likewise concluded that the Mysteries transplanted into Greece never lost the character of their Babylonian origin.

And it was not only Greece and Egypt. The distinguishing features of Phoenician idolatry also were imported from Assyria and Babylonia, as testified by Macrobius.

Not only can the origin of Buddhism and Hinduism, and the religions of Greece, Egypt, Phoenicia and Rome (which derived her worship from the Mysteries of Greece) be traced to Babylon. To the ends of the earth basic similarities may be traced between the Mysteries and the manifold religions of the world. Among all early races, leading anthropologists have announced, there was a belief in one supreme God, This applies to Babylon, Egypt, Iceland, the Goths and even India, which now recognises millions of gods. This original monotheism quickly degenerated into polytheism and idolatry, however. In essence, as will be developed more fully later, the real object of pagan worship was still in effect the same, disguised under many forms. To the uninitiated there were presented many gods and goddesses. To the initiated was revealed their underlying unity and awful identity.

This original supreme god was worshipped as a trinity. Not only in Babylon, but also in Assyria, among the pagans of Siberia, in India and in Japan representations have been found of their supreme god with three heads on one body.

This ancient recognition of a trinity developed into the worship of the goddess mother with a child in arms.

- In Egypt they were called Isis and Osiris;
- in India Isi and Iswara;
- in Turkey Cybele and Deoious;
- in Rome Fortuna and Jupiter puer;
- in Greece Ceres with baby at her breast.
- Even in Tibet, China and Japan the first Jesuit missionaries were astonished to discover the worship of this counterpart of the Catholic Madonna and child. (In China Shing Moo, the Holy Mother, was represented with a child in her arms and a glory around her). They also found mention of a mother and child very similar to their own in pagan Chinese sacred books.

Not only the mother and child, but also the remembrance of the death of the child is found over all the earth, from Greenland round to Japan. Despite considerable variations from the original, the different legends are essentially one, indicating their ultimate origin from the same source.

- In Egypt, Phoenicia, Greece and Rome great lamentations were made annually in commemoration of his sudden death.

- In China annual weepings were made. (Interestingly Buddha is represented here as a *negro*. Nimrod was a negro Cushite or Ethiopian; cp Jeremiah 13:23).
- The Japanese, Icelandic and Scandinavian religious systems had similar lamentations.

As in Babylon, the son was represented as dying to bruise the serpent's head in other mythologies such as in India, Scandinavia and Mexico. He was also represented as virgin-born long before the Christian era among Buddhists in China and Tibet. Indeed this virgin "mother of the gods" became an object of almost universal worship throughout Europe and Asia. She is referred to among the Persians, Germans, Druids and Egyptians among others.

In conclusion, the essential features of the Babylonian apostasy spread over all the earth. It influenced the paganism of Scandinavia, Iceland, Germany, Britain, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Syria, Phoenicia, Mesopotamia, Persia, India, China, Tibet, Siberia, Mexico, the Red Indians, and even the South Sea islands! The idolatry of the whole earth is essentially one.

Beyond this sinister fact, however, is one yet more sinister, The idolatries of the earth not only spring from one original fountain. They ultimately have one single grand object of worship.

The multitude of gods worshipped is merely the external as understood by most idolaters. As already indicated, however, the true nature and object of the worship of the Babylonian Mysteries was hidden and revealed only to those admitted to the highest degrees of initiation. To the uninitiated, a surface meaning and explanation was given. To the initiated the full mystery was unveiled. The apparent multitude of different gods in ancient religions was in effect ultimately one. Not only was the source of the idolatry of the whole earth one; so also was the ultimate grand object of its worship.

The Babylonian object of worship was essentially one, revealed in a trinity of father, mother and son. The many and diverse deities of paganism were substantially only different manifestations of one or other of this trinity, especially the mother and son. The pagan author Apuleius for example, describing his initiation, said that Isis revealed herself to him as "... *the uniform manifestation of the gods and the goddesses... whose one sole divinity the whole earth venerated, and under a manifold form, with different rites, and under a variety of appellations*". Concerning the Egyptian gods, Wilkinson says that they, "took the form of different deities which ... may readily be accounted for when we consider that *each of these whose figures or emblems were adopted was only an emanation, or deified attribute of the same great being...*"

To uncover the identity of that great, evil being is to uncover the whole secret network of the Mysteries, and ultimately the satanic plan still at work today.

c) The Ultimate Objective of the Mysteries

Although the essential features of the Babylonian religion spread eventually to the ends of the earth, as already been shown, this does not mean its true nature and inspiration were understood by the average worshipper. Indeed, popular conceptions of God were swathed in deepest superstition. Having refused to acknowledge and glorify God, they:

became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image... (Ro 1:21-23)

It was not always so. Darkness only came when light was refused. Paul calls the Gentiles:

aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (Eph 2:12)

Yet the term “aliens” (Gk = alienated) implies a time when men were once *not* cut off, before the Gentile apostasy from primitive Truth.

The dark secret of the ultimate objective of the world’s religions were concealed, and revealed only to certain. Furthermore, the ignorance of the common people was actually encouraged. It was considered not merely useless for them to know certain truths, but actually expedient that they believe precisely the contrary. Hence the full facts were shrouded in secrecy.

In progressive initiation ceremonies candidates were sworn to silence as to the true meaning of the “Mysteries”. Even among savage and uncivilised tribes evidence is found to this day of initiation ceremonies with sinister objectives similar to those in the more civilised parts of Europe and the Near East. Pember gives examples from the West African Fangs and the Ojibbeway Indians. They were specifically designed to bring the initiates into union with the spirits, from whom henceforth they could seek supernatural aid. And this was precisely the aim of the Mysteries of 2000 years ago. For example, one authority wrote concerning the Eleusinian Mysteries, “These observances ... were considered the appointed means for regeneration through an *interior union* with the divine essence”. Similarly, in the cult of the Magna Mater (=Great Mother), the whole ceremony is intended to impress upon initiates the certainty of their being united in a special way with the goddess, as in a mystic marriage.

Indeed, the quest for, and experience of, union with the deity underlay all the different mystery religions. In some instances this took the form of an orgiastic ecstasy or repulsive phallic rite. It is, therefore, not difficult to understand why the Bible terms unfaithfulness to God as fornication. Pagan religions very often favoured “sacred” prostitution and other acts intended to represent physically the reality of the spiritual union of the worshipper and the deity. Thus a feature of the third and final stage of the Eleusinian initiation rites is a sacred marriage between the high priest and the priestess.

In other instances union with the deity was symbolised by a sacred meal whereby the initiate shared in the experiences of the god, died with him, rose with him, became partaker of the divine nature and participated in his immortality. No wonder Paul wrote:

I would not that ye should have communion with demons. Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons (1Cor 10:21).

Communion with evil spirits is an awful possibility. In his desire to attain all that God Himself seeks, the serpent seeks to bring about a perverted form of that holy communion of the Spirit so wonderfully offered to man (Phil 2:1; 2 Cot 13:14). Satan’s attempt to effect a union between false gods and their worshippers is his version of the Father’s objective: *He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit* (1Cor 6:17). (For fuller details see, “The Pergamos Church Age”, pp 3-6).

Let us now look more closely at the stages of initiation in the Mysteries from different parts of the earth. Details vary somewhat but the same basic principles apply.

Initiation into the secrets of the Mysteries was in stages. Every Greek, for example, could be initiated into the lesser Eleusinian Mysteries. It was generally believed that only by such initiation could salvation be obtained.

This did not mean, however, that such initiates were introduced to the real secrets of the Mysteries. This was reserved only for those few deemed worthy to progress to the final stages, which were not to be revealed on pain of death. The evidence we have, however, all points to the different stages of initiation leading to a progressive unveiling and full knowledge of the objects of worship.

For example, we have already seen how Apuleius, who passed through all the stages of initiation, described Isis as revealing herself as “the uniform manifestation of the gods and goddesses.... whose *one sole divinity* the whole earth worshipped, and under a manifold form, with different rites, and under a variety of appellations”. He also describes how he was subsequently “enlightened by the Mysteries of the great god and *parent* of the gods, the invincible Osiris. For *although the essence of their divinity and religion is connected, or rather is united*, nevertheless there is a great difference in their initiatory rites”. He later describes Osiris as the “greatest of the highest” of the gods.

From this we see again the essential underlying identity of the many different objects of pagan worship. They were many manifestations of the one supreme god revealed in a trinity of father, mother and son. (Isis, remember, was both the wife and mother of Osiris, whose originals were Nimrod and Semiramis).

The different initiation stages not only involved a progressive unveiling of the true identity of the grand god of the Mysteries. They also point to a progressive identification and communion with him. According to the spiritualistic Theosophists (which claims to continue today the ancient Mysteries of the East), the different stages of the Mysteries typified the stages of the redemption of man. These are described as baptism, crucifixion (or death to self), burial, resurrection and ascension. The concluding act is the consummation or marriage whereby the spirit and the bride are indissolubly united. What a remarkable satanic parallel of the believer’s union with Christ, and ultimate full communion at the wedding supper of the Lamb.

So, from the available evidence, it appears that the ultimate objective of the Mysteries is the union of the initiate with an unclean spirit. Scripture makes it abundantly plain that it is possible to contact evil spirits, and to be empowered by them. The awful objective of the Mysteries, however, is to effect a foul union between demons (for such are the idols of the heathen) and men, a union designed to imitate that holy union between Christ and His Bride. Indeed the ultimate objective of false religions seems to be none other than to induce men into communion with and worship of evil spirits.

Before concluding this terrible subject, let us consider one more fact. We have seen that the supreme pagan deities may be traced back to Nimrod and Semiramis in Babylon. Even they, however, were not the *ultimate* objects of worship. Behind them was the dark inspiration of that ancient serpent, who has ever lusted for the worship due only to the Lord. In deifying and worshipping Nimrod, effectively it was his inspirer who was honoured. As already explained in the Pergamos Church Age, sacrifice to idols is sacrifice to demons.

Some, however, are so full of the spirit of their inspirer that their identities seem almost to converge. Notice, for example, how the evil one himself is addressed directly in parts of Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 even though they prophesy against the kings of Babylon and Tyre. Consider how the end-time beast has seven heads and ten horns, identical to the dragon from whom he receives his power and authority (Rev 12:3; 13:1). Consider also how worship of the beast is equated not just with worship of devils (which is reproved in Revelation 9:20), but of the dragon, the prince of the devils (Rev 13:4).

There is a similar situation with Nimrod. He too was identified with the evil prince of the devils, as seen in the title given to his Egyptian counterpart, Osiris: the father of the gods.

So, the ultimate objective of the Mysteries was to lead men to worship none other than the evil one himself, and to bring about a union and communion of spirit with him, which was a blasphemous copy of the holy relationship between Christ and His Bride.

Thus may be seen the horrible and awful blasphemy of pagan religion. The majority were unaware of its ultimate objectives and of its true object of worship. Such secrets were very jealously guarded.

For example, when the true identity of the guardian divinity of ancient Rome was incautiously let slip by Valerius Sotanus, a man of the highest rank, he was remorselessly put to death. It is not difficult to see why when we consider who that evil divinity really was. The Roman sun-god was worshipped under the form of a serpent called Aesculapius, "the man-instructing serpent". He was also represented as a fly-destroying bird. Now the fly-destroying god of the East was "the Lord of the fly" He is called Beelzebub in the Bible. So, it is clear that the supreme god of Rome was none other than the devil himself.

To understand the objectives and ultimate deity of the Mysteries will enable a better appreciation of the character of the worship of historical Babylon, and so of the implications of the term "Mystery Babylon".

d) The Babylonian origin of the religion of pagan Rome

Let us now outline the prevailing religious ideas of the Roman Empire during the first few centuries of Christianity. This will explain the nature and origin of that form of paganism which so strongly entered the Christian Church after the union with the State in the days of Constantine.

It has already been shown how the religion of Babylon reached Rome. Indeed, "above and beyond all other nations it had had a connection with the idolatry of Babylon that put it in a position peculiar and alone" (Hislop p 239).

It is easy to show that the root of Roman paganism is in the early Chaldean idolatry. Long before Romulus and the founding of Rome (about 750 BC), a representative of the Babylonian Messiah had founded a temple for his worship (which was already in ruins by 900 BC) on the very site of the later city of Rome. Also, in ancient times a colony of Etruscan migrants, deeply attached to the Babylonian idolatry, had settled in the same area.

These Etruscans were ultimately incorporated in the emerging Roman State. But long before that, they exercised a most powerful influence over the religious affairs of Rome. From them the Romans learned soothsaying and divination which played so great a role in their affairs. The College of Cardinals and its head, the Sovereign Pontiff, which controlled all public and private religion in Rome, became Etruscan in spirit and in practice. The evangelical Professor F F Bruce confirms that a great part of the Roman religion was of Etruscan origin.

Now this origin is highly significant. The best evidence indicates that the Etruscans came from Asia Minor long before the fall of Babylon, and so at a time when its religion still swayed Asia and was infecting all lands. One example of the close link with the Babylonian religion is the great significance attached by the Etruscans to liver-reading for divining, just as practised in Babylon (cp Ezk 21:21).

According to the "New Catholic Encyclopaedia", the initial pagan Roman religion was a fusion of Etruscan and Italic elements with a Roman core proper. In view of the very close links of the Italic (i.e. non-Roman ancient Italian) and Etruscan religions with the Babylonian religion, the strong influence of the spirit of this system may be seen from the very foundation of Rome.

These are not the only links, however. Over the years the influence of the Mysteries became very strong in Rome. According to Walker, by the time of Christ, "The great majority of those who felt religious longings simply adopted Oriental religions" ("History of the Christian Church", p 9). In view of what has been said earlier about the Mysteries, the obvious implication of this is an even stronger influence of the Babylonian religion in Rome.

The most popular of these mystery religions were the worship of Cybele (the Great Mother) originating in Asia Minor, and of Isis, Osiris and Serapis from Egypt.

The Mysteries of Dionysus (= Bacchus) were also introduced from Greece, and became very popular. (To the common man Bacchus is usually associated with drunken bacchanal orgies. The reason for this lay in the surname given to him: "Lyseus". This described him as the personification, or the mystical giver, of wine. But this wine was not the fruit of the grape. It was that of the golden cup of Semiramis, and of initiation into the higher Mysteries).

So then, not only was the original Roman religion essentially Babylonian. So also were those forms of the Mysteries which later played so important a part in the lives of her citizens during the early years of the Christian period.

One final detail will suffice to show the close link between the Roman and Chaldean religions. Reference has already been made to the pagan Sovereign Pontiff and College of Cardinals who controlled Roman religion. This basically Etruscan institution was only a copy of the grand original, the Pontifex Maximus of the Babylonian College.

Later, when Julius Caesar became emperor, these two offices, the Etruscan Sovereign Pontiff and the Babylonian Pontifex Maximus were united. So, the pagan Roman Pontiff became the direct legal descendant of the high-priest of the original Babylonian religion. Let us see how.

I have already shown how Pergamos became the seat of the royal Babylonian priesthood after the fall of the latter city. At the death of Attalus III (133 BC), this priesthood was bequeathed to Rome. The office had to remain vacant for some years, however, since no citizen of the Roman Republic fulfilled the requisite condition of being both high priest and sitting on a throne. But the difficulty was solved when Julius Caesar, who had accepted the office of Pontifex Maximus, made himself Emperor, and thus united the Roman pontificate with its superior Babylonian original. As a result, the Babylonian priestly caste settled in Rome with all the implications this had for the future course and development of Roman religion.

It is little surprise, then, to discover the true identity of the sun-god, the tutelary divinity of Rome. As mentioned earlier, one form in which this supreme deity of pagan Rome was worshipped was as a serpent, under the name Aesculapius (= man-instructing serpent). If this is not enough to identify him with the serpent in Eden, then one of the symbols used to represent Aesculapius ought to clinch the matter once and for all. This serpent was also represented symbolically as a fly-destroyer, or "lord of the fly". There is a god in the Bible, "Baalzebub", whose name means precisely this. Jesus revealed the true identity of this god, however, as being none other than the Prince of the devils, that ancient serpent, the dragon (Mt 12:24-28).

As repeatedly mentioned, the whole worship of Babylon was designed to glorify those who rebelled against the Lord, creating a counterfeit Messiah to ape Christ, leading ultimately to a worship of the dragon himself. This worship was now deeply entrenched in pagan Rome, and would provide the springboard for its reproduction in Christianity.

It is astonishing to see the extent to which this purpose was achieved.

THE GREAT METAMORPHOSIS (or, THE PAGAN ORIGINS OF ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE)

a) Introduction

In the Pergamos Church Age (in the chapter headed “Where Satan’s seat is”) attention was drawn to the inroads of paganism into the Roman Church especially following the Church-State union. It is difficult for the modern believer to adequately appreciate the astonishing extent to which the whole spirit and character of Roman Catholicism mirrors the ancient paganism of Greece and Rome, especially since the study of Classics has almost disappeared from school timetables. It is essential not simply to mentally acknowledge but also spiritually discern this, if the reader is to understand the spiritual conflicts of the history of the Church.

In lectures given in 1883 entitled “The influence of Greek (i.e. pagan) ideas and usages upon the Christian Church”, Dr E. Hatch, reader in Ecclesiastical History at the University of Oxford, described pagan influence in exegesis, preaching, morals, theology, worship and creed. In describing the influence of the Mystery religions, evidence was given of the changes effected upon the manner of observing baptism and the Lord’s supper in many important details. Hatch concluded by saying, “Thus *the whole conception* of Christian worship was changed ... by the influence... of the contemporary worship of the Mysteries and concurrent cults”. In another lecture Hatch illustrated the stages whereby the government of nominal Christianity was transformed into a mighty organisation closely modelled on the political structures of the Roman Empire. He concluded: “not only some *but all* the elements of the organisation can be traced to external sources”.

So then the nominal Church became not only the perpetuation of pagan religious doctrine and practice but also of the external political constitution of the world government. When the Church was forming her organisation under Constantine on the model of the State, the key guideline was that the head of the religious society must be in every point conformed to his prototype, the chief of the civil government.

b) Historical Developments

i) *Gnosticism*

I have emphasised that satanic opposition to God’s purposes is not piecemeal and unco-ordinated. There is a definite master strategy at work. Furthermore, precisely the same demon spirits were at work after the ministry of Christ as before it, with the same objectives albeit in a different outward setting. The diverse forms of demonic opposition and teaching therefore had a predetermined strategy. It is not simply the elimination of the one true religious worship that the serpent seeks. He also seeks to propagate his own particular brand of worship, the essence of which was first revealed in Babylon.

An early attempt to inject pagan religion into Christianity took the form of what is usually termed “Gnosticism”. This is a generic term describing a loosely defined amalgam of religious ideas which were common in the Near East before Christianity. There were both Jewish and heathen varieties.

It had occult, magical and spiritualistic elements traceable back to Babylonian religious ideas,

mixed with oriental theosophical elements. It took many differing shapes and forms, assimilating different elements from different sources. Its most prominent feature was the ability to absorb and combine with many differing religious expressions (cp Freemasonry and Theosophy, with which it has much in common).

There was no one single type of Gnosticism. Indeed when its influence spread among Christians, chiefly from the end of the first C to the middle of the second, there were a dozen or more rival sects. Basically these attempted to fuse Christianity with pagan Greek ideas and oriental theosophy. In other words, it was an attempt to blend Christianity with the essential religious ideas of the Mysteries.

An idea of the nature of "Christian" Gnosticism may be gained from the following description by Valentinius, founder of one Gnostic sect: "The Gnostic is in possession of an occult lore. He participates in mysterious rites, and is instructed in magical watchwords and secret names... He undergoes a mystical experience whereby he apprehends the true nature of God and enters into communion with him". How striking a resemblance to the Mystery religions.

During the height of its influence, Gnosticism posed a severe problem for the Church. The danger appeared to be overcome. But the cost was a greatly strengthened governmental system which paved the way for later priestly control of the laity.

Although this early attempt to merge Christianity with the essence of the secret mystery religion doctrines failed, the same objective was ultimately achieved by later developments.

ii) The intrusion of the paganism of the Roman Empire

Despite the failure of Gnosticism to penetrate Christianity to any significant degree, the demonic assault on the Church was not without effect. During the Ephesus and Smyrna Ages there was a gradual undermining of the high wall of separation between the Church and the spirit of the world.

From the second C on, the growing influence of pagan religious ideas on Christian doctrine and practice is evident in Christian writings. The term "sacrament", used to translate the Greek "mystery", came to be applied to certain Christian ordinances. There is no Biblical basis for this. A concept of a sacrament is purely pagan. For example, the breaking of bread and baptism:

- The memorial supper came to be likened unto the pagan religious feasts of the Mysteries, and to be understood in the same terms.
- Likewise baptism came more and more to be considered in the terms of the Mysteries where it was an initiation rite. Indeed when Constantine asked about the way of salvation, the priests described the unbaptised as the "uninitiated".

In this way the meaning and purposes of these Scriptural practices came stage-by-stage to take on the role and implications of their counterparts in the Mystery religions. Increasingly they ceased to be seen as acts whose effectiveness lay in the attitude of the individual believer. Instead they became mere ceremonies, carried out by a specially ordained priesthood, whose effects worked like a magical spell. Thus the thought patterns and terminology of the Mysteries were increasingly introduced into the Church, predisposing the unstable and unwary to accept also the practices and doctrines of those same pagan religions. Especially after Constantine and the pagan influx into the Church, the celebration of the Lord's

supper increasingly became a vast display of ceremonial splendour similar to a pagan temple service. Baptism, too, became cluttered with an unbelievable array of associated practices and doctrines, all derived from paganism.

As the Pergamos Age progressed, and the knowledge and light of the Word dimmed in believers' hearts, Nicolaitan theologians came actively to justify the ever-increasing influx of unscriptural practices and doctrines by claiming them as unwritten traditions handed down by the apostles.

In a remarkable passage, Basil wrote: "Of the.... doctrines preserved in the Church, there are some which we hold from Scriptural teaching, but others we received, handed down to us in Mystery-teaching, from the tradition of the apostles. *And both of these sources have the same authoritative force in regard to religion*". Such teaching increasingly elevated the priesthood to the same level as the pagan Mystery priests, the sole depositories of all sacred knowledge. As the worshippers progressed they were increasingly instructed in the fuller meaning of religion, in a manner increasingly likened unto the stages of pagan initiation.

Whilst there was undoubtedly a tendency in the 2nd and 3rd C for a gradual assimilation of a limited number of pagan religious ideas and practices into the Church, the adulterous 4th C Pergamos union vastly accelerated the pace.

All authorities agree that the 4th C saw a great influx of pagan religious influence on Christianity due to the vast number of semi-Christianised pagans entering the Church. The most significant aspect, however, was the active encouragement given to this trend by certain influential figures among the clergy (many of whom by this time were not even converted). They actually *encouraged* the people: *to eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication* (Rev 2:14), thus hastening their downfall.

Most astonishing of all was the inheritance in 378 AD by Damasus, the bishop of Rome, of the title 'Pontifex Maximus'. This made him the direct legal and lineal descendant of the high priest of the ancient Babylonian idolatry. The paganism of Rome rapidly disappeared, only to reappear in a different guise in the emerging Roman Catholic religion. One manifestation of the spirit of Babylon was destroyed; another arose to replace it. Although the external appearance differed, *the underlying spirit was the same*. In proportion as paganism disappeared outside the Church, it reappeared within. Pagan Rome died; papal Rome rose up in its place. The same spirit had merely undergone a circumstantial, external change. (For further details, see Study No.5, pp 7-14).

It has long been known that Catholicism was baptised paganism. Many authors (including Catholics) testify to the pagan origin of different aspects of the ritual and doctrine of Rome. What has not been adequately appreciated, however, is the fact that *this is the very paganism which prevailed in ancient Babylon*:

- The essential character of her chief objects of worship, religious festivals, doctrine, ceremonies and priesthood are all derived from Babylon.
- The head of the system, the Pope, is in direct lineal descent from Belshazzar, the last Pontiff-King of Babylon.

Stage-by-stage over the Pergamos and Thyatira Ages, feature after feature of the ancient Babylonian idolatry came to be reproduced in that developing ecclesiastical system we today call Catholicism. Even those practices, doctrines and ceremonies with a superficially Christian and Biblical origin no longer reflected their true spirit. The Catholic Jesus was *another Jesus*, their Gospel *another gospel* and their Spirit *another spirit* (2 Cor 11:4).

I cannot adequately stress the extent of this metamorphosis. (Hislop especially will give some idea of this). I must confine myself to certain specific examples to try and show the amazing extent of the resurgence of the founding spirit of the ancient Babylonian idolatry. It is truly astonishing and breathtaking to realise the extent to which that spirit was able to “inspire” Medieval Christendom, thereby revealing the same essential features and characteristics found in the grand prototype.

Even most of the very chants and music used by the Papal choir and most Catholic cathedrals and abbey churches is derived from hymns of the Chaldean Mysteries. The Catholic priest Eustace shows how the Gregorian chants were not composed by Gregory but merely collected by him from “Lydian, Phrygian and other Greek and Roman tunes”. Lydia and Phrygia were chief seats of the Mysteries and also famous for their music. These tunes were sacred. Among other things they were used to mourn the death of Bacchus (= Nimrod).

This minor detail is symptomatic of the essence of Catholic worship. To an amazing extent it is not a worship of the Christ of Scripture, but of the Babylonian counterfeit Messiah whose spirit is wholly antagonistic to that of the Christ who walks among the candlesticks.

c) Baptism

i) Infant baptism

Rome teaches baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation. So, infants who die unbaptised cannot be admitted to heaven.

Now a key to understand all the unbiblical doctrines of Catholicism is to remember that they did not spring up in a vacuum. Their source is the inspiration spirit of pagan Rome, the same spirit which inspired the rebellious idolatry of Babylon. Hence the root of Catholicism’s errors may nearly always be found somewhere in the religion first formed in Babylon, and which spread its baneful influence over all the earth.

And indeed, that is the case here. By the gates of the pagan hell was a place reserved for infants who had not undergone the necessary initiation rites.

ii) Baptismal regeneration

Another Catholic error concerning baptism is the teaching that it brings about the new birth.

This also is essentially Babylonian. Baptism was necessary for initiation into the Mysteries, and by its “purifying waters” pardon and new birth were said to be received.

This idea was so widespread in the pagan world that Catholic missionaries were astonished to witness a Mexican infant baptismal ceremony where the child was said to be purified, cleansed and born anew. There was even an exorcism ceremony. This explains the pagan origin of the perplexing length of ceremonies associated with a Roman baptism: the candidate is first exorcised, and then the water blessed to be freed from any evil spirits so as to become “a regenerating water, a purifying stream”. (For the evidence of the Babylonian source of this Mexican practice, see Hislop pp 133-134. Such similarity of practice and doctrine between lands so far apart further proves the original unity of the idolatry of the whole earth.)

It is amazing how even small details of the Roman ceremony are traceable directly to a pagan source. Not only is the general concept of the Roman baptismal regeneration Babylonian, but also the peculiar detailed acts connected with it, such as the use of salt, spittle, anointing with oil, and marking the forehead with the sign of the cross. Even Catholic theologians admit such practices are not Scriptural, usually claiming their origin in unwritten tradition. Cardinal Newman, however, frankly admits “holy water” and many other things were, “the very instruments and appendages of demon worship”. Pagan temples in Rome, for example, had holy water basins long before Catholicism, and those entering were expected to sprinkle themselves. Spittle was common in paganism as a magic charm to avert evil, just as when the Catholic priest anoints those to be baptised with spittle, he calls upon the devil to flee.

Let us conclude by considering to the “holy water” of the Roman baptism. Blessing and the plunging of a lighted torch into the font is said to consecrate these waters. This is exactly how the Greeks purified their regenerating waters. In pagan worship the torch symbolised the god of fire.

iii) The sign of the cross

As early as the mid 3rd C, African Christians were marked at baptism with the sign of the cross, just as Tertullian implies happened to those initiated by baptism into the Mysteries. Indeed the Roman cross is not that of the Scripture, but that used in the Babylonian Mysteries, for the same magic purposes, and honoured with the same honours.

A cross is the ancient sacred emblem of Tammuz (Nimrod), the Babylonian Messiah. It was worn as an amulet over the heart, marked on priestly robes, and suspended from necklaces by the Vestal virgins of pagan Rome (just as the nuns of today). There is hardly a pagan tribe where the cross has not been found. According to the archaeologist Wilkinson, this symbol was already in use as early as the 15th C BC. He also shows how it came into common Christian use by examples on early Egyptian “Christian” tombstones, with an unmistakably pagan origin. (This was not the only area in which Egypt, never thoroughly evangelised, channelled rank pagan ideas into Christianity).

Like the Egyptians, the great influx of Christianised pagans into the Church after Constantine’s “conversion” brought with them their fondness for this ancient symbol of their grand object of worship. Thus the sign of the cross became so extensive in so many Catholic practices.

How strange, yet how appropriate, that the very symbol of the false Babylonian Messiah was marked on the forehead at the initiatory baptism of those entering the Roman fold. How very appropriate when the Roman Jesus is *another* Jesus, whose attributes and features are metamorphoses of the ancient Babylonian rebel, Nimrod.

d) The Pope and his priests

i) The bishop of Rome as Pontifex Maximus

In the Pergamos Age I detailed how the Pontifex Maximus (or High Priest) of pagan Rome became historically the sole legitimate representative of Nimrod by way of Pergamos (pp 7 - 10), and how this title later became legally vested in the Catholic bishop of Rome (pp 13 -14).

The fact that the bishop of Rome is vested with the very title of the high priest of the ancient rebellious religion of Babylon is no mere coincidence or quirk of history. Furthermore, it is

undeniable that not only was the title conveyed, but along with it came a veritable flood of pagan ideas into Christianity whose ultimate spring and source was Babylon itself. In the mercy of God it took years for many of these pagan doctrines and practices to spread throughout Christendom. Although the emperors gave the Roman bishop extensive authority over all churches in France and Italy, this was virtually nullified when the barbarian invasions destroyed the power of the Western Roman Empire. It was therefore several centuries before the tyrannical Jezebel could effectively teach all her blasphemous doctrines far and wide, imposing them upon all and eliminating any dissension.

ii) The Keys of Peter

To appreciate more fully that the pope's title, "Pontifex Maximus", is no coincidence, let us consider further attributes of his office.

A constant claim of the Papacy is to hold "the Keys of Peter", which are said to signify the possession of the sole right to grant admission to heaven.

This is a very interesting and instructive. When Rome repeatedly proclaims unbiblical doctrines as truth, this is no simple misinterpretation of Scripture. There is an underlying spirit continually seeking to press a thought into the mind so as to further its objectives. This is why men go to such lengths to claim as truth matters that are plainly contrary to Scripture, or at best mere conjectures.

Is it not strange, for example, that Catholicism is so emphatic that it was Peter who was chief of the apostles, and the first bishop of Rome? After all, the Bible states expressly that, whilst the gospel of the circumcision (Jews) was committed unto Peter, it was Paul who was the apostle to the uncircumcised Gentiles (Gal 2:7-9). Even if Peter did go to Rome, therefore, as Catholicism is so keen to maintain (and which is unproven), he had no divine jurisdiction over a Gentile city.

But there was another "Peter" who held the highest place in the pagan priesthood. The priest who interpreted or explained the Mysteries to the initiates was called in primitive Chaldee, the real language of the Mysteries, Peter or Pether, which means, the Interpreter. This priest would communicate certain writings from the "Book Petroma" or "Pet-Roma", i.e. the "Book of the Grand Interpreter. How strange a coincidence! How amazing that Rome again uses a Biblical name, the apostle Peter, and yet their Peter is not the one of the Bible, but *another* Peter, just as their Jesus is *another* Jesus and their Mary *another* Mary.

Not only was the pagan Pontifex Maximus named "Peter" the Interpreter. He was also invested with the keys of Janus and his wife/mother Cybele, two Roman deities attributed with the "power of the key". (These were of course only further manifestations of the grand originals Nimrod and Semiramis.) So, as revealer of the Mysteries, the "Interpreter was decorated with the keys of those deities whose Mysteries he unfolded. (Janus was commonly known in Rome as the grand Mediator, the opener and the shutter, with the key of the invisible world.)

So, the keys now displayed as a symbol of papal authority are not the keys of the kingdom of heaven, of which our Lord spoke to Peter (Matt 16:19). They are those of the pagan Pontifex Maximus, grand interpreter of the Mysteries of pagan deities. They were revealed unto those initiated into their worship by a transmuted baptism which, though outwardly Christian, was in root and spirit a metamorphosis of the ancient Babylonian initiatory rite.

Stage-by-stage this paganised head of ecclesiastical Christianity would lead the Lord's

servants to *commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols* (Rev 2:20b). Even though set forth in the name of Christianity, this would bring his subjects into communion with the very inspiration spirit of paganism.

It is no coincidence that no bishop of Rome based his claim of supremacy on possession of the Keys of Peter until Damasus (366 - 384 AD). He was the first to inherit the office of Pontifex Maximus. Once he occupied the office of the grand interpreter, however, what more natural to the semi-pagans who had filled the churches of Rome since Constantine, than that he should also be entitled to the keys of Janus and Cybele.

It is highly significant that from the time of Damasus the claims of the bishop of Rome reached a new crescendo, stressing that he and none other was successor to Peter. From the early 5th C, belief spread that Peter was first among the apostles. In 431 AD it was first claimed that the bishop of Rome was endowed with the Keys of Peter. In the course of time, just as the statue of Jupiter came to be worshipped in Rome as the image of Peter, so the keys of Janus and Cybele came to be seen as the keys of the Catholic Peter.

iii) The College of Cardinals

Assisting the pope in the government of the Catholic Church are the cardinals.

As there is no Biblical foundation for such an office we may well wonder at its origin. The Catholic "College of Cardinals" is but the counterpart of the pagan College of Pontiffs, with the Pontifex Maximus or "Sovereign Pontiff" at its head. This had existed in Rome from earliest times, being modelled on the original Babylonian Council of Pontiffs.

The word "cardinal" is derived from the Latin word for "hinge". Janus, whose key the pope bears, was the god of doors and hinges, and called "the opener and the shutter". He was attributed with the power of turning the hinge. Without his mediation the door of heaven could not be opened. When the bishop of Rome claimed this right, therefore, those still imbued with the spirit of paganism were predisposed to acknowledge such pretensions, especially when justified by the use of Christian terminology.

Thus the pope became representative of Janus, who was none other than the Babylonian Messiah. Just as the Pontiff of pagan Rome, the bishop of Rome was called "your holiness". The pope receives the adoration of his cardinals just as the Babylonian king in his office of Sovereign Pontiff.

So, the meaning of the unscriptural title, cardinal, is plainly understood. These are the priests of the hinge, associated with the Sovereign Pontiff as representative of Janus in whom the government of the world was said to be vested and all power in heaven, earth and sea.

iv) The mitre and crosier

Two distinctive adornments of the pope are his two-horned mitre and peculiarly shaped crosier, or staff. Their source is highly illuminating.

The papal mitre is entirely different from that of the Old Testament priest. That was a turban. In fact, it is fish-head mitre worn by Dagon, the Philistine and Babylonian fish-god, who was identified with Janus. Such mitres were used in Nineveh, Egypt and Malta. There is even a Chinese mitre used by emperors for many centuries in their role as high priests. It is the very

facsimile of a papal mitre.

If this seems astonishing, then consider the origin of the papal crosier. It is claimed this symbolises a shepherd's crook. In actual fact it is simply the crooked divining-rod of the pagan Roman soothsayers! This was borrowed from the Etruscans, who derived it from the Assyrians. Chaldean soothsayers and priests were commonly equipped with such magic rods for their ceremonies. They are directly traceable to Nimrod who first bore the title of "Shepherd-King". So, the papal crosier, supposedly symbolising the pope's pastoral functions, is no less than the crooked magic diving-rod of the priests of Nimrod.

How astonishing to see the ancient paganism continued in its new "Christianised" form. Even the above details do not exhaust the amazing extent to which Rome came to reflect the original Babylonian idolatry. How amazing is the likeness between the pope in all his attire, and the pagan Pontifex Maximus. Once the latter office was transferred to Julius Caesar, he would appear in all the pomp of the Babylonian costume just as the Pope of today: in scarlet robes, holding the crosier of Nimrod, wearing the mitre of Dagon, and bearing the keys of Janus and Cybele. The ancient paganism had been restored to life.

v) Celibacy

A distinctive mark of Catholicism is the celibacy of her priests, monks and nuns. Although practised to some degree among certain other Christian groups (chiefly Orthodox), only Rome enforces it so strictly.

Of course, the Bible does speak of those *which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake* (Matt 19:12). Paul also spoke of those who remained unmarried to be free from *the things of the world so as to attend upon the Lord without distraction* (1 Cor 7). There is, however, no hint of support for insisting that all priests remain unmarried. Indeed, the so-called first pope, Peter, was married (1 Cor 9:5). Nor is there any suggestion in the Word of special groups of celibate men and women who live apart in their own communities such as do monks and nuns.

As in other circumstances when Rome insists dogmatically upon ideas without Scriptural support, we ask the question: what then is their origin? The answer is easily found in Paul's warning to Timothy:

...in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron, forbidding to marry (1 Tim 4:1b-3a).

Here it is plainly stated that to forbid to marry (as opposed to a voluntary choice) is a doctrine of evil spirits. Rome does not offer her priests any choice. She prohibits their marrying absolutely.

Now the spirit of error does not simply attack God's work in a haphazard fashion, simply seeking to disrupt in any way possible. There is always a co-ordinated strategy, and a grand master design behind the individual parts. Forbidding to marry, therefore, is but part of an overall strategy. And what is that strategy? It is the reproduction of the counterfeit plan of salvation first manifested in the religion of Babylon. "Mystery Babylon" is the term describing the operations of the spirit seeking to bring about this reproduction, the fullest expression of which is found in Catholicism. Let us see how clerical celibacy fits into the strategy.

Historical records show that the origin of celibacy is in Babylon. Its invention in its most stringent form is attributed to the evil Semiramis, who presided over the Chaldean Mysteries. From there it spread as far as Tibet, China and Japan. When the worship of Cybele was introduced into Rome in its primitive form, it was brought in with a celibate clergy. How very appropriate, then, that the bishop of Rome, after becoming the legal representative of that goddess should introduce celibacy for his priesthood also.

Not only is priestly celibacy traceable to Babylonian paganism. Orders of monks and nuns also existed long before the Christian era in Tibet and Japan, for example, where the Chaldean system was early introduced. Indeed, referring to the detailed duties of sacred virgins, the Peruvian explorer Prescott wrote of his astonishment, "to find so close a resemblance between the institutions of the American Indian (i.e. Peruvian Incas), the ancient (pagan) Roman, and the modern Catholic." Even the very word "nun" is Chaldean!

vi) The clerical tonsure

Another distinguishing feature of Catholic priests and monks is the circular tonsure, or shaved patch on the head. This is sometimes called the "tonsure of Peter". It was imposed on the clergy as the visible symbol of submission to the authority of the Roman pope.

And in very fact it was the tonsure of Peter. Not of the apostle of Scripture, however, but of the pagan Chaldean Peter, or "Interpreter" of the Mysteries. The Babylonian Bacchus (= Tammuz or Nimrod) was sometimes shown with a tonsure. It was an esoteric symbol of his death that was lamented annually. It was also an emblem of the sun god, or the Seed (i.e. of the woman), the grand deliverer or satanic counterfeit Messiah. Since the grand god himself had a tonsure, so his priests had their hair clipped or shaven at their ordination.

Wherever the Chaldean system spread, whether Egypt, pagan Rome, India or China, this tonsure is the distinguishing mark of the priesthood. So ancient and widespread was this mark that it was said of Israelite priests, *They shall not make baldness upon their head.... They shall be holy unto their God* (Lev 19:5a). Since they were separated unto the God of Israel, they were not to bear upon them the very symbol of consecration to the abominations of the heathen.

The words of Jerome (340 - 420 AD), an ardent supporter of monasticism, show clearly how the tonsure was a mark of paganism. In his commentary on Ezekiel 44:20 he wrote, "by this it is clearly shown that we ought not to have shaven heads like the priest and worshippers of Isis and Serapis".

How amazing - yet how appropriate - that since Catholicism is but the metamorphosis of the ancient Babylonian religion in a Christian disguise, and since the Catholic "Pontifex Maximus" is but the earthly representative the Babylonian Messiah, that his priests should bear the distinguishing mark of the god they represented.

The serpent is a past master of taking upon himself the outward appearance of one thing, whilst in reality being something very different. No wonder then that his ministers are described as assuming the garb of apostles of Christ, and disguising themselves as ministers of righteousness (2 Cor 11:13-15 Wey). The word "transform", used three times in this passage, is the key to the operation of the Mystery Babylon spirit. It means the changing of the outward fashion, without in any way altering the abiding essential character of the object in question. Satan's grand objective has in no way changed from the beginning of time. It may be that the external form it took in historical Babylon had been destroyed. But his ultimate essential

purpose was unchanged. The same spirit, seeking to achieve the same objectives, was now at work behind a different outward mask, dressed in a different disguise. If the Lord grants understanding of this principle of Satan's working, the reader will be well on the way to discerning the operations of the mystery of iniquity across the pages of history. Rome is but a grand metamorphosis of the whole Babylonian counterfeit system of worship.

e) Easter

The feast of Easter is not found in the Bible. (The word is used in Acts 12:4 AV, is a mistranslation. It should read "Passover".) What then is the origin of this festival and of its English name?

According to Webster's dictionary, Easter is an Anglo-Saxon word derived from, "the name of the old Teuton goddess of spring". Its origin is ultimately Chaldean, being derived from Astarte, one of the titles of the queen of heaven. Both Astarte, and its Assyrian equivalent Ishtar, were even pronounced identically to the English "Easter".

How strange that such a name should be applied to a festival associated with the suffering and resurrection of our Lord. How did it happen?

According to historical records, many Christians especially in the East observed such a festival in the 2nd and 3rd C on the date of the Jewish Passover. It was called "Pasch" or "Passover". The Church historian Socrates in a lengthy account of different Easter celebrations concluded that:

"the celebration of the feast of Easter began everywhere more of custom than by any commandment either by Christ or any apostle ... (There was) no law enjoined to keep this feast.... It seems to me (it) has been introduced from some old usage, just as many other customs have been established".

Despite its lack of for New Testament authority, however, at least this original Christian "Passover" feast was devoid of the rank paganism that came in later.

In addition to the Pasch observed especially in the Eastern churches, there was an alternative practice in the West on a different date. The origin of this alternative is shrouded in mystery. The fifty odd years after the death of the first apostles has been termed "the age of shadows" since a veil hangs over our knowledge of this twilight period. Whatever changes did take place, it is certain that the mystery of iniquity was already at work (2 Thess 2:7).

In any case, serious dissension arose in the 2nd C over the date of the Easter celebration. In 197 AD Victor, bishop of Rome, demanded that all adopt the practice of Rome, and threatened dissenters with excommunication. He was restrained, however, by the protests of other bishops. Later the issue was raised again at the Council of Nicea, and the Roman practice was unanimously approved. Those who continued to celebrate the feast on the day of the Jewish Passover (called Quartodecimans) gradually faded away.

To those accustomed only to acknowledge and practice the explicit teachings of Scripture, it seems strange that so much passion should focus on the date of Easter, especially when there is no explicit New Testament sanction for any such annual observance. But, once it is recognised that there was a spirit at work paving the way for the introduction of further aspects of the ancient Babylonian idolatry, the issue then becomes much clearer.

Throughout the pagan world, one of the great annual festivals was to commemorate the death and resurrection of Nimrod, under many different names in widely scattered locations. One of the distinguishing features was a forty-day Lent, or sacred fast, which seems to have its origin in the weeping for the slain god prior to his resurrection. Such forty-day Lents were held, for example, among the pagan Kurds, Mexicans and Egyptians.

After the Church-State union, the general Catholic policy was to blend pagan and Christian, grafting Christian terms and ideas onto old pagan stocks. Now the spirit of error already had a pagan festival as his direct counterfeit of the events surrounding the death of the Messiah. So, as part of the policy referred to, the annual celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ was merged with that festival. From Constantine onwards, more and more of the practices associated with the Easter celebrations were absorbed from the pagan original.

One example is Lent. It is evident that this practice has no Scriptural authority. Cassianus, a 5th C French monk, wrote, "the observance of the forty days had no existence so long as the perfection of the early church remained inviolate". By 519 AD, however, it was decreed by a Western Church council that Lent should be solemnly observed before Easter.

Throughout the Middle Ages additional attributes of the pagan Easter were incorporated into Church practice. Hot cross buns, for example, were eaten by the Saxons in honour of their goddess Easter (cp Jer 7:18, *cakes to the queen of heaven* i.e. Ishtar). Even the commonly known Easter egg, referred to in Catholic set Easter prayers, is but an emblem of Astarte (or, Easter).

Without further detail, I trust it is now clear that even that festival generally considered one of the highlights of the Christian calendar is, in the Roman Church, nothing but a metamorphosis of the celebration of the death and resurrection of the Babylonian anti-Messiah. Not only are the pope and his ministers in direct line as representatives of Nimrod. Papal festivals also are but re-enactments of the life, death and resurrection of Nimrod, the deliberate counterfeit of that Holy One sent to restore us to the image and glory of God.

f) Mary worship

j) Introduction

It has already been repeatedly stressed that Rome's use of Christian terms does not imply that the spirit and essence of those terms is Christian. Just as the Roman Peter is another Peter, so the Roman Mary's resemblance to the Mary of Scripture is only superficial. Her true counterpart is found in the normal source for so much Catholic doctrine and practice.

Some idea has already been given of the identification of the Mary of Rome with the Babylonian Semiramis in chapter 1, section (d). This explains the very powerful tendency in Romanism to exalt, and even deify, Mary. The mystery of why Rome lays such emphasis upon Mary, far beyond all Scriptural warrant, is once again explained by the powerful mastermind spirit at work seeking to reproduce the essentials of the Babylonian worship in a different disguise. The Babylonian Semiramis was attributed with certain features known by the serpent to apply to Mary. For example, one of her titles was the "Virgin Mother". Indeed, long before the Christian age, Buddhist priests had a tradition that a virgin would beget a child to bless mankind.

With the pagan influx into the Church, Mary was progressively attributed with all the character-

istics of her Babylonian counterpart. As in Babylon, there was a trend in the Medieval Church to ascribe all the attributes of the Messiah-son also to his mother. This should help explain how Mary is so prominent in the popular Catholic mind. She is even blasphemously considered a mediatrix between man and Christ. Without quoting extensively from numerous Catholic documents, suffice it to say that the multitude of unbiblical attributes and titles blasphemously ascribed to Mary may individually be traced back to a Babylonian source. As mentioned earlier, even the very physical features of Roman and Babylonian Madonnas are identical. The halos or circles of light on her images also have pagan counterparts.

ii) Lady Day

One of the great Catholic festivals is “Lady Day”, held on 25th May. It commemorates the miraculous conception of Christ. How Rome can be so precise as to a date not divinely recorded seems a mystery. The mystery vanishes, however, when we learn that the very same day was observed in pagan Rome in honour of Cybele, mother of the Babylonian Messiah. Furthermore, the common title of Cybele in Rome was “Domina” (= the Lady), which is doubtless the origin of the name “Lady Day”.

iii) The immaculate conception and assumption of the virgin Mary

Do not think that the idolatry of Rome is a thing of ages long past, nor that the spirit of error once at work in the dark corridors of the Vatican has now been exorcised and replaced by an enlightened modern outlook. The same spirit that originally metamorphosed the pagan Semiramis into the Biblical Mary is still at work.

In 1854 Pius IX proclaimed that Mary was born sinless. Later, in 1950, Pius XII proclaimed infallibly “ex cathedra” that she was carried bodily into heaven shortly after her death. Nor is this the climax. Current discussion centres on Mary as Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix. This blasphemy means that she is Mediator along with Christ; and that her sufferings, particularly - when at the cross, were redemptive in the same sense as Christ’s. Short of explicitly saying so in so many words, there seems little else Rome can do to make Mary a member of her idolatrous trinity. This would bring to a climax the long trend of transposing every attribute of Semiramis to Mary.

Whilst there is no Scriptural basis for such Roman fables as Mary’s sinlessness and assumption into heaven, there certainly is one in the Babylonian system. According to the 1950 pronouncement, Mary was raised from the grave shortly after death, and enthroned as queen of heaven. Her body was miraculously preserved from corruption. In the Babylonian system too, it was taught that Bacchus went down to hell, rescued his mother and took her triumphantly to heaven. Furthermore, that mother was considered to have been born without sin, that is, immaculate. The Chinese, too, had a festival based on a similar legend of a mother rescued by her son from the power of death and corruption. This festival was held in August, the same month as the Catholic Feast of the Assumption.

Not only was the mother of the pagan Messiah honoured for her bodily assumption into heaven, she was also termed the “Virgin” mother, “pure and undefiled”. This related not only to the virgin birth of the false Messiah, and the sinless life of the mother. It also implied her “immaculate conception”, i.e. her being born without original sin.

Does the coincidence of the terms used by Catholicism and paganism to describe Mary seem too great? For those who have understood the underlying spirits at work, it will not. As Hislop

wrote:

“There is no real reason to wonder. It was only in following out the pagan doctrine previously adopted and interwoven with the whole system of Rome to its logical consequences ... that the Madonna of Rome has been formally pronounced , in every sense of the term, absolutely ‘immaculate’. Now, after all this, is it possible to doubt that the Madonna of Rome, with the child in her arms, and the Madonna of Babylon are one and the same goddess?” (“The Two Babylons”, pp 126-127).

In keeping with the objective of the spirit of antichrist at work in Christendom (just as in the Babylonian original) Mary came to overshadow Christ. Consider the thoroughly antichrist nature of the following quotations taken from “The Glories of Mary”, by Ligouri, one of the greatest Catholic devotional writers, and canonised as a saint. The editor of this work describes it as, “a summary of Catholic tradition on the subject it treats”:

- “Sinners receive pardon by... Mary alone”.
- “Mary is our life...”
- “Many things are asked from God and are not granted; they are asked from Mary and are obtained...”
- “Mary is called the gate of heaven, because no one can enter ... without passing through her”.
- “... at the command of Mary, all obey – even God...”
- “Mary is also the advocate of the whole human race... for she can do what she wills with God”.

How astonishing to those versed in Scripture alone! The whole system is thoroughly antichrist. Although His Name is retained, Christ is replaced at every level.

g) The Mass

In considering the peculiarities of the Mass, we must again apply a fundamental principle: Catholic ideas and practices with no Scriptural foundation are not merely oddities of history. There is an origin, even for comparatively minor details. And so often this origin uncannily goes right back to the evil original idolatry of the whole earth, in one or other of its many manifestations. Let us illustrate by looking at a few of the features peculiar to the Roman method of remembering the death of our Lord.

As may be known, the Catholic communion only offers the bread, not the wine, to the layman. This “bread” takes the form of a circular disc or wafer with the words I H S. Rome explains this as meaning “Iesus Hominum Salvator” (Jesus the Saviour of men). It is odd indeed, however, that to the pagan worshippers of Isis these are the initials of the Mother, Child and Father of the pagan Egyptian trinity.

The “unbloody sacrifice” of the mass was first introduced by the women of Arabia in the 4th C. At that time the queen of heaven, under the name of Mary, was beginning to be worshipped, and special cakes offered and eaten (cp Jer 44:19). It was well known that this practice had been adopted from paganism, and that those involved were considered heretics. They were called “Collyridians”, from the Greek word for the special cake they used. Despite this condemnation, however, the offering and eating of such cakes was patronised by Rome.

The peculiar emphasis laid by Catholicism on the thin round form of their wafers may also be significant. There is certainly no Biblical basis for any importance being attached to the *form* of

the bread used in the Lord's supper. Such a thin round cake, however, appeared on all Egyptian altars. The round disc symbolised the sun god, who was also worshipped in his capacity as the bread given to nourish men's souls. Also, on the Egyptian (and Babylonian, Peruvian and apostate Israelite) altars, alongside the sacred cake there was a metal disc also representing the sun (cp 2 Chron 34:4, Marg.). How strange that Hurd, describing the ornaments of a Catholic altar, where the consecrated wafer is deposited, refers to a silver plate "in the form of a sun" fixed opposite to it.

When describing how to partake of the wafer, Bishop Hay stresses the importance of fasting. How odd when it is remembered that Biblically the breaking of bread was part of a love feast! Paul even specifically enjoined eating before attendance if necessary (1 Cor 11:33 - 34). Fasting, however, was imperative for those who sought pagan initiation.

Thus we see how once again, in the very ceremony professing to commemorate the Lord's death, and our partaking of His Life, the spirit of paganism has again reappeared. The Roman communion is another communion. It is a metamorphosis of the worship of the ancient sun god, the false Babylonian Messiah, in his capacity and title of "the Corn", the bread given to feed men's souls. See again how the spirit of antichrist sought to anticipate in the ancient Babylonian worship the attributes and ministry of the true Anointed One, of Whom it is written:

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world (John 6:51).

h) Christmas Day

No informed authority, whether Catholic, Protestant or otherwise, denies that the celebration of Christmas has no Biblical or early Church warrant. For example:

- The Catholic Encyclopaedia says: "Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church ... the first evidence of the feast is from Egypt". "Pagan customs centring around the January Kalends gravitated to Christmas.
- The Encyclopaedia Americana says Christmas, "was, according to many authorities, not celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian Church ... a feast was established in the 4th C. In the 5th C the Western (i.e. Catholic) Church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of the Sol (= the Unconquered Sun)..."

So, there is no command in Scripture to celebrate any special day in memory of Christ's birth. Not only is there no explicit Biblical command to celebrate Christmas, it is also universally acknowledged to be a direct transfer from paganism. For example:

- The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge says: "The pagan Saturnalia and Brumalia were too deeply entrenched in popular custom to be set aside by Christian influence ... The pagan festival ... was so popular that Christians were glad of an excuse to continue its celebration with little change of spirit and manner. Christian preachers of the West and the Near East protested against the unseemly frivolity with which Christ's birthday was celebrated, whilst Christians of Mesopotamia accused their Western brethren of idolatry and sun worship for adopting as Christian this pagan festival".
- The Encyclopaedia Britannica says: "Certain Latins, as early as 354 AD, may have transferred the birthday from January 6th to December 25th ... (the) birthday of the

unconquered Sun ... The Syrians and Armenians, who clung to January 6th, accused the Romans of sun worship and idolatry ..

If we use our guiding principle of comparing the unscriptural practices and doctrines of Rome with paganism, we shall again find the true source of the Roman Christmas. Once again it is but a metamorphosis of one of the chief festivals of the ancient pagan Messiah, the counterfeit Christ.

Consider firstly the choice of dates for the birth of Christ. Even the "Catholic Encyclopaedia" acknowledges that it was not December 25th. The Scriptures describe the shepherds abiding in the open fields (Luke 2:8) at the time of His birth. It was not, however, the custom for Judean shepherds to watch in the open fields later than October because of the rain and cold (cp S of Sol 2:11; Ezra 10:9,13). Jesus also taught the Jews, *Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter* (Matt 24:20).

Since it is generally agreed that no one knows the exact time of Christ's birth, how did December 25th come to be chosen? Long before the birth of Christ, a pagan festival was celebrated at that precise time in honour of the birth of the son of the Babylonian queen of heaven. In Egypt for instance the son of Isis (Egyptian title for the queen of heaven) was born about the time of the winter solstice. Even the peculiar British term for Christmas, Yule-Day, is only the term used by our pagan Anglo-Saxon ancestors to describe 25th December, the "Day of the Child", observed in celebration of the pagan Lord, or Baal.

This date was also celebrated in pagan Rome. It was called Saturnalia (=the feast of Saturn) and was the historical origin of the Catholic Christmas. It was the celebration of "Natalis invicti Solis" (= the birthday of the unconquered Sun), the celebration of the victorious rebirth as a child of the false Babylonian Messiah.

i) Miscellaneous

We have so far examined in detail:

- certain of the chief objects of Catholic worship (particularly Christ and Mary),
- some of the most important religious festivals (Easter, Christmas and Lady Day),
- two of the major sacraments (Baptism and Mass), and
- the most important features of the Catholic form of ecclesiastical government.

In all cases it is astonishing how the Roman Christ and Mary are but a metamorphosis of their Babylonian antitypes, and how the chief Catholic festivals originated not in Scripture but in pagan feasts commemorating the salient incidents of the lives of these two Babylonian deities.

The examination of baptism revealed an astonishing parallel with pagan initiation into the Mysteries, (and thus the full knowledge of their ultimate object of worship). The Mass bore a sobering likeness to the idolatrous feast in honour of and communion with the Babylonian counterfeit Messiah. Finally, the Roman priesthood also draws its distinctive characteristics again not from Scripture, but from the pagan priesthood of the Mysteries, the guardians of the inner secrets of their religion, binding the laity inseparably to themselves.

It is a truly amazing metamorphosis, both in scope and in detail, of the essential features of pagan religions, whose inspiration and origin is from Babylon. How justly then may the Roman Catholic Church be considered the most fully developed (though not the only) expression of that spirit called "Mystery, Babylon the Great", otherwise called "the mystery of the woman".

Very much more could be said, and further abundant detail given, but space forbids. I will conclude therefore by referring briefly to certain other distinctive Catholic practices. This will illustrate further the incredible extent of the likeness between Catholicism and paganism, and will doubly emphasise that this is no mere coincidence. It is the culmination of a single mastermind spiritual strategy.

i) Purgatory and prayers for the dead

The idea of purification by fire after death existed long before Christ in the Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman and other pagan religions. Built on this doctrine was that of prayers for the dead to speed their delivery from the purifying flames.

Greek ideas spread through the Near East after Alexander the Great's conquests. Consequently, even modernistic Jewish rabbis began to teach sin offerings to relieve the sufferings of the dead. (This is referred to in 2 Maccabees. It explains the attempt by Rome to include this book in the canon of Scripture).

Not only do pagan prayers for the dead find their counterpart in Romanism, but also the great financial cost extorted by a domineering priesthood. In India, Central Asia, Greece and Egypt the cost of prayers and special sacrifices for the dead (cp Catholic masses for the dead) was not inconsiderable. Also, in Egypt, for example, such rites for the dead were administered for as long as payment was forthcoming.

ii) The Rosary

This distinctly Catholic item is a string of beads used for keeping count of prayers. It came into general use early in the 13th C. It is not of papal origin, but almost universally found in pagan lands. Before its common adoption by Catholicism, it was used for counting prayers by Buddhists in China and Tibet for centuries. It was also found among ancient Mexicans, Hindus and in pagan Rome and Asiatic Greece.

iii) Relic worship and pilgrimages

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Catholicism is the veneration of the relics and bones of their saints and martyrs, and the miracle-working powers attributed to them.

A similar worship existed in heathen lands such as Greece, and particularly in Buddhist realms where the relics of the Buddha are held in great esteem. Egypt also was filled with tombs of the various limbs of Osiris after his dismemberment. (This suggests the real origin of the veneration of relics as being part of the ceremonies in memory of the sudden death of Osiris, or Nimrod).

Another peculiarity of Romanism is the regular pilgrimages to shrines holding the tombs of saints. This has no New Testament warrant, but was commonly practised among the pagan Egyptians.

(Incidentally, relic worship and prayers both to and for the dead are further examples of the strong tendency within Romanism towards communion with the dead).

iv) Image worship

Despite the clear testimony of Scripture against idolatry, the heathen element that entered the Church after the 4th C became so strong that opposition was overcome.

Religious processions with images became a commonplace spectacle of pageantry in Roman lands. Despite their lack of Biblical authority, these processions had their heathen counterpart, of course, in Mexico, Assyria, Greece, Egypt and Babylon (cp Isa 46:6-7). Great attention is also paid to the clothing and adorning of Catholic idols, just as in pagan worship in Egypt and Greece.

There is insufficient space to discuss this further, but the ultimate source of these practices is once again traceable to the original rebellion of Nimrod, his premature death and subsequent deification.

v) Wax candles

Another feature of Catholicism is the wide use of wax-candles and tapers in worship and processions.

These were also common among Persians, Egyptians and Kurds in their worship of the sun-god. In pagan Rome, too, wax tapers were lit in honour of the gods, and used in religious processions. So distinctively pagan was the practice that it was derided by Lactantius, a 4th C Christian writer. Soon after, however, it became increasingly common in Catholicism.

With all Catholic peculiarities absorbed from paganism, I have sought to emphasise not just their pagan origin, but their secret underlying meaning in ancient pagan worship. For example, Catholic adoration of Mary was not simply influenced by the contemporary worship of the goddess-mother. Rather, the true heart of Catholic Mary-worship is the worship of the historical Semiramis, with all that that implies. Romanism is not a basically sound Christian body with an unfortunate number of pagan tumours attached. The essence of Catholicism is the essence of the Babylonian counterfeit Messiah worship.

Let us now apply this principle to explain Rome's widespread use of wax-candles.

Such candles were considered essential aids to worship by the pagans of Lake Baikal in Siberia, the Molucca Islands and Ceylon. Being so widespread, it may safely be presumed that there is some mystic reason for their use. And indeed there is. The wax-candle was a hieroglyph (i.e. a sacred symbol which could be explained only by the priesthood). It symbolised the Babylonian god in his role as the enlightener, leading men from darkness into light. For reasons detailed by Hislop (pp 193 - 197), this god was termed the Word, or the Bee (which is the same word in Chaldean). A beeswax candle giving forth light in the darkness symbolically represented him.

Amazing references are made to the mystery of the wax-candles, with Christ described as "the celestial Bee" in certain Catholic set prayers and other devotional works. (These have rarely been used since the Reformation, which led to a removal of some of Rome's more obvious paganism.) Such expressions and their underlying implications are a direct transcription of Babylonian worship and terminology. Rome's candles are a modern-day representations of the ancient Babylonian Messiah, blasphemously called "the Word".

How very far-reaching were the words of Paul when he wrote of another Jesus being introduced into the Church.

j) Conclusion

Abundant evidence has now been given of:

- the pagan origin of different parts of the Catholic system, and
- the essential identity of Catholic worship and that of the false Babylonian Messiah and his wife.

Further evidence is provided by Hislop of the origin of extreme unction, scourging and penance, justification by works, the feast of the Nativity of St John and the worship of the sacred heart.

Even Catholics acknowledge that the source of much of Catholicism is purely pagan, at least in part. Cardinal Newman, for example, admits that, "Temples, incense, oil lamps, votive offerings, holy water, holy days and seasons of devotion, processions, blessings of fields, sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure, images etc are all of pagan origin" ("The development of the Christian religion", p 359).

In view of the common origin of the idolatry of the whole world, it is not surprising to find many common points between Catholicism and a religion so distant and apparently distinct as Buddhism. The rosary and Madonna and Child statues have already been mentioned. Other similarities are the worship of saints and their relics, priestly celibacy, ascetic practices, monasteries, the sign of the cross, holy water, the tonsure, confession, worship of the queen of heaven, halos, certain vestments, the mitre, crosier and censer swinging on five chains, fasts, processions, litanies (= responsive prayers), image worship and the mystic fans of peacock feathers carried on either side of Popes and Lamas on grand festivals.

In his autobiography "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome" the former priest Charles Chiniquy describes his experiences in a Catholic seminary. For years he never even studied the Bible itself. Instead he was bombarded with the dogmas and theologies of Rome, and such a deep study of the pagan classics that the spirit of the seminary was more like a Greek or Roman school of philosophy. He discovered how scapulars, medals, holy water etc (used as charms against dangers and temptations) were but remnants of pagan worship. Describing his student days, he wrote:

"The further we advanced in the study of pagan antiquity, the more we were forced to believe that our own religion, instead of being born at the foot of Mount Calvary, was only a pale and awkward imitation of paganism. The modern Pontifex Maximus (Pope of Rome) ... resembled the Pontifex Maximus of ... empire of Rome as much as two drops of water resemble one another. Had not our Pope preserved only the name, but also the attributes, the pageantry, the pride and even the garb of that high pagan priest? Was not the worship of the saints absolutely the same as the worship of the demigods of olden time? Was not our purgatory minutely described by Virgil? Were not our prayers to the Virgin and saints repeated, almost in the same words, by the worshippers who prostrated themselves before their gods ...? Was not our holy water in use among the idolaters, and for the same purpose for which it was used among us?"

"We knew ... the year in which the magnificent temple consecrated 'to all the gods',

bearing the name of Pantheon, had been built at Rome. We were acquainted with the names of several of the sculptors who had carved statues of the gods in that heathen temple, at whose feet the idolaters bowed respectfully, and words cannot express the shame we felt on learning that the Roman Catholics of our day, under the very eyes and sanction of the Pope, still prostrated themselves before the same idols, in the same temple, and to obtain the same favours.

“When we asked each other the question “What is the difference between the religion of heathen Rome and that of the Rome of today?” more than one student would answer: “The only difference is in the name. The idolatrous temples are the same: the idols have not left their places. Today, as formerly, the same incense burns in their honour...; instead of calling this statue Jupiter, we call it Peter; and instead of calling that one Minerva or Venus, it is called St. Mary. It is the old idolatry coming to us under Christian names”.

The spirit of Rome is identical to that of paganism. This is so inadequately appreciated. Boettner for example, quotes one Protestant theologian describing one of the errors of Rome as ‘... another one of those foreign growths that has fastened itself like a malignant tumour upon the theology of the Roman Catholic Church’. Rome’s errors are certainly foreign to the Word. But they are not foreign to herself. The individual errors of Rome are not just malignant tumours fastened upon an otherwise healthy body. They are essentially part of the body. They are a normal expression of the true nature and seed of that body. Rome is not merely an accretion of error upon a basically sound foundation. The whole system is imbued with error and corrupt to the very core. Even where she uses orthodox terms, the root spirit of those terms is not that of the Word. The whole atmosphere surrounding them betrays their source.

It is often said that despite her many errors Rome at least upholds certain fundamental truths of Christianity, such as the deity of Christ and so must be classed as a Christian Church. Having considered the root and spring of Rome’s “orthodox” doctrines, however, I hope that this idea has now been clearly rebutted. Despite Rome’s acknowledgement of Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Gospel, these are not the Biblical Jesus, Holy Spirit and Gospel. They come into the category described by Paul:

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or if ye receive a different spirit, which ye did not receive, or a different gospel which ye did not accept, ye do well to bear with them ... For ye bear with a man, if he bring you into bondage (2 Cor 11:4, 20a).

No, Rome’s errors are not simply tumours. The very inspiration spirit of Rome is the spirit of error. It is the fullest living expression of the worship of ancient Babylon. How complete and how amazing a metamorphosis!

Before concluding I wish to re-emphasise that Roman Catholicism is not merely an extension of the external forms and ideas of the old Babylonian religion. It is a continuation of the living spirit that originated these.

It was pointed out in the chapter 1 that the religion of Babylon was supernatural. So is the religion of Rome. Catholicism (unlike many Protestant bodies) teaches that signs and wonders should still accompany the preaching of the Gospel. Indeed, one of Rome’s proud boasts is that in every age a multitude of miracles has been worked in the Catholic Church, and that these are divine tokens and vindications of her spiritual authority. It is extremely difficult to convey adequately the vast extent of the signs, wonders and prodigies claimed by Rome through the ages. Nor are these limited to the credulous Middle Ages. They continue unabated until the present day. Wherever we go in Catholic devotional literature, reports abound of

visions, voices and all sorts of supernatural manifestations.

A flourishing literature of miracle accounts grew strongly from the 4th C onwards. It comprised an incredible bibliography of tens of thousands of every conceivable (and inconceivable) wonder. These were not simply believed by the simple people, but by the most respected ecclesiastics of the age. Many of these miracle stories had the same origin as the large influx of erroneous teachings and practices entering Christianity after the Church-State union. A whole mass of pre-Christian heathen legends and marvels reappeared in "Christian" clothing. The Christianised versions were often merely reproductions of the motives and even the very incidents of earlier heathen tales. Many of these are traceable back to very ancient religious tales. The Catholic tale of Barlaam and Joasaph, for example, was no less than the story of Buddha! How deeply even the emerging Catholic folklore was inspired by pre-Christian and anti-Christian tales. There was virtually a complete reproduction of the whole heathen miracle-legend mentality in the semi-pagan 4th C Church.

This reproduction prepared the way for a substantial influx of all sorts of signs and wonders into Medieval Catholicism bearing a remarkable resemblance to many supernatural occurrences in the old pagan religions. As emphasised earlier, false religions may definitely be accompanied by genuine miracles. Idolatry is demon-worship, and demons possess many occult and supernatural powers. No doubt a vast number of claimed Catholic miracles are spurious. But there are instances of miraculous healings, for example, with no human explanation. It is not necessary, however, to try and explain away every claimed Catholic miracle. There is a powerful spirit of error at work in Catholicism and this spirit is fully capable of: *all power and signs and lying wonders* (2 Thess 2:9). The Jezebel spirit of the Thyatira church claimed to speak the Word of the Lord supernaturally (*which calleth herself a prophetess*).

At the end time the fullness of the spirit of false prophecy is revealed in the man called the false prophet. He will be able to do great wonders and miracles (Rev 13:13-15)(cp Rev 16:13-14). No wonder then that the many lesser false prophets arising at this same time are also able to *shew great signs and wonders* (Matt 24:24).

Although there will be an abundance of miraculous events from evil sources at the end time, do not think there are none before then. Jesus warned of false prophets who did many wonderful works in His Name (Matt 7:22). Moses also warned of false prophets who could give signs and wonders that came to pass (Dt 13:1-3). He knew the reality of this from personal experience with Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian magicians (Ex 7:11,22; 8:7,18; 9:11). Referring to these, Paul warned that as supernaturally equipped men rose up to withstand Moses, so in the Church there would rise up men who would resist the Truth (2 Tim 3:8). The comparison with Jannes and Jambres suggests that those of whom Paul spoke would be supernaturally empowered. So, supernatural signs and wonders, arising from demonic power, are to be expected in the Church. Their purpose is to oppose the Truth. Small wonder, therefore, that when we examine the chief characteristics of Catholic miracles, we find so many directly linked with originating or continuing erroneous doctrine.

One of the strangest features of Catholic miracles is the difficulty of finding anyone who himself ever claimed to have wrought miracles. After all, the apostles knew the powers they had, and were fully aware of their authority to exercise them. Paul also wrote of those specifically endowed with the gifts of healings and miracles. In Catholicism, however, people are frequently claimed to have worked all sorts of wonders, including raising others from the dead, but only after their death. The claimed miracle workers themselves were unaware of any such power or effects during their lifetimes.

Even more strange, however, (and also highly significant) is the fact that the vast majority of Catholic miracles are directly worked by some part of a dead man's body, or his belongings, or some location associated with him.

The heart of Catholic miracles is the worship of relics. This is very definitely derived from heathenism.

The growing practices of the worshipping and praying to dead saints and martyrs and the veneration of their remains were merely a metamorphosis and reproduction of earlier heathen practices whose origin and meaning we have already considered. It is not so much that semi-pagan "Christians" invading the Church from the 4th C onwards continued the same pagan rites unbrokenly at the tombs of the old heathen gods and heroes (although some *were* absorbed wholesale into the emerging Christian worship). Rather it was a continuation under a different outward form of the same spirit that inspired the old heathen worship.

Based on the claimed holiness of saints and martyrs, it was believed that supernatural power was associated with their graves, or any place where fragments of their bodies were preserved. This led to an incredible traffic in the dismembered limbs and relics of the dead. The great majority of Catholic healing miracles were wrought through relics. Relic-worship is at the very heart of Rome's miracle-life. Faith healing was mainly centred here to such an extent that Catholic writers, on account of the extent of associated supernatural manifestation, feel able to claim that the worship of saints and relics is one of the most divinely vindicated Catholic teachings.

I have earlier noted the strong attraction in Catholicism towards communion with the dead. This is no coincidence. It reflects the nature of its inspiration spirit. Not only are relics, tombs and prayers to the dead central to its miracle-life. They are also very prominent in her religious life. Indeed, Catholic worship centres on what is in effect a relic-chest.

I have shown previously how the Biblical communion table was exchanged for a heathen temple altar which became the focal point of the new ecclesiastical liturgy. Later, however, this altar (or, mass-table) became nothing less than a coffin enclosing the relics of a saint. "As churches built over the tombs of martyrs came to be regarded with peculiar sanctity, the possession of relics of some saint came to be looked upon as absolutely essential to the sacredness of the building, and the deposition of such relics in or below the altar henceforth formed the central part of the consecration rite" (Smith and Cheatham, "Dictionary of Christian Archaeology", I, p 431). So, it has long been a rule that every Catholic altar should contain a relic. Rome's mass-table, her focal point of worship, is thus inseparably bound with the dead, and communion with them. When I once heard it said that Catholicism was the highest form of spiritualism known, I considered this remark somewhat excessive. The more I have studied church history, however, the more I find this remark substantiated.

I do not intend to examine the teeming multitudes of Catholic prodigies and wonders, considering how many are real. Much of the early literature of wonder-tales and legends is generally acknowledged to be purely fictitious, or transfers from existing heathen tales. Even Catholic writers dismiss many supposed historical miracles. Even when they do claim that genuine miracles have taken place, they acknowledge the often sharp distinction between Biblical miracles and what may be termed "ecclesiastical miracles".

Nonetheless, there is no Scriptural doubt that the spirit of error so powerfully at work in Catholicism is certainly capable of working wonders. This is particularly borne out by the nature of so many Catholic miracles, and of the doctrines they substantiate. Paul warned of an

influx of seducing spirits and of doctrines injected by demons (1Tim 4:1). Such demonic doctrines may also be supported by demonic supernatural power.

Significantly, many of the early miracles associated with the emerging Catholic church were directly connected to the rise of asceticism and monasticism. And this is the very context in which Paul warned of the coming of doctrines of demons (1 Tim 4 1-5). There are whole masses of reported visions, attacks by demons and miracles associated with early ascetics.

The Bible warns of the real possibility of visions which are not of God in a context of self-humiliation as opposed to a Spirit-given humility in Colossians 2:18 (NASV): *Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions inflated without cause by his fleshly mind.* The great veneration given to these early ascetics led to their inclusion among the martyrs in the growing cult of dead heroes and their remains.

Miracles are also closely associated with other Catholic errors such as the mass, or the blasphemous honour and role afforded to Mary. Even if such miracles were real it would be irrelevant it would only underline their demonic origin. They support doctrines which have no Biblical warrant.

I hope this necessarily piecemeal review of Catholic miracles will further convey an understanding of the nature and spirit of Romanism. To rightly appreciate this system it is necessary not only to grasp intellectually the errors of its doctrine, but also to discern its inspiration spirit. Only then will there come a proper feel of the spiritual atmosphere surrounding, overhanging and permeating the whole system. It is not simply filled with doctrinal error but permeated with the spirit of error and the smell of death. Roman Catholicism is not simply a theological monstrosity; it is empowered and energised by a living spiritual agency capable of great wonders and of great deceit. It is precisely because of this *spiritual* power that Romanism is able to maintain sway over so many millions of minds, despite the mass of historical data available to expose its origins and errors.

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her... for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived (Rev 18: 20, 23b).

The same spirit is with us today which bewitched and cast its malign spell upon the Galatians, turning them from the fullness of Christ and the grace of God (Gal 3:1).

Its most complete and fullest (though by no means its only) expression is found in Roman Catholicism.

4 CONCLUSION

This study in many ways supplements the previous one. It is a fuller exposition of the effects of permitting Jezebel to teach and throws much fuller light on the expression *the depths of satan* (Rev 2:24). As already explained, this expression describes the effects of holding the doctrine of Jezebel, rather than being any particular doctrine.

This brings to a nadir the slide begun with the doctrine of Balaam. Both this and Jezebel's doctrine were basically one. The doctrine of Jezebel brings the implications of Balaam's earlier counsel *to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication* (Rev 2:14) to its dreadful conclusion. Communion with demons first begun with Balaam in Pergamos. It culminated in a full-scale experience of *the depths of satan* once Jezebel was able to enforce her teaching bringing in to an amazing extent so much of the spirit and practice of the earth's original idolatry.

Although Roman Catholicism most faithfully absorbed and represented the Babylonian idolatry, it deeply affected also the other major pre-Reformation Christian bodies:

- The Eastern Orthodox Church was especially affected, having been most closely linked with Rome. (This meant that the various national Orthodox Churches that arose in SE Europe and the Near East over the years also shared the same unhappy inheritance).
- The ancient independent Churches of the Holy Land and the Copts of Egypt and Ethiopia were also seriously tainted with the same evils afflicting the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.
- The Persian (Nestorian) Church was also increasingly marred both by Nicolaitanism and also by compromise with pagan religious practice.

Periodic attempts were made to reform these ecclesiastical systems from within by sincere and godly men. But the Light of the Word was too dim for them to grasp that the very systems themselves were corrupt.

The only groups not significantly affected by the doctrines of the Nicolaitans, Balaam and Jezebel were the various protest groups that rose at differing times and in diverse places.

In the next study I wish to show how from this time on there is a progressive recovery of the Word.

Until this point the knowledge and experience of the Headship of Christ had been progressively robbed from the Church. From this time on, however, there would be a progressive recovery of the revelation and experience of Christ,

till we all attain unto ... the knowledge of the Son of God, unto to a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:13, RV).