

An Exposition Of The
SEVEN CHURCH AGES

William Marrion Branham

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An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages

Setting forth a detailed study of the Seven Church Ages and the various major doctrines contained in Revelation, Chapters One through Three.

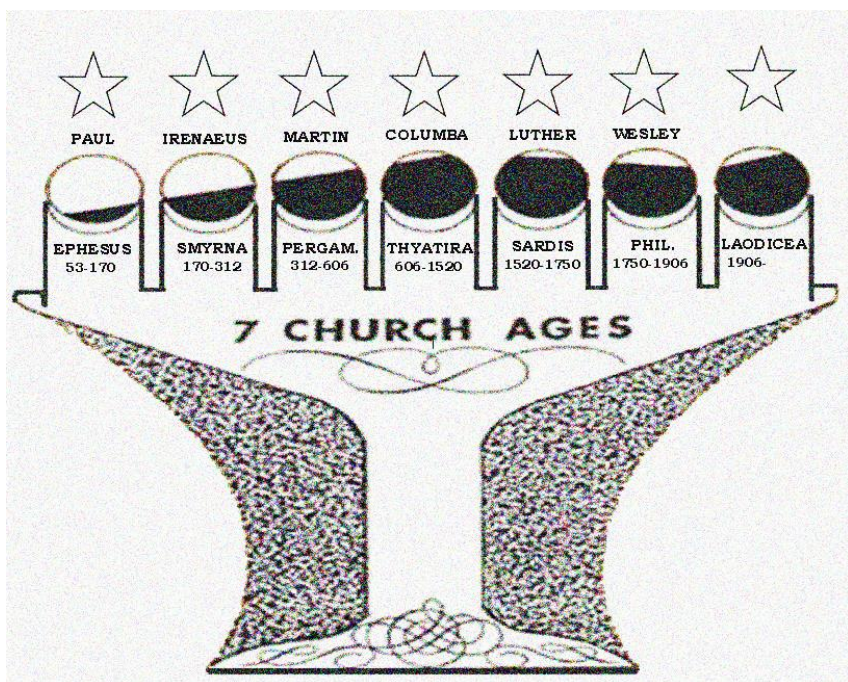
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INTRODUCTION

Though this volume will concern itself with various major doctrines (such as the Godhead, Water Baptism, etc.) found in Revelation, chapters One through Three, its main theme is the setting forth of a detailed study of the Seven Church Ages. This is necessary in order to study and understand the rest of the Revelation, for out of the Ages come the Seals, and out of the Seals come the Trumpets, and out of the Trumpets come the Vials. Like the first burst of a Roman candle, the Church Ages come forth with a mighty initial illumination, without which there could be no further light. But once the brilliance of the Seven Church Ages is given by Divine revelation, light upon light follows, until the whole of the Revelation opens wide before our wondering eyes; and we, edified and purified by its Spirit, are made ready for His glorious appearing, even our Lord and Saviour, the One True God, Jesus Christ.

This composition is set forth in the first person as it is a message from my heart to the hearts of the people.

Particular pains have been taken to capitalize all names and titles, nouns and pronouns, etc., that relate to Godhead, and also the words Bible, Scripture, and the Word, as we hold this only proper in speaking of the majesty and Person of God and His Holy Word.

I pray the blessing of God upon each reader; and may illumination by the Spirit of God be each one's special portion.

William Marrior Branham

CHAPTER ONE

THE REVELATION OF JESUS THE CHRIST

REVELATION 1:1-20

^{1.} *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John:*

^{2.} *Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.*

^{3.} *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

^{4.} *John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him Which Is, and Which Was, and Which Is To Come; and from the seven Spirits Which are before His throne;*

^{5.} *And from Jesus Christ, Who is the Faithful Witness, and the First Begotten Of The Dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth. Unto Him That loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,*

^{6.} *And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

^{7.} *Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.*

^{8.} *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord Which Is, and Which Was, and Which Is To Come, the Almighty.*

^{9.} *I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

^{10.} *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,*

^{11.} *Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.*

^{12.} *And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;*

^{13.} *And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*

^{14.} *His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire;*

^{15.} *And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters.*

^{16.} *And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*

^{17.} *And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last:*

^{18.} *I am He That liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

^{19.} *Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;*

^{20.} *The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER ONE

Revelation 1:1-3.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John;

Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all the things that he saw.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the Words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: For the time is at hand."

The scribe (not author) of this book is St. John the divine. Historians agree that he lived the last part of his life in Ephesus, though at the time of the writing of this book he was on the Isle of Patmos. It is not the life story of John, but it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ in the future church ages. In verse three it is called a prophecy and that is actually what it is.

This book is usually termed the Revelation of Saint John, but that is incorrect. It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ given to John for Christians of all

ages. It is the only book in the entire Bible that is written by Jesus Himself, through personally appearing to a scribe.

It is the last book of the Bible, yet it tells the beginning and the end of the dispensations of the Gospel.

Now the Greek word for revelation is "apocalypse" which means "unveiling". This unveiling is perfectly described in the example of a sculptor unveiling his work of statuary, exposing it to the onlooker. It is an uncovering, revealing what was previously hidden. Now the uncovering is not only the revelation of the Person of Christ, but it is **THE REVELATION OF HIS FUTURE WORKS IN THE ONCOMING SEVEN CHURCH AGES.**

The importance of revelation by the Spirit to a true believer can never be over emphasized. Revelation means more to you than perhaps you realize. Now I am not talking about this Book of Revelation and you. I am talking about ALL revelation. It is tremendously important to the church. Do you remember in Matthew 16 where Jesus asked the disciples this question,

"Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?"

And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?"

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in heaven.

And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The Roman Catholics say that the church is built upon Peter. Now that is really carnal. How could God build the church upon a man so unstable that he denied the Lord Jesus and cursed while doing it? God can't build His church upon any man born in sin. And it wasn't some rock lying there as though God had hallowed the ground at that spot. And it isn't as the Protestants say, that the church is built upon Jesus. It was the REVELATION. Read it the way it is written: "Flesh and blood hath not REVEALED it, BUT MY FATHER HATH REVEALED IT, and UPON THIS ROCK (REVELATION) I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH:" The church is built on Revelation, on the "Thus Saith the Lord".

How did Abel know what to do in order to offer a proper sacrifice to God? By faith he received the revelation of the blood. Cain didn't get such a revelation (even though he had a commandment) so he couldn't offer the right sacrifice. It was a revelation from God that made the difference and gave Abel

eternal life. Now you might take what the pastor says, or what the seminary teaches, and though it might be taught to you with eloquence, until God reveals to you that Jesus is the Christ, and that it is the blood that cleanses you, and that God is your Saviour, you will never have eternal life. It is the Spiritual revelation that does it.

Now I said that this Book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus and what He is doing in the churches for those seven ages. It is a revelation because the disciples, themselves, didn't know these recorded truths. It had not been previously revealed to them. You remember that they came to Jesus in the Book of Acts and asked Him, "Are You at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons." Those men were still thinking of Jesus having an earthly kingdom. But it was a spiritual kingdom that He was going to build. Even He could not tell them about His place in it, for the Father had not revealed it unto Him. But now after His death and resurrection, and at this particular time in His mediatorial ministry, He is able to set forth here in this revelation of Himself to John what His glory and presence in the church would mean and do.

In this revelation He tells us what the end of the devil is. He tells how He is going to deal with the devil and cast him into the lake of fire. He reveals the end of the wicked ones who follow Satan. And Satan hates that.

Have you ever noticed how Satan hates two books of the Bible more than all others? Through liberal theologians and pseudo-scientists he is always attacking the Book of Genesis and the Book of Revelation. In both of these books we find Satan's origin, his awful ways and his destruction. That is why he attacks them. He hates to be exposed, and in those books he is exposed for exactly what he is. Jesus said about Satan, "He has no part in Me and I have no part in him." The devil would like to prove that different; but he cannot, so he does all he can to destroy confidence in the Word. But when the church disbelieves Satan and believes the Spirit's revelation of the Word, the gates of hell cannot prevail against her.

Let me just put in a word here from my own ministry, if you don't mind. You all know that this gift in my life is supernatural. It is a gift whereby the Holy Spirit is able to discern diseases, and the thoughts of men's hearts, and other hidden things that only God could know and then reveal to me. I wish you could stand with me and see the faces of people when Satan knows he is going to be exposed. Now, it isn't the people that I am talking about. It is that Satan has got a hold in their lives through sin, indifference, and disease. But you should see their faces. Satan knows he is going to be exposed, and the most peculiar changes come over the peoples' countenances. Satan is afraid. He knows that the Spirit of God is about to let the people know of his works. That is why he hates these meetings so much. When names are called and

diseases revealed, Satan hates it. Now what is this? It is not mind reading, it is not telepathy, nor is it witchcraft. It is a REVELATION by the Holy Ghost. That is the only way I can know it. Of course the carnal mind will call it anything but the Holy Ghost.

Let me show you another reason why Satan hates this Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ in the church. He knows that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever, and He changes not. He knows that a whole lot more than do ninety percent of the theologians. He knows that since God is immutable in His nature, then He is just as immutable in His ways. Thus Satan knows assuredly that the original church at Pentecost with the power of God (Mark 16 in action) is the True Church that Jesus claims as His own. All else is false. It has to be.

Now remember this. Christ in the True Church is a continuation of the Book of Acts. But the Book of Revelation shows how that the antichrist spirit would come into the church and defile it, making it lukewarm, formal and powerless. It exposes Satan, revealing his works (attempted destruction of God's people and the discrediting of God's word) right down to the time he is cast into the lake of fire. He fights that. He cannot stand it. He knows that if the people get the TRUE REVELATION of the TRUE CHURCH and what she is, what she stands for and that SHE CAN DO THE GREATER WORKS, she will be an invincible army. If they get a true revelation of the two spirits within the framework of the Christian church, and by God's Spirit discern and withstand the antichrist spirit, Satan will be powerless before her. He will be as definitely thwarted today as when Christ withstood his every effort to gain power over Him in the desert. Yes, Satan hates revelation. But we love it. With true revelation in our lives, the gates of hell cannot prevail against us, but we will prevail over them.

You will recall that I mentioned at the beginning of this message that this Book we are studying is the actual revelation of Jesus, Himself, in the church and His work in the future ages. Then I mentioned that it takes the Holy Spirit to give us revelation or we will fail to get it. Bringing these two thoughts together you will see that it won't take just ordinary study and thinking to make this Book real. It is going to take the operation of the Holy Ghost. That means this Book can't be revealed to anyone but a special class of people. It will take one with prophetic insight. It will require the ability to hear from God. It will require supernatural instruction, not just a student comparing verse with verse, though that is good. But a mystery requires the teaching of the Spirit or it never becomes clear. How we need to hear from God and lay ourselves open and become yielded to the Spirit to hear and know.

As I have already said, this Book (Revelation) is the consummation of the Scriptures. It is even placed exactly right in the canon of Scripture; at the end.

Now you can know why it says that anyone who reads or even hears it is blessed. It is the revelation of God that will give you authority over the devil. And you can see why they who would add or take from it would be cursed. It would have to be so, for who can add or take away from the perfect revelation of God and overcome the enemy? It is that simple. There is nothing of such prevailing power as the revelation of the Word. See, in verse three a blessing is pronounced on those who give special attention to this Book. I think this refers to the Old Testament custom of the priests reading the Word to the congregation in the morning. You see, many could not read so the priest had to read to them. As long as it was the Word, the blessing was there. It didn't matter if it was read or heard.

"The time is at hand."

The time was not at hand previously. In the wisdom and economy of God this mighty revelation (though fully known to God) could not come forth hitherto. Thus we immediately learn a principle--the revelation of God for each age can come in that age only, and at a specific time. Look at the history of Israel. The revelation of God to Moses came only at a specific time of history, and even more specifically it came as the people cried unto God. Jesus, Himself, came at the fulness of time, He being the complete Revelation of the Godhead. And in this age (Laodicean) the revelation of God will come in its due time. It will not falter, neither will it be premature. Think on this and heed it well, for we are in the end-time today.

THE SALUTATION

Revelation 1:4-6.

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia; Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him Which Is, and Which Was, and Which Is to Come; and from the seven Spirits Which are before His throne;

And from Jesus Christ, Who is the Faithful Witness, and the First Begotten of the Dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth. Unto Him That loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

The word, Asia, is actually Asia Minor. It is a small parcel of land about the size of Indiana. The seven churches there were especially picked from all other churches for their characteristics, which same characteristics would be found in the successive ages centuries later.

The seven Spirits before the throne is the Spirit That was in each of the seven messengers, giving them their ministries for the age in which each lived.

Now all these expressions, 'Him Which Is', and 'Him Which Was', and 'Is To Come', and 'Faithful Witness', and 'First-born From Among the Dead', and 'Prince of the Kings of the Earth', and 'The Alpha and Omega', and 'The Almighty', are titles and descriptions of the ONE AND THE SAME PERSON, Who is the Lord Jesus Christ, Who washed us from our sins in His own blood.

The Spirit of God in John expresses thusly in order to set forth the Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ and to reveal the Godhead as ONE God. Today there is a gross error. It is that there are three Gods instead of one. This revelation as given to John by Jesus, Himself, corrects that error. It is not that there are three Gods, but one God with three offices. There is ONE God with three titles, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This mighty revelation is what the early church had, and it must be restored in this last day along with the correct formula of water baptism.

Now modern theologians won't agree with me for here is what was written in a great Christian magazine. "That teaching (on the Trinity) is at the very heart and core of the Old Testament. It is every whit as much at the heart and core of the New Testament. The New Testament is just as much opposed as the Old Testament is to the thought that there are more Gods than one. Yet the New Testament with equal clearness teaches that the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and that these three are NOT three aspects of the same Person, but three persons standing in a truly personal relationship to one another. There we have the great doctrine of the Three Persons but one God."

They also state, "God, according to the Bible, is not just one person, but He is three persons in one God. That is the great mystery of the Trinity".

It sure is. How can three persons be in one God? Not only is there no Bible for it, but it shows even a lack of intelligent reasoning. Three distinct persons, though identical substance, make three gods, or language has lost its meaning entirely.

Just listen to these words again, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, Which Is, and Which Was, and Which Is to Come, the Almighty". This is Deity. This is not simply a prophet, a man. This is God. And it is not a revelation of three Gods, but of ONE God, the Almighty.

They didn't believe in three Gods in the beginning of the church. You can't find that sort of belief amongst the apostles. It was after the apostolic age that this theory came in and really became an issue and a cardinal doctrine at the Nicene Council. The doctrine of Godhead caused a two way split at Nicaea. And from that split there came two extremes. One actually went into

polytheism, believing in three Gods, and the others went into unitarianism. Of course that was a little while in coming about, but it did, and we have it right today. But the Revelation through John by the Spirit to the churches was, "I am the Lord Jesus Christ, and I am ALL of it. There isn't any other God". And He put His seal on this Revelation.

Consider this: Who was the Father of Jesus? Matthew 1:18 says, "She was found with child of the Holy Ghost". But Jesus, Himself, claimed that God was His Father. God the Father and God the Holy Ghost, as we often express these terms, make the Father and the Spirit ONE. Indeed they are, or else Jesus had two Fathers. But notice that Jesus said that He and His Father were One--not two. That makes ONE God.

Since this is historically and Scripturally true, people wonder where the three came from. It became a foundational doctrine at the Nicene Council in 325 A.D. This trinity (an absolutely unscriptural word) was based upon the many gods of Rome. The Romans had many gods to whom they prayed. They also prayed to ancestors as mediators. It was just a step to give new names to old gods, so we have saints to make it more Biblical. Thus, instead of Jupiter, Venice, Mars, etc., we have Paul, Peter, Fatima, Christopher, etc., etc. They could not make their pagan religion work out with just one God, so they split Him up into three, and they made intercessors of the saints as they had made intercessors of their ancestors.

Ever since then people have failed to realize that there is just one God with three offices or manifestations. They know there is one God according to Scripture, but they try to make it the fantastic theory that God is like a bunch of grapes; three persons with the same Divinity shared equally by all. But it plainly says here in Revelation that Jesus is "That Which Is", "That Which Was", and "That Which Is to Come". He is the "Alpha and Omega", which means that He is the "A to Z" or THE ALL OF IT. He is everything--the Almighty. He is the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star, the Righteous Branch, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He is God, Almighty God. ONE GOD.

I Timothy 3:16 says, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into Glory". This is what the Bible says. It doesn't say a thing about a first or second or third person here. It says God was manifest in flesh. One God. That ONE GOD was manifested in flesh. That ought to settle it. God came in a human form. That didn't make Him ANOTHER GOD. HE WAS GOD, THE SAME GOD. It was a revelation then, and it is a revelation now. One God.

Let's go back in the Bible and see what He was in the beginning according to the revelation He gave of Himself. The great Jehovah appeared to Israel in a

pillar of fire. As the Angel of the Covenant He lived in that pillar of fire and led Israel daily. At the temple He announced His coming with a great cloud. Then one day He was manifested in a virgin born body that was prepared for Him. The God that tabernacled above the tents of Israel now took on Himself a tent of flesh and tabernacled as a man amongst men. But He was the SAME GOD.

The Bible teaches that GOD WAS IN CHRIST. The BODY was Jesus. In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead, BODILY. Nothing can be plainer than that. Mystery, yes. But actual truth--it can't be plainer. So if He wasn't three people then, He can't be three now. ONE GOD: And this same God was made flesh.

Jesus said, "I came from God and I go (back) to God". John 16:27-28. That is exactly what happened. He disappeared from earth by way of His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. Then Paul met Him on the road to Damascus and He spoke to Paul and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Paul said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" He said, "I am Jesus." He was a pillar of fire, a blinding light. He had turned back, exactly as He said He would. Back to the same form that He was before He took on a tabernacle of flesh. That is exactly how John saw it. John 1:18 "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him". Notice where John says that Jesus IS. He is IN the bosom of the Father.

Luke 2:11 says,

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, Which is Christ the Lord".

He was born the Christ, and eight days later when He was circumcised He was named Jesus, even as the angel had told them. I was born a Branham. When I was born they gave me the name of William. He was CHRIST but He was given a name down here among men. That outward tabernacle men could see was called Jesus. He was the Lord of Glory, the Almighty manifested in flesh. He is God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He is all that.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are just titles. They are not names. That is why we baptize in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for that is a name, not a title. It is the name of those titles, just like you take a new born baby who is a son and name him. Baby is what it is, son is the title, then you name him, John Henry Brown. You just don't baptize in 'Jesus Name'. There are thousands of Jesuses in the world and have been even before Jesus, our Saviour. But there is only one of them born the Christ, "Lord Jesus Christ".

People talk about Jesus being the Eternal Son of God. Now isn't that a contradiction? Whoever heard of a 'Son' being eternal? Sons have beginnings,

but that which is eternal never had a beginning. He is the Eternal God (Jehovah) manifested in the flesh.

In St. John's Gospel it says,

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

He was the True and Faithful Witness to the Father's eternal Word. He was a Prophet and could say what the Father bade Him say. He said, "My Father is in Me". That is what Jesus the tabernacle said, "My Father is in Me".

God has many titles: 'Our Righteousness', and 'Our Peace', and 'Ever Present', and 'Father', and 'Son', and 'Holy Ghost'; but He has only one human name and that name is Jesus.

Don't be confused because he has three offices or that He has a threefold manifestation. On earth He was a Prophet; in heaven He is the Priest; and coming back to earth, He is King of Kings. "He That Was"--That is Jesus, the Prophet. "He That Is"--That is He, the High Priest, making intercession--One Who can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. "Which Is to Come"--That is the coming King. On earth He was the Word--the Prophet. Moses said of Him, "The Lord your God will raise up a Prophet like unto me, and it will come to pass if they don't hear the words of that Prophet they will be cut off from amongst the people".

Notice these facts about Jesus. On earth He was Prophet, Lamb, and Son. This did not make Him three. These were but manifestations or offices of the One Person, Jesus.

Now there is a very favorite portion of Scripture that the trinitarians think prove their point of more than one actual Person in the Godhead.

It is Revelation 5:6-8,

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as It had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him That sat upon the throne.

And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints".

Indeed these verses, if isolated, would seem to prove their point. You notice, I said, these ISOLATED verses.

However, read Revelation 4:2-3 and 9-11,

"And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and ONE sat on the throne.

And He That sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to Him That sat on the throne, Who liveth for ever and ever,

The four and twenty elders fall down before Him That sat on the throne, and worship Him That liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

Carefully note in verse two it says, "ONE" (not two or three but ONE) sat on the throne. In verse three it says, "HE" (NOT they) was to look upon as a jasper stone. In verse nine it says that the beasts gave honour to "HIM" (not them). In verse ten it says that the elders fell down before "HIM" (not them). In verse eleven it says that they cried, Thou art worthy O LORD" (not Lords). Also in verse eleven it says this ONE on the throne was the "Creator", Which is Jesus (John 1:3), Which is Jehovah-Spirit-God of the Old Testament (Genesis 1:1).

But let us not stop there. Read now in Revelation 3:21,

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

Also read Hebrews 12:2,

"Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Notice that according to Jesus, Himself, Who wrote the Revelation, He is set down WITH the Father. The Spirit in Paul (Which Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, for That is the Spirit of Prophecy whereby the Word comes) says He is set down at the RIGHT HAND of God. But when John looked he saw only "ONE" upon the throne. And it was not until Revelation 5:6-8 (which follows Revelation 4:2-3 in sequence of time) that we see the "Lamb" taking the book from "HIM" That sat on the throne, as indicated in Revelation 4:2-3 and 9-10. What is it? It is the mystery of "ONE GOD." He (Jesus), came out from God, became manifested in flesh, died and rose again, and returned to the "Bosom of the Father." As John said, "The only begotten Son Which is IN the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18. It was now time for God (Messiah) to come back to claim His bride and then present Himself (make Himself known) to Israel. Thus we see God again stepping forth to assume a physical relationship to man as the "Son of David, King of Kings and Lord of

Lords, and Bridegroom of the Gentile Bride." It is NOT "Two" Gods, but simply ONE GOD manifesting His mighty triune offices and titles.

The people knew He was a Prophet. They knew the sign of the Messiah which could come only through the prophet.

John 1:44-51,

"Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

The ability to discern the heart-thoughts in men made the elect of God to understand that here was the Messiah, the anointed Word of God.

Hebrews 4:12,

"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

When the woman at the well heard Him discern the thoughts of her heart she acclaimed Him a prophet, declaring that Messiah would be known for that great ability.

John 4:7-26,

"There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink.

(For His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat).

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who It is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.

The woman saith unto Him, Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water?

Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

The woman answered and said, I have no husband.

Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said I have no husband,

For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

The woman saith unto Him, Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messias cometh, Which is called Christ: when He is come, He will tell us all things.

Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He."

In Revelation 15:3 it says,

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the LAMB, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints."

Do you see it? The LAMB, the High Priest holding His blood as an atonement on the mercy seat for our sins is the Lord God Almighty. That is His present office. That is what He is doing now, pleading His blood for our sins. But one day that Lamb will become the Lion of the Tribe of Juda. He will come forth in power and glory and take His authority to reign as King. He is the coming King of this earth. Of course, that does not say He is not King now. For He is our King, King of the Saints. Right now it is a spiritual kingdom. It is not of this world system even as we are not of this world. That's the reason we act different from the world. Our citizenship is in heaven. We reflect the Spirit of the world of our rebirth where Jesus is the King. That is why our women do not dress in men's clothing or cut their hair or use all those cosmetics and other things that the world likes so much. That is why our men don't drink and smoke and carry on in sin. Our dominion is the dominion over sin and it is in force through the power that is in the Spirit of Christ That indwells us. Every kingdom on earth is going to be torn down, but ours will remain.

Now we've been talking about the offices and manifestations of the one true God and beholding His glory in a Scriptural study. But He is not to be known intellectually. He is known Spiritually; by Spiritual revelation. This same One Who was known as Jesus after the flesh went back to the pillar of fire. But He promised He would come again and dwell amongst His people by the Spirit. And on the day of Pentecost that pillar of fire came down and it separated itself in tongues of fire upon each one of them. What was God doing? He was separating Himself into the church, giving all those men and women a part of Himself. He divided Himself amongst His church just as He said He would.

John 14:16-23,

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever;

Even the Spirit of Truth: Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him: for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also.

At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.

He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.

Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."

He said that He would pray the Father Who would send another Comforter Who was WITH them (the disciples) already but NOT IN them. That was Christ. Then in verse twenty-three, speaking of Himself and the Father, He said WE will come. There it is: "The Spirit is coming, the Same Spirit of God that manifested as the Father, and as the Son, and will yet manifest in the many"--ONE GOD Who is Spirit.

That's why no man can ever come along and say the holy man is a pope or the holy man is a bishop or priest. The HOLY MAN is Christ, the Holy Spirit, in us. How dare the hierarchy declare the laity has no word to say? Each one has something to say. Each has a work, each has a ministry. The Holy Ghost came at Pentecost and separated Himself on each, that it might be fulfilled whereof Christ said,

"At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me and I in you."

John 14:20.

The Great I Am, the Almighty God, has come as Spirit to fill His true church. He has a right to move anywhere He wants to, and upon anybody He wants to. We don't make any "holy men" amongst us, but the whole true congregation of the Lord is holy, because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is He, the Holy Spirit, that is holy, not the congregation of itself.

Now that is the revelation: Jesus Christ is God. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New. No matter how hard you try, you can't prove there are THREE Gods. But it also takes a revelation by the Holy Spirit to make you understand the truth that He is One. It takes a revelation to see that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New. Satan crept into the church and blinded the people to this truth. And when they were blinded to it, it wasn't long until the Church of Rome stopped baptizing in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I admit that it takes a real revelation from the Holy Ghost to see the truth about the Godhead these days when we are in the midst of the perverting of so much Scripture. But the prevailing, overcoming church is built on revelation so we can expect God to reveal His truth to us. However, you actually don't need

a revelation on water baptism. It is right there staring you in the face. Would it be possible for one minute for the apostles to be led astray from a direct command of the Lord to baptize in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost and then find them in willful disobedience? They knew what the Name was, and there is not one place in Scripture where they baptized any other way than in the Name of Lord Jesus Christ. Common sense would tell you that the Book of Acts is the church in action, and if they baptized that way, then that is the way to baptize. Now if you think that is strong, what do you think of this? Anyone who was not baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus had to be baptized over again.

Acts 19:1-6, "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him Which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied." There it is. These good people at Ephesus had heard about the coming Messiah. John had preached Him. They were baptized unto repentance of sins, looking FORWARD to believing on Jesus. But now it was time to look BACK to Jesus and be baptized unto REMISSION of sins. It was time to receive the Holy Ghost. And when they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul laid his hands on them and the Holy Ghost came upon them.

Oh, those dear folks at Ephesus were fine people; and if any one had a right to feel secure, they did. Notice how far they had come. They had come all the way up to accepting the coming Messiah. They were ready for Him. But don't you see that in spite of that they had missed Him? He had come and gone. They needed to be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They needed to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

If you have been baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, God will fill you with His Spirit. That is the Word.

Acts 19:6 which we read was the fulfilling of Acts 2:38,

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

See, Paul, by the Holy Ghost, said exactly what Peter said by the Holy Ghost. And what was said CANNOT be changed. It has to be the same from Pentecost until the very last elected one has been baptized.

Galatians 1:8,

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Now some of you Oneness people baptize wrong. You baptize for regeneration as though being immersed in water saved you. Regeneration does not come by water; it is a work of the Spirit. The man who by the Holy Ghost gave the command, "Repent and be baptized every one in the Name of the Lord Jesus," did not say that water regenerated. He said it was only an evidence of a "good conscience toward God." That was all.

I Peter 3:21,

"The like figure where-unto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

I believe it.

If anyone has any false ideas that history can prove water baptism in any other way than in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I would advise you to read the histories and find out for yourself. The following is a true record of a Baptism which took place in Rome A.D. 100 and was reproduced in TIME Magazine December 5, 1955. "The deacon raised his hand, and Publius Decius stepped through the baptistry door. Standing waist-deep in the pool was Marcus Vasca the woodseller. He was smiling as Publius waded into the pool beside him. 'Credis?' he asked. 'Credo,' responded Publius. 'I believe that my salvation comes from Jesus the Christ, Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate. With Him I died that with Him I may have Eternal Life.' Then he felt strong arms supporting him as he let himself fall backward into the pool, and heard Marcus' voice in his ear--'I baptize you in the Name of the Lord Jesus'--as the cold water closed over him."

Right up until the truth was lost (and did not return until this last age--this is from Nicaea till the turn of this century) they baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. But it has come back. Satan can't keep the revelation down when the Spirit wants to give it.

Yes, if there were three Gods, you might very well baptize for a Father, and a Son, and a Holy Ghost. But the REVELATION GIVEN TO JOHN was that there is ONE GOD and His Name is LORD JESUS CHRIST, and you baptize for ONE God and only one. That is why Peter baptized the way he did at Pentecost. He had to be true to the revelation which was, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that SAME JESUS, Whom ye have crucified, BOTH LORD AND CHRIST." There He is, "The LORD JESUS CHRIST."

If Jesus is 'BOTH' Lord and Christ, then He (Jesus) is, and cannot be else but "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" in ONE Person manifested in the flesh. It is NOT "God in three persons, blessed trinity," but ONE GOD, ONE PERSON with three major titles, with three offices manifesting those titles. Hear it once more. This same Jesus is "BOTH Lord and Christ." Lord (Father) and Christ (Holy Spirit) are Jesus, for He (Jesus) is BOTH of them (Lord and Christ).

If that doesn't show us the true revelation of the Godhead, nothing will. Lord is NOT another one; Christ is NOT another one. This Jesus is the Lord Jesus Christ--ONE GOD.

Philip one day said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and it will suffice us." Jesus said unto him, "Have I been so long with you and you don't know Me? He that has seen Me has seen the Father, so why do you say, Show us the Father? I and My Father are One." I quoted that once and a lady said, "Just a minute, Mr. Branham, you and your wife are one."

I said, "Not that kind."

She said, "I beg your pardon?"

So I said to her, "Do you see me?"

She said, "Yes."

I said, "Do you see my wife?"

She said, "No."

I said, "Then that oneness is a different kind, for He said, When you see Me, you see the Father."

The prophet said that it would be light at the evening time. In the hymn it is written:

"It'll be light in the evening time,
The path to glory you will surely find,
In the waterway, that's the light today,
Buried in the precious Name of Jesus.
Young and old, repent of all your sin,
The Holy Ghost will surely enter in.
The evening light has come--
It is a fact that God and Christ are one."

Not too long ago I was talking to a Jewish Rabbi. He said to me, "You Gentiles can't cut God in three pieces and give Him to a Jew. We know better than that."

I said to him, "That's just it Rabbi, we don't cut God in three pieces. You believe the prophets, don't you?"

He said, "Certainly I do."

"Do you believe Isaiah 9:6?"

"Yes."

"Who was the prophet speaking of?"

"Messiah."

I said, "What relation will Messiah be to God?"

He said, "He will be God."

I said, "That's right." Amen.

You can't put God into three persons or three parts. You can't tell a Jew that there is a Father, and a Son, and a Holy Ghost. He will tell you right quick where that idea came from. The Jews know this creed was established at the Nicene Council. No wonder they scorn us as heathen.

We talk about a God that does not change. The Jews believe that too. But the church changed its unchanging God from ONE to THREE. But the light is returning at eventide. How striking it is that this truth has come at the time when the Jews are returning to Palestine. God and Christ are ONE. This Jesus is BOTH LORD AND CHRIST.

John had the revelation, and JESUS was the Revelation, and He produced Himself right here in the Scripture--"I AM He That Was, Which Is and Shall Come, the Almighty. Amen."

If revelation is beyond you, look up and seek God for it. That is the only way you are ever going to get it. A revelation has to come from God. It never comes by human, natural endowments, but by Spiritual enduement. You can even memorize the Scripture, and though that is wonderful, that won't do it. It has to be a revelation from God. It says in the Word that no man can say that Jesus is the Christ except by the Holy Ghost. You have to receive the Holy Ghost and then, and only then, can the Spirit give you the revelation that Jesus is the Christ: God, the Anointed One.

No man knows the things of God save the Spirit of God and he to whom the Spirit of God reveals them. We need to call on God for revelation more than anything else in the world. We have accepted the Bible, we have accepted the great truths of it, but it still is not real to most people because the revelation by the Spirit is not there. The Word has not been quickened. The Bible says in II Corinthians 5:21 that we have become the righteousness of God by our union with Jesus Christ. Did you get it? It says that WE ARE THE VERY RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD HIMSELF by being IN CHRIST. It says that He (Jesus) became SIN for us. It does not say He became sinful, but became SIN for us that by our union with Him we might become the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God. If we accept the fact (and we must) that He literally became SIN for us by His substitution for us, then we must also accept the fact that we by our union with Him have become the VERY RIGHTEOUSNESS of God. To

reject one is to reject the other. To accept the one is to accept the other. Now we know the Bible says that. It can't be denied. But the revelation of it is missing. It is not real to the majority of God's children. It is just a good verse in the Bible. But we need to have it made ALIVE to us. That will take revelation.

Let me drop in something here that will both amaze and help you. There is hardly a student that does not believe the New Testament was originally in the Greek language. All our great Bible students have said that God gave the world three great nations with three great contributions for the sake of the Gospel. He gave the Greeks who gave a universal language. He gave us the Jews who gave us the true religion and true knowledge of God through the Saviour. He gave us the Romans who gave us a unified empire with law and a system of highways. Thus we have true religion, the language to express it to many peoples, and the government and roads to spread it physically. And historically speaking this seems to be exactly right. And today our Greek scholars say that the Greek language of Bible days is so perfect and exact that if the student of the Greek is a refined and accurate grammarian he can truly know exactly what the New Testament Word teaches.

But is this not only a theory? Is this true? Is it not so that every Greek scholar of repute from one denomination debates another student of another denomination, and is it not so that their arguments are based on identical Greek words and identical rules of grammar? Certainly that is the way it is. Even back there in the Pergamean Age, just prior to the Nicene Council of 325 there were two great students, Arius and Athanasius who became locked in doctrinal combat over a Greek word. So intense and so world wide did their debate become that historians said the world was divided over a diphthong (the sound of two vowels in a single syllable.)

Now if the Greek is so perfect, and so ordained of God, why was there such a dispute? Surely God did not intend us all to know the Greek? Right today we are having arguments over the Greek. Take for instance the book, "Christ's Paralyzed Church X-rayed" by Dr. McCrossan. In it he sets forth numerous quotes from many renowned Greek grammarians, and proves to his own satisfaction that the unchanging rules of Greek grammar prove conclusively that the Bible teaches a man is baptized with the Holy Ghost subsequent to rebirth. He also states flatly that women can take over the pulpit because the word prophesy means to preach. But has he convinced other students of the Greek who are as able as he? Never. All you have to do is read those students who hold the opposite view and hear their learned quotes.

Now not only is what I have just said true, but let us go a step further. Today we have some students who claim that the original manuscripts were written in the Aramaic which was the language of Jesus and the people of His

day. It is claimed by them that the people did not speak and write in the Greek as is so commonly supposed. And the fact is our historians are divided on that. For example, Dr. Schonfield, a most brilliant student has from research proved to his satisfaction that the New Testament was written in the vernacular of the Greek speaking people of that day. He builds up a fine case for his beliefs, based on the various documents at his disposal. But on the other hand we have another renowned student, Dr. Lamsa, who is convinced that the New Testament was written in the Aramaic and he has none other than the brilliant historian, Toynbee, to back up his contention that the Aramaic, and NOT THE GREEK was the language of the people, so it seems possible that the New Testament was first written in the Aramaic.

However, before we get too concerned about this, let us read both the King James version and the translation by Dr. Lamsa. To our gratification we find the words in both amazingly the same so that there is no difference actually in content or doctrine. We may even conclude that God has allowed these newly discovered manuscripts and recent publications of already known scripts to come before us to prove the authenticity of what we already had. And we find that though translators may fight each other, scripts do not.

Now you can see that you can't base interpretation upon students' profound knowledge of the language the Bible is written in. But if you still can't see that because you are veiled in your mind by tradition here is one last illustration. No one can doubt but what the Scribes and Pharisees and the great scholars of the year 33 A.D. knew the exact laws of grammar and the exact meanings of the words in which the Old Testament was written; but for all their superb knowledge they missed the revelation of God's promised Word manifested in the Son. There He was set forth from Genesis to Malachi, with whole chapters devoted to Him and His ministry, and yet except for a few who were illuminated by the Spirit, they missed him entirely.

We now come to a conclusion, such conclusion as we have already found in the Word. As much as we believe in trying to find the oldest and best manuscripts to get the best record of the Word possible, we will never get the true meaning of it by study and comparison of Scriptures, sincere as we may be. IT WILL TAKE A REVELATION FROM GOD TO BRING IT OUT. THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT PAUL SAID, "WHICH THINGS WE ALSO SPEAK, NOT IN WORDS WHICH MAN'S WISDOM TEACHETH, BUT WHICH THE HOLY GHOST TEACHETH." I Cor. 2:15. The true revelation is God interpreting His own Word by vindicating what is promised.

Now don't let anyone be misled by what I have said and think that I do not believe in the accuracy of the Word as we now have it. I believe this Bible is accurate. Jesus completely authenticated the Old Testament when here on earth and it was compiled exactly as was our New Testament. Make no mistake

about it, we have the infallible Word of God today and no man dares take from it or add to it. But we need the same Spirit that gave it, to teach it to us.

Oh, how we need revelation by the Spirit. We don't need a new Bible, we don't need a new translation, though some are very good, and I am not against them, **BUT WE NEED THE REVELATION OF THE SPIRIT.** And thank God, we can have what we need, for God wants to reveal His Word to us by His Spirit.

May God begin by His Spirit to give us continuous life-giving and prevailing revelation. Oh, if the church could only get a fresh revelation and become by it the living Word manifested, we would do the greater works and glorify God our Father in heaven.

LOOSED FROM SIN

Revelation 1:5,

"Unto Him That loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

The word "washed" is actually "loosed"--"Loosed us from our sins in His own blood." Isn't that wonderful? But are you spiritual minded? Did you catch it? It was His **OWN** blood that loosed us completely from our sins. It was not human blood. It was the blood of God. Peter called it the blood of Christ. Paul called it the blood of the Lord, and the blood of Jesus. Not three persons, but **ONE** person. There is that revelation again, **ONE** God. That omnipotent Jehovah God came down and made Himself a body by means of the virgin birth and in-dwelt it, that it might be the blood of God that would free us (loose us entirely) from our sins and present us spotless before Himself with exceeding great joy.

Would you like an Old Testament type? Let us go back to the Garden of Eden. When the first news came to glory that the son, Adam, had been lost, did God send an angel? Did He send a son? Did He send another one like unto us? No, He came **HIMSELF** to redeem that lost son. Hallelujah! God did not entrust His plan of salvation to another. He trusted only Himself. God was made flesh and dwelt among us and redeemed us unto Himself. We're saved by the "blood of God". The Eternal God in-dwelt a mortal body in order to take away sin. He became the Lamb in order to shed His blood and enter into the veil with it.

Consider this. Since it is the blood of God, it is perfect blood; and if the perfect blood is loosing us from the power and bondage and defilement of sin, then the loosing is perfect and complete. There is now therefore no condemnation.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth (declares us righteous). Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died..."

Romans 8:33-34.

There it is, His death gave us the blood. The blood has loosed us. There is now no condemnation. How can there be? There is nothing to be condemned for, because the blood has loosed us from sin. We are free, guiltless. Don't listen to man, listen to the Word. You are loosed by the blood.

Now don't get tied down again by traditions and creeds and organizations. Don't be led astray by listening to those that deny the power of the Word and deny that Jesus saves, heals, fills with the Holy Ghost and power. You are God's free men, loosed by His own blood. If you still hold your faith to creeds and denominations, it is certain by the evidence that you have lost your faith in the Word.

KINGS AND PRIESTS

Revelation 1:6,

"And He hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

"He hath made us!" Oh, there are certain truths we need to emphasize. This is one of them. HE! HE HATH MADE US! Salvation is His doing. Salvation is of the Lord. All of grace. He redeemed us for a purpose. He bought us for a purpose. We are kings, spiritual kings. Oh, we are going to be kings upon the earth with Him when He sits on His throne. But now we are spiritual kings and we reign over a spiritual kingdom.

It says in Romans 5:17,

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

And in Colossians 1:13,

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom (reign) of His dear Son."

Right now we reign with Christ, having dominion over sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil. Showing forth His praise and glory; showing forth HIMSELF, for it is Christ in us, willing and doing of His good pleasure. Yes, indeed, even now we are seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

"And made us priests." Yes, priests unto Him, offering the spiritual praise of sanctified lips. Spending our lives as a sweet offering unto Him. Worshipping Him in Spirit and in truth. Interceding and petitioning. Priests and kings unto our God. No wonder the world does not appeal to us and we are a peculiar people zealous unto good works. We have been recreated in Him to be children like unto our Father.

THE COMING GOD

Revelation 1:7,

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen."

He is coming. Jesus is coming. God is coming. The Prophet is coming. The Priest and King is coming. The ALL in ALL is coming. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

He is coming. He is coming in clouds, clouds of glory as when He was seen upon the Mount of Transfiguration, and His garments were shining as the power of God enfolded Him. And EVERY eye shall see Him. That means this is not the Rapture. This is when He comes to take over His rightful place as World Ruler. This is when those who have pierced Him with their creeds and denominational doctrines shall mourn, and all the people shall wail in terror because of Him Who is the Word.

This is the revelation story of Zechariah 12:9-14. Zechariah prophesied this about 2500 years ago. It is just about to take place. Listen.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced..."

Now, when is the Gospel returning to the Jews? When the day of the Gentiles is finished. The Gospel is ready to go back to the Jews. Oh, if I could just tell you something that is about to happen right in this our day. This great thing that is about to happen will carry over to Revelation 11 and pick up those two witnesses, those two prophets, Moses and Elijah, turning the Gospel back to the Jews. We're ready for it. Everything is in order. As the Jews brought the message to the Gentiles, even so the Gentiles will take it right back to the Jews, and the Rapture will come.

Now, remember what we have read in Revelation and Zechariah. Both come right after the tribulation. The Church of the First-born does not go through the tribulation. We know that. The Bible teaches that.

At that time it says that God is going to pour out His Spirit upon the house of Israel. It is the same Spirit that was poured upon the Gentiles in their day. "And they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and they shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart..." and each one of the houses apart when He comes in clouds of glory at His Second Coming. Those Jews that pierced Him shall see Him as it says in another Scripture, "Whence did You get those wounds?" and He will say, "In the house of My friends." Not only will it be a mournful time for the Jews who rejected Him as Messiah, but it will be a mournful time for those left of the Gentiles who have rejected Him as the Saviour of this day.

There'll be weeping and wailing. The sleeping virgins will be wailing. They represent the church that refused to get oil (symbol of the Holy Spirit) in their lamps (symbol of the body or holder of the oil) until it was too late. It wasn't that they were not good people. They were virgins and that signifies a high moral order. But they didn't have oil in their lamps so they were cast out where there was wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Let us type this all out in Genesis, chapter 45, where Joseph meets his brethren in Egypt and reveals himself to them. Genesis 45:1-7, "Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance."

Now doesn't that compare with Zechariah 12 just beautifully? Putting the two together we are bound to get it exactly right.

When Joseph was very young he was hated by his brethren. Why was he hated by his brethren? It was because he was Spiritual. He couldn't help seeing those visions, nor could he help dreaming dreams and interpreting. That was in him. He could not display anything else but what was in him. Therefore, when his brothers hated him it was without cause. But he was the beloved of his father. His father was a prophet and understood. That makes a perfect type of Christ. God the Father loved the Son, but the brethren (Scribes and Pharisees) hated Him because He could heal the sick, do miracles and foretell the future, see visions and interpret them. That was no reason to hate Him but they did, and like Joseph's brethren, they hated Him without a cause.

Now remember how those sons of Jacob treated Joseph. They cast him into a pit. They took his coat of many colors that his father had given him and dipped it in blood to make his father think that the boy was killed by some animal. They sold him to some slave traders who took him into Egypt and there he was resold to a general. The general's wife had him falsely imprisoned, but after some time his ability as a prophet brought him to the attention of Pharaoh and he was exalted to the right hand of Pharaoh with such authority that none could approach Pharaoh unless he came first through Joseph.

Now let us examine the life of Joseph while he was in Egypt, for it is here we see him as the perfect type of Christ. While in the house of the general he was falsely accused, punished and imprisoned without a cause, just like they did to Jesus. There in prison he interpreted the dream of the butler and baker who were also prisoners with him. The butler was restored to life, but the other condemned to death. Christ was imprisoned on the cross, forsaken by God and man. On either side of Him was a thief--one died, spiritually, but the other was granted life. And notice, when Jesus was taken off the cross, He was exalted into heaven and now sits at the right hand of the great Spirit of Jehovah; and no man can come to God except by Him. There is ONE mediator between God and men, and He is all you need. There are no Marys or saints, just Jesus.

Keeping on with this type we find in Joseph, notice how that everything he did in Egypt prospered. His first job with the general prospered. Even the jail prospered. When Jesus returns, the desert will blossom as a rose. He is the "Son of Prosperity." As no age ever prospered as the one under Joseph, so there is a time of such blessing coming on this earth as the world has never known. We can every one of us sit under our own fig tree and laugh and rejoice and live forever in His presence. In His presence is fulness of joy and on His right hand there are pleasures forever more. Praise God.

Now notice, that everywhere Joseph went they sounded a trumpet to announce his arrival. The people would scream, "Bow the knee to Joseph!" No matter what a man was doing, when that trumpet sounded he bowed the knee.

He could have been selling something in the street, just reaching out for his money, but he had to stop and bend the knee when that trumpet blew. If he were even a performer or an actor, he would have to stop his act and bow the knee to Joseph when his presence was announced with that trumpet call. And one of these days everything in time will stand still when the trumpet of God shall sound, and the dead in Christ shall rise and morning will break eternal bright and fair. Everything will bow the knee then, for it is written,

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name;

That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Philippians 2:9-11.

But notice another glorious revelation in this typing of Joseph. Joseph, while in Egypt, was given a Gentile bride and through her he received a family of two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Joseph asked his father to bless the two boys. He placed them in front of Jacob so that Manasseh, the first-born would be on Jacob's right and Ephraim to the left. As Jacob was about to bless them he crossed his hands so that the right hand fell upon the younger. Joseph cried out, "Not so, father, this is the first-born to your right." But Jacob said, "God crossed my hands." Here in type we see that the blessing which belonged to the first-born (the Jew) was given over to the younger (the Gentile) through the cross (crossed hands) of the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessing comes through the cross. Galatians 3:13-14, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The blessing of Abraham came through the cross to the Gentiles. The Jews rejected the cross; therefore, Jesus got the Gentile bride.

Now getting back to the story of Joseph meeting his brethren. You recall that not all the brethren came. Joseph knew that and insisted that all the brethren appear before him, or he could not make himself known unto them. Finally they brought the one that was missing, little Benjamin. It was little Benjamin, the full brother of Joseph, that set his soul on fire. And when our Joseph, even Jesus, will come to the people who have kept the commandments of God and who have gone back to Palestine, His soul will be set on fire. Little Benjamin typifies the 144,000 Israelites from all over the earth who have gone back to Palestine for their redemption. They will be standing there ready to receive Him, Whom to know aright is Life eternal. They will say, "This is our God for Whom we have waited." Then they will see Him Whom they have

pierced. And they will cry out in dismay, "Where did these awful wounds come from? How did it happen?" And they will wail and cry, every family apart, everyone apart in the agony of sorrow.

Now where will the Gentile Church be while Jesus is making Himself known to His brethren? Remember that the bride of Joseph with the two children were in the palace, for Joseph had commanded, "Let everyone leave me; put them all out from before me." So the Gentile bride was hidden in the palace of Joseph. Where will the Gentile Church go in the rapture? Into the palace. The bride will be taken off the earth. She will be caught up before the great tribulation to meet her Lord in the air. For three and one-half years while the retributive wrath of God is poured out, she will be in the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Then will He return, leaving His bride in "His Father's house," while He makes Himself known to His brethren. At this very time, the antichrist covenant that the Jews have made with Rome will be broken. Rome and her allies then send their troops to destroy all the God-fearing, Word-abiding Jews.

But as they come against the city to destroy it, there will appear in the heavens the sign of the coming of the Son of Man with His mighty armies to destroy them who have been destroying the earth. With the enemy repulsed, Jesus then comes and presents Himself to the 144,000. Having seen His mighty acts of salvation, they have come to know His power. But also seeing His wounds and knowing that they had rejected Him even to that moment, causes them to cry out in the agony of terror and fear, even as did their brethren of old when they stood before Joseph, being sore afraid that they would be killed. But as Joseph said, "Don't be angry with yourselves. It is all right. God was in it all. He did it to preserve life." Even so will Jesus speak peace and love to them.

Why did the Jews reject Jesus? God was in it all. It was the only way that He could bring out the Gentile bride. He died on the cross to preserve the life of the Gentile Church.

Now these 144,000 are not in the bride. In Revelation 14:4 they are called virgins and they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. The fact that they have not defiled themselves with women shows that they are eunuchs (Matthew 19:12). The eunuchs were the keepers of the bridal chambers. They were attendants. Notice that they do not sit in the throne but are before the throne. No, they are not in the bride, but will be in the glorious millennial reign.

We then see that when these last of Israel have been joined in love to the Lord, and the enemy has been destroyed, God will prepare His holy mountain, His new Garden of Eden for the bride and His and her attendants for the thousand year honeymoon upon the earth. As Adam and Eve were in the

garden and did not finish out the thousand years, now Jesus our last Adam, and His Eve (True Church) will fulfill all the plan of God.

Oh, how the Bible repeats itself. The scene of Joseph and his brethren is about to be repeated, for Jesus is coming soon.

And as we leave the type of Joseph, there is one more thing I want to bring to your attention about this end time. You recall that as Joseph stood before his brethren when Benjamin was not with them he spoke through an interpreter though he knew the Hebrew well. He spoke to his brethren in another tongue. Did you know that the first Gentile Age (the head of gold, Babylonian Age) went out with a message in tongues written on a wall? This age is going out the same way. The abundance of tongues in this day is a further proof that the Times of the Gentiles is over and God is turning back to Israel.

He is coming soon. The Alpha and Omega, the Prophet, Priest and King, the All in All, Lord God of Hosts, is coming soon. Even so Lord Jesus, the One and Only True God, come quickly!

CHAPTER TWO

THE PATMOS VISION

REVELATION 1:9-20

JOHN ON PATMOS

Revelation 1:9,

"I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

This series of visions of the Revelation of the Person of Jesus Christ was given to John while he was banished to the Isle of Patmos. This small island is thirty miles off the coast of Asia Minor in the Aegean Sea. Being rocky and infested with snakes, lizards and scorpions, it had little commercial value, so it was used by the Roman Empire for a penal colony where were housed the more desperate criminals, political prisoners, etc.

You will notice that John has addressed himself to the Christians as a brother in tribulation. It was at this time that the early church was going through great persecutions. Their religion was not only "everywhere spoken against" but the people themselves were imprisoned and killed. John, like multitudes of others, was now suffering imprisonment for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. When arrested, they tried in vain to kill him by boiling him in oil for twenty-four hours. The enraged and powerless officials then sentenced him to Patmos as a witch. But God was with him, and he was spared to leave the island and return to Ephesus where he again continued as pastor until the time of his death.

The visions that John received covered a period of two years, A.D. 95-96. They are the most remarkable of all visions in the Word. The entire book is set forth in symbols, and therefore is the target of much criticism and dispute. However, it does have the seal of God upon it. That makes it authentic and of tremendous value to all who read or listen to its sacred pages.

IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY

Revelation 1:10,

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."

"I was in the Spirit." Isn't that just beautiful? My, I love that. You could just call those words, "The whole of the Christian life." If we are going to live as Christians, we have to be in HIS Spirit. John was not talking about being in his own spirit. That would not have brought these visions. It had to be the Spirit of God. It has to be the Spirit of God with us, too, or all our efforts are in vain. Paul said, "I will pray in the Spirit, I will sing in the Spirit, I will live in the Spirit." If there is anything good that will come to me it has to be revealed by the Spirit, confirmed by the Word, and made manifest by the results it bears. As surely as John needed to be in the Spirit to receive these tremendous revelations fresh from Jesus, we need to be in the Spirit to understand the revelations that God has given to us to live by in His Word, for it is the same Spirit.

Look at it this way. All too many read the Bible where it says in Acts 2:38,

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,"

and just pass right on. They don't see it. If they saw it, by getting in the Spirit, they would know that if they want to receive the Holy Spirit, they need to repent and be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus and then God would be duty bound to fulfill His Word by filling them with the Holy Ghost. They never get in His Spirit or it would happen to them exactly as the Word says. Pray to God for a revelation by His Spirit. That is the first step. Get in the Spirit.

Let me just use another illustration. Suppose you need healing. What does the Word say? Well, we have all read it countless times, but did not get in the Spirit when reading it. Did we ask God for His Spirit to teach us the real truth of it? If we did, we would call the elders, confess our sins, be anointed and prayed for, and that would be that. It might not come immediately, but in His Spirit, it is all over. There is no other court of appeal. God will fulfill His Word. Oh, we need to get in the Spirit, and then things will be done. **DON'T GO THROUGH THE ACTS FIRST. GET IN THE SPIRIT AND THEN GO THROUGH THE ACTS AND WATCH WHAT GOD WILL DO.**

Have you ever noticed how the world gets into the spirit of things that are in the world? They go to their ball games, their sporting events, and their dances. They enter into the spirit of it. They don't sit there like wall flowers, old dried up sticks. They enter right into the feel of things and become a part of things. But, oh, how they hate the Christians for getting into the Spirit of God's Word. They call us fanatics and holy-rollers. There is nothing they won't do to show their hatred and disapproval. But ignore that. You can expect it, knowing where it is coming from. Just go on and get in the Spirit of worship.

Our spirit is clean. It is fresh. It is real. It is sober and serious but nonetheless, full of the joy of the Lord. The Christian ought to be just as

exuberant and full of his pleasure in the Lord as the world is when it savors and delights in its pleasures. Both Christians and the world are human; both have emotions. The difference is the Christians' hearts and emotions are purely on the Lord of Glory and His love, while the world satisfies the flesh.

Now it says that John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

Oh, my, here is a verse that really causes some dissension. Not that it needs to, or ought to, but some just don't see what the Word really says.

First of all we find some fine folks that call the Lord's Day, the Sabbath Day, which to them is Saturday. Then there are the others who call the Lord's Day, Sunday, the first day of the week. But how could it be either of these days, or even the two put together, for John was in the Spirit receiving those visions for a period of two years. Actually what had happened was that John was caught up in the Spirit and transported into the Lord's Day, which is yet to come. The Bible speaks of the Day of the Lord which is to be in the future, and John is now seeing the things of that future day. But in the meantime, just to settle our minds, let us find out exactly what the Sabbath is today.

The Sabbath, as we know it from the New Testament, is NOT the keeping of a certain day. We have no command whatsoever to keep Saturday for a Sabbath, nor do we have any commandment to keep the first day of the week, which is Sunday. Here is the truth of the Sabbath, which means "rest."

Hebrews 4:8,

"For if Jesus had given them rest (or rest day), then would He not afterward have spoken of another day.

There remaineth therefore a rest (Sabbath keeping) to the people of God.

For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His."

Did you hear that key phrase in the last part of the verse?

"God ceased from His own works."

God gave Israel the seventh day for their Sabbath, in commemoration of His own work wherein He created the world and all that was therein, and then stopped creating. He ceased from His labors. He rested. Now it was fine to give a Sabbath rest to a people who were all in one place at one time, so they could all keep a certain day. Today half the world is in light while the other half is in darkness, so it wouldn't work at all. But that is just an argument from the natural.

Let's see what the Bible teaches us about this Sabbath rest. "For he that is entered into his rest." This entering in is not only entering in, but remaining in, the rest. It is an 'eternal rest' of which the seventh day is but a type. 'Seven' is completion. 'Eight' is the 'first' day again. Jesus' resurrection was in the first day of the week, giving us eternal life and eternal Sabbath rest. Thus we see

why God could not give us any one certain day of the week as a Sabbath (rest). We've 'entered into' and do 'remain in' our rest, which Israel could not do, having only a shadow of the true substance which we enjoy. Why go back to a shadow when we have reality now?

How we receive this rest, or continuing Sabbath, is at the invitation of Jesus.

He said in Matthew 11:28,29,

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me;... and ye shall find rest (or keeping of the Sabbath, not a day, but eternal life, Sabbath) unto your souls."

No matter how long you have been laboring under your load of sin, whether it is ten years, thirty years or fifty years, or longer, come with your tired weary life and you will find His rest (the true Sabbath). Jesus will give you rest.

Now exactly what is that rest that Jesus will give?

Isaiah 28:8-12,

"For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people.

To whom He said, This is the rest (Sabbath) wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest (or keeping of His Sabbath); and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear."

Here it is prophesied right here in Isaiah. And it came to pass about 700 years later at Pentecost when they were all filled with the Holy Ghost exactly as it was said they would be. This is the true Sabbath that was promised. Thus when they were filled with the Holy Ghost they ceased from their worldly works, their worldly doings, their evil ways. The Holy Ghost took charge of their lives. They entered into rest. There is your rest. That is your Sabbath. It is not a day, nor a year, but the eternity of being filled and blessed in the Holy Spirit. It is you ceasing, and God doing. It is God in you willing and doing of His good pleasure.

Let me make one more note about the Saturdarians who claim that we meet on the wrong day of the week when we meet on Sunday, the first day. Here is what Justin said in the second century. "On Sunday a meeting is held of all

who live in cities and villages, and a section is read of the memoirs of the apostles and the writings as long as time permits. When the reading is finished, the president in a discourse gives the admonition and exhortation to imitate those noble things. After this we all arise to offer common prayer. At the close of the prayer, as we have described, bread and wine are placed before us, and thanksgiving made and the congregation answers, "Amen". Then the elements are distributed to each one and are partaken of and carried by the deacons to the house of the absent. The wealthy and willing then give contributions according to their free will and this collection is deposited with the president who therewith supplies orphans, widows, prisoners, strangers in want." Thus we see that those who claim the early church carried on the Judaic tradition of assembling on the last day of the week are grossly ignorant of what history actually sets forth, and are therefore not worthy of confidence.

Oh, that people might come unto Him and find that rest. There is a cry in all hearts for that rest but the majority don't know the answer. So they try to still the cry by a religious process of keeping certain days or accepting denominational creeds and dogmas. But failing in that, many try drinking, carousing, and every physical excess, thinking that by worldly pleasures there can be some satisfaction. But in such there is no rest. They smoke and take pills to quiet their nerves. But there is no rest in earthly potions. They need Jesus. They need the heavenly remedy, the rest of the Spirit.

Then the most of them go to church on Sunday. That is good but even there they have no idea of how to approach God and how to worship Him. Jesus said that true worship was in Spirit and in truth, John 4:24. But what kind of worship can you get in a church that knows so little of God it puts up a Santa Claus at Christmas and bunnies at Easter? Where did they get that? They got it from the pagans and made it a part of the church doctrine. But when one turns to the Lord and is filled with the Holy Ghost he ceases from all such things. He has a rest in his soul. He really begins to live, and love God and worship Him.

Now let's get back to our Scripture. We know what the Lord's Day is not. If it is not Saturday or Sunday, what is it? Well, let's put it this way. Today is certainly not the Lord's Day.

This is man's day. It is man's doing, man's work, man's church, man's idea of worship, man's everything, for it is man's world (kosmos). BUT THE DAY OF THE LORD IS COMING. Yes, it is. It is just that at this time of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, John was taken up by the Spirit and transported by the Spirit to that Great Day that is coming. The Lord's Day is when the days of man are over. The kingdoms of this world will then become the kingdoms of our God. The day of the Lord is when the judgments fall, and after that comes the millennium. Right now the world does what it wants to do with the Christian. They call him all manner of evil names, making fun of him. But

there is coming that great and notable day when they will wail and howl, for the Lamb is coming in wrath to judge the world. That is when the righteous will have their day with the Lord, for the wicked shall burn and the righteous will walk over their ashes into the millennium.

Malachi 4:3,

"And ye shall tread down the wicked for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts."

THE VOICE LIKE A TRUMPET

Revelation 1:10,

"... And heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."

John was in the Spirit, and when he was, he saw the great and wonderful day of the Lord Jesus and all His holy power. The future was about to unfold for God was about to teach him. John did not say it was a trumpet. It was like a trumpet. Now when a trumpet is blown it has an urgency about it. It is like the herald, the king's messenger, coming to the people. He blows on a trumpet. It is an urgent call. The people gather to listen. (Israel was always assembled by the sounding of a trumpet.) Something important is at hand. "Listen to it." So this voice had the same urgency of appeal as did the trumpet. Clear and strong it was, startling and awakening. Oh, that we might hear the voice of God as a trumpet this day, for it is the 'Gospel Trumpet' sounding forth the 'Word of Prophecy' to make us aware of, and prepared for, what is coming upon the earth.

THE COMMAND TO WRITE

Revelation 1:11,

"Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."

Here it is. The First and Last, the Alpha and Omega: that's ALL of it. The one true God. The Voice and Word of God. Reality and truth is at hand. What a thing it is to be in the Spirit. My, to be in the presence of God and hear from Him...

"What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches."

The voice that sounded forth His Word in the Garden of Eden and upon Mount Sinai, which voice was also heard in the excellent glory of the Mount of Transfiguration, was once again sounding forth, and this time to the seven churches with a complete and final revelation of Jesus Christ.

"Write the visions, John. Make a record of them for the ages which are to follow, for they are the true prophecies which **MUST** come to pass. Write them and send them out, making them known."

John recognized that voice. Oh, you will recognize that voice when He calls if you are one of His own.

THE GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS

Revelation 1:12,

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks."

John does not say that he turned to see the one whose voice he heard, but he turned to see the voice. Oh, I like that. He turned to see the voice. The voice and the person are one and the same. Jesus is the **WORD**.

John 1:1-3,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made."

If you can ever get to really see the Word you will be seeing Jesus.

When John turned he saw seven golden candlesticks. Actually they were lampstands. And according to verse 20, they are the seven churches:

"the seven candlesticks that thou sawest are the seven churches."

To represent the churches they could hardly be candles. A candle burns but awhile and then is burned out. It dies. There would be no more to it. But lampstands possess a lasting quality not found in candles.

If you want to get a beautiful picture of the lamp, read about it in Zechariah 4:1-6,

"And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep.

And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof.

And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my Lord?

Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my Lord.

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the Word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My 'Spirit', saith the Lord of Hosts."

Here is another lamp of pure gold. It is burning brightly because it has plenty of oil which it is getting from the two olive trees, which stand on either side. The two trees represent the Old and New Testament, and of course the oil typifies the Holy Ghost, Who alone can give the light of God to the people. The angel who spoke to Zechariah was as much as saying "this what you see means that the church cannot accomplish anything by its own might or power, but by the Holy Ghost."

Now examine this lampstand. You will notice that it has a large bowl, or reservoir, that is central to seven arms that come out of it. This bowl is filled with olive oil which flows through seven wicks which are placed in the seven arms. It is the same oil that burns and makes a light at the end of the seven pipes. This light never went out. The priests just kept pouring oil into the bowl.

The lamp was lit in a special way. First, the priest took fire from the sacred altar which was originally lighted by the fire of God. He lit, first of all, the lamp that was sitting on top of the bowl. He then lit the second lamp from the flame of the first lamp. The third lamp received its fire from the second lamp, as did the fourth receive its from the third, and so on, until all the seven lamps were burning. This holy fire from the altar, being passed from lamp to lamp, is a wonderful type of the Holy Spirit in the seven Church Ages. The original outpouring of Pentecost (which outpouring came direct from Jesus on the Mercy Seat) is enduing His Church through all the seven ages, and showing forth perfectly that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever, the never changing God in His essence and His ways.

In John 15, Jesus said, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." He is the main Vine, that which comes out of the original root from the original seed that has the life in it. Now the vine does not bear fruit; it is the branches that do that. Now watch this: You can take a citrus tree such as an orange tree, and graft into it a grapefruit limb, a lemon limb, a tangelo limb, and other kinds of that

variety, and all those limbs will grow. But those grafted limbs will not bear oranges. No sir. The lemon limb will bear lemons, and the grapefruit limb will bear grapefruit and so on. Yet those limbs will be thriving off the life in the tree. But if that tree ever puts forth another branch of itself it will be an orange branch and bear oranges. Why? Because the life in the limb and the life in the trunk are identical whereas it wasn't so with the grafted limbs. Those grafted branches had their sources in other kinds of life from other trees, from other roots, from other seeds. Oh, they will bear fruit all right, but they won't bear oranges. They cannot because they are not the original.

That's the way the church is. The vine has been split and limbs have been grafted in. They have grafted in Baptist limbs, Methodist limbs, Presbyterian limbs, and Pentecostal limbs. And those limbs are bearing Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, and Presbyterian fruit. (Denominational seeds from which they produce their fruit.) But if the vine ever brings forth another branch of itself, that branch will be exactly like the vine itself. It will be the same kind of a branch that was brought forth at Pentecost. It will speak in tongues, prophesy, and have the power and signs of the resurrected Jesus Christ in it. Why? Because it's thriving on the natural resources of the vine itself. You see, it wasn't grafted into the vine; it was BORN in the vine. When those other branches were grafted in, all they could do was bear their own fruit for they were not born of that vine. They don't know about that original life and original fruit. They cannot know for they were not born of it. But if they had been born of it, that same life that was in the original stem (Jesus) would have come through them and manifested through them. John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father."

Denominations which are man directed cannot be born of God; for it is the Spirit, NOT MAN, that gives life.

How thrilling it is to think of those seven lamps drawing life and light from the resources of that main bowl because they had their wicks dipped therein. Each church age messenger is depicted here. His life is on fire with the Holy Ghost. His wick (life) has been immersed in Christ. Through that wick he is drawing the very life of Christ, and by it gives out light to the church. What kind of a light is he giving? The very same light that was in the first lamp that was lit. And right on down the ages to the present time of the last day messenger the same life and the same light is manifested by a life that is hid with Christ in God.

Not only can we speak thus of the messengers, but every true believer is dramatically depicted here. They are all drawing from the same source. They have all been dipped into the same bowl. They are dead to themselves and their lives are hid with Christ in God. They are sealed in by the Holy Ghost.

Ephesians 4:30, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." No man can pluck them out of His hand. Their lives cannot be tampered with. The visible life is burning and shining, giving light and manifestations of the Holy Ghost. The inner, invisible life is hidden in God and fed by the Lord's Word. Satan cannot touch them. Not even death can touch them, for death has lost its sting; the grave has lost its victory. Thanks be unto God, they have this victory in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen and amen.

NO LONGER THE PRIEST

Revelation 1:13,

"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

There He stands, One like unto the Son of Man. As the jewel is beautified by the mounting of the ring, so He is glorified in the midst of the churches. It is the Lord's Day; for John sees Him standing, not as a priest, but as the coming Judge. The golden girdle is no longer girt around the waist where the priest must wear it as he ministers to God in the Holiest Place, but it is now around His shoulders, for He is not now the priest but the JUDGE.

Now has John 5:22 come to pass,

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."

His service has been rendered. The priesthood is over. The days of the prophecy are finished. He stands girded as the JUDGE.

THE SEVENFOLD GLORY OF HIS PERSON

Revelation 1:14-16,

"His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire.

And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters.

And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

How deeply moving and inspiring was the appearing of Jesus to John, who was in exile for the cause of the Word, and behold, the Living WORD now stands before him. What an illuminating vision, for every descriptive attribute has a significance. What a revelation of His glorious Being.

1. His Hair as White as Snow.

John first notices and mentions the whiteness of His hair. It was white, and as bright as snow. This was not because of His age. Oh, no. The brilliantly white hair does not signify age but experience, maturity, and wisdom. The Eternal One does not age. What is time to God? Time means little to God, but wisdom means much. It is as when Solomon called to God for wisdom to judge the people of Israel. Now He is coming, the Judge of all the earth. He will be crowned with wisdom. That is what the white and glistening hair signifies.

See this in Daniel 7:9-14,

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire.

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the Judgment was set, and the books were opened.

I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

There it is. Daniel saw Him with that white hair. He was the Judge opening the books and judging out of them. Daniel saw Him coming in clouds. That is exactly what John saw. They both saw Him exactly the same. They saw the Judge with His judgment girdle over His shoulders, standing pure and holy, full of wisdom, fully qualified to judge the world in righteousness. Hallelujah.

Even the world understands this symbology, for in ancient times the judge would appear and convene court, dressed in a white wig and a long robe that signified his complete authority (head to foot robe) to mete out justice.

2. His Eyes as Fire.

Think of it. Those eyes that were once dimmed with tears of sorrow and pity. Those eyes that wept with compassion at the grave of Lazarus. Those eyes that saw not the evil of the murderers who hanged Him on a cross but in sorrow cried, "Father forgive them." Now those eyes are a flame of fire, the eyes of the Judge Who will recompence those who rejected Him.

Of all the human emotions He manifested the most when He appeared as the Son of Man was this one, He wept often. Yet behind that weeping and that sorrow there was still God.

Those same eyes saw visions. They looked deep within the hearts of men and read their very thoughts and knew all their various ways. Blazing out of mortal eyes was God, Who cried to those who knew Him not for what He was,

"... If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."

John 8:24.

"If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not.

But if I do (the works of My Father), though ye believe not Me, believe the works..."

John 10:37,38.

Like Jeremiah of old, He was the weeping prophet, for men received not the Word of God and thrust aside the revelation.

Those fiery flaming eyes of the Judge are even now recording the lives of all flesh. Running to and fro throughout the earth, there is nothing He does not know. He knows the desires of the heart and what each one intends to do. There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed, for all things are naked before Him with Whom we have to do. Think of it, He knows even now what you are thinking.

Yes, there He stands as Judge with flaming eyes to mete out judgment. The day of mercy is over. Oh, that men might repent and seek His face in righteousness while there is yet time. That they might make His bosom their pillow ere the world dissolves in fire.

3. The Feet of Brass.

"And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." Brass is noted for its remarkable hardness. There is nothing that is known that you can put with it to temper it. But this brass that describes His feet is more remarkable yet in that it has stood the test of the fiery furnace, a test that no other one has gone through. And that is exactly right. For brass signifies Divine Judgment: a judgment that God decreed and brought to pass.

John 3:14-19,

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up:

That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Numbers 21:8, 9,

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

Israel had sinned. Sin had to be judged. So God commanded Moses to place a brazen serpent on a pole, and he who looked was saved from the penalty of his sin.

The brazen serpent on the pole symbolized sin from the Garden of Eden, where the serpent beguiled Eve, causing her to sin. Brass speaks of judgment, as is seen in the brazen altar where the penalty for sin was met in the sacrifice upon the altar. When God judged Israel for her sins in the days of Elijah, He withheld the rain and the fiery heavens became as brass. Now in this illustration we see that the serpent upon the pole represents sin already judged, for it is made of brass, showing Divine judgment had already fallen upon sin. Then whoever looked at the serpent on the pole, accepting the significance of it, was made whole, for this was the work or salvation of the Lord.

The serpent on the pole is a type of what Jesus came into the earth to accomplish. He was made flesh in order to take upon Himself the judgments of God for sin. The foundation of the altar of sacrifice was solid brass, typifying the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. Judgment had already passed upon Him when as yet there were no sinners. Salvation being entirely of the Lord, He trod the wine press of the fierceness of the wrath of God alone. His vestures were dyed crimson with His own blood. The fiery furnace of the just judgment and wrath of God was His portion. He suffered, the just for the unjust. "Thou art worthy, O Lamb of God, for Thou hast redeemed us by Thine

own blood." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquity, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. He suffered as no man had ever suffered. Even before the cross He had shed great drops of sweat like blood from His body as in the intense agony of the ordeal ahead the very blood separated in His veins.

Luke 22:44,

"And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

But some day those feet of brass will stand upon the earth. And the Judge of all the earth He shall be, and with equity and perfection will He judge mankind. And there will be no evading that judgment. No turning of that justice. There will be no tempering of it. He that is unjust will be unjust still; he that is filthy will be filthy still. The Unchanging One will not change then, for He never has and never will. Those feet of brass will crush the enemy. They will destroy the antichrist, the beast and the image and all that is vile in His sight. He will destroy the church systems that have taken His Name only to corrupt its brilliance and crush them along with the antichrist. All the wicked, the atheists, the agnostics, the modernists, the liberals, will all be there. Death, hell, and the grave will be there. Yes they will. For when He comes, the books will be opened. That is when even the lukewarm church and the five foolish virgins will appear. He will separate the sheep from the goats. When He comes He will take over the kingdom, for it is His, and with Him will be the thousands times ten thousands, His Bride, who come to minister to Him. Glory! Oh, it is now or never. Repent before it is too late. Wake up from amongst the dead and seek God to be filled with His Spirit or you will miss eternal life. Do it now while there is time.

4. His Voice Was as the Sound of Many Waters.

Now what do the waters represent? Hear it in Revelation 17:15, "... the waters which thou sawest,... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." His voice was as the sound of multitudes speaking. What is it? It is the judgment. For these are the voices of the multitudes of witnesses, who by the Holy Spirit all through the ages have testified to Christ and preached His Gospel. It will be the voice of every man rising in judgment against the sinner who would not take warning. The voices of the seven messengers will be heard loud and clear. Those faithful preachers who preached the saving power of Jesus, who preached water baptism in Jesus' Name, who preached the in-filling and power of the Holy Ghost, who stood with the Word more than they stood with their own lives; all of them were the voice of Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost down through the ages.

John 17:20,

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word."

Have you ever thought how terrifying it is to a man drifting helplessly toward a cataract? Think now of that roar as he approaches his sure and certain doom. And just exactly like that is coming the day of judgment when the roar of the multitude of voices condemns you for not having paid heed ere it was too late. Take heed this very hour. For at this moment your thoughts are being recorded in heaven. There your thoughts speak louder than your words. Like the Pharisee who claimed so much with his mouth, but not listening to the Lord, his heart became corrupt and evil until it was too late, even now this could be your last call to hear the Word and receive it unto eternal life. It will be too late when you approach the roar of the many voices of judgment and doom.

But have you ever noticed how sweet and relaxing the sound of water can be? I like to fish, and I like to find a spot where the water is whispering in ripples. I can just lie back and hear it speaking peace and joy and contentment to my heart. How glad I am to be anchored in the haven of rest where the voice of the Lord speaks peace, as the Word of the waters of separation hath declared. How thankful we should be to hear His voice of love and care and guidance and protection. And some day we will hear that same sweet voice speak, not in judgment, but in welcome to us whose sins have been remitted by His blood, whose lives have been Spirit-filled, and whose walk was in the Word. What could be more precious than to hear the multitudes of welcoming voices and be surrounded by those multitudes who have believed unto eternal life? Oh, there is nothing like it. I pray that you will hear His voice and harden not your heart, but receive Him as your King.

Oh, if you would only see it. It was the waters that destroyed the world, but it was the same waters that saved Noah and also saved the whole earth for Noah. Listen to His voice, the voice of His servants, as it calls to repentance and life.

5. In His Right Hand Were Seven Stars.

"And He had in His right hand seven stars." Now of course we already know from verse twenty what the seven stars actually are.

"And the mystery of the seven stars are the angels (messengers) of the seven churches."

Now we couldn't make a mistake here on any account, as He interprets it for us. These seven stars are the messengers to the seven successive church ages. They are not called by name. They are just set forth as seven, one to each age. From the Ephesian Age on down to this Laodicean Age each messenger brought the message of truth to the people, never failing to keep it the Word of God to that particular church age. Each one held to it. They were steadfast in

their loyalty to the original light. As each age pulled away from God, His faithful messenger turned that age back to the Word. Their strength was from the Lord or they never could have stemmed the tide. They were safe in His care, for nothing could pluck them out of His hand, and neither could anything separate them from the love of God, let it be sickness, peril, nakedness, famine, sword, life or death. They were truly yielded to Him and kept by His omnipotence. They were not concerned about the persecution that came their way. Pain and derision was but cause to give glory to God that they were counted worthy to suffer for Him. And in thankfulness for His salvation they burned with the light of His life and reflected His love, patience, meekness, temperance, gentleness, faithfulness. And God backed them up with wonders, signs, and miracles. They were accused of being fanatics, and holy-rollers. They were denounced by organizations and held in mockery, but they kept true to the Word.

Now it is not hard to stand up and keep true to a creed. It is easy, for the devil is right behind all that. But it is something else to be true to God's Word and go back to what the Word originally produced after Pentecost.

Not long ago a man said to me that the Roman Catholic church had to be the true church as it had been true to what it believed over all the years, and kept on growing and not changing. That isn't so at all. Any church with the government behind it, and with its own creed which isn't the Word at all, and with no manifested ministry to cause the devil to get aroused, could surely carry on. That was not a criterion. But when you think of that little group whose members were sawn asunder, fed to lions, persecuted and driven from pillar to post and yet stayed true to the Word--now definitely that would have to be God. How they survived their battle of faith and carried on still: THAT is the miracle.

And this comfort is not for the seven church age messengers only. Every true believer is in the hand of God and can draw from His love and power, and receive the full benefit of all that God is to the believer. What God gives the messenger, and how He blesses and uses the messenger, is an example to all believers of His goodness and care to ALL members of His body. Amen.

6. The Two-edged Sword.

"And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."

In Hebrews 4:12,

"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Out of His mouth went the sharp two-edged sword which is the WORD OF GOD.

Revelation 19:11-16,

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.

His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself.

And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His Name is called The Word of God.

And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

John 1:48,

"Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee."

There it is. When He comes, that Word will come against all nations and all men. And none will be able to stand against it. It will reveal what was in every heart as He did with Nathanael. The Word of God will show who did the will of God and who didn't. It will make known the secret works of every man and why he did them. It will divide asunder.

That is what it says in Romans 2:3,

"And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"

Then it goes on to say how God is going to judge men. Here it is in verses 5 to 17. The hard impenitent heart will be judged. The works will be judged. The motives will be judged. There won't be any respect before God; but all will be judged by that Word, no one escaping it. Those who heard and wouldn't listen will be judged by what they heard. Those that rested in it saying they believed it, but didn't live it, will be judged. Every secret will come out in the open and be shouted from the housetops. Oh, we will really understand history then. There won't be a mystery left from all the ages.

But do you know that He is revealing the heart-secrets of men and women in this age in which we are living? Who else could reveal the secrets of the heart but the Word, Himself?

Hebrews 4:12,

"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

It is the Word. It is performing where-unto It was sent, for It (the Word) is full of power. It is the same Spirit that was in Jesus (the Word) that is present again in the church in this last age as a last sign trying to head the people off from judgment, for they that reject Him (the Word) are now already come into judgment, crucifying Him afresh.

Hebrews 6:6,

"If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."

Now Paul said that the Word came in power as well as voice. The Word preached actually demonstrated itself. Like a flaming, cutting sword it went to the consciences of men, and like a surgeon's knife it cut out the diseases and set captives free. Everywhere those early believers went, "they went preaching the Gospel (Word) and God confirmed that Word with signs following." The sick were healed, devils were cast out, and they spoke in new tongues. That was the Word in action. That Word has never failed in the mouths of believing Christians. And in this last age it is here stronger and greater than ever in the true Word bride. Oh, little flock, you little minority, hold on to the Word, fill your mouth and heart with it, and some day God will give you the kingdom.

7. His Face Like The Sun.

"And His countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength."

Matthew 17:1-13,

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.

And was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.

And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him.

Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses and one for Elias.

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.

And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead.

And His disciples asked Him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise, shall also the Son of Man suffer of them.

Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist."

Now in Matthew 16:28, prefacing Matthew 17:1-13, Jesus had said,

"... There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

And the three apostles did see just that--the order of His second coming. They saw Him transfigured there on the mountain top. His raiment was blazing white and His face shone like the sun at its zenith. And there as He appeared, stood Moses and Elijah on either side. That is exactly how He is coming again. Truly Elijah will first come and turn the hearts of the children (bride) back to the fathers' Apostolic Word Doctrine.

Malachi 4:5,6,

"Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Israel is already a nation. She is established now with her armies, navy, postal system, flag, and all that pertains to nation-hood. But there is still to be fulfilled the Scripture that says,

"... or shall a nation be born at once?..."

Isaiah 66:8.

That day is coming soon. The fig tree has put forth her buds. The Israelites are waiting for the Messiah. They are expecting Him and their expectations are about to be fulfilled. Israel will be reborn Spiritually, for her Light and her Life are about to be revealed to her.

In Revelation 21:23,

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

This is the New Jerusalem. The Lamb will be in that city, and because of His presence, there will be no light needed. The sun won't rise and shine there, for He is the Sun and Light thereof, Himself. The nations that come into it will walk in His light. Aren't you happy that day is upon us? John saw that day coming. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

Malachi 4:1-3,

"For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of Hosts."

There it is again. The SUN shining out in all its strength. Oh, the strength of the Son of God shining in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. There He stands, the Judge, the One who suffered and died for us. He took the wrath of Divine judgment upon Himself. He tread the wine press of the fierceness of the wrath of God alone. As we have already stated, to the sinner His voice is as the sound of the cataract or the surf pounding in waves of death upon the rocky shores. But to the saint, His voice is as the sound of the sweetly singing brook as you lie at rest, satisfied in Christ. Shining upon us with His warming rays of love He says, "Fear not, I am He Which Was, Which Is, Which Is To Come; I am the Almighty. Beside Me there is no other. I am the Alpha and Omega, the ALL of it." He's the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star. He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul. Yes, that great day is ready to break and the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings.

THE VICTORIOUS CHRIST

Revelation 1:17,18,

"And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not;

I am the First and the Last; I am He That liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

No human being could stand the full effect of that vision. His strength utterly gone, John fell at His feet as though dead. But the hand of the Lord in love touched him, and the voice of blessing said, "Fear not. Don't be afraid. I am the First and Last. I am He That liveth, and was dead; and, behold I am alive for evermore." What is there to fear? The judgment that fell upon Him at the cross, at the grave, and when He descended, was for us. He absorbed the full brunt of the wound of sin and there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. See for a surety our "Attorney" is our "Judge". He is both "Attorney" and "Judge." As Judge the "case is settled"--it is finished. There is now therefore no condemnation. Why should the church fear? What promise has He ever failed to manifest before us? Why should it fear punishment or death? It has all been overcome. Here is the mighty conqueror.

Here is the One Who conquered both worlds of the seen and unseen. Not like Alexander, who conquered the world at the age of thirty-three and knew no other way to turn for further conquest, so he died a victim of sin and riotous living. Not like Napoleon, who conquered all Europe but finally was defeated at Waterloo and banished to Elba, only to find himself conquered. But nothing could conquer Christ. He that descended has now ascended above all, and unto Him has been given a Name that is above every name. Yes, He conquered death, hell, and the grave, and has the keys thereof. What He looses is loosed, and what He binds is bound. There is no changing of it. There was no conqueror before Him and there is none beside Him. He alone is the Saviour, Redeemer. He is the ONLY God: and "Lord Jesus Christ" is His Name.

"Don't fear, John. Don't fear, little flock. All that I am, you are heir to. All my power is yours. My omnipotence is yours as I stand in your midst. I have not come to bring fear and failure, but love and courage and ability. All power is given unto Me and it is yours to use. You speak the Word and I will perform it. That is My covenant and it can never fail."

THE SEVEN STARS AND CANDLESTICKS

Revelation 1:20,

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels (messengers) of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

We have already discovered the truth of these two mysteries. Oh, we haven't revealed who these seven messengers were, but by the help of God we will and that mystery will be accomplished. The seven ages we know. They are listed in the Word, and we will deal with each so as to come up to this last age in which we live.

But in one last closing glimpse of this chapter, see Him as He stands there in the midst of the golden lampstands with the seven stars in His right hand. Oh, it is breathtaking to see Him standing there in His Supreme Deity. He is the Judge, the Priest, the King, the Eagle, the Lamb, the Lion, the Alpha, the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Father, Son, Holy Ghost, He Which Was, Which Is, Which Is To Come, the Almighty, the ALL IN ALL. There He is, the Author and Finisher. Worthy is that Lamb! He proved His worth as He bought our salvation by Himself. Now He stands in all His power and all His glory with all things committed unto Him as Judge.

Yes, there He stands amidst the lampstands, with the stars in His hand. It is night, for that is when we use lamps for light, and that is when the stars are seen shining and reflecting the light of the sun. And it is dark. The church is walking by faith in the darkness. Her Lord departed this earth but the Holy Spirit still shines out through the church, giving light to this old sin-cursed world. And those stars reflect His light also. The only light they have is His light. How dark it is--how spiritually cold. Yet when He comes into the midst it is light and warm, and the church is empowered and through Him does the works that He did.

Oh, that we might get a glimpse of Him as did John. What manner of people we ought to be, standing before Him at that day!

If you have not already given your life to Him, may you turn your heart to God this moment, and kneel down right where you are, and ask His forgiveness for your sins, and surrender your life to Him. Then we will attempt to approach the Seven Church Ages together; and as we do I pray that God will help this unworthy servant to reveal His Word to you.

CHAPTER THREE

THE EPHESIAN CHURCH AGE

INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCH AGES

In order for you to fully understand the message of the Church Ages I would like to explain the various principles that allowed me to arrive at the names of the messengers, the length of the ages, and other factors involved therein.

Since this study was to be the most serious one I had ever undertaken up to this time, I sought God for many days for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Then only did I read the Scriptures on the Church Ages and delve into the many church histories written by the most unbiased historians that I could find. God did not fail to answer my prayer, for while I read the Word and the histories, I was enabled by the Holy Spirit to see unfolded a pattern that runs through the centuries and right into this present, last day.

The key given me of the Lord whereby I was able to determine the messenger for each age is a most Scriptural one. In fact it might be called the Keystone of the Bible. It is the revelation that God never changes, and that His ways are as unchangeable as He is.

In Heb. 13:8 it says,

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever".

Ecclesiastes 3:14,15,

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before Him.

That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."

Here it is: an unchanging God with unchanging ways. What He did at the FIRST He will have to keep on doing until it is done for the LAST time. There will never be a change. Apply that to the Church Ages. The kind of man that God chose for the first age, and how God manifested in that man's ministry, would be the example for all other ages. What God did in the first church age is what He wants to do in all other ages.

Now we know exactly from the Word which was recorded by the Holy Spirit how the first, or original church, was founded and how God manifested Himself in her. The Word can't change or be changed because the Word is God.

John 1:1,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

To change one word of it, as did Eve, brings sin and death, even as it says in Revelation 22:18-19,

"... If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Thus, what the church was at Pentecost is the standard. That is the pattern. There is no other pattern. No matter what the scholars say, God has NOT changed that pattern. What God did at Pentecost He has to keep on doing until the church ages close.

Though scholars may tell you the apostolic age is over, don't you believe it. Such a statement is wrong on two counts. First of all, it is wrong to suppose there aren't any more apostles, just because the original twelve are dead. An apostle means a 'sent one'; and there are many sent ones today, but they are called missionaries. As long as men are being called and sent forth with the Word of Life there is an apostolic age going on. Secondly, they refer to an age of 'manifested Holy Ghost power' as being over since the Bible has been completed. That is untrue. There is not even one Scripture that suggests that, but many conclusively state otherwise. Here is our proof that both of these charges are false.

Acts 2:38,39.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The promise of power with which the apostles were endued at Pentecost is to "you (Jews), and to your children (Jews), and to all that are afar off (Gentiles), and to as many as the Lord our God shall call (both Jew and Gentile)". Until He stops calling, the Pentecostal message and power will NOT CEASE.

What the church had at Pentecost is her inalienable right. Originally, she had the pure Word of God. She had the power of the Spirit manifested in divers signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Hebrews 2:1-4,

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

For if the Word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience (to the Word) received a just recompence of reward;

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him;

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?"

That original church was not organized by men. It was led by the Holy Ghost. It wasn't very big. It was hated and despised. It was oppressed. It was persecuted unto death. But it was true to God. It stayed with the original Word pattern.

Now don't get led astray here. When I said that God and His ways never change, I did not say that the church and its messengers could not change. The church isn't God. So she can change. But what I said was that because of the unchanging God with unchanging ways we can go back to the beginning and see the first and perfect act of God and then judge by that standard. That is how it is done. The True Church will always try to be like the original at Pentecost. The True Church of today will try to approximate that early first one. And the messengers to the churches, having the same Spirit of God in them, will try to approximate the apostle Paul. They won't be exactly like him; but the true messengers will be the ones that come the closest to Paul, who was free of all men, sold out to God, and gave forth the Word of God only, and manifested the Holy Ghost in power. None else would do. You have to work from the original. As like begets like, the True Church will always be the one that tries to follow in the steps of her founders at Pentecost and her messengers will follow the apostle Paul, the first messenger to the first church age. It is that simple, and that wonderful.

With this key, so simple, yet so wonderful, I was able, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to read the Book of Revelation and the histories and find therein each age, each messenger, the duration of each age, and the part each played in the purpose of God from Pentecost to the consummation of those ages.

Since you now understand how we judge what the True Church was like (what she was at Pentecost and what she was in the apostolic age as set forth in the Word in the Book of Acts) we can apply the same rule to show us how the church failed. The basic error, or errors, that crept into the first church and were revealed in the Book of Acts and Revelation and also in the Epistles will become more and more visibly manifested in each subsequent age, until we come to a complete blackout of truth in the last, or Laodicean Age.

Now out of this first key that we have received of the Lord, there comes another and slightly less wonderful truth. I said that the True Church would always try to be like it was in the Book of Acts. That is exactly right. But we have discovered that the Word also teaches an invasion of error until there is a complete blackout of truth in the last day when the Lord is about to appear. The question now arises in our minds; does God forsake His own and let them fall into a state of complete deception? On no account, for the Scripture says very clearly in Matthew 24:24, that the 'Elect' CANNOT be deceived.

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, they shall deceive the very elect."

What then? The answer is clear before us. There is a True Church and a false church. There is a True Vine and a false vine. But of course that false church, false vine body, will always try to usurp the position of the True Church and contend that she, and not the Elect, are the real and authentic. The false will try to kill the True. That is how it was in the Book of Acts, that is how it is set forth in the seven ages, and that is how it is declared in the various Epistles. That is how it has been. That is how it is now. That is how it will be. It can't change.

Now let us be very careful that we are not confused at this point. Thus we will seek the Word to validate this claim. Let us go back to the Book of the beginning, Genesis. In the Garden of Eden there were TWO trees. One was good; one was evil. One produced LIFE, the other produced Death. There were two children who originally offered sacrifices to God. Let me repeat that, they BOTH offered sacrifices to God.

Genesis 4:3-5,

"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect..."

But one (Cain) was evil, being of his father (that Wicked One), while Abel was righteous before the Lord. Again, there were two children from the flesh of the same parents. They were the twins of Isaac and Rebekah. One was the elect of God and the other was reprobate. Both worshipped God. In every single case there was worship of God involved. In every case the evil hated the righteous and persecuted the righteous. In some cases the evil destroyed the righteous. But notice. They were planted together. They lived together. They both made claims upon God and worshipped God.

These illustrations depict perfectly the parable of the Lord Jesus Christ when He said that the kingdom of heaven was like unto a man who sowed good seed, only to have an enemy come and plant tares amongst those good seeds. God did not plant the tares. Satan planted those tares right amongst the good seed of God. Those two kinds of plants (people), from two different seeds, grew up together. They partook of the nourishment in the same earth, they shared in the same sun, rain, and all other benefits, and both were harvested in their turn. Do you see it? Don't ever forget these truths as we study the church ages and later the seals. And above all, don't forget that it is in this last age, when the tares are getting bound for their burning, that they will shove out the wheat that is to be garnered by the Lord.

I want to carry this thought all the way through, so let us go a step further. Have you ever studied the history of revivals? Now a revival signifies a move of God in power. And every time God moves, Satan is there to move also. It never fails. In the days of the great Welsh revival (and most people don't know this), the insane asylums filled up quickly, and there was a great display of devil power to take away the attention from God. It is written that in Wesley's day the people would do most peculiar things that were definitely of Satan to try to mock the goodness and power of God. In Luther's day it is said that the miracle of his ministry did not lie in the fact that he successfully protested the Roman Catholic Church, but the miracle lay in the fact he could, and did, stay sound and sane amidst the fanatics who were often filled with, and guided by, wrong spirits. And if you have been aware of this last day ministry, you will have noted the same invasion of false and wicked spirits. It has to be that way. Now I hope and trust you are spiritual minded enough to get that, and capitalize on it.

Just to seal this point on the True and false vines mingling and demonstrating the two spirits that are at work, let us look into I John 4:1-4, and Jude 3, 4, 12.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and EVEN NOW ALREADY is it in the world.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: (antichrist spirit) because greater is He, (God's Spirit) that is in you than he that is in the world."

Jude 3, 4, 12.

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the SAINTS.

For there are CERTAIN MEN (not Saints) crept in unawares (these have not come into the fold by means of the DOOR and are therefore robbers), who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, UNGODLY men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast WITH you, feeding themselves without fear..."

It cannot be denied in the face of these Scriptures that the True Church and the false church are intertwined, having been planted together but of different seeds.

Now then, I think there is something else you ought to know. The seven churches which are addressed by John are in Asia Minor and are all Gentile churches. He does not speak to the church at Jerusalem which was mostly Jewish with perhaps just a few Gentiles in it. The reason is that God had turned from the Jews to the Gentiles. Thus the whole of the church ages is God dealing with the Gentiles, and calling out a Gentile Bride to Himself. That makes the 'Church Ages' and 'The Fulness of the Gentiles' the one and the same thing.

Acts 13:44-48,

"And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God.

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Romans 11:1-8,

"I say then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.

But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day."

Romans 11:25-29,

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the Fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

These seven churches located in Asia Minor contained certain characteristics within them, at that ancient date, which became the mature fruit of later ages. What were just seed plants back there came out later in a mature harvest, even as Jesus said,

"For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

Luke 23:31.

THE MESSAGE TO THE EPHESIAN CHURCH AGE

Revelation 2:1-7

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith He That holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, Which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

THE MESSENGER

The messenger (angel) to the church of Ephesus was the apostle Paul. That he was the messenger to the first age of the Gentile era cannot be denied. Though to Peter was granted the authority to open the doors to the Gentiles, it was given to Paul to be their apostle and prophet. He was the Prophet-Messenger to the Gentiles. His prophetic office, by which he received the full revelation of the Word for the Gentiles, authenticated him as their apostolic messenger. To this agreed the other apostles at Jerusalem.

Galatians 1:12-19,

"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

But when it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace,

To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."

Galatians 2:2,

"And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain."

Galatians 2:6-9,

"But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

But contrariwise, when they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter:

(For He That wrought effectually in Peter to the apostle-ship of the circumcision, the Same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."

Romans 11:13,

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office."

Paul founded the church at Ephesus about the middle of the first century. This enables us to set the date of the beginning of the Ephesian Church Age; about 53 A.D.

His manner of ministering set the pattern that all future messengers were to aspire to, and actually sets the pattern for every true minister of God, though he would not attain to such heights in the prophetic realm as did Paul. Paul's ministry had a threefold quality and was as follows:

First of all, Paul was absolutely true to the Word. He never deviated from it no matter what the cost.

Galatians 1:8-9,

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Galatians 2:11,14,

"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

"But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

I Corinthians 14:36-37,

"What? came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

Notice that Paul was unorganized, but Spirit-led, as when God moved upon Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt. Jerusalem's council never sent Paul out, nor did it have any power or jurisdiction over him. God, and God alone, did the sending and the leading. Paul was not of men, but of God.

Galatians 1:1,

"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead:)"

Galatians 2:3-5,

"But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you."

Secondly, his ministry was in the power of the Spirit, thereby demonstrating the spoken and written Word.

I Corinthians 2:1-5,

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Acts 14:8-10,

"And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked."

Acts 20:9-12,

"And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted."

Acts 28:7-9,

"In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed."

II Corinthians 12:12,

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."

Thirdly, he had the evident fruit of his God-given ministry.

II Corinthians 12:11,

"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefeest apostles, though I be nothing."

I Corinthians 9:2,

"If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostle-ship are ye in the Lord."

II Corinthians 11:2,

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

Paul had been the means of bringing in multitudes of the Gentile sheep; he fed them, and cared for them, until they brought forth righteous fruit and were prepared to meet the Lord as a part of the Gentile bride.

At the time of the giving of the Revelation, according to tradition, Paul had already died a martyr, but John was carrying on in his stead exactly as Paul had done in the days of his ministry. The death of Paul, before the Revelation was given, does not at all annul the fact that he was the messenger to the Ephesian Church Age, for the messenger to every age, regardless of when he appears or goes, is the one who influences that age for God by means of a Word-manifested ministry. Paul was that man.

THE CITY OF EPHESUS

The city of Ephesus was one of the three greatest cities of Asia. It was often called the third city of Christian faith, with Jerusalem first, and Antioch second. It was a very rich city. The government was Roman but the language was Greek. Historians believe that John, Mary, Peter, Andrew and Philip were all buried in this beautiful city. Paul, who founded the true faith in this city, pastored here only about three years; but when he was absent from the flock he was continually, prayerfully, mindful of them. Timothy was its first bishop.

I Timothy 1:1-3,

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, Which is our hope;

Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."

The very name, Ephesus, has a strange compound meaning, "Aimed at", and "Relaxed". The high aspirations of this age that had begun with the fullness of the Spirit, "the depth of God", whereby they were aiming at the high calling of God, began to give way to a less watchful attitude. A less ardent following of Jesus Christ began to manifest itself as an omen that in the

future ages the physical vehicle called the church would sink to the awfulness of the "depth of Satan". It had become relaxed and was drifting. Already the age was backsliding. It had left its first love. The tiny seed planted in that Ephesian Age would one day grow in the spirit of error until all foul birds of the air would roost in its branches. So inoffensive to human reasoning would that little plant appear to that New Eve (the New Church) that again she would be deceived by Satan. The Ephesian Age had presented to her the opportunity for God's best, and for awhile she prevailed, and then relaxed, and in that unguarded moment Satan planted the seed of complete ruin.

The very religion of Ephesus types out perfectly this first church age and sets the tenor of the ages to come. In the first place, the magnificent temple of Diana, that was so many years in building, housed in its sacred courts the most lusterless and unobtrusive, image of Diana that one could imagine. She was absolutely unlike any other of her images seated in the other temples dedicated to her. She was simply an almost shapeless female figure that finally sunk into the block of wood from which she was carved. And her two arms were formed of two simple bars of iron. How perfectly this depicts the spirit of antichrist loosed in the first age. There he was loosed in the midst of the people, and yet took no shape as to alarm the people. Yet the two arms of iron bars showed that it was his intent to crush the work of God as he made his inroads. And no one seemed to notice him or what he was doing. But one day they would notice, when with those arms of iron his 'deeds' became 'doctrine', and his doctrine became the law of an empire.

The order of temple service is also very revealing. There were, first of all, priests who were eunuchs. This sterile priesthood presaged the sterility of a people who would drift from the Word, for a people who claim to know God apart from the Word are as barren of life as is a sterile eunuch.

Secondly, the temple had within its confines the virgin priestesses who performed the religious acts of the temple. This showed forth the day that ceremony and form, ritual and works, would take the place of the Holy Spirit and no longer would charismatic manifestation fill the temple of God.

Over them all was the high priest, a man of political power and public influence, portraying what was already in progress, though not too manifested, that is, the church would soon be given over to the leadership of man with man's plans and man's ambitions and "thus saith the Holy Ghost" would no longer be a living reality.

And underneath them all were the temple slaves who had n choice but obedience to the religious hierarchy. What can this mean but the day would come when the vested clergy, by political maneuvering, state help, and the substitution of Word and Spirit for creeds, dogmas, and human leadership, would enslave the laity while the leaders luxuriated in ill gotten wealth and

enjoyed their filthy pleasures, and the poor people who were to be served according to God, now became the servants.

JESUS, HIS MESSENGER, AND CHURCHES

Revelation 2:1,

"... These things saith He That holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."

This is He of Whom it is said, 'This Same Jesus is BOTH Lord and Christ.' There He is, the One and Only Lord God Almighty, and beside Him there is no other. There He is, the Saviour ("... salvation is of the Lord", Jonah 2:9) walking in the midst of the churches throughout the seven ages. What He was in the first age He is in all ages. To every believer, He is Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, and today, and forever. What He did once He is still doing, and will keep on doing.

Now you will notice that Jesus is walking alone in the midst of His churches. There is no one else with Him. Neither indeed can there be, for He alone wrought her salvation, and having purchased her with His own blood He owns her. He is her Lord and Master. She gives Him all the glory and that glory He will not share with another. There is no pope with Him. There is no archbishop with Him. Mary, the mother of His earthly body, is not with Him. He does not speak and turn to a Father, for He is the Father. He does not turn to give orders to a Holy Spirit, for He is God, eternal Spirit, and it is His Life that is flowing and pulsating in the church giving her life, and without Him there would be no life. Salvation is of the Lord.

There was no one with Him when He trod the fierceness of the wrath of the fiery furnace. It was not another, but HIM Who hung upon the cross and gave His blood. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is the Alpha and Omega of our salvation. We are espoused to Him and not another. We don't belong to the church. We belong to Him. His Word is law. Creeds, dogmas, by-laws and constitutions have no effect on us. Yes, it is Jesus ALONE Who walks in the midst of the churches. It is God in her, willing and doing of His good pleasure. Never forget that. You have only one relationship to God and God has only one relationship to you--that is JESUS, and JESUS ALONE.

There He is with the seven stars in His right hand. The right hand or arm signifies the power and authority of God. Psalms 44:3, "For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them." In that right hand of power are seven stars,

who, according to Revelation 1:20, are the seven church messengers. This signifies that the very power and authority of God are behind His messengers to every age. They go forth in the fire and power of the Holy Ghost with the Word. They are stars because they reflect light. The light they reflect is His light. They have no light of their own. They kindle not their own fires that men may walk in the light of their sparks. Isaiah 50:11. It is night, for that is when the stars come out. It is the night of the blackness of sin, for all (even the whole world), have sinned and are constantly falling short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23.

These seven messengers are making God known to the people. He that receiveth them, receiveth Him That sent them. John 13:20. They speak and act upon His authority. He stands behind them with all the power of Godhead.

Matthew 28:18-20,

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ALL POWER is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, even unto the end of the world (consummation of the ages)."

So there they are, full of the Holy Ghost and faith, on fire with the fire of God, holding forth the Word of truth, and there He stands to back them up. And think of it, not one believer of any age need cry in his heart, "Oh, that I might have been back there in the first age when the apostles were first sent out." There is NO need to look back. LOOK UP! Behold Him Who is even now walking in the midst of the churches through all ages. Behold Him Who is the same yesterday and today, and forever; and Who never changes either in essence or in His ways. Where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there He is in their midst! And not only in their midst as a complacent onlooker, or as a recording angel; but there He stands expressing exactly what He is--the Life and Sustainer and Giver of all good gifts to the church. Hallelujah!

"Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." How meaningful are those words when viewed in the light of the Scripture, which describes Him as "Christ Who is our Life". For Christ, indeed, is the life of the church. She has no other life. Without Him she is simply a religious society, a club, a meaningless gathering of the people. As a corpse bejeweled and dressed is still a corpse, so the church, no matter what her programs and her gracious efforts might achieve, without Christ she is a corpse also. But with Him in her midst, with Him motivating her, she becomes to the wonderment of all "His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." And this very hour He

is walking in the midst of the last age's golden candlestick. What He was as He walked in the first age He is even now in this last age. Jesus Christ the SAME, YESTERDAY, and TODAY, and FOREVER.

"Seven golden candlesticks." In Exodus 25:31, it says,

"And thou shalt make a candlestick of PURE gold; of BEATEN work shall the candlestick be made; his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same."

The true church of Jesus Christ, the bride, is likened to PURE gold. Her righteousness is HIS righteousness. Her attributes are HIS own glorious attributes. Her identity is found in Him. What He is, she is to reflect. What He has, she is to manifest. There is no fault in her. She is all glorious within and without. From beginning to ending she is the work of her Lord, and all His works are perfect. In fact in her is summed up and manifested the eternal wisdom and purpose of God. How can one fathom it? How can one understand it? Though we cannot do that, we can accept it by faith, for God hath spoken it.

But not only is the candlestick of gold, it is of BEATEN gold. Hand-crafted of beaten gold, according to her blue prints which were Spirit-given. Outside of her Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, was ever a people so beaten and purged as the bride of Jesus Christ? Surely she is filling up the sufferings that Christ has left behind. Her goods are despoiled. Her life is in jeopardy. She is accounted as sheep for the slaughter. She is killed all the day long. She suffers much, but in it all retaliates not, neither does she cause others to suffer. Worthy of the Gospel is this lovely bride of Christ. And as gold is malleable, whereas brass will break with the beating, this gold of God will bear her suffering for the Lord, not bowed, not broken, not destroyed, but formed as a thing of beauty and a joy forever by the trials and testings of this life.

CHRIST PRAISES HIS OWN

Revelation 2:2,3,

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars;

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."

How beautifully the Saviour praises and commends His children. He takes full account of their fine spiritual attitudes and behavior. He knows that there is weakness amongst them, but as yet He does not cry out against it. Isn't that just like the Lord? He knows how to encourage us in the right matters and

discourage us in the wrong matters. We could all learn a good lesson right here in running the church and our families. And better still, we could all learn a good lesson in that God deals with each one of us in exactly this way. Don't ever be discouraged, Saint of God, for God is not ungracious to forget your labors of love. Whatever we do, even giving a cup of cold water to someone, has a reward and blessing from the Lord.

"I know thy works, thy labour, and thy patience." As He walks in the midst of His church, He is aware of the suffering of His people, and He cares. As it was in the days of the captivity in Egypt when He heard their cries, He Who never changes still hears the cries of the oppressed as He walks amongst them. The very word, labour, signifies a weariness through oppression. God's people do not only work for Him in a labour of love, but they suffer for Him with joy. They are patient in bearing the yoke. This first age suffered great persecution. It had to work hard to preach the Gospel and shed forth truth. Their high calling in life was to serve God, and when their hopes in life were blighted they were patient and committed all to Him Who had promised a lasting recompence in heaven for what they had given up for Him on earth.

I think we ought to stop here and deal with the thought that God's people have always been and always will be persecuted. You know that Genesis is the book of beginnings, and what you find started there will carry right on through the Revelation and never change. There we see that Cain persecuted and killed Abel because the latter pleased God. Then we see a perfect picture in Abraham's son of the flesh, Ishmael, who teased and fought the son of promise, Isaac. And there was Esau, who hated Jacob and would have killed him, had not God intervened. In the New Testament we find Judas betraying Jesus, while the religious orders of the first century attempted to destroy the early believers. The children of this world, controlled by the devil, hate the children of God who are controlled by the Spirit.

No matter how just and upright a Christian is before the public, and how gracious he is to his fellow man, doing naught but good, let him confess Christ as his Saviour and acknowledge the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in tongues, prophecy, healing and miracles, and he will be condemned. The spirit of this world hates the Spirit of God, and because it can't overcome the Spirit of the Lord it tries to destroy the vessel in whom the Spirit of Truth dwells.

Persecution and trials are a natural, normal part of the Christian life. There is only one thing you can do about them. Commit them all to God, judge not, and leave their outworking and final judgment to Him.

"Thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."

These Ephesians believed that God's people ought to be holy. According to this verse they took steps to keep the body unleavened from sin. Most

evidently the apostasy had already started. Sin had entered into the church. But they were obedient to the words of Paul when he said to put away the wicked from amongst them. They were a separated people. They had come out of the world, and now they weren't going to let the world enter amongst them. They would not put up with sin in the church. Holiness wasn't a phrase with them or a figure of speech; it was a way of life.

"Thou hast tried them that say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."

My, that is a blunt statement. "Thou hast tried them who call themselves apostles." Isn't that presumptuous? What right has a people to try those who call themselves apostles? And how do they try them? Oh, I love this.

Here it is in Galatians 1:8,

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have (already) preached unto you, let him be accursed."

It was the apostles who brought the original Word to the people. That original Word could not change, not even a dot or dash of it. Paul knew it was God Who had spoken to him so he said, "Even if I come and try to give a second revelation, try to make one little change in what I gave originally, let me be accursed." You see, Paul knew that first revelation was correct. God can't give a first revelation, then a second revelation. If He did, He would be changing His mind. He can give a revelation and then add to it, as He did in the Garden of Eden when He promised the Seed to the woman, and then later designated that Seed had to come through Abraham, and then later said it would come by the same blood lines in David. But it was the same revelation. It only gave the people more information to help them receive and understand it.

But God's Word can't change. The Seed came exactly as revealed. Hallelujah. And see what those false apostles were doing. They came with their own word. Those Ephesians knew that Word as Paul had taught it. They were full of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of Paul's hands. They looked those false apostles in the eye and said, "You are not saying what Paul said. You are, therefore, false." Oh, that sets my heart on fire. Get back to the Word! It is not you that really tries the apostle, and prophet and teacher, **IT IS THE WORD THAT TRIES THEM.**

One of these days there is going to come a prophet to the Laodicean Church Age and you will know if he is the real one sent from God or not. Yes you will, for if he is of God **HE WILL BE IN THAT WORD EXACTLY AS GOD GAVE IT TO PAUL. HE WON'T DEVIATE FROM THAT WORD FOR A MOMENT, NOT BY ONE IOTA.** In that last age, when there will be many false prophets appearing, watch and see how they keep telling you that if you don't believe them and what they say, you will be lost; but when that

LAST DAY PROPHET comes on the scene, if he is truly that prophet, he will be crying out, "Get back to the Word or you are lost." He won't build on a private revelation or interpretation, but on the Word. Amen, and Amen!

These false apostles are the grievous wolves that Paul spoke of. He said, "Once I am gone they will try to come and claim equal revelation; but their purpose is not to help you, but destroy you."

Acts 20:27-32,

"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things (their own word and ideas, not God's) to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

John knew of them, also, for he said in I John 4:1,

"... many false prophets are (already) gone out into the world."

That antichrist spirit was already infiltrating the church, and it was doing it by going against the Word. Why here is where it all started. Right here in the first church age. Already they were denying the Word and setting up their own creeds and philosophies instead of the Word. That is antichrist, for Jesus is the Word. To be anti-Word is to be anti-Jesus. To be anti-Word is to be antichrist, because the Spirit and the Word are ONE. If you are anti-Word, you will have to be antichrist. **AND IF IT STARTED IN THE FIRST CHURCH IT WILL HAVE TO GROW UNTIL THE END WHEN IT TAKES OVER.** And that is exactly what you will see as we cover all the ages. It starts out real small in the Ephesian Age and it grows in every age until the anti-Word, antichrist system takes over entirely and the infallibility of the Word is repudiated by the false apostles of the false church.

Now it is easy to get a wrong impression of what we are talking about because I am making this so strong. It could sound to you as though this anti-Word, antichrist spirit, is a complete repudiation of the Word, a denial of the Bible culminating in its rejection. No sir. It is not that.

What it is, is Revelation 22:18,19,

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

It is the changing of even just ONE word by taking away or adding to it. It is the original trick of Satan in the Garden of Eden. He just added one little word to what God had said. That did it. It brought death and destruction. And in Ephesus, it was just the same. Just a word added, just a word taken away, and the anti-Word, antichrist spirit began to flourish.

Did you get it now? There are those twins again. There are those two trees again, growing side by side in the same earth, partaking of the same nourishment, drinking in the same rain, and benefiting by the same sun. But they come from DIFFERENT seeds. One tree is FOR the Word of God, exactly as God gave it, and loves and obeys it. The other tree is from the seed that is anti the Word of God and changes it where it wants to. It substitutes its own creeds and dogmas for the living true Word exactly as did Cain, who ended up killing Abel. But fear not little flock. Stay with the Word. Keep that Word between you and the devil. Eve did not do that and she failed. And when the church lets down on the Word she goes into the depths of the darkness of Satan.

"And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."

This is just about the same as was said in verse two. But in verse two the work, labor, and patience were from guarding the sacred Word which was committed unto them. How they kept away the adversaries. What a credit they were to Paul. But in this verse their persecutions and trials and patience are over the blessed Name of Jesus.

You know that is not at all strange, for it is the Word and the Name that brings the enemy pouring after us like a flood. That mighty Word which was manifested in healings, signs, wonders, and other demonstrations, caused the Pharisees to scream out for the death of the true believers. And now that Name, hated and despised by the Jews, is mocked by the cultured as they laughed to think anyone could be so foolish as to believe in a man who died and rose again and is now seated in heaven. So here were the religious persecutors, the Jews, cursing this Jesus, Who to them was a false Messiah; and here were the others laughing with delight and mocking sarcastically at the Name of a new god, Who to them wasn't a god at all.

Now here is something else that started in that age and will continue right down through the ages, getting deeper and darker. That is, people were

repudiating that Name. It was not the true Ephesian Church that was doing it. No sir. It was the false apostles. It was the outsider trying to get in and defile the believers. The Ephesians knew that Name and loved it. Recall the origin of that Ephesian Church. A little group of people who were looking for the Messiah heard that a prophet who called himself the forerunner of the Messiah had appeared in the desert of Palestine and was baptizing people unto repentance of sins. These, then, received the baptism of John.

But when Paul came to them he showed them that the prophet was dead, that Jesus had come and fulfilled His life as a sacrifice for sin, and that NOW the Holy Ghost was come and would enter in and fill all true believers in Jesus, the Messiah. When they heard this, **THEY WERE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS**, and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. They knew what it was to obey the Word, to be baptized in His Name (Lord Jesus Christ) and in that way they knew they would be filled with the Holy Spirit. You could not get that people to change. They knew the truth. Acts. 19:1-7.

They knew the power of that Name. They saw that Name was so powerful that even aprons taken from the body of Paul and sent in Jesus' Name to suffering people could deliver the sick from all manner of diseases and cast out evil spirits. So manifestly wonderful did that Name perform that reprobate Jews at Ephesus attempted to use it to exorcise devils.

Acts 19:11-17,

"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul;

So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the Name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus Whom Paul preacheth.

And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

They knew the righteous life that accompanied the bearing of that Name, for whosoever nameth the Name of the Lord, let him depart from sin. Be ye holy, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord. Thou shalt not bear the Name of the

Lord thy God in vain. These Ephesians were CHRISTIANS. They bore a Name, and that Name was Christ, Who was the Spirit of God within them, and Which was one of the threefold Names of their Lord.

"... And for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."

These believers weren't laboring for Paul, or for an organization. They weren't committed to programs and institutions whereby they built up holdings of value. They worked for the Lord. They were His servants, not the pawns of organization. They didn't go to church on Sunday and talk about that Name and then forget it the rest of the week. They didn't give lip service to that Name. No Sir. It was their lives that were given.

All they did, they did in that Name. In that Name they acted, but if they could not act in that Name, then they refrained from acting. These were heavenly placed Christians whose behaviour was in the Lord.

But that false vine group that wanted to defile that Name hung like skulking wolves in the dark, waiting to get in and tear down. But the saints stood the test and kept the Word and the Name.

THE COMPLAINT OF GOD

Revelation 2:4,

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

To understand this you must realize that the Spirit is not speaking to the original saints of Ephesus alone. This message is to the entire age which lasted about 120 years. Its message, then, is to all the generations in that span. Now history keeps repeating itself. In the generations of Israel we see revival in one generation, only to see the fires fading in the next. In the third generation, embers may be glowing slightly, but in the fourth there may be no vestige whatsoever of that original flame. Then God lights the fire again, and the same process is repeated. It is simply the manifestation of the truth that God has no grandchildren. Salvation is not passed on by natural birth any more than is there any truth to apostolic succession. It isn't in the Word. You start out with truly born-again believers, and when the next generation comes along they are no longer just plain Christians, but they have taken a denominational name and are now Baptists, Methodists, etc. That is exactly what they are, too. They are not Christians. You have to be born of the will of God, not the will of man, to be saved. But these folks are all coming together now by the will of man. I don't say that some of them aren't right with God. Not for a minute do I say that, but the original fire has died down. They are not the same any more.

The fervent desire to please God, the passion to know His Word, the cry for reaching out in the Spirit, all begins to fade and instead of that church being on fire with the fire of God it has cooled off and become a bit formal. That is what was happening back there to the Ephesians. They were getting a bit formal. The abandonment to God was dying out and the people weren't too careful about what God thought of them as they began to be careful about what the world thought of them. That second generation coming on was just like Israel. They demanded a king to be like the other nations. When they did that, they rejected God. But they did it anyway. That is the history of the church. When it thinks more of conforming to the world instead of conforming to God, it isn't long until you see them stop doing things they used to do, and start doing things they wouldn't do initially. They change their manner of dress, their attitudes and their behaviour. They get lax. That is what "Ephesus" means: relaxed--drifting.

That cycle of revival and death has never failed. All you have to do is recall this last move of God in the Spirit when men and women dressed like Christians, went to church, prayed all night, took to street corners and weren't ashamed of the manifestations of the Spirit. They left their old dead churches and worshipped in homes or old store buildings. They had reality. But it wasn't too long a time until they began to get enough money to build fine new churches. They put in a choir instead of singing unto God for themselves. They put gowns on the choir. They organized a movement and ran it by man. They soon began to read books that weren't fit to read. They let down the bars and goats came in and took over. The cry of joy was gone. The freedom of the Spirit was gone. Oh, they kept on with a form; but the fire had died down and the blackness of ashes is about all that is left.

A few moments ago I mentioned that John understood what it was to love God. That great apostle of love would certainly see it when the church began to lose that first love of God.

In I John 5:3, he says,

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments (His Word)."

One little deviation from that Word was a step away from Christ. People say they love God, they go to church, they even shout and rejoice and sing and have a great emotional time. But when it is all over, watch and see if they are in that WORD, walking in it, living in it. If they go through all the other and then don't walk in that Word, they can say they love God but their lives tell another story. I wonder if John didn't see a lot of that before he died; people saying they loved God but not obeying His Word. Oh, Ephesian Church, something is happening to you. Someone is trying to either add to that Word or take from it. But they are doing it so subtly that you can't see it. They haven't made a move so big you can see it out there in the open. It is under cover, and

they are bringing it by way of reason and human understanding and it will take over unless you refuse it. Go back to Pentecost before it is too late!

But as usual people don't heed God's warning. That revival fire built upon the sacred Word is so wonderful, and the manifestation of the Spirit so blessed, that a little fear creeps in and a whisper in the heart says, "How can we protect this truth we have? What can we do to see this revival goes on?" That is when the "antichrist spirit" comes in and whispers, "Look, you have the truth now, see that it doesn't get lost. Organize and set up your creed of what you believe. Put it all in a church manual." And they do it. They organize. They add to the Word. And they die just like Eve did for taking One wrong word. It's God's Word that brings life. And it's not what we say about the Word that counts, but it's what God said.

THE WARNING OF GOD

Revelation 2:5,

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

God tells them to REMEMBER. Evidently something had left their minds. They had forgotten something. He told them to turn back in their minds to their point of origin. The origin of the first age was Pentecost. They had fallen from it. They had forgotten the glory and wonder of it. It was time to go back in mind and then in reality. Back to when they could say, "For me to live is Christ." Back to purity when Ananias and Sapphira were dealt with. Back to the Gate Beautiful. Oh, what a reproach it is to drift from God and countenance those acts that defile His Name. Let those who name His Name depart from sin and keep their vessels pure for God. Look at what you once were in your heart, and mind, and in your life. Then go back to it.

And what is the way back? The way is the way of repentance. If a sinner has to come to God by way of repentance then the lukewarm or backslider will have to repent that much more. Repent! Bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Prove it by your life. "If you do not repent," said God, "I will remove your lampstand." Certainly. A church in that condition can't give light to the world. Its light has turned to darkness. God will then take away its faithful messenger and its faithful shepherds and leave them to themselves, and they will go on talking about Christianity but be bereft of it.

Repent quickly! Don't hesitate! Evidently Ephesus did hesitate, for her life span was not very long. The glory of God decreased ever so rapidly. It was not

long until the city was in ruins. Its glorious temple became a shapeless mass. The land became a marsh inhabited by water fowl; the population was gone except for a few unbelievers in a squalid village. There was not even ONE Christian left. The lamp was rent from its place.

Now it does not mean that she could not have repented. It does not mean that we cannot repent. We can. But it must be quickly. It must be a true heart cry to God in sorrow, and then God will restore. The glory shall come again.

THE SEED OF NICOLAITANISM

Revelation 2:6,

"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."

Now there are two thoughts on what the Nicolaitanes were. It is said by some that they were a group of apostates who had as their founder, Nicholas of Antioch, a proselyte, who became one of the seven deacons at Jerusalem. They had pagan feasts and were most unchaste in their behaviour. They taught that in order to master sensuality one would have to know by experience the whole range of it at first. Naturally they gave way to such abandon that their degradation was complete. Thus they had applied to them the two Old Testament names that symbolized such extravagances: Balaam and Jezebel. Since Balaam corrupted the people and thus conquered them, it was said that Nicholas did likewise. This group was supposedly forced out of Ephesus and found a place of establishment in Pergamos.

But the problem about this belief is that it is not true. There is absolutely no history for it. It is at best tradition. To adopt such a view would make the church age of Ephesus absolutely historical with no bearing upon today. This is not true, for whatever starts in the early church must continue in every age until it is finally blessed and exalted by God or destroyed as an unclean thing in the lake of fire. That this tradition is actually against Scripture, simply note that in Revelation 2:2, the Ephesian Church could NOT BEAR the evil ones. They thus had to put them out, or it would not make sense to say they could not bear them. If they did not put them out, then they were bearing them. Now in verse six, it says that they hated their deeds. So this Nicolaitane group remained a part of the first age, doing their deeds. The deeds were hated, but the people were not rendered impotent. Thus we see seeds in Ephesus that will continue and will become a doctrine that will go right up to, and into, the lake of fire.

What are these Nicolaitanes? The word comes from two Greek words. Nikao, which means to conquer, and Laos, which means the laity. In plain fact, somebody was doing something in that early church which was conquering the laity. If the laity were being conquered, then it must have been some "authority" there doing it.

What was it that God hated that was happening in that church? What was going on then, and is now going on today, is exactly what the word Nicolaitane means. The people were being subjected somehow in a way that was absolutely contrary to the Word of God.

Now to get the real meaning of what we are about to go into, I must caution you to ever keep in mind that religion (spiritual matters if you like), is composed of two parts that intertwine but are as opposite as black and white. Religion and the spiritual world are made of those two trees which had their roots in Eden. Both the Tree Of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil stood in the midst of the garden and no doubt their very branches intertwined each other. Thus in the Ephesian Church is that same paradox. The church is made up of good and bad. Two vines make the church. They are like the wheat and tares, growing up side by side. But one is the TRUE. The other is the FALSE. Now God will speak TO each one and He will talk ABOUT each one. He will call them the church. And only the elect will really know which is the true Spirit. Only the elect will not be deceived.

Matthew 24:24,

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

So way back there in the early church (a very short period after Pentecost) the false vine got to intertwine itself around the True Vine and we find these deeds of the Nicolaitanes. And that spirit is going to be found fighting the True Vine until it is destroyed by God. Now have you got it?

All right. Now what was the spiritual climate of that church? It had left its first love. Leaving its first love of the Word of God was revealed to us as having fallen from its origin, which was Pentecost. In plain English, that means this church was in danger of being taken away from the leading of the Holy Spirit, the control of the Spirit. This was exactly what took place after Moses led Israel out of Egypt. The way of God was to lead them by the cloud of fire, prophetic utterance, miracles and signs, and God-given wonders. This was to be accomplished by 'God-selected', and 'God-ordained', and 'God-equipped', and 'God-sent' men, with the whole camp being dominated by a Holy Ghost move. They rebelled and wanted a set of rules and creeds to go by. Then they wanted a king. Then they wanted to be exactly like the world and went into complete apostasy and oblivion. That is exactly how the first church

age started, and it will get worse and worse, until the Holy Spirit is completely rejected and God must destroy the people.

See how it started out in the early church. It was called deeds. Then it became a doctrine. It became the standard. It became the unbending way. It finally took over and God was pushed aside. Oh, it started so small, so quietly, so inoffensively. It looked so good. It seemed so sound. Then it caught a hold, and like a python, it squeezed out the very breath and killed all the spirituality there was in the church. Oh, that false vine is subtle. It is like an angel of light until it gets a hold on you. Now I want to say that I believe in leadership. But it is not the leadership of men I believe in. I believe in the leadership of the Holy Ghost coming through the Word. I believe also, that God has set men in the church, men who are gifted by the Spirit; and they will keep the church in order. I believe that. I believe also that the church is ruled over by men that God sends to take charge. But that rule is **BY THE WORD**, so that it is not men really ruling but the **SPIRIT OF GOD**, for the Word and Spirit are **ONE**.

Hebrews 13:7,

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

But see what was happening back there. That false vine was getting a hold and it was teaching that rulership by man was right. It taught that the church had to be governed. It taught a control over the people, but instead of doing it God's way, they simply took authority and vested all the spiritual power in their own hands and came out with a holy priesthood standing between God and the people. They went right back to the old Aaronic system. They became antichrist for they disposed of His mediator-ship and imposed their own. God hated that. The Ephesians hated that and any true believer will hate it too.

We would have to be stone blind not to see that same thing at work all through the ages and right now it is the worst of all. What it was, was organization. That separated the people. God's people are supposed to be one. By **ONE** Spirit are they **ALL** baptized into one body and **EVERYONE** is to be moved upon by the Holy Ghost and **EVERYONE** is to participate in the worship of God. But men wanted the preeminence, so they took over control, and bishops became archbishops, and with imposing titles they by-passed the Word of God and taught their own doctrines. They got the people to obey them until the time came that their way of worship did not in any way at all resemble the early days after Pentecost. These deeds were the beginning of apostolic succession. From apostolic succession it was one easy and quick step to "church membership" as the means of saving grace. The Word was reduced to a creed. Antichrist by his spirit was predominating the church.

Look at it today. If you read Acts 2:4 the way some do, you could read it this way, "Now when the day of Pentecost was fully come, there came a priest with a wafer and said, 'Stick out your tongue,' and he laid the wafer upon it, and he himself drank some wine and said, 'You have now received the Holy Ghost.'" Incredible? That is exactly what Nicolaitanism has come to. They say, "Never mind what God's Word says. You can't understand it. We have to interpret it for you. Furthermore the Bible is not finished. It has to change with the times and we will tell you what the changes are." How contrary that is to the Word of God that emphatically states, "Let God be true, but every man a liar," whenever there is a conflict with the truth. Heaven and earth will pass away, but NOT ONE WORD of God will fail. So the people are led by people who presume to be what they are not. They say they are vicars of Christ, but what they are is antichrist.

Here is another sad story. It is the story of water baptism. In Jesus' day and after Pentecost they were immersed in water. No one can deny that. Educated men say that all they did was pour water on them because it was easy to find little holes of water in many places. And when they pour water on them, they do it in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, as if those titles were real names, and as if there were three Gods instead of just one. But stay in that organization and try and preach the truth of immersion in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be put out. You couldn't be led of God and stay in there. It is impossible.

Now Paul was a prophet, taught by the Holy Ghost. If Paul baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and said anyone that did different from his preaching was accursed, then it is time to wake up and see that the church is no longer controlled by the Holy Ghost but it is controlled by the Nicolaitanes.

Acts 20:27-30,

"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

Paul saw it coming. But he warned them about this subtle priesthood that would come and take over with its false doctrines. He knew they would implement a way of worship that excluded the people from any part in a Holy Spirit ministry. And even right today among those who claim to be free and full of the Spirit there is not too much freedom in the laity, and the best we can

see is a few preachers with inspired preaching while the flock just sits there and tries to absorb it. This is a far cry from Paul who said that when all came together, all had the leading of the Spirit, and all participated in Spiritual worship.

And the church corporate has never learned this lesson from the Scripture nor from history. Every time God gives a visitation of the Holy Spirit and people get free, after awhile they bind themselves right back to the very thing they came out of. When Luther came out of Catholicism, the people stayed free for awhile. But when he died, the people simply organized what they thought he believed and set up their own creeds and ideas and repudiated anyone who said opposite to what they said. They went right back to Catholicism with a little different form. And right today many Lutherans are ready to go all the way back.

Oh, yes! In Revelation 12, that old whore had many daughters. These daughters are just like mother. They set the Word aside, deny the work of the Spirit of God, subjugate the laity, and make it impossible for the laity to worship God unless they come through them or through their pattern, which is nothing but a blueprint of unbelief from Satan himself.

Where, oh where, are we spiritually? We are in a wilderness of darkness. How far we have wandered from the first church. Pentecost is nowhere in view and the Word cannot be found. Apostolic succession, which today abounds, is not found in the Word. It is a man-made device. It supersedes illegally the truth that GOD, NOT MAN, has set His leaders in the church. Peter was not even in Rome. Yet they lie and say he was. History proves he was not. There are people who read history, but shrug their shoulders and go back to believing a lie.

Where can you find the 'vicar of Christ' in the Word? No one takes His place, yet it has been done and people accept it.

Where can you find that 'added revelation' is accepted by God, especially revelation contrary to one already given? Yet they accept it and rest on it.

Where do you find a 'purgatory'?

Where do you find a 'mass'?

Where do you find 'paying money to get out of hell'?

It is not in the Word, but men put it in their own book and by it took over the people, ruling them by fear. Where do you find that 'man has the power to forgive us as though he were God'? "Grievous wolves," is hardly strong enough to describe them. Nicolaitanism. Organization. Man over man.

Get back to God. Repent before it is too late. See the handwriting on the wall. It is writing judgment. As the sacred vessels were desecrated and thus brought the wrath of God, now the sacred Word has been desecrated and the

Spirit grieved, and judgment is here, even at the door. Repent! Repent! Go back to Pentecost. Back to the leadership of the Holy Ghost. Back to the Word of God, for why will ye die?

THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT

Revelation 2:7,

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree Of Life, Which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." It may be that millions will hear these words or read them. But how many will pay heed to them? That we do not know. But he who will lend his ear and want to know the words of truth will find the Spirit of God enlightening him. If your ear is open to the Word, the Spirit of God will make the Word real to you. Now that is a work of the Spirit. I can teach you the truth, but if you don't open your ear to hear it and your heart to receive it, you won't get the revelation.

Now notice, it says that the Spirit is speaking to the churches. That is plural, not singular. The Spirit did not have John write this down for a local Ephesian church, nor for the first age only. It is for all church ages. But this is the church of beginnings. And thus it is like the Book of Genesis. What started in Genesis holds true throughout the entire Word and finally closes out in Revelation. Thus, this church beginning in Acts is God's blueprint for all ages until she closes out in the Laodicean Age. Watch it carefully. Let every age take heed, for what is going on here is only the start. That little tree that was planted is going to grow. It is going to grow through the ages. This, then, is a message for every Christian through every age until Jesus comes. Yes, it is, for it is the Spirit speaking. Amen.

THE REWARD PROMISED

Revelation 2:7,

"... To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree Of Life, Which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

This is the future reward to all overcomers of all ages. When the last call to battle has been sounded, when our armour has been laid down, then we will rest in the paradise of God and our portion shall be the Tree of Life, forever.

"The Tree Of Life." Isn't that a beautiful figure of speech? It is mentioned three times in the Book of Genesis and three times in the Book of Revelation. In all six places it is the same tree and symbolizes exactly the same thing.

But what is the Tree Of Life? Well, first of all we would have to know what the tree itself stands for. In Numbers 24:6, as Balaam described Israel, he said they were "trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted." Trees throughout the Scriptures refer to persons, as in Psalms 1. Thus the Tree Of Life must be the Person of Life, and that is Jesus.

Now in the Garden of Eden there were two trees standing in the midst of it. One was the Tree Of Life, the other was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Man was to live by the Tree Of Life; but he was not to touch the other tree or he would die. But man did partake of the other tree, and when he did, death entered into him by his sin, and he became separated from God.

Now that Tree back there in Eden, that Tree which was the source of life, was Jesus. In John, chapters six through eight, Jesus sets Himself forth as the source of eternal life. He called Himself the Bread from heaven. He spoke of giving Himself and that if a man ate of Him he would never die. He proclaimed that He knew Abraham, and that before Abraham, He WAS. He prophesied that He Himself would give them living waters that if man drank he would never thirst again, but would live eternally. He showed Himself as the GREAT I AM. He is the Bread Of Life, the Well Of Life, the Eternal One, the TREE OF LIFE. He was back there in Eden in the midst of the garden even as He will be in the midst of the paradise of God.

Some have an idea that the two trees in the garden were just two more trees like unto the rest of those that God had placed there. But careful students know that this is not so. When John the Baptist cried that the axe was laid to the root of all trees, he was not talking of simply natural trees, but of spiritual principles.

Now in I John 5:11 it says,

"And this is the RECORD, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

Jesus said in John 5:40,

"And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."

Thus the record, God's Word, states plainly and clearly that LIFE, ETERNAL LIFE, is in the Son. It is no other place.

I John 5:12,

"He that hath the Son hath LIFE; and he that hath not the Son of God hath NOT Life."

Now since the record cannot change, be taken from or added thereunto, then the record stands that THE LIFE IS IN THE SON... Since this is so, THE TREE IN THE GARDEN HAS TO BE JESUS.

All right. If the Tree Of Life is a person, then the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is a person ALSO. It can't be otherwise. Thus the Righteous One and the Wicked One stood side by side there in the midst of the Garden of Eden. Ezekiel 28:13a "Thou (Satan) hast been in Eden, the garden of God."

Here is where we receive the true revelation of the 'Serpent's seed.' Here is what really happened in the Garden of Eden. The Word says that Eve was beguiled by the serpent. She was actually seduced by the serpent.

It says in Genesis 3:1,

"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made."

This beast was so close to a human being (and yet was pure animal) that he could reason and talk. He was an upright creature and was somewhat in between a chimpanzee and a man, but closer to a man. He was so close to being human that his seed could, and did mingle with that of the woman and cause her to conceive. When this happened, God cursed the serpent. He changed every bone in the serpent's body so that he had to crawl like a snake. Science can try all it wants to, and it won't find the missing link. God saw to that. Man is smart and he can see an association of man with animal and he tries to prove it out of evolution. There isn't any evolution. But man and animal did mingle. That's one of the mysteries of God that has remained hidden, but here it is revealed. It happened right back there in the midst of Eden when Eve turned away from Life to accept Death.

Notice what God said to them in the garden.

Genesis 3:15,

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed, It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel."

If we give credit to the Word that the woman did have a Seed, then the serpent must have surely had a seed also. If the Seed of the woman was a man-child apart from the man, then the seed of the serpent will have to be in the same pattern, and that is another male must be born apart from human male instrumentality. There is no student who does not know that the Seed of the woman was the Christ Who came by the instrumentality of God, apart from human intercourse. It is also just as well known that the predicted bruising of the serpent's head was in actuality a prophecy concerning what Christ would accomplish against Satan at the cross. There at the cross Christ would bruise the head of Satan, while Satan would bruise the heel of the Lord.

This portion of Scripture is the revelation of how the literal seed of the serpent was sown in the earth, even as we have the account of Luke 1:26-35, wherein is set forth the exact account of how the Seed of the woman came into physical manifestation apart from the instrumentality of the human male.

"And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His Name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David:

And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also That Holy Thing Which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

As the Seed of the woman was literally God reproducing Himself in human flesh, so the seed of the serpent is the literal way that Satan found he was able to open the door to himself into the human race. It was impossible for Satan (for he is only a CREATED spirit-being) to reproduce himself in the manner which God reproduced Himself, so the Genesis account tells how he produced his seed and introduced or injected himself into the human race. Also recall that Satan is called the 'serpent.' It is his seed or injection into the human race we are speaking of.

Before Adam ever had carnal knowledge of Eve, the serpent had that knowledge ahead of him. And that one born of it was Cain. Cain was of (born of, begotten of) that "Wicked One". I John 3:12. The Holy Spirit in John could not in one place call Adam the "Wicked One" (for that is what he would be if he fathered Cain) and in another place call Adam the "Son of God" which he was by creation. Luke 3:38. Cain turned out in character like his father, a bringer of death, a murderer. His utter defiance of God when faced by the

Almighty in Genesis 4:5,9,13,14, show him to be absolutely unhuman-like in characteristics, seeming even to surpass any account we have in Scripture concerning a confrontation of Satan by God.

"But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from Thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me."

Notice the exact way the record of God sets forth the account of the births of Cain, Abel and Seth.

Genesis 4:1,

"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And she again bare his brother Abel."

Genesis 4:25,

"And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth..."

There are THREE sons born from TWO acts of carnal knowledge by Adam. Since the Bible is the exact and perfect Word of God, this is no mistake but a record for our illumination. Since THREE sons were born from TWO acts by Adam, you know POSITIVELY that ONE of those three WAS NOT the son of Adam. God has recorded this in this exact manner to show us something. The truth of the matter is that Eve had in her womb TWO sons (twins) from SEPARATE impregnations. She was carrying twins, with Cain's conception sometime previous to that of Abel's. See those TWINS again. Perfect type as always.

To those who think that this is not possible, let it be known that the medical records are replete with cases where women have carried twins who were of separate ova and separate insemination with the fertilization of the eggs being days apart, and NOT ONLY SO, but some of the records show that the twins were fathered by separate males. Recently worldwide coverage was given to a Norwegian mother who was suing her husband for support for herself and her twins, one of which was white and the other black. She admitted that she had a Negro lover. The two conceptions were about three weeks apart. In Beaumont, Texas, in 1963, the records again set forth a multiple birth wherein pregnancies were many days apart, in fact so much so that the woman almost died along with one child in childbirth.

Now why did this have to be so? Why was it that the seed of the serpent must come this way? Man was created for God. Man was to be the temple of God. The place of God's rest (the Holy Spirit) was man, the temple.

Acts 7:46-51,

"Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

But Solomon built Him an house.

Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of My rest?

Hath not My hand made all these things?

Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

Satan has known this all along. He also wants to in-dwell man even as God so does. But God has reserved to Himself that right. Satan cannot do that. God alone appeared in human flesh. Satan could not and cannot do that. He does not have creative powers. The only way for Satan to accomplish what he wanted to do was to enter the serpent in Eden even as he entered by evil spirits into the swine at Gadara. God does not enter animals; but Satan can and will to accomplish his ends. He could not have a child directly by Eve as did God by Mary, so he entered into the serpent and then beguiled Eve. He seduced her and by her did Satan have a child vicariously. Cain bore the full spiritual characteristics of Satan and the animalistic (sensual, fleshly) characteristic of the serpent. No wonder the Holy Spirit said that Cain was of that wicked one. He was.

Now I want to go into some certain proof we have that there is a definite affinity between man and animal. It is a physical thing. Do you know that you can take the embryo cells from an unborn fetus and inject them into human beings? Then those thyroid cells will go right to the human thyroid, the kidney cells will go right to the human kidneys. Do you realize how stupendous this is? Some intelligence guides those animal cells exactly to the right place. That intelligence accepts those cells and puts them in exactly the right place. There is an affinity between animal and man. They can't intermingle and reproduce. That has been tried. But back in the garden that intermingling did take place and the chemical affinity which still exists proves it. For back in Eden the serpent was an upright creature. He was close to man. He was almost man. Satan took advantage of the serpent's physical characteristics to use him to beguile Eve. Then God destroyed that pattern of the serpent. No other beast can commingle with man. But the affinity is there.

Now that we have come this far, let me try to crystallize your thinking on this subject so you can see the necessity of our going into the 'serpent seed doctrine' as I have. We start with the fact that there were TWO trees in the midst of the garden. The Tree of Life was Jesus. The other tree is definitely Satan because of what came forth of the fruit of that tree. Now then, we know that both of those trees had a relationship to man or they would never have been placed there. They must have had a part in the sovereign plan and purpose of God in their relationship to mankind and to Himself or we could never impute omniscience unto God. This is all true so far, is it not? Now the Word most definitely sets forth that from BEFORE the foundation of the earth the purpose of God was to share His Eternal Life with man.

Ephesians 1:4-11,

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.

In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace;

Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself:

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him:

In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

Revelation 13:8,

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (Satan) whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

But that Life could not, and would not, be shared in any other way than through the way of "God manifest in the flesh." This was a part of His eternal and predestinated purpose. This plan was to be to the praise of the glory of His grace. It was the plan of Redemption. It was the plan of Salvation. Now listen closely. "God being a Saviour, it was necessary that He predestinate a man who would require salvation in order to give Himself reason and purpose of

being." That is one hundred percent correct and multitudes of Scripture bear it out as does the very pointed verse of Romans 11:36,

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are ALL THINGS: to Whom be GLORY for ever. Amen."

Man could not directly come and partake of that Tree of Life in the midst of the garden. That Eternal Life of the Tree had to become flesh first. But before God could raise and save a sinner, He had to have a sinner to raise and save. Man had to fall. The fall which would be caused by Satan, had to have flesh to make fall. Satan had to come through flesh also. But Satan could not come through human flesh to make the fall as would Christ come in human flesh to restore the fallen.

But there was an animal, the serpent, so close to man that Satan could get to that beast and through that beast he could get to human flesh and cause the fall, and inject himself thereby into the human race, even as Jesus would one day come and inject Himself into the human race, into human bodies, even to the extent of a resurrection wherein we would have bodies like unto His glorified one. Thus what God worked out here in the garden was His predestinated plan. And when Satan had brought about that which was necessary to the purpose of God, then man could not get to the Tree Of Life in the garden. Certainly not. It wasn't time. But an animal (animal had caused the fall had it not? let animal life be shed) was taken and his blood shed and then God had communion with man again.

Then there was to come a day when God would appear in flesh, and by means of His humiliation He would restore fallen man and make him a partaker of that Life Eternal. Once you see this, you can understand the serpent seed and know that it was no apple Eve ate. No, it was the degradation of humanity by intermingling the seed.

Now I know in answering one question another one is apt to come up, and people ask me, "If Eve fell that way, what did Adam do, for God lays the blame on Adam?" That is simple. The Word of God is forever settled in heaven. Before one speck of stardust was made, that Word (God's law) was there EXACTLY AS IT IS WRITTEN IN OUR BIBLE. Now the Word teaches us that if a woman leaves her husband and goes with another man she is an Adulteress and is no longer married and the husband is not to take her back. That Word was true in Eden as it was true when Moses wrote it in the law. The Word can't change. Adam took her back. He knew exactly what he was doing, but he did it any way. She was a part of him, and he was willing to take her responsibility upon himself. He would not let her go. So Eve conceived by him. He knew she would. He knew exactly what would happen to the human race, and he sold the human race into sin that he might have Eve, for he loved her.

And so those two sons were born. Sons that would be the fathers of the human race that was even now polluted. And what does the record say of them? Read the record.

Jude 14,

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied..."

Genesis 5 is the chapter of genealogy of Enoch. It gives that genealogy thusly, 1. Adam, 2. Seth, 3. Enos, 4. Cainan, 5. Mahalaleel, 6. Jared, 7. Enoch. Notice that Cain is not mentioned. The line of Adam goes through Seth. If Cain were the child of Adam, the law of the birthright would have given Cain the right in the lineage.

Also it must be noted carefully that in Genesis 5:3, it says that,

"Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth."

Nowhere does it say that Cain was in Adam's likeness, yet he would have to be if he were his son, for the law of reproduction is emphatically that each brings forth after its likeness. We must also credit the fact that in both genealogies in Genesis and Luke, Cain is missing. If Cain were the son of Adam it would be said of him somewhere that, "Cain, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God." It does not say that for it CANNOT say that.

Of course students for a long time have set forth two lines of men: one of which was the godly line found in Seth and the other the ungodly line as founded by Cain. And it is strange, but true, these same students have never told us how it was that Cain was the kind of person he was while Abel and Seth were of the spiritual, godly line. Factually, Cain should have been spiritual and Abel less spiritual, and Seth even more so, and right on down the line because each succeeding generation has always gotten further away from God. But no, Cain comes forth as wicked as no man ever has been described for he violently withstands God and the Word.

Now let this be known: Scripture does not play with words. Whatever is in the Record is there for the anointed eyes to see. It is there for a purpose. In that Word it says, Genesis 3:20, "And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living." But no Scripture ever says that Adam is the father of all living. If there is not this connotation to be placed upon Genesis 3:20, why would it be mentioned that Eve is the mother of all, and no word said about Adam? The fact is that though Eve was the mother of all living, Adam was not the father of all living.

In Genesis 4:1, Eve said,

"I have gotten a man from the Lord."

She does not credit Adam with the fatherhood of Cain. But in Genesis 4:25, she says,

"... For God, said she, hath appointed me ANOTHER seed, INSTEAD OF ABEL, whom Cain slew."

She does not say God had GIVEN her another seed--that would have been Christ, for He is GIVEN. This son, Seth, was APPOINTED instead of Abel. She recognizes her son that came by Adam; she does not now recognize Cain for he came by the serpent. When she says ANOTHER SEED instead of Abel, she is saying that Cain was different from Abel, for if they were of the same father she would have had to say, "I have been given some MORE SEED."

I don't believe everything I read, but it is certainly a curious thing that the March 1, 1963, issue of LIFE reports psychiatrists as saying exactly the same thing we are discussing. Now I know that all psychiatrists don't agree with each other, but here it is. The fear of snakes is not a conscious revulsion but an unconscious one. If it were a natural fear people would just as happily stand fascinated before the gorilla or lion cages. Their unconscious thoughts keep them staring at snakes. That lure of snakes is unconsciously sexual. That it has been through the ages is seen by the people in generation after generation going through the same thing. Snakes have always been and always will be repulsively attractive. The snake has always stood for that which is both good and bad. It has been a phallic symbol through the ages. Just exactly as the Garden of Eden description, we find the serpent the personification of passionate evil.

It is almost universal amongst the various uncultured tribes that the snake is associated with sex and often worshipped in conjunction with it. The study of sexology brings that out in many instances. Now I would like to know where these people got that from, seeing they are uneducated and never read the Bible. But even as the story of the flood is known throughout the world, so is this truth of the fall of man known. They knew what happened there in Eden.

Now right here someone is going to ask me this question: Did God tell Eve to watch out for the serpent or the serpent would seduce her? Now listen, God didn't have to say one thing about what would happen. Just get the point of the story. He simply gave the Word. He said not to partake of KNOWLEDGE. Partake of LIFE. LIFE WAS THE WORD OF GOD. DEATH WAS ANYTHING THAT WASN'T THE WORD OF GOD. She allowed ONE WORD to be changed and right then Satan had her. God could have said, "Don't pick more fruit off the trees than you can eat." Satan could say, "Look, that is quite right. You see if you pick too much it will rot. But here is a method of preserving the fruit and yet at the same time you can pick all you want. So you see, you can have your way and God's way at the same time." The devil would have her right there. He that is guilty in ONE point of the law

has broken the WHOLE law. Don't fool with that Word. That is exactly what happened in the Ephesian Age before it ran out in about 170 A.D.

And what did that tree produce? The Tree of Knowledge produced death. Cain killed his brother, Abel. The wicked killed the righteous. It set a pattern. It will keep that pattern until the restoration of all things as spoken by the prophets.

The Tree of Knowledge produced clever men; men of renown. But their ways are the ways of death. God's people are simple but spiritual minded, leaning toward God and nature, calmly tilling the soil, caring for truth rather than wealth. The seed of the serpent has brought tremendous commerce, wonderful inventions, but with it all comes death. Their gunpowder and atomic bombs kill in war; and in peace time their mechanical inventions, such as the car, kill even more in a time of peace than do the inventions of war destroy in times of trouble. Death and destruction are the fruits of her labors.

But they are religious. They believe in God. They are like their father, the devil, and their ancestor, Cain. Both of them believed in God. They go to church. They mingle with the righteous as do tares mingle with the wheat. In so doing they corrupt and produce a Nicolaitane religion. They spread their poison in every effort to destroy the seed of God even as Cain killed Abel. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

But God loses none of His own. He keeps them even in death, and has promised that in the last day He will raise them up.

CONCLUSION

"... To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree Of Life, Which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

What a thrilling thought is this. That Tree Of Life in the Garden of Eden Which could not be approached unto because of the fall of Adam is now given to the overcomer. The flaming sword of the guarding cherubim has been sheathed. But it was not sheathed ere its blade was bloody with the blood of the Lamb. Let us meditate upon this truth awhile as we consider why the Tree was denied to Adam and his descendants but now allowed again.

God's intention for His creation, man, is to express His Words. In Genesis, Adam was given the Word to live by. A life lived by the Word would be the Word expressed. That is true is it not? But did Adam live by that Word? No, because he was to live by EVERY Word, and he failed to take heed to every Word.

Then there arose Moses. What a great and mighty man he was. Yet he also failed to live by every Word, and that prophet, the type of the Great Prophet to come, failed in anger to obey the Word.

And there was also David, the great king of Israel, a man after God's own heart. He failed by adultery, when he was tempted.

But eventually, in the fullness of time, there came One, the Head, even Jesus, Who also must be tempted to see if He would live by EVERY Word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. Then was Satan foiled. For here was One Who lived by "It is written," and that Masterpiece of God overcame by reflecting God's Word. Then was this manifested Perfect One given to the cross, as the Perfect Lamb of God for the perfect sacrifice. And on the 'tree' He received the wounds unto death, that we, by Him and because of Him, might eat of the Tree Of Life, and then that Life freely given would enable us to overcome, and express the Word of God.

And now to these Sons of God, who by Him overcome, are given the privilege of the paradise of God, and the constant fellowship of Jesus Christ. There will never more be any separation from Him. Whither He goes, His bride will go. What is His, He shares with His beloved on a joint-heir relationship. The secret things will be revealed. The dark things will be made plain. We shall know as we are known. And we shall be like Him. This is the heritage of the overcomer who has overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of testimony to Jesus Christ.

How we long for that day when the crooked roads will all be straightened, and we will be with Him, time without end. May that day hasten its appearance, and may we hasten to obey His Word and thereby prove our worthiness to share His glory.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." How tragic it is that this first age did not listen to the Spirit. Instead it listened to man. But thank God, in the last age there will be a group rise up, the True Bride of the last day, and she will listen to the Spirit. In that day of gross darkness the light will return by the pure Word and we will return to the power of Pentecost to welcome back the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SMYRNAEAN CHURCH AGE

REVELATION 2:8-11

And unto the angel of the church of Smyrna write; These things saith the First and the Last, Which was dead, and is alive;

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

INTRODUCTION

In order to refresh your minds I want to point out again how we arrive at finding the names of the messengers to the various ages. God in His sovereign will has seen to it that the history of the New Testament church was not lost, even as He saw to it that the history of Israel would not be lost by placing it in the Bible and corroborating it today from multitudes of scrolls, earthen vessels and other artifacts that archaeologists have discovered and interpreted. We actually have a running commentary of Bible history from the first page up to now.

Thus by reading history we can find out what man or men in the various ages were the closest to God's original pattern, the Apostle Paul. The ones that God used to bring His people back to the Word of Truth would be the ones to examine. Then out of those there would be one for every age who would stand out the clearest as the closest in Word pattern and power. That one would be the messenger. The ages also are found by a study of history. One simply needs to read the ages as found in Revelation and it all patterns perfectly with history as INDEED IT MUST. Since the church ages were foretold by God and their very conditions revealed, then of necessity, the history that would follow would be as the Bible sets forth. It is that simple--but then simplicity is the key to the Word. Now with all this I have not simply been a student and a

historian, I have sought to be a Spiritual-minded man, and it was only with the definite approval of the Spirit of God that I chose the men I have chosen. This is true as God knows my heart.

THE MESSENGER

Using our God given rule of choosing the messenger for each age, we unhesitatingly declare that Irenaeus was exalted by the Lord to that position. He was the disciple of that great saint and warrior of faith, Polycarp. And it is no doubt as he sat at the feet of that great man he learned the Christian graces that flowed from his consecrated life, for Polycarp was one of the truly illustrious saints of all ages when viewed in the light of a blameless life.

You will remember from your own reading that Polycarp was martyred. Too old to flee, and too sincere a man to allow another to hide him and then suffer a penalty for doing so, he gave himself up to death. But before he did, he asked for and was granted permission to pray two hours for his brethren in the Lord, for the governor, for his enemies and his captors. Like the great saints of all ages, and desiring a better resurrection, he stood firm, refusing to deny the Lord, and died with a free conscience. He was placed at the stake (untied at his own request) and the fire was lit. The fire bent away from his body, refusing to touch him. He was then pierced through with a sword. As this was done, water gushed from his side drowning the flames. His spirit was actually seen to depart in the form of a white dove released from his bosom. Yet for all this great testimony, this student of John the Revelator was not militant against the Nicolaitane system, for he himself leaned toward organization, not realizing that the desire for fellowship and what appeared like a good plan to foster the work of God was really a trick of the enemy.

With Irenaeus this was not so. He was militant against any form of organization. Also, his life history, wherein he served the Lord, was one of much manifestation in the Holy Spirit; and the Word was taught with unusual clarity and conformity to its original precepts. His churches in France were known to have the gifts of the Spirit among them, for the saints spoke in tongues, prophesied, raised the dead, and healed the sick by the prayer of faith. He saw the danger of any kind of organized brotherhood among the elders, pastors, etc. He stood solidly for a unified, Spirit-filled, gift-manifesting local church. And God honored him for the power of God manifested among the saints.

He was also clear on his understanding of the Godhead. And since he was the disciple of Polycarp, who in turn was the disciple of Saint John, we can know for sure he had as perfect teaching as is possible on this subject. In

Volume 1, page 412 of the Ante Nicene Fathers we have this statement by him on the Godhead. "All the other expressions, likewise, bring out the title of one, and the same being, the Lord of Power, the Lord, the Father of All, God Almighty, Most High, Creator, Maker, and such like, these are not the names and the titles of a succession of different beings, but of one and the same." He pointed out clearly that these are but titles as is Rose of Sharon, Bright and Morning Star, Fairest of Ten Thousand, etc. Neither is there but ONE God. His Name is Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus with his strict adherence to the Word, his wonderful understanding of Scripture, and the attendance of the power of God upon that ministry, he is the right choice for the age. It is altogether unfortunate that the other ages did not have in their messengers such a balance of fruit, power, and leadership in the Holy Spirit and the Word.

SMYRNA

The city of Smyrna was a little north of Ephesus at the mouth of the Smyrna Gulf. Because of its very fine harbor it was a commercial center renowned for its exports. It was also distinguished for its schools of rhetoric, philosophy, medicine, sciences, and fine buildings. Many Jews lived there, and they were bitterly opposed to Christianity, even more so than were the Romans. In fact, Polycarp, the first bishop at Smyrna was martyred by the Jews and it is said that the Jews desecrated their holy day (Saturday) to carry the wood that would make his funeral pyre.

The word Smyrna means, "bitter," being derived from the word, myrrh. Myrrh was used in embalming the dead. Thus we have a twofold significance found in the name of this age. It was a bitter age filled with death. The two vines within the framework of the church were drifting further apart with an increased bitterness toward the true vine on the part of the false. Death was not only the seed of the false vine but even in the true vine there was a creeping paralysis and impotence because they had already drifted from the unadulterated truth of the first few years after Pentecost; and no true believer is any stronger and spiritually healthy and alive than his knowledge of and adherence to the pure Word of God, as seen by multitudes of examples in the Old Testament. Organization was growing apace, confirming and augmenting the death of the membership, for Holy Ghost leadership was deposed and the Word was replaced by creeds, dogmas and man-made ritual.

When Israel entered into unlawful alliances with the world, and formed fellowships by marriage, the day finally came when the world took over and Babylon carried away the people of God into captivity. Now when they went

into captivity they went in having a priesthood, a temple and the Word. But when they came back they had rabbis, a theological order of Pharisees, a synagogue, and the Talmud. And when Jesus came they were so corrupt that He called them of their father, the devil, and this in spite of the fact they were of Abraham according to the flesh. In this age we see the same thing happening. However, as 'all Israel' is not Israel, but a little group were the true Spiritual Israelites, so there would always be a little group of true Christians, the bride of Christ, until He came for His own.

In this city there were two famous temples. One was the temple erected to the worship of Zeus, and the other was erected to Cybele. And between these two temples was found the most beautiful road of ancient times, called the Golden Street. To me this depicts a further inroad of paganism that had already started in the first age, but was known to exist only at Rome. The joining of the two temples of a god and goddess is the seed of Maryolatry wherein Mary is called the mother of God and receives honor and titles and powers giving her a coequality with Jesus Christ.

The Golden Street that joins them is a picture of the greed that caused the Nicolaitane organizers to join state and church because they knew the wealth and power it offered them. As the Ephesian Age was but the seed bed for the tragic Pergamean Age that was yet in the future, this Smyrnaean Age was the rain, the sun, and the nourishment that ensured the vile corruption that would confirm the church in idolatry which is spiritual fornication, from which she would never rise. Death was permeating her root to branch and they that partook of her, partook of bitterness and death.

This age lasted from 170 to 312 A.D.

THE SALUTATION

Revelation 2:8,

"These things saith the First and the Last, Which was dead and is alive."

"The First and the Last, Which was dead and is alive." Now these are not the words of a man. A mere man (could he speak from the grave) would say, "I am the first and the last which was alive and is dead." The first thing that happens to a man is that he is born (is alive) and the last thing that happens is that he dies. So this is not a man speaking. This is Deity.

Man (Adam) took life and turned it into death.

But this MAN (Jesus) took death and turned it into life.

Adam took innocence and turned it into guilt.

This One took guilt and turned it into righteousness.

Adam took a paradise and turned it into a waste howling wilderness; but this One is coming back to turn an earth rocking and reeling with destruction into another Eden. Adam took a life of fellowship and joy with God and turned it into a desert of spiritual darkness that brought forth all sin, moral decay, pain, suffering, delusion, and corruption that wars within the souls of men. But this One, from all the tragic death and degradation that filled mankind, brought forth a life of righteousness and beauty, so that as sin once reigned unto death, even so might men now reign in righteousness by One, Christ Jesus; and not as the offence was, though terrible indeed it was, but now much more is His gift unto eternal life.

And here He is, walking in the midst of those whom He has redeemed, even His church. And what were those who were redeemed? Were not many like Paul, murderers and corrupters? Were not many like the dying thief, robbers and men killers? All trophies of His grace. All brought back from the dead. All made ALIVE in Christ Jesus, the Lord.

I wonder if you noted the salutation to the first age and then noted the one to this age. Just put them together. "These things saith He that holds the seven stars in His right hand and walks in the midst of the churches. These things saith the First and the Last, Which was dead and is alive." This is one and the same person. And He is letting us know that the church is His.

As the seed of the fruit is in the midst of the fruit, so is He, the Royal Seed, in the midst of the church. As the seed alone has life in it, so is He the author of life to the church. His walking signifies His untiring care of it. He is the Chief Shepherd watching over His own. That is His right, for He bought that church with His own blood. That blood is the blood of God. The One Who owns that church is God, very God. He is the 'First and the Last.' That title spells eternity. He was dead and is alive. He paid the price so He has sole ownership of the temple of God. He rules it. He is worshipped in it. He resents anyone taking over His Lordship and authority. No doubt the reason He introduces Himself to each age as Deity is to warn and comfort the people. He warns the false vine, and He comforts the true vine. This is the ONE TRUE ALMIGHTY GOD. Hear Him and live.

CONDITIONS OF THE AGE

Revelation 2:9,

"I know thy works and thy tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

The key to this age is most evidently tribulation. If there was tribulation in the first age, there is now predicted an intensified tribulation throughout the second age. There is no doubt but what the following words of Paul applied to the mass of Christians wherever they were in the world and in every age.

Hebrews 10:32-38,

"But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

For yet a little while, and He That shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

The mere association of kindhearted people with the true believer might well bring death in return for their kindness.

Now the Lord God Almighty says, "I KNOW." There He is walking in the midst of His people. There He is, the Chief Shepherd of the flock. But does He hold back the persecution? Does He stem the tribulation? No, He does not. He simply says, "I KNOW your tribulation--I am not at all unmindful of your suffering." What a stumbling block this is to so many people. Like Israel they wonder if God really loves them. How can God be just and loving if He stands by and watches His people suffer?

That is what they asked in Malachi 1:1-3,

"The burden of the Word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet we say, Wherein hast Thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob,

And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness."

You see, they could not figure out God's love. They thought that love meant no suffering. They thought that love meant a baby with parental care. But God said that His love was "elective" love. The proof of His love is ELECTION--that no matter what happened, His love was proven truly by the fact they were chosen unto salvation (because God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth). He may commit you to death as He did Paul. He may commit you to suffering as He did Job. That is His prerogative. He is sovereign. But it is all with a purpose. If He did not have a purpose, then He would be the author of frustration and not of peace. His purpose is that after we have suffered awhile we would be made perfect, be established, strengthened and settled. As Job said, "He puts strength in us." (Job 23:6b) You see He, Himself, suffered. He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. He was actually made perfect by the things that He suffered.

Hebrews 5:8-9,

"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered;

And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."

In plain language, the very character of Jesus was perfected by suffering. And according to Paul He has left His church a measure of suffering that they, too, by their faith in God while suffering for Him, would come to a place of perfection. Why did He want this?

James 1:2-4,

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

Why does He stand by? The reason is in Romans 8:17-18,

"And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Unless we suffer with Him we cannot reign with Him. You have to suffer to reign. The reason for this is that character simply is never made without

suffering. Character is a VICTORY, not a gift. A man without character can't reign because power apart from character is Satanic. But power with character is fit to rule. And since He wants us to share even His throne on the same basis that He overcame and is set down in His Father's throne, then we have to overcome to sit with Him. And the little temporary suffering we go through now is not worthy to be compared to the tremendous glory that will be revealed in us when He comes. Oh, what treasures are laid up for those who are willing to enter into His kingdom through much tribulation.

"Think it not strange concerning the fiery trials that are to try you."

That is what Peter said. Is it strange that God wants us to develop a Christ-like character that comes through suffering? No sir. And we all have trials. We are all tried and chastened as sons. Not one but goes through that. The church that is not suffering, and is not being tried, hasn't got it--it isn't of God.

Heb. 12:6,

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

Now this special condition in Smyrna must be applied to every age. There is no age free from it. There is no true believer free from it. This is of God. This is the will of God. It is needful. We need the Lord to teach us the truth that we are to suffer and be Christ-like in doing it. "Love suffereth long and is kind."

Matthew 5:11-12,

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

The cloudy skies and storms of life are no signs of God's disapproval. Neither are bright skies and still waters signs of His love and approval. His approval of any of us is only IN THE BELOVED. His love is elective which He had for us before the foundation of the world. Does He love us? Ah yes. But how shall we know? We shall know because He SAID SO, and manifested that He did love us for He brought us to Himself and gave us of His Spirit, placing us as sons. And how shall I prove my love to Him? By believing what He said, and by conducting myself with joy amidst the trials that He in His wisdom allows to come to pass.

"I know thy poverty (but thou are rich)."

There it is again. See Him walking up and down in the midst of His Church. Like a father He is looking down upon His family. He is the Head of His household. He is the provider. He is the protector. Yet He looks on at their

poverty. Oh, how the untutored believer stumbles at this. How can God bear to look upon His own in a time of need and not just stop it all--just give in and lavish everything material upon them?

Here is where you have to believe again in the love, and goodness and wisdom of God. This, too, is needful. Remember He admonished, "Take no thought for the morrow, what ye shall eat or what ye shall put on. Your Father knoweth the things ye have need of. He Who clothes the lily and feeds the sparrow shall do much more for you. These physical things are not the true basic necessities of your life, for a man's life consisteth not of the things he possesses. But rather seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all material necessities will be added unto you."

The people of God are not material minded. They are Christ-minded. They do not seek the treasures that are below; they seek those above. It is absolutely true, the majority of Christians are NOT wealthy. Rather they are on the poor side. It was so in Jesus' day. It was true in Paul's day and it should be true today. Oh, it is not too true today for the Laodicean Age is one of vast wealth where often the criterion of spirituality is an abundance of earthly goods. My, how rich the church is in goods. But how poor in Spirit. "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is NOT meat and drink." It is not material. It is WITHIN us. A rich man is rich in God, not in worldly things.

"Oh," cries the Spirit, "I see your poverty. I see your need. You haven't very much, if anything, to boast of. What you did have has been taken from you. You gladly gave up your possessions in exchange for eternal ones. You are laughed at. You are scorned. You don't have material resources to fall back on. But you are rich in spite of it all. Your security lies in Him Who is your shield and exceeding great reward. Your kingdom is yet to come. But it will come. And it will be an everlasting one. Yes, I am mindful of your trials and woes. I know how hard it is to get along. But I will remember all this when I return to claim you as My own, and then I will reward you."

Now this is nothing against rich people because God can save a rich man. Some of God's children are rich. But money can be such a snare, not only to those who have it but to those who don't have it. Way back there in the first age, James cried out to those who were putting stock in wealthy people, "Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons." The poor there were trying to butter up the rich in order to get help, rather than trusting in God. "Don't do it," says James. "Don't do it. Money isn't everything. Money isn't the answer." And today it is not the answer either. We have more wealth than we have ever had and yet less is being accomplished Spiritually. It is not with money that God works. He moves by His Spirit. And that moving of the Spirit comes only to a life consecrated to the Word.

THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN

Revelation 2:9b.

"I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

Here is a verse that will bear considerable thought, not only because it is most peculiar in its contents, but also it is virtually repeated in an age that is over a thousand years later.

Revelation 2:9

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

To begin with, the word, Jews, does not describe the religion of the Jewish people. It refers only to the people of Judah and has the same precise meaning if I were to say I am Irish born. These people were saying that they were actually Jews, real Jews by birth. They were liars. They were not Jews by birth and they weren't Jews by religion.

If all this is true, what were they? They were a deceived people who were already part of the church. They belonged to the false vine.

They were not of the true church, but of the false church because God said "they were the synagogue of Satan." Now the word for synagogue is not the same word we use for church. In the Bible, church means, "the called out ones", or the "summoned ones". The Psalmist said about these elect people,

"Blessed is the man whom THOU CHOOSEST, and CAUSEST to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts."

Psalms 65:4.

But the meaning of synagogue is "assembly or gathering." This can be good or bad, but in this case it is bad, for these are they whose assembling is not of God but of their own selves. Isaiah said of them,

"Behold, they shall surely gather together, but NOT BY ME: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake."

Isaiah 54:15.

And since these were surely against the true vine, God will one day deal with them in destruction.

Now why do we have a people mixed in the framework of the church and calling themselves Jews? The reason is this: Since they were liars they could make any claim they wished. They could say what they wanted as though it

were a fact and then stick to it. And in this case they could be lying with a very powerful thought in mind. Was it not so that the early church was almost if not entirely composed of Jews, making them the original members of His body? The twelve apostles were Jews, and the later apostles were either Jews or proselytes. Thus for men to swear they were Jews would give them a preeminence and a claim to originality. Tell a lie. Stick to it. Never mind fact or history. Just say it and keep saying it to the people, and soon the people will receive it.

Now did you catch something there? Isn't that the same spirit right in the church today? Isn't there a group that claims that they are the original and true church and that salvation is found only in her? Don't they claim that they have the keys of the kingdom which they received from Peter? Don't they claim that Peter was their first pope, and that he resided in Rome when there is **ABSOLUTELY NO HISTORICAL FACT FOR IT?** And even her most educated and knowing adherents believe her lies. Satan's synagogue! And if Satan be her father, and he the father of lies, then it is not strange that those in his synagogue are liars also.

Consider the thought of blasphemy. These of Satan's synagogue were not blaspheming God in this instance (though that goes without saying) but they were blaspheming the true church. Certainly. As Cain persecuted and killed Abel because he (Cain) was of that wicked one, and as the dead formal Judaic followers (Jesus said they were of their father, the devil) tried to destroy the Christians in the first few years of the first age, now this same group (the false vine) is even more strongly attempting to destroy the true believer in the second age. That antichrist spirit is growing.

The group that inched its way ever so slowly into the church by its DEEDS (Nicolaitanism) no longer fears exposure but is openly organized in a group of its own assembling and is coming against the true church in undisguised hostility.

Now when I say this was an organized antichrist church I am giving you the truth from authenticated history. The first church founded in Rome (we will trace its history in the Pergamean Age) had already turned the truth of God into a lie by introducing a pagan religion with Christian names and meaning. By the second age it was so pagan (though claiming to be the true church) that Polycarp came about 1500 miles at a very old age to plead with them to turn back. They would not do it. They had a solid hierarchy and a solid organization, and a complete departure from the Word. This then, is Satan's synagogue, full of blasphemy, in which were already the seeds of the doctrine of Nicolaitanism, and which would shortly be the actual seat or power of Satanic religion. And this is exactly right for Revelation 2:9b does NOT say

these people are OF Satan's synagogue but it says they ARE SATAN'S SYNAGOGUE.

This spirit of antichrist is not new. This is not something that just came in the church ages. It has been here all along. To get a clear understanding of how it works, how it goes against God and takes over in the church, look at the Old Testament and see it there. Let us examine this spirit as it was manifested in Israel as she came out of Egypt to be the church in the wilderness.

Just as the early church started out under the pure ministry of the Holy Spirit with signs and wonders and manifestations such as prophecy, tongues, and interpretation, wisdom, knowledge and healing, so in the days of Israel when they left Egypt, they were under the leadership of the Spirit of God manifesting in gifts. God was the leader of the people. Actually He was their King. He was a Father-King. He took care of Israel like a man cares for his family. He fed them, fought their battles, smoothed away their difficulties and settled their problems. He just busied Himself over them. They were the only nation to which He was truly God. But one day they got to looking around, and they saw the Philistines and other nations with kings over them. It caught their eyes and they decided that they ought to humanize their leadership, so they wanted a king. Now God was going to humanize the leadership Himself, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, but they got ahead of Him. Satan knew the plan of God so he put it in the hearts of the people to get ahead of God (the Word).

When they approached Samuel and asked for a king, Samuel was so dismayed that his heart almost failed him. God had been leading His people through this consecrated, Scripture-vindicated prophet and he felt that he had been rejected. He gathered the people and pleaded with them not to turn away from the God Who had carried them like children, and prospered them and blessed them. But they persisted. They said to Samuel. "You have never been wrong in your leading. You have never been dishonest in your financial dealings. You have done your best to keep us in line with the Word of the Lord. We appreciate the miracles, wisdom, provision and protection of God. We believe in it. We like it. And furthermore we don't want to be without it. It's just that we want a king to lead us to battle. Now of course when we go out to battle it is still our intention to have the priests go ahead with Judah following, and we will blow the trumpets and shout and sing. We don't intend to stop any of that. **BUT WE WANT A KING WHO IS ONE OF US TO LEAD US.**"

And God said to Samuel. "See, they have not rejected you, but they have rejected ME from ruling over them."

How tragic that was. Little did they realize that when they were asking God to let them be like the rest of the world they were rejecting Him, because God

had ordained that His people act different from the world. They are not of the world and they don't look like the world and they don't act like the world. They are crucified unto the world and the world is crucified unto them.

II Corinthians 6:17-18,

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

You see the one difference between Israel and the rest of the nations was God. Put God to one side and Israel was like any other nation. When Samson cut off his hair he was like any other man. Put the leadership of the Holy Ghost aside and the church is NOTHING BUT THE WORLD WITH GOD'S NAME ATTACHED TO IT. The world and the church are all of the same lump, just like Jacob and Esau were of the same parents, but the Spirit of God makes the difference.

It doesn't matter if you call yourself a Christian. Anyone can do that. The point is whether or not you have the Spirit of God in you, for without that Spirit you are reprobate; you are none of His. Amen.

Not too long ago I asked a lady if she were a Christian. She said to me, "I will have you know, sir, that I burn a candle every night." What in the world has that got to do with it? I'm a Methodist, I'm a Baptist, I'm a Pentecostal. That hasn't a thing to do with it. It is the Holy Ghost or perish.

Well, starting way back there in the first church the people got to thinking and reasoning how to improve on God. The deeds of the Nicolaitanes began showing themselves. Then a group formed. They drifted away from the pattern of the Word. All it takes is just one word changed and that little leaven then leavens the whole lump. He that offends in one point of the law is guilty of all. Eve just changed one word. That will do it.

And when that Satan-centered group was formed, it began to hate and to fight the true believers, insisting that they (the aliens) were the church of God.

Notice how organization breeds hatred. It destroys fellowship. It makes bitterness. That is what myrrh means. This is what Smyrna was full of. Bitterness. A root of bitterness defiles many. So more and more defilement was coming in. Every age would feel its scars.

The Smyrnaean church had drifted far from the original. It had become a hybrid. It had hybridized itself the way Eve did. You know that a hybrid is what comes of two species mixing. The result is no longer pure like the original. It is mongrel. Well, when Eve allowed the beast to mingle his seed with hers she produced a creature called Cain that wasn't pure human. He was of the WICKED ONE. Notice how different he was from Abel. Notice how

different he was from Seth. He hated God and would not obey the Word and persecuted and killed the righteous. He set himself up above the Word of God.

The church, too, has departed from what she originally was. She is a hybrid. That is, the church nominal is a hybrid. People say, "I am a Baptist." It wasn't so in the beginning. "I am Methodist." It wasn't so in the beginning. Instead of the straight Word of God, instead of the Spirit-filled men in the church who were led by Spirit-given revelation, there are now creeds, and by-laws, and the educated guesses of educated men. Learning has taken the place of revelation. Reason has replaced faith. Program has replaced spontaneous praise in the Holy Ghost. It wasn't so from the beginning. The whole specie has changed. It has become a hybrid church.

Now then, when the church becomes hybridized, will it produce pure Christians? It can't. The life or seed that brings Christians to birth is not in them. Like brings forth like. The Baptists bring forth more Baptists and they act like Baptists. Methodists bring forth Methodists and they act like Methodists. Not one is known by the power of God nor can they be for it's not there. They are known by their ceremonial worship of God and their creeds and dogmas.

Talk about a hybrid. Do you know the most famous hybrid in the world? It has been with us for ages. It is the mule. It is a cross between a donkey and a horse. He is a funny kind of an animal. He can't reproduce himself. He has no life that can do that. Yet talk about work. He can outwork the horse or the donkey. But watch his nature. He is stubborn and you can never trust him. He is a perfect picture of hybrid religion. A cross between truth and darkness, for the horse is a type of the true believer and the ass a picture of the unrighteous one. Mix them and you have a sterile, formal religion. It hasn't the seed of life. It is dead. It can talk about truth but it can't produce it. It doesn't have God in its midst, yet it gathers together and talks about God, and all the while systematically denies the power. They will deny the Word in the very Name of the Lord. And there is never any hope for them. Do you realize that no organized religion ever had a revival? Never! Once they organized they died. They can't ever come back. No sir. I can show you that in type.

In Exodus 13:13,

"And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck; and all the first-born of man among thy children shalt thou redeem."

See, the ass can be redeemed. Every miserable sinner can be redeemed by the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ, or in rejecting Christ be rejected himself. But you don't redeem the mule. There is no redemption for him. There is no blood for him. There can't be because the mule takes refuge in the church

while the ass takes refuge in the blood. The mule has "no seed" in him that can be quickened, but the ass has seed.

Why, just a few weeks ago I read an editorial. Yes, it was an editorial by an unsaved businessman; not by a Christian. He said that he was amazed at the churches. He could not understand them. They had seminaries filled with professors who taught the Word of God in order to destroy it. Now then this man could not figure that out. He was appalled by it. He said that he could understand the atheist or communist, or free thinker or someone else doing that. But when the church itself destroyed the Word of God it was tantamount to premeditated murder. **THERE IS YOUR HYBRID RELIGION. WAKE UP AMERICA BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.**

When the church gets away from the Word it will believe anything. It is like Eve. When Cain was born she said, "I've gotten a man from the Lord." Now do you realize that she really meant that? She thought that she had a man from the Lord. You see, once she had been deceived by taking the word of Satan instead of the Word of God she then thought that whatever she said was right. If she said that she had a man from God, then she had a man from God. But God has set laws in His universe. A good seed can only bring forth good fruit and the evil seed can bring forth only evil fruit. Now each seed, though different, will utilize the same earth, nourishment, moisture, and sunshine, but it will bring forth after its own kind. Notice the history of the Cain line. Notice the history of the Seth line. Only one difference between them--the original seed. Nothing else.

If you look at this statement of Eve real close you will notice that she had more of an understanding than most realize. She did not attribute the son to Satan for that would have made him equal with God. Only God could create the egg in the womb of Mary. Satan couldn't do that. Eve knew that. Satan can only pervert. So he beguiled her with the wrong seed. It was the serpent's seed that brought forth Cain. It was Adam's seed that brought forth Abel and Seth. Those seeds went through exactly the same process, but the children were different for they were from different seeds.

She believed that Cain was from God. She accepted the devil's lie as the truth of God. That is exactly what we have now. Churches set themselves up as fountains of truth but the truth is not in them; yet their begotten children swear by them and will even kill to uphold their error.

If you think that is an exaggeration, read all of II Timothy chapter 3 and the first five verses of the fourth chapter.

II Timothy 4:1-5

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom;

Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

When the church allowed herself to move away from the original, like Adam and Eve, death set in.

There is no strength in her. She has become a monstrosity. The minute the church moved toward form and ceremony, and toward priesthood by organizing the ministers into a group that decided leadership apart from the Holy Spirit and His Word, that very moment death entered and she started to get sick, and as she got sick she changed to a powerless group of people whose only weapon was argument. She could produce nothing in the Spirit, for her hopes were built on program and not on faith in His Word. They sowed program so they reaped program. They sowed perversion so they reaped perverted children.

You tamper with God and you reap exactly what you injected. Man ought to learn that from nature. He has tampered with nature. He has injected his own ideas into nature and rearranged the molecules, etc., and now he is reaping a whirlwind. Just look how they have bred the chicken. It is so highly bred that it is a laying machine that lays itself out. It is no good for food and is soft and poor eating. They inject substances into the meat we eat and because of that the human body is changing so that women are getting narrower in the hips and broader of shoulder and men are getting just the opposite. Now if you fool with nature and get a monstrosity and a backfire, what will happen if you change the truth into a lie? The answer is, you will breed an antichrist, godless system of religion that is so perverted it will not look like or produce what the original did. The only answer that God has for a situation like that is the lake of fire.

That poor Smyrnaean Age was dying. When it died, it never came back. No age ever comes back. No revival ever comes back. It can't have the life of God in it by natural generation. It takes a regeneration from above. This last age started with the fires of a Pentecostal revival and they organized it right back. Instead of taking the Word they took their own ideas and did just what every age has done--substituted the manual for the Word. Just you step outside that manual and see what happens. You are out, brother. And they will persecute you and blame it on God. And how they love their organization. No wonder. They are second generation Pentecostals and since God doesn't have

grandchildren they are just children of their fathers, known by their creeds and form of worship. They can talk about what used to be, but they can't produce it. Once they had the lightning but about all that is left is the thunder.

But let them talk to you about the glories of their movement. They will say, "Yes sir, I want you to know that this is a move that no man started. It came spontaneously. The Spirit fell all over the world. Yes sir, we got what they had at Pentecost. This was not of men but of God." THEN WHY DIDN'T THEY KEEP IT THAT WAY? IF GOD STARTED IT HOW COME GOD COULDN'T KEEP IT AND FINISH IT? If God didn't write a handbook of creeds and formulas and dogmas to start it, then what right did they have to do that?

God poured out His Spirit upon Baptists, Methodists, Nazarenes, Adventists, Presbyterians, Brethren, Church of God (several so named) etc. All these brethren were brought up on different doctrines, by-laws, church manuals etc. God swept it all to one side; He destroyed their dispensational theories and restored the gifts of the Spirit, proving He is the same yesterday and today and forever. But did those Pentecostals learn their lesson about organization? No sir. They organized right back and have written their own textbooks, by-laws and church manual, fellowship book, etc. with one idea in mind, which is to prove that they now have all the truth, know all the answers, and are therefore, the elite of God who know the way and can show it unto others as God's appointed guides. But they haven't got it. They have hybridized themselves like the very groups they came out of. If they want to be in the bride they are going to have to come out exactly as did their forefathers.

They are like all the rest. The revival is over. They are trying to live a name and are dead. They took organization, all the while talking about the Spirit of God. They talk about the evidence of the Holy Spirit. But they forget that the devil can talk in tongues, too. The utter confusion of Babel is in their midst and they call it the Spirit of God. Once again we see man telling God, instead of God telling man.

Now you might desire to scold me right here for what I have said. All right. They call themselves Pentecostal and Full Gospel. Let them prove it. At Pentecost the fire came in a cloud and separated over each of them like a tongue, and fell on each one. Where is the fire? They spoke in tongues at Pentecost and the people who listened understood. Where is that? The whole multitude of believers acted like one family. Pentecostals are as badly divided as any group in history. No man durst join himself to the early church but only God added. They have as many goats among them as any. They claim to be full Gospel but they can't prove it. Their churches are as empty of power as any of them. If they are full Gospel then we had better admit the Bible made a mistake when it describes the full Gospel men at Pentecost. They sing,

"There's been a great change in me." They are right. But the change has not been for the better.

It is time to get back to God. They have a name that they live but are dead. Tongues isn't the evidence of revival. It is the evidence of death. Tongues proclaimed the evidence that the ceremonial religion of the Jews was over, that a new era had begun. Tongues today is ringing down the curtain on the Gentile church ages and the Gospel is going back to the Jews. People are talking about tongues heralding in a great Spiritual move. They have missed the boat. The truth is that it is writing the finish to all of man's ideas, programs and kingdoms, and the kingdom of God is being ushered in. Wake up people of God. Wake up.

If you don't think this is true, just listen to this. All over the world in both Pentecostal and fundamental groups they are organizing the businessmen. They have invaded the pulpit without a call from God. They have styled themselves the fishers of men and the founders of a move of God, and they say the gifted ministry of Ephesians 4:10-13 that God gave the church has failed, so they are taking over. Here we are right in the midst of the fulfillment of prophecy, called the gainsayings of Korah, and they don't even know that they have fulfilled it. They are blindly going on preaching experience for truth. May God have pity on them. May their eyes be opened before it is too late. Oh, listen to me. When did the prestige of money, social leadership, business ability, or sheer mental prowess ever qualify a man for spiritual leadership, or give any weight to the Word of God? And when in any way materiality or human values begin to show as the media by which God works instead of the Holy Spirit ALONE, then we are fighting against God, not for Him.

Now I want this on record right here. I am not speaking against elders in the church. No sir. And that elder can be as poor as any man was ever poor, or be the richest man in the world as long as he is an elder in heart and deed. I would not hesitate to ordain any man that has the real Spiritual qualifications as an elder or deacon regardless of his finances or social position. But when you see a social or financial structure come into the church that divides the folks in any way--that is not of God. It is another sign of the time in this physically rich, but Spiritually impoverished Laodicean Age in which we are now living.

"I know thy poverty." Did you notice that their poverty is linked up with the synagogue of Satan in that same verse? Yes, it is the rich powerful organization that has the wealth and always pushes out the little people that serve God. When the Spirit of God moves in the hearts of men, who is it that leaves the buildings and property? The little flock always loses out to the big organization. And where do the people then go? They worship in homes, old

store buildings, and basements, just as they did when they went to the catacombs.

These people were poor in this world's goods. Certainly. But they were rich in Spirit.

"I know their blasphemy." Now it isn't the thought here that these liars are blaspheming God, though that goes without saying. But they are blaspheming the true church. It is always thus. The Jews of Jerusalem blasphemed the church at the beginning. The Gentile polytheists did likewise. If anyone is going to be evil-spoken of, it will always be the true seed. In Nero's day the Christians were blamed for every calamity--even for the burning of Rome. In communist countries the little flock is always the first to be exterminated though actually insignificant in size. Though the Christians are fine loyal people, who do only good, they will always be persecuted to the end that they might be physically destroyed.

The reason this is so, is because they are a rebuke to the godless. Like a sore thumb they stand out before the wicked. And though the righteous intend no harm to the wicked but want to do only good, invariably they find they are embroiled as was John the Baptist with Herod. For John did not want to harm either Herod or his wife but to save them from the wrath of God. This was not only thoroughly misunderstood and absolutely withstood, but John was put to death because of it. And for all the good the people of God do, they are still put to public shame and to death. Surely there must be some sinister force behind a people who would be so void of conscience that they would return evil to those who did them good. Yes, there is such a force. It is Satan. The answer lies in the next verse.

TEN YEARS OF TRIBULATION

Revelation 2:10

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Every time the Lord uses those words, "Fear not," there is an engagement at hand which will involve great danger and suffering and deprivation. Now He does not say in a blunt, curt manner, "Tribulation is coming." That would frighten one. But like a mother who is about to turn out the light says gently to her child lest he be frightened, "Now don't be afraid, for the light will go out and it will be dark. But remember that I am here with you." So He says, "Don't be afraid of man or what he can do to you. I am with you, and My grace is

sufficient for you. When you pass through the waters, they will not overflow you. Not even in death are you defeated. You are more than conquerors."

The great apostle, Paul, knew from experience the reality of those words and he wrote in Romans 8:35-59,

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him That loved us.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

No, we are not to fear. His love casts out all fear.

Now notice what He says, "the devil will cast some of you into prison that you may be tried." The Jews were doing that right then. The pagan priests were doing that right then. The governors who tried to curry favor with the public because the people liked the arena, hurled the Christians by the thousands to their death, destroying them by lions and gladiators. What has the devil to do with this? Why blame him? Ah, yes, but it is the devil's hatred behind it all. He is behind it all for he hates God. What God has set His heart on, Satan is bound to try to destroy. But watch. Here is some illumination. If Satan is behind the Jews who are hailing the Christians into court, then the Jews are not of God's religion but the devil's. Their gathering is also of the synagogue of Satan. And if the Roman Catholic Church killed the multitudes of believers in the Dark Ages, yes and in all ages, then they are of the devil and belong to Satan, also.

And if you think this shocking, just wait until the prophecy of Revelation 13 is fulfilled. It is strikingly true that the United States of America is in that chapter. The very number thirteen is a symbol of this nation. It started with thirteen colonies. Its flag has thirteen stars and thirteen stripes. And there is her destiny in the thirteenth chapter. In this image that is mentioned in this chapter will be found all the wickedness of the beast that was before it. As the beast rose at the Nicene Council, so the image will come out of the World Council of Churches with all ungodly and Satanic power to vent the anger of the devil upon the true vine of God. It will be a repeat performance of all diabolical cunning and cruelty.

Those who fight the humble of God and scoff and destroy--let them do it. And do it they will. And all in the Name of God and religion. But they lie. They are not of God. They are of their father, the devil. They, by their deeds

against ANY people, expose themselves for what they are. Let them organize and repudiate the little flock. They but further reveal to all that they are of the devil. They are the false vine--the vine that murders. Their hatred proves who they are. The Nicolaitane antichrist church is who they are.

"They shall be cast into prison." Yes, they are hailed into court and falsely accused and tried and imprisoned. And of course it is all done in the name of religion and decency and outraged innocency. All done for a good cause. That makes me think of the Supreme Court's ruling on prayer and Bible reading in the schools. Who is behind it? Satan is. It is just another angry outburst against God.

"Thou shalt have tribulation ten days." Here is a prophecy. And with it is a means of determining the life span of the Smyrnaean Age. Diocletian, the cruelest of all emperors, launched a terror campaign against the saints of God, that except for the mercy of God would have wiped out all believers. It was the bloodiest in history and lasted ten years (the ten days of Revelation 2:10b) from 302 to 312.

"Be thou faithful unto death." He does not say be faithful until death, but unto death. You may have to seal your testimony with your blood. Thousands, yea millions, have died during all the ages. They died in the faith. Like Antipas, the faithful martyr, they held not their lives dear unto death. Often we think that it would be almost impossible to be a martyr. But dare to recall that the faith we daily use to triumph in Christ Jesus is the same faith that upholds the Polycarps and all martyrs. The supreme faith will give supreme grace for the supreme hour. Blessed be God forever!

"And I will give thee a crown of life." Since not even a cup of cold water given in the Name of the Lord fails to receive a reward, how great shall be the reward to him who gives his life as a martyr for the Name of the Lord Jesus. Perhaps we can get a small idea if we compare this crown with the crown won in a race.

In I Corinthians 9:24, Paul says,

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain."

A crown given to the winner of the Olympic race was a garland of olive branches. But the crown spoken of here in the Revelation, given to a martyr, is the crown of royalty. Jesus calls it the crown of life. The one crown is for those who have striven; the other is for those who have given. Both crowns are incorruptible. They will not perish. The winners of the worldly race of life will soon lose the joy of the plaudits of the world. Their glory will fail. But those who give their lives for God, either by daily striving or shedding their blood as the crowning sacrifice of their lives will be given the crown of life.

All too little time is spent on laboring for the eternal rewards of God. The recompence of God is too lightly esteemed. If we believe in the reality of the resurrection of the body, and an eternal kingdom of substance, then we ought to lay up in heaven those good treasures that are available to the faithful saints.

THE REWARD FOR OVERCOMING

Revelation 2:11,

"He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

Now, once again the Spirit is talking to all the ages. This message is to comfort us today even as it has comforted our brethren of all the other ages. And He says to us that the second death will not hurt us.

We all know that the second death is the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:14,

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

Of course that means all those who were therein, were cast into the lake of fire. Now then, I want to bring out something here for you. It no doubt will cause people to comment on my strange doctrine.

But I stand here on the authority of the Word of God and deny that the unbeliever goes to an eternal hell and burns there eternally. In the first place, hell, or the lake of fire, or whatever you want to call it is not eternal. How can it be if it had a beginning? In Matthew 25:41, it says that "everlasting fire was prepared for the devil and his angels." Now if it was prepared, then it wasn't without a beginning. If it had a beginning then it can't be eternal. Of course you might stumble over the idea of the word 'everlasting.' But that word means "from the ages to the ages" and has different meanings attached to it. In I Samuel 3:13-14, God told Samuel that He was going to judge the house of Eli forever, and that they would offer no more sacrifices "forever" as His priests. And in II Kings 2:27, Solomon thrust out the last descendants of Eli from the priesthood. That was four generations or so later. Now you can see that "everlasting" does not compare with what is "eternal", or that which had no beginning or end. Here in this case the word everlasting means "to the vanishing point." That is what happened. They vanished.

Look at the word, "destruction" over in II Thessalonians 1:9,

"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction."

In the Greek, "destruction" positively means annihilation. And the word, "destruction", does NOT mean destroying. Now "destroying" means something going on and on in decay. So what can everlasting annihilation mean? It doesn't mean to keep on annihilating, or that would make the word "destroying", instead of "destruction". It means to destroy to the ending point. End it.

You might wonder now, when you can use that word, "eternal", and not use it the way we have been taught. That is easy. When it applies to God it means to be without beginning or end, and ever enduring and never ceasing. And when you talk of eternal life you have that in mind which is the life of God. "This is the record, that God has given us eternal life, and that life is in the Son. He that hath the Son hath life." Now then, only sons of God have life eternal, the kind that never had a beginning, but always was. That is right. You have something in you right now that is eternal--without beginning or end. It is the Spirit of God. It is a part of God Himself. It is the life of God.

Now if a sinner is going to go to hell and then suffer the same as you are going to heaven and enjoy heaven, then he has the same kind of life you have already.

Well, then there might be those who say eternal life signifies the welfare of the children of God. It is their welfare and enjoyment that is at stake. On the other hand the sinner goes to his punishment, so that we can reduce the second death to a matter of punishment and place. Eternal life means heaven, and eternal punishment means hell. You would be surprised at the men who have been exalted as theologians that believed that. But do you know what that does? It makes eternal life a matter of geography instead of a Person. Eternal life is God--the Lord Jesus Christ. How anyone could believe such a thing, that eternal life is a matter of place, is more than I know. It makes me stagger to think of it.

No sir. There is only one kind of eternal life. God has it. If we have God, we have eternal life in and through Him.

So you see, that word eternal, or everlasting, can be applied in various ways, but when it applies to God, He being what He is, it has one meaning. It is the duration of God. You can't apply it like that to any other thing. God alone is eternal, and because He lives, we live with Him.

Now don't let anyone say that I don't believe in a lake of fire and in punishment. I do. I don't know how long it will last, but it will eventually be removed. In Revelation 21:8, it says that those sinners mentioned will have their part in the lake of fire. But the true interpretation of the word is not 'part' but it is 'time.' See, there you have it.

So the wicked shall be cast into hell (Hades or the grave) and hell into the lake of fire. Separated from God. What a terrible thing that will be.

But with the righteous it shall not be so. They don't have to fear. They have been redeemed by God. They are in His bosom. They are the overcomers. And who is he that overcometh? He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ.

Why will this overcomer, this believer escape, and go into realms of eternal life and bliss? Because Jesus paid a price to ransom us from sin. He filled the gap of separation, and we who were afar off are now made nigh by the blood.

And they will never come into condemnation. They will never be in that lake of fire. They can never be lost for He will lose none of them. Not one of the redeemed will be anywhere except where Jesus is.

Do you know why that is? I will illustrate it for you. I have a little boy, Joseph. He is a part of me, no matter what happens. If I were a rich man, the worst I could do would be to disinherit him, but there is nothing that I can ever do to deny him. I can't because he is a part of me. Here, let's take a blood test. Let's match his blood with mine. It'll prove that Joseph is my son. He is mine.

It's the blood test that shows whether you belong to God or not.

I can't help thinking of the time that I used to ride herd on purebred Herefords out in Colorado. We used to have to bring in those cattle for government inspection if we wanted them to feed on government range. But they would not allow one single animal that did not have the blood tag on the ear. The tag signified that it was purebred. The rangers that looked them over did not once look at the brand. They just looked at the tag to see that the blood was the right blood. Hallelujah. If it's the right blood, it's got to be right.

You know God looked down and declared, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. It is separated from Me. It can't approach unto Me." We know that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. That meant that all died, all were separated, and one day a time would come when even that bit of life would be snuffed out and it would be all over. But God in love, took an animal and took its life in the place of the sinner's life.

In the Old Testament the sinner brought a lamb. He placed his hand on the lamb while the priest cut the lamb's throat. He felt the bleeding and heard the bleating. He felt the body stiffen in death. He saw the smoke of the sprinkled blood ascend to God. He knew that the lamb had taken his place. He knew that the lamb's life had been forfeited for his. But the life of that lamb was animal life and it could not come back upon the sinner making him clean. So he left with the same desire to sin. He would go out with sin in his mind, and come back and offer a sacrifice for the same thing a year later.

But in the New Testament it is not so. Our dying Lamb is the Son of God Who gave His blood a ransom for many. By faith we walk up and place our hands upon that Lamb--we see Him with the bloody wounds, the lacerated back, the cruel thorns tearing His brow--we feel His pain and hear Him cry,

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And what happened? The life that left that broken blood cell came back upon the repentant one. The life that was in Him came back upon us. We go back with no more desire to sin, and we now possess a hatred for the works and lusts of the flesh.

Look at us. What is our life? Just one little cell that came from our father. The female does not have the hemoglobin. She produces the egg; she is the incubator. But the blood comes from the male. That is why the woman takes the man's name. The children take his name. The mother is the incubator for the children she bears him.

That is what happened for our redemption. The Holy Ghost came upon Mary and she bore a Son and called Him, Jesus. The great Creator came down and became a sacrifice for our sin. His blood was the blood of God. That is exactly what it was. That blood of God was shed and the Spirit left Him as He died in agony. Then the SAME LIFE (SPIRIT) came back to in-dwell the repentant sinner and set him free. That sinner did not come back year after year, sacrifice after sacrifice, for there was no need. By ONE sacrifice, once and for all he has been set free from the dominion of sin, and has received the life of Christ whereby he reigns in victory over sin, the world, the flesh and the devil.

God did it. He did it all. He cried out to the world cursed in sin, "I will give you a sign. A virgin shall be with child. A virgin shall conceive and bear a Son. That will be your sign. It will be an everlasting sign. What she brings forth will be Emmanuel, God with us."

God came down in a blood cell, not through a man, but by the Holy Ghost, and in that virgin womb a tabernacle for the purpose of death was built. The Seed of the woman came in order that He be bruised to bring us our salvation. When the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, He created within her womb the cell that would multiply and become the body of our Lord. That cell was created. It was the Beginning of the Creation of God. That is Who Jesus is. And that Holy One was filled with Holy blood, even the blood of God. That tabernacle came to birth. He grew to be a man. He went to Jordan and there that Sacrifice was washed of John in the river called Jordan. When that Acceptable Sacrifice rose out of the water, God came and in-dwelt Him, filling Him with the Spirit without measure. And when He died and shed His blood, the perfect life of God was liberated to come back upon the sinner who would accept the Christ as his Saviour.

Oh, how striking it is. Jehovah, born crying over a manure pile. Jehovah born in a manger of straw. There is your everlasting sign to the proud and puffed up, pseudo-intellectuals that have evolved their own theology and denied the truth of God. Jehovah God, a crying baby in a stinking barn. Then we think we have a right to be proud, holding up our noses, criticizing and

acting as though we were somebody. Here's your real sign. This is the right one. Jehovah, playing as a boy. Jehovah working in a carpenter's shop. Jehovah washing the feet of fishermen.

"I will give you a sign," said God. "Not the sign of a white collared priesthood. Not the sign of wealth and power. There's nothing in this sign that you will want, or think suitable. But it is an everlasting sign. It is the greatest sign of all." Jehovah standing in the courtyard bruised and bleeding with thorns on His brow and spit on His face, mocked and set at naught. Jehovah, despised and rejected, hanging naked upon the cross, while the hypocrites jeered and dared Him to come down off the cross. Jehovah dying. Jehovah praying and nothing happening. Then Jehovah died. That is the sign for all men now. There isn't another like it. It is the great one.

Then darkness came upon the earth. They put Him in a tomb. There He lay those three days and nights until an earthquake shattered the gloom of night and He came forth. Jehovah came forth. Jehovah ascended on high. Then Jehovah returned to in-dwell His church. Jehovah came back with a mighty rushing wind and flames of fire. Jehovah came back to walk in the midst of His church and empower His people. Once more Jehovah came, and this time to stay in His people. And again Jehovah heals the sick, raises the dead and manifests Himself by the Spirit. Jehovah came back, speaking in tongues, and giving the answer back in interpretation.

Jehovah came down and He raised the prostitute to sin no more. He came down to the drunkard with flyblows on his face as he lay unconscious in the gutter. Yes, Jehovah came to manifest in flesh and manifest through flesh. Jehovah came--God in us, the hope of glory.

Yes, Jesus came and shed His blood and set the captive free. He came and redeemed His lost sheep. He gave them eternal life and they shall never perish. He won't lose one of them, but raise them up at the last day.

Hallelujah, the second death cannot hurt them. It has no power over them. For they are the Lamb's and they follow Him wherever He goes.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EVERY AGE

Revelation 2:11,

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

There is not one church age where this verse is not mentioned. Every single age has the same admonition to the people of every age. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith." But it is absolutely impossible for all men to hear what the Spirit says to the different ages.

I Corinthians 2:6-16,

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught;

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory:

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned.

But he that is Spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Matthew 13:13-16,

"Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand.

And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."

John 8:42-44,

"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love Me: for I proceeded forth and came from God: neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me.

Why do ye not understand My speech? even because ye cannot hear My Word.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

It is most evident from these Scriptures that no man of himself can hear God. That ability has to be given him of God.

Matthew 16:17,

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in heaven."

Putting these verses together we see that there is only one group of people, and that a very special group of people who are able to hear what the Spirit says in each age. It is one special group that receives the revelation for each age. That group is of God, because the group that cannot hear is not of God. (John 8:42-44.) The group that can and does hear what the Spirit is saying and receives the revelation thereof is that group described in I Corinthians 2:6-16. They are the ones who have the Spirit of God. They are the ones that are born of God. They are baptized into the body of the Lord Jesus Christ by His Spirit. They are baptized with the Holy Ghost.

To further bring out what we have just said, and to also use a Scripture that should be borne in mind as we talk about who it is that is baptized with the Holy Ghost, see what Jesus says in John 6:45,

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall All be taught of God."

But turn to Isaiah 54:13 whence this is taken and it reads,

"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord."

The ALL of God are the CHILDREN of God. Thus it is that the evidence of being a true child of God, (he whom the Spirit has come upon and indwells) is again set forth as one taught the Word by the Holy Ghost.

Now you can begin to see why tongues is not the evidence of being baptized with the Holy Ghost. It doesn't say in any age that "he that hath a tongue let him say what the Spirit is saying." That puts tongues, interpretation thereof, and prophecy, etc. aside as an evidence. The evidence is HEARING what the Spirit says. The Spirit is talking. Yes, the Spirit is teaching. That is exactly what Jesus said He would do when He came.

John 14:26,

"He will teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."

And that is just what happened. That is how the Gospels were written. These men had recalled to their minds by the Holy Ghost the very Words that Jesus spake. That is why the Gospels are accurate. They are perfect. But the Spirit did not only bring all things to their minds but He taught them further on the truth they already had. That is how Paul received his revelations. He said concerning it,

"But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it (of man) but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Galatians 1:11-12. He was taught by the Holy Ghost.

One day when Jesus was upon earth, a certain important man came to visit Him. This man said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher sent from God." But you will notice that Jesus cut him short. He turned to Nicodemus and the words He spoke may well be paraphrased thusly, "I am NOT a teacher. I am the Sacrificial Lamb for sin. I am making possible the New Birth by My Spirit. But there is a coming One Who is the Teacher. He is the Holy Spirit." When Jesus was upon the earth He came as the Lamb, and as the Prophet. But when He came back upon the church by His Spirit He became the Teacher.

And to every age we hear the same truth. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." But only a Spirit-filled man can hear the revelation for that age. None other can. No sir. They cannot because that is exactly what Paul said in I Corinthians 2:6-16.

Now this ought to make you rejoice. There is a most peculiar doctrine in the air that is causing much misunderstanding and hard feelings. For when the Pentecostals say you MUST speak in tongues or you haven't been baptized with the Holy Ghost, they are either denying that great men like Knox, Moody, Taylor, Goforth and others did not receive the Holy Ghost, or saying that they all secretly spoke in tongues and were not aware of what was going on. Now that is not true. No sir. That is gross error. Tongues are not the evidence of being Spirit-filled. It is simply one of the nine manifestations mentioned in I Corinthians 12. There is no Scripture that says you receive the Holy Spirit speaking in tongues or that you receive the Holy Spirit by speaking in tongues. But it does say that "After they were all filled with the Holy Ghost they spake in tongues," and later on it says that they prophesied.

Today amongst many folks it is taken for granted that all who claim to receive the Holy Ghost by speaking in tongues speak in a genuine Spiritual

tongue. But this is not so for many people speak in a known tongue but under the influence of a wrong spirit. Now let's say we are in a meeting and people are all speaking in tongues. How can you know which tongue is from the Spirit and which is from the devil? I have been amongst the heathen where their wizards drank blood out of a skull, spoke in tongues and interpreted and prophesied. They can even write in tongues.

Now if tongues is THE evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost, then every tongue would have to be of God. But it has been admitted by tongues evidence people that there are false and true tongues for God has the genuine and Satan has the false. So my question is, "Who knows what is real? Who understood the language to know what was spoken? Who has the gift of discernment to know?" Now when we get those answers we will have something to go on, but until then, we have to wonder about the source of the tongues. You can see right now that if you back up a tongues evidence and don't know what is being said, you have to finally come to the place where all tongues have to be of God. That would lead us then to believe that the devil cannot speak in tongues. That is not so; no, not for a minute. Any true missionary on a foreign field knows only too well that devils speak in other tongues, the same as I know it by experience.

Pentecostal theologians admit that they have no Scripture setting forth that people speak with tongues when baptized by the Holy Ghost. They admit that they infer it from the experiences set forth in the Book of Acts wherein three out of five times the people spoke with tongues. And they also say without any Scripture that there are two kinds of tongues. One is the tongue you speak in while receiving the Holy Ghost and it is the 'evidence', while later on if you believe, you can receive the gift of tongues whereby you may speak often.

However, they say, once having spoken in tongues as the evidence of receiving, you may never speak again. Once more we are anxious to know where this is found in the Word. If it isn't there, then God hath not spoken it and woe unto him who would add to that Word. But there is something in the Word about this very subject that they ignore completely. I Corinthians 13. It mentions tongues of men and angels. These would be known and unknown tongues. Modern Pentecostals say that they can receive the Holy Ghost speaking in unknown or angelic tongues. They have the cart before the horse, for in Acts 2 the people spoke in a perfect dialect which even unbelievers heard and understood.

Now when God is silent we had better be silent. But where He has spoken we had better speak, too, and say what He has already said. He told us the evidence, or what would happen after being baptized with the Holy Ghost was that we would have the Teacher come and teach all truth. But that Teacher was an INSIDE teacher, not an outside teacher. If the Spirit wasn't inside, you

wouldn't hear the truth and receive it by revelation if you heard it every moment of the day. That was the sign of the indwelling Spirit in the days of Paul. Those who were filled with the Holy Ghost heard the Word, received it and lived by it. Those who did not have the Spirit heard it only as carnal men, put a wrong interpretation on it and went into sin.

In every age, (and every age is the age of the Holy Ghost for the true believer)--I say, in every age the evidence was the same. Those who had the Spirit, the Teacher, heard the Word, and that Spirit in them took the Word and taught it (revealed it) to them; and they were of the group that heard the messenger and his message and took it and lived it.

I know it is a great temptation to refer back to the day of Pentecost and also to the day when the Holy Ghost fell in the house of Cornelius and then set those two identical experiences as the evidence of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. But on each occasion the tongues were understood by the listeners. This is a far cry from the modern babel of confusion of Pentecostal meetings. And if this were not enough to persuade us to leave off such reasoning, what will we do when we are confronted with the fact that people who have never spoken in tongues have some of the other eight manifestations in their lives, such as word of wisdom, the discerning of spirits, a word of knowledge, faith, healing and even miracles? And this observation is even more interesting in the light that tongues is the least of the nine gifts; so when we see people who do not, nor ever have spoken in tongues, use greater gifts than those who do speak in tongues, we must discount such a doctrine even more completely than before.

So you can see now, that we cannot afford to say what the Bible has not said. When Scripture teaches us that the work of the Holy Spirit, and the manifestation of that Blessed Person is to bring the truth of each age to the true seed of that age, then we know that the Spirit has to be abiding in the person or he cannot receive the truth for that time. Amen. That is exactly correct. And if these ages bring out anything, they surely bring and bear out this truth.

Now before we leave this subject I want to make myself very clear on what the Baptism with the Holy Ghost is according to the Word. It is not according to me, and it is not according to you. It has to be according to "Thus saith the Lord," or we are falsely led. Amen.

To begin with you will notice that in my meetings when I have finished preaching an evangelistic service, or some teaching message, I cast the net and invite a response from the people. I ask them to come forward and receive the Holy Spirit. My Pentecostal friends, upon hearing me say this believe that I am inviting people to come forward to be baptized with the Holy Ghost because they are already born again. So when I invite those who are Spirit-filled to come and deal with those who have answered the invitation to receive the Spirit, these dear ones surge forward and deal with the people in such manner

as to encourage them to yield to God and believe to speak in tongues. This has caused a great deal of confusion and I want to tell you exactly what I mean. I mean for the sinner to come forward and be born again, which is to be baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Ghost which is exactly what took place at Pentecost when the church was launched. In other words, to be born of the Spirit is to be truly baptized with the Holy Ghost. It is one and the same.

Now I realize that it is going to be confusing for a moment here, as most people know that I was ordained a Baptist preacher and I have steadfastly declared that the Baptists have missed it for saying you receive the Holy Ghost WHEN you believe, for that is not so. You receive Him "SINCE you believed."

Acts 19:2-6.

"He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him Which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

When they heard this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them: and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

There it is. Paul asked, "Have you received SINCE, NOT WHEN you believed." And there is a great difference there, for it is AFTER we believe that we receive. Ephesians 1:13 is an exact word repeat of what happened in Ephesus according to Acts 19,

"In Whom ye also trusted, AFTER that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also AFTER that ye believed (not when ye believed), ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

Now here is my point. Too many of our modernists and even our fundamentalists (so-called) believe unto salvation at a certain specific time which in many cases is called "making a decision," and that has been called receiving Christ or being born again. Now to receive Christ is to receive His Spirit. To receive His Spirit is to be born again. To receive His Spirit is to be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Amen. These folks believe. That is wonderful. But they stop there. You receive the Holy Ghost AFTER you believe. It has always been that way and always will be. The very first word of direction to the people was by Peter at Pentecost and he said,

"Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,

For the promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

These directions came as a direct answer from Peter relative to what had actually happened at Pentecost. What came to pass was that God according to Joel was pouring out the promised Holy Spirit upon all flesh. He was not poured out before that time or given before that time. This was it. But THIS was to come from now on by repenting, being baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then God was duty bound to fill the ones who came. Peter, or any of the apostles never said, "Ye must be born again, and then filled with the Spirit."

That this is the pattern of experience relative to receiving the Holy Spirit, note carefully the very next time that the Spirit fell upon a people.

Acts 8:5-17,

"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

And there was great joy in that city.

But there was a certain man, called Simon, which before-time in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria giving out that himself was some great one:

To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God they sent unto them Peter and John:

Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

(For as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.)

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

According to verse 12, **THEY BELIEVED THE WORD**. They were then baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. But according to verse 16, in spite of all that, they had **STILL NOT RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT**. It was only **AFTER** believing and being baptized correctly that they received the Holy Ghost. That is the exact pattern as set forth by Peter in Acts 2:38-39.

Another Scripture that casts wondrous light on this is found in Galatians 3:13-14,

"Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree:

That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that (in order that) we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Now by no means can it be said that the "blessing of Abraham" is the rebirth, and that the "promise of the Spirit" is the Baptism with the Holy Ghost as two separate events. For the Scripture reads thus: "Jesus died on the cross, and by means of that death and resurrection, the blessing of Abraham came on the Gentiles, leaving the Jews. This transpired in order that the Spirit might become available to the Gentiles."

To understand what I have just said is to clear up why students have never ever found Paul saying at any time, "Be born again and **THEN** be Spirit-filled." They have inferred it is there, and they have put their own meanings to make it say it, **BUT SCRIPTURE DOES NOT SAY THAT**. Jesus never said it either.

Look at John 7:37-39, and read it now with understanding.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.

He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

(But this spake He of the **SPIRIT**, Which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

Now it says here distinctly and emphatically that the believer upon drinking by coming unto Jesus in faith would have rivers of living waters pouring out of him. And it places this experience at Pentecost.

Now keeping this thought in mind we read John 4: 10 & 14,

"If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

This same living water is mentioned, but this time it is not called a river; it is called an artesian well. There is where the people make their mistake. Because it is called a well and a river, they think that in one place it is eternal life given by the Spirit and in the next place where it is called a river (implying a great dynamism) it has to be the Spirit now given as an endowment of power. Not so. It is one and the same. It is the Spirit that gives life and power, and that came at Pentecost.

What is it that caused this misunderstanding? The answer is, "EXPERIENCE". We have gone by experience and not the Word. Away with experience as your measuring line. There is only one plumb line, only one rod, and that is the WORD. Now watch carefully and get this. Peter said, "Repent and be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Paul said, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost SINCE ye believed?" This is the whole of our problem right here. People repent of their sins, they get baptized in water, BUT THEY DON'T GO ON AND RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST. YOU BELIEVE UNTO RECEIVING THE SPIRIT.

Believing on Jesus is the step in the right direction which is toward the Holy Ghost. But the people stop there. They go as far as water and then stop. They believe, and then stop. The Bible does not say that you receive WHEN you believe. It is, "Have you received the Holy Ghost SINCE you believed?" The exact and literal translation is: "Did ye, having previously believed, receive the Holy Ghost?" The people believe and then stop. You don't receive the Holy Ghost when you believe UNTO Him, having repented. You go on and receive the Holy Ghost. Do you see it? That is what is wrong with our fundamentalists. They have no power for they stop short of Pentecost.

They are like the children of Israel who came out of Egypt and stopped short of the Promised Land. Now those children of Israel left Egypt about two million strong. They all journeyed together, all saw the same miracles of God, all partook of the same manna and water from the smitten rock, all followed the same cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night but ONLY TWO reached the Promised Land. ONLY TWO WERE TRUE OR REAL BELIEVERS. That is correct because the Word tells us that the rest died because of unbelief; and because of unbelief they could not enter in (Hebrews 3:19). Then since that is so, and only TWO ENTERED, then the rest were not true believers.

What made the difference? Two stayed with the Word. When the hearts of the ten spies failed at Kadesh Barnea, Joshua and Caleb did not stagger for they believed the Word and said, "We are more than able to take the land." They knew they could because God had said, "I have given you the land." After all those Israelites saw of the power and goodness and deliverance of God they did not enter into rest, which is a type of the Holy Ghost. So you can see right now that very few will ever believe all the way to receiving the Spirit of God.

All right, we have come this far. Now I want to go further, and when I do I know I am going to cause some emotions to rise. But that is something I am not responsible for. I am responsible to God and His Word and the people God has sent me to. I have to be faithful in all He gives me to say.

In John 6:37 & 44 it says,

"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to me; and him that cometh to Me I shall in no wise cast out.

No man can come to Me except the Father draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 1:12-13,

"But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name,

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, BUT OF GOD."

Ephesians 1:4-5,

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

Now without getting too involved in the subject of the sovereignty of God (for that would take a book in itself) let me point out here that according to these verses, Jesus Christ is choosing His own bride just the same as men choose their brides today. The bride today does not simply decide she is going to take a certain man for a husband. No sir. It is the groom who decides and chooses a certain woman for his bride.

(John 15:16,

"Ye have not chosen Me; but I have chosen you.")

Now according to the Word of God, the bride was chosen before the foundation of the world. This choosing of the bride was purposed in Himself. Ephesians 1:9.

And in Romans 9:11 it says

"That the purpose of God according to election might stand."

You can't read it any other way. The heart purpose, the eternal purpose of God was to take a bride of His OWN choosing, and that purpose was in Himself, and being eternal was decreed before the foundation of the world.

Watch carefully now and see this. Before there was ever a speck of star dust; before God was God (God is an object of adoration and no one was there to worship Him, so He was at that time only potentially God.) and He was known only as eternal Spirit, the bride was already in His mind. Yes, she was. She was existing in His thoughts. And what about those thoughts of God? They are eternal, are they not?

The eternal thoughts of God! Let me ask you, "Are the thoughts of God eternal?" If you can see this, you will see many things. God is unchangeable in both essence and behavior. We have studied that and proven that already. God is infinite in His abilities so therefore He as God must be omniscient. If He is omniscient, then He is not now learning, nor is He taking counsel even with Himself, nor is He at any time adding to His knowledge. If He can add to His knowledge, then He is not omniscient. The best we could say is that sometime He will be. But that is not Scriptural.

He IS omniscient. He has never had a new thought about anything because all His thoughts He has always had and always will have, and knows the end from the beginning because He is God. **THUS THE THOUGHTS OF GOD ARE ETERNAL. THEY ARE REAL.** They are not simply like a man with a blueprint he has drawn up and which one day will be translated into substance and form, but they are already real and eternal, and part of God.

See how this works. God always had His thoughts for Adam. Adam, as His thoughts, was yet unexpressed.

Psalms 139:15-16 will give you a little idea of this,

"My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book were all my members written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

That, as I said, was not written about Adam but it gives you the idea and knowledge that the thought was there in His mind, and that thought was eternal and had to be expressed. So when Adam was formed of the dust of the earth and his spiritual being created by God, then Adam became God's thought expressed, and those eternal thoughts were now manifested.

Down through the centuries we could go. We find a Moses, a Jeremiah, a John the Baptist, and each one of these were God's eternal thought expressed in its season. Then we come to Jesus the LOGOS. He was the perfect and

complete THOUGHT expressed and He became known as the Word. That is what He IS, and forever WILL BE.

Now it says that "He hath chosen us IN HIM (Jesus) before the foundation of the world." That means that we were right there WITH Him in the mind and thoughts of God before the foundation of the world. That gives an ETERNAL quality to the elect. You can't get away from that.

Let me inject a thought in here. Even our natural birth is based upon election. The female ovaries produce many, many eggs. But why is it that at a certain time a certain egg comes down and not another one? And then amongst the male sperm, for no known reason a certain germ attaches itself to the egg while others that could have just as easily attached themselves, or had a better opportunity to do so did not do so and perished. There is an intelligence behind all this, otherwise what determines whether the baby is a boy or girl, blond or brunette, light or dark type of eyes, etc. With these thoughts in mind think about Joshua and Caleb.

Did not Jesus say in John 6:49

"Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead?"

Those parents that died were necessary as the forefathers of the people to whom Jesus was speaking. They perished, yet they were in the election of God naturally as Joshua and Caleb were Spiritually.

But to go on. These elect were not only the eternal thoughts of God which were to be expressed in flesh in their due season, but these same elect are called by another name.

Romans 4:16.

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all."

Romans 9:7-13,

"Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

And not only this; but when Rebekah had also conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him That calleth;)

It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

Galatians 3:16,

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

Galatians 3:29,

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

According to Romans 4:16 we find that God has given a Sure Promise to ALL of Abraham's seed, and Paul puts himself and all believers under that designation because he says "Abraham who is the father of us ALL." Then he goes on to not only narrow down his definition, but rather to finalize it for in Galatians 3 he identified the SEED (singular) with Jesus, and counted "the seed children" as children of promise, and promise as having to do with "election", or "the choosing of God". And that is exactly what we have been saying. These who are of the Royal Seed are the elect of God; are the predestinated, fore-known of God, and were in the mind of God and His thoughts.

In very plain language the True Bride of Christ was in the mind of God eternally, though not expressed until each came forth in the designated, decreed season. As each member came forth it became EXPRESSED and took its place in the body. Thus this bride is the literal SPOKEN WORD SEED BRIDE. And though she is feminine in designation she is also called the "body of Christ". It is very apparent that she ought to be called that for she was predestinated in Him, came from the same source, was eternal with Him, and is now manifesting God in a many membered body whereas once God was manifested in ONE MEMBER, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now then, here we are coming to a conclusion. As the eternal Logos (God) was manifest in the Son, and in Jesus dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and that Eternal One was the Father manifest in flesh, and thereby gained the title of Son, even so we, eternal in His thoughts in our turn became the many membered Spoken Word Seed, manifest in flesh, and those eternal thoughts now manifest in flesh are the sons of God, even as we are so called. **WE DID NOT BECOME SEED BY THE REBIRTH, WE WERE SEED AND THEREFORE WERE REBORN FOR ONLY THE ELECT CAN BE REBORN.** Because we WERE SEED is the reason we could be quickened. In NON-SEED there is nothing to quicken.

Hold this carefully in mind. Now take the next step. Redeem means to buy back. It restores to the original owner. God, by His death, the shed blood **BOUGHT BACK HIS OWN.** He bought back the Spoken Word Seed Bride.

"My sheep hear My voice (Word) and they follow Me." You always were a sheep. You never were a pig or a dog turned into a sheep. That is impossible for every kind of life produces the same kind and there is no change in specie. As we were in the thoughts of God and then expressed in flesh, there had to come a day when we would hear His voice (the Word), and hearing that voice become aware of our Father calling us, and recognize that we are the sons of God. We heard His voice and we cried out as did the prodigal son, "Save me, Oh, my Father. I am returning to Thee."

A son of God can go a long time before he recognizes that he is a son. In fact a lot of true Christians are like the story of the baby eagle that was hatched out under a hen. You know that the eagle is a type of the true believer. Well, a farmer took an egg from an eagle's nest and he placed it under a hen. In due time all the eggs under the hen hatched out. The baby chicks got along fine with the mother hen but that little eagle could not figure out the clucking and scratching for food in the manure pile. He managed to make a living but he was pretty confused about it all.

But one day, from way up in the air the mother eagle that had laid the egg spied that little eagle on the ground. She swooped down with tremendous speed and screamed at the top of her voice for him to fly up to meet her. He had never heard an eagle cry, but when he heard that first scream something in him stirred and he longed to launch out toward it. But he was afraid to try. Again that mother screamed for him to arise in the wind and follow her. He screamed back that he was afraid. Once more she called out, screaming that he try. Beating his wings he hurled himself into the air, and answering the cry of his mother, he soared off into the blue skies. You see he always was an eagle. He acted like a chicken for a little while but he could not be satisfied. But when he heard the call of the great eagle he came to his own place. And once a true son of God hears the cry of the Spirit by the Word, he too, will realize who he is and run to the Great Prophet Eagle and be with Him forever seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

NOW COMES OUR TRIUMPHAL CAPSTONE on the Baptism with the Holy Ghost.

Galatians 4:4-7,

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

There it is. Jesus Christ came forth, died upon the cross, and accomplished Redemption (restoring to original owner by means of purchase, or paying the price) and thereby PLACED US AS SONS. He did not make us sons, for we were already His sons, but He placed us as sons; for as long as we were in the world, in the flesh, we could not be recognized as His sons. We were held captive by the devil. But we were sons, nonetheless. And hear this: AND BECAUSE YE ARE SONS, GOD HATH SENT FORTH THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON INTO YOUR HEARTS WHEREBY YOU CRY, FATHER, FATHER." Upon whom did the Spirit fall at Pentecost? Sons. At Corinth? Upon Sons while they HEARD THE WORD.

What is the Baptism with the Holy Ghost? It is the Spirit Baptizing you into the body of Christ. It is the new birth. It is the Spirit of God coming in and filling you after you have repented, (having heard His Word) and been baptized in water as an answer of a good conscience toward God.

What we have just set forth would be much easier for all to understand if all believed the doctrine of the oneness of the Godhead. For there are not three persons in that Godhead but ONE. Thus we are NOT born again by the Spirit of Life of Jesus coming in, and then subsequent to that the Holy Spirit coming in to give us power. If that were true, why are we dishonoring the Father by not giving Him a part in our complete salvation, for if salvation is of the Lord and there are three Lords, then HE (Father) must have something to do, too. But surely it can be seen that Jesus made this very clear that it was He and He alone Who is God and it is He and He alone Who is coming into the believer.

John 14:16 says that the Father will send another Comforter.

But verse 17 says that He (Jesus) dwelleth with them and should be IN them later.

In verse 18 He says He will come to them.

In verse 23 in speaking to the disciples He said, "We (Father and Son) will come unto him." Thus it is the Father, Son and Holy Ghost all coming in at the one time for IT IS ONE PERSON comprising the Godhead. That advent took place at Pentecost. There aren't two comings of the Spirit, just one. The trouble is that people don't know the real truth, and they simply believe in Jesus for remission of sin but never go on to receive the Spirit.

Before I close this subject, I know there is a question in your minds. You will want to know if I believe in the doctrine of preexistence. I don't believe in that Mormon doctrine of the preexistence of souls any more than I believe in reincarnation or the transmigration of souls. Be careful here and see this. It is not the person that comes predestinated eternally from God, IT IS THE

WORD, OR SEED. That is it. Way back there, too far back for the human mind to grasp, the Eternal God with eternal thoughts, thought and decreed,

"JACOB HAVE I LOVED, BUT ESAU HAVE I HATED,

(Romans 9:13)

AND NEITHER WAS BORN, AND NEITHER HAD DONE GOOD OR EVIL."

See, it was the THOUGHT, and then that thought became expressed, and God bought back Jacob, because Jacob alone was SEED. Jacob, alone had the seed; that is why he had respect to the birthright and covenant of God. If you are true seed, you will hear that Word; the Spirit will baptize you into the body of Christ, filling you and empowering you, and you will receive the Word for your day and age. See how clear the true evidence becomes when the Word is revealed to you? Again, note, Jesus was the Royal Seed. He lived in a human body. When the Spirit called to Him (the Word-Manifested Thought), He went to Jordan and was there baptized in water. Upon obeying the Word, the Holy Spirit came upon Him and the voice said, "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him." The voice did not say, "This has become My Son," Jesus WAS the Son. The Holy Ghost positioned Him as that Son before them all. Then having been filled thus (and the same pattern holds at Pentecost and ever after), He went in demonstrated power, receiving the full revelation of God and from God, for that day.

Now we have been constantly saying that the true evidence of being baptized with the Holy Ghost is for the believer to receive the Word for the age in which he lives. Let me show you most clearly.

The Seven Ages as set forth in Revelation Chapters 2 & 3 take in the whole span of the Fullness of the Gentiles, or the whole time in which God is dealing with the Gentiles unto salvation. In every single age, bar none, it says the very same thing in opening and closing the message to each age. "Unto the messenger of (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea) write; These things saith He, etc., etc. "... He that hath an ear, let him (singular) hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." Notice here that Jesus (by the Spirit) in EVERY age addresses Himself to ONLY ONE person relative to the Word for that age. Only ONE messenger for each age receives what the Spirit has to say to that age, and that ONE MESSENGER is the messenger to the true church. He speaks for God by revelation to the "churches", both true and false. The message is then broadcast to all. But though it is broadcast for all who come within range of the message, that message is received individually by only a certain qualified group in a certain way. Each individual of that group is one who has the ability to hear what the Spirit is saying by way of the messenger. Those who hear are not getting their own private revelation, nor is a group getting their collective revelation, BUT

EACH PERSON IS HEARING AND RECEIVING WHAT THE MESSENGER HAS ALREADY RECEIVED FROM GOD.

Now think it not strange that this is the case, for Paul set this pattern under the hand of God. Paul alone had the full revelation for his day as evidenced by his confrontation of the other apostles who admitted that Paul was the Prophet-Messenger to the Gentiles for that day. And also note by actual illustration in the Word, that when Paul desired to go to Asia, God forbade him, for the sheep (His children) were in Macedonia and they (the Macedonians) would hear what the Spirit had to say through Paul, while the people in Asia would not.

In every age we have exactly the same pattern. That is why the light comes through some God-given messenger in a certain area, and then from that messenger there spreads the light through the ministry of others who have been faithfully taught. But of course all those who go out don't always learn how necessary it is to speak **ONLY** what the messenger has spoken. (Remember, Paul warned the people to say only what he said, I Corinthians 14:37, "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the **COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD**. What? came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?") They add here, or take away there, and soon the message is no longer pure, and the revival dies down. How careful we must be to hear **ONE** voice, for the Spirit has but one voice which is the voice of God. Paul warned them to say what he said, even as Peter did likewise. He warned them that **EVEN HE (PAUL)** could not change one word of what he had given by revelation. Oh, how important it is to hear the voice of God by way of His messengers, and then say what has been given them to say to the churches.

I hope you are beginning to see it now. Perhaps you can understand now why I don't hold with the fundamentalists and the Pentecostals. I have to hold to the Word the way the Lord revealed it. Now I did not cover it all. That would take a separate book, but by the help of the Lord we will get many sermons and tapes and messages on all of these points to help you to understand and dovetail all Scripture.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches of each age." In every age it was the same cry. Hear what the Spirit says. If you are a Christian, you will get back to what the Spirit is teaching, that is, the Word of this age. Every messenger to every age will preach that Word. Every fresh and true revival will be because men have gotten back to the Word for their age. The cry of every age is the rebuke, "You have left the Word of God. Repent, and come back to the Word." From the first book in the Bible (Genesis) to the last book (Revelation) there is only one reason for God's displeasure--leaving the Word; and there is only one remedy to regain His favor--back to the Word.

In the Ephesian Age, and in this age, and in every age we contemplate we will see that this is true. And in the last age which is our age, we will find the blackout of the Word, the complete apostasy ending in the great tribulation.

If you are true seed, if you are truly baptized with the Holy Ghost you will esteem His Word above your necessary meat, and yearn to live by EVERY Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

This is my earnest prayer for all of us; may we hear what the Spirit is bringing from the Word for us today.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PERGAMEAN CHURCH AGE

REVELATION 2:12-17

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith He Which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

PERGAMOS

Pergamum (ancient name) was situated in Mysia, in a district watered by three rivers, by one of which it communicated to the sea. It was described as the most illustrious city in Asia. It was a city of culture with a library second only to that in Alexandria. Yet it was a city of great sin, given over to licentious rites of the worship of Aesculapius, whom they worshipped in the form of a living serpent which was housed and fed in the temple. In this beautiful city of irrigated groves, public walks and parks lived a small group of dedicated believers who were not fooled by the veneer of beauty, and abhorred the Satanic worship that filled the place.

THE AGE

The Pergamean Age lasted about three hundred years, from 312 to 606 A.D.

THE MESSENGER

Using our God-given rule for choosing the messenger to each age, that is, we choose the one whose ministry most closely approximates that of the first messenger, Paul, we unhesitatingly declare the Pergamean messenger to be Martin. Martin was born in 315 in Hungary. However, his life work was in France where he labored in and around Tours as a bishop. He died in 399. This great saint was the uncle of another wonderful Christian, St. Patrick of Ireland.

Martin was converted to Christ while he was following a career as a professional soldier. It was while he was still engaged in this occupation that a most remarkable miracle occurred. It is recorded that a beggar lay sick in the streets of the town where Martin was posted. The winter cold was more than he could bear for he was poorly clad. No one paid any attention to his needs until Martin came by. Seeing this poor man's plight, but not having an extra garment, he took off his outer cloak, cut it in two with his sword, and wrapped the cloth around the freezing man. He attended him the best he could and went on his way. That night the Lord Jesus appeared unto him in a vision. There He stood, like a beggar, wrapped in the half of Martin's garment. He spoke to him and said, "Martin, though he is only a catechumen has clothed Me with this garment." From that time on Martin sought to serve the Lord with all his heart. His life became a series of miracles manifesting the power of God.

After having left the army and having become a leader in the church, he took a very militant stand against idolatry. He cut down the groves, broke up the images and pulled down the altars. When confronted by the pagans for his deeds he challenged them in much the same manner that Elijah did the prophets of Baal. He offered to be tied to a tree on its underside so that when it was cut down it would crush him unless God intervened and turned the tree around while it fell. The wily heathen tied him to a tree that was growing on the side of a hill, assured that the natural pull of gravity would cause the tree to so fall as to crush him. Just as the tree began to fall, God swung it around and uphill, contrary to all natural laws. The fleeing heathen were crushed as the tree fell on several of them.

Historians acknowledged that on at least three occasions he raised the dead by faith in Jesus' Name. In one instance he prayed for a dead baby. Like Elisha, he stretched himself upon the babe and prayed. It came back to life and health. On another occasion he was called to help deliver a brother who was being carried away to his death in a time of great persecution. By the time he arrived the poor man was already dead. They had hanged him upon a tree. His body was lifeless and his eyes protruded from the sockets. But Martin took him down, and when he had prayed the man was restored to life and to his rejoicing family.

Martin never did fear the enemy regardless of who it was. Thus he went to personally face a wicked emperor who was responsible for the death of many Spirit-filled saints. The emperor would not grant an audience, so Martin went to see a friend of the emperor, one Damasus, a cruel bishop of Rome. But the bishop, being a nominal Christian of the false vine would not intercede. Martin went back to the palace, but by now the gates had been locked and they would not allow him to enter. He lay down on his face before the Lord and prayed that he be able to get into the palace. He heard a voice bidding him arise. When he did so, he saw the gates open of their own accord. He walked into the court. But the arrogant ruler would not turn his head and speak to him. Martin again prayed. Suddenly a fire came spontaneously from the seat of the throne and the unhappy emperor vacated speedily. Surely the Lord humbles the proud and exalts the lowly.

Such was his ardour in serving the Lord that the devil was mightily aroused. The enemies of truth hired assassins to kill Martin. They came by stealth to his home and as they were about to kill him, he stood erect and bared his throat to the sword. As they leaped forward, the power of God suddenly hurled them back across the room. So overcome were they in that holy and fearful atmosphere that they crawled upon their hands and knees and begged forgiveness for the attempt upon his life.

Too often when men are signally used of the Lord they become lifted up with pride. But not so with Martin. He ever remained the humble servant of God. One night as he was preparing himself to enter the pulpit, a beggar came to his study and asked for some clothing. Martin referred the beggar to his head deacon. The haughty deacon commanded him to leave. Thereupon he went back to see Martin. Martin arose and gave the beggar his own fine robe, and bade the deacon bring him another robe which was of lesser quality. That night as Martin preached the Word, the flock of God saw a soft white glow of light around his person.

Surely this was a great man, a true messenger to that age. Never desirous of aught but to please God he lived a most consecrated life. Never could he be induced to preach until he had first prayed and was in such spiritual frame as to

know and deliver the full counsel of God by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Often he would keep the people waiting while he prayed for full assurance.

Just to know about Martin and his mighty ministry might make one think that the persecution of the saints had abated. Not so. They were still being destroyed by the devil through the instrumentality of the wicked. They were burned at the stake. They were nailed to logs face down and wild dogs were turned loose upon them, so that the dogs would tear away the flesh and bowels, leaving the victims to die in terrible torture. Babies were ripped from expectant mothers and thrown to the hogs. Women's breasts were cut away, and they were forced to stand erect while each heart throb poured out the blood until they crumpled in death. And the tragedy was even greater to think about when one realizes that this was not solely the work of the heathen, but many times it was caused by so-called Christians who felt that they did God a favor in exterminating these loyal soldiers of the cross who stood for the Word and obedience to the Holy Spirit.

John 16:2,

"They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

Matthew 24:9,

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for My Name's sake."

By signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit, Martin was truly vindicated as the messenger to that age. But not only was he gifted by a great ministry, he himself was forever true to the Word of God. He fought organization. He withstood sin in high places. He championed the truth in word and deed and lived out a full life of Christian victory.

A biographer wrote of him on this wise. "No one ever saw him angry, or disturbed, or grieving, or laughing. He was always one and the same, and seemed something beyond mortal, wearing on his countenance a sort of celestial joy. Never was anything on his lips but Christ, never anything in his heart but piety, peace and pity. Often did he weep for the sins even of those his detractors, who when he was quiet and absent attacked him with viperous lips and poisoned tongues. Many hated him for virtues they themselves did not possess and could not imitate; and alas! his bitterest assailants were bishops."

THE SALUTATION

Revelation 2:12b

"These thing saith He Which hath the sharp sword with the two edges."

The message to the third church age is about to come forth. The third scene of this unfolding drama of "Christ in the midst of His church" is about to be revealed. With trumpet-like voice, the Spirit presents the Matchless One, "He Which hath the sharp sword with the two edges!" How vastly different is this presentation from the time when Pilate introduced the Lamb of God, clothed in mocking robes of purple, smitten and thorn crowned, saying, "Behold your King!" Now, regal robed and crowned with glory stands the risen Lord, 'Christ, the power of God.'

In these words, 'He Which hath the sharp sword with two edges' lies another revelation of Godhead. In the Ephesian Age, you will recall, He was set forth as the Unchanging God. In the Smyrnaean Age we saw Him as the ONE TRUE God and beside Him there was no other. Now in this Pergamean Age there is a further revelation of His Godhead, set forth by His association with the sharp two edged sword, which is the Word of God.

Hebrews 4:12

"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Ephesians 6:17

"And take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God."

Revelation 19:13 & 15a,

"And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His Name is called the Word of God. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword."

John 1:1-3,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Same (Word) was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made which was made."

I John 5:7,

"For there are three that bear record in Heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are ONE."

Now we can see His association with the Word. HE IS THE WORD. That is Who He is. THE WORD IN HIS NAME.

In John 1:1 where it says "In the beginning was the Word," the root from which we get our translation for 'Word' is 'Logos' which means 'the thought or concept.' It has the double meaning of 'thought' and 'speech.' Now a 'thought expressed' is a 'word', 'or words.' Isn't that wonderful and beautiful? John says the concept of God was expressed in Jesus.

And Paul says the very same thing in Hebrews 1:1-3,

"God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, (Logos) Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds;

Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

God became expressed in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus was the Express Image of God.

Again in John 1:14,

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us."

The very substance of God was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. The great Spirit-God unto Which no man could approach, Which no man had seen or could behold was now tabernacled in flesh and dwelt among men, expressing the fullness of God to men.

John 1:18,

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

God, Who on occasions would manifest His presence by the cloud or pillar of fire that struck fear in the hearts of men; this God, Whose heart characteristics were made known only by revelation of words through the prophets, now became Emmanuel (God with us) declaring Himself. The word, 'declare,' is taken from the Greek root which we often interpret as exegesis, which means to thoroughly explain and make clear. That is what the Living WORD, Jesus, did. He brought God to us, for He was God.

He revealed God to us with such perfect clarity that John could say about Him in I John 1:1-3

"That Which was from the beginning, Which we have heard, (Logos means speech) Which we have seen with our eyes, Which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life;

(For the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that Eternal Life, Which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

That Which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

When God was truly revealed, He was manifested in the flesh. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

Now back in Hebrews 1:1-3 we made note that Jesus was the express image of God. He was God expressing Himself in man to man. But there is something else to note in these verses, especially verses one and two.

"God Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."

I want you to notice here in the margin of your Bible you will see a correction. The word, 'by' is not a correct translation. It should be 'IN.' Not 'by.' It then reads correctly, "God spake in times past unto the fathers IN the prophets by means of the Word".

I Samuel 3:21b,

"For the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the Lord."

That brings out I John 5:7 perfectly, "The Spirit and Word are ONE." Jesus revealed the Father. The Word revealed the Father. Jesus was the Living Word. Praise God, today He is still that Living Word.

When Jesus was upon earth He said,

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works."

John. 14:10.

Here it is most evidently set forth that the perfect manifestation of God in the Son was by the indwelling Spirit manifesting in Word and works. That is exactly what we have been teaching all along. When the bride will get back to being a Word bride, she will produce the very works that Jesus produced. The Word is God. The Spirit is God. They are all ONE. One cannot work apart from the other. If one truly has the Spirit of God, he will have the Word of God. That is how it was with the prophets. They had the indwelling Spirit of God and the Word came to them. That is how it was with Jesus. In Him was the Spirit without measure and the Word came to Him. (Jesus both began to do and TEACH. My doctrine is not My own, but the Father's That sent Me. Acts 1:1, John. 7:16.)

Remember now, John the Baptist was both the prophet and the messenger of his day. He was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. When he was baptizing in Jordan the Word of God (Jesus) came to him. The Word always comes to the truly Spirit-filled. That is the evidence of being filled with the Holy Ghost. That is what Jesus said would be the evidence. He said, "And I will pray the Father and He will send you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive." Now we know what Truth is.

"Thy Word is Truth."

John 17:17b.

Again in John 8:43,

"Why do ye not understand My speech? even because ye cannot hear My Word."

Did you notice that Jesus said that the world could not receive the Holy Ghost? Well, in this verse I just read, neither could they receive the Word. Why? Because the Spirit and the Word are one, and if you have the Holy Spirit as the prophets, the Word would come to you. You would receive it.

In John 14:26,

"But the Comforter, Which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall TEACH you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Here again we find the Word coming because of the Spirit of God.

Again in John 16:13

"Howbeit when He the Spirit of Truth (Word) is come, He will guide you into all truth, (Thy Word is truth), and He shall not speak of Himself: but whatsoever He shall hear (Word of God), that shall He speak (Word): and He will show you things to come." (Spirit bringing the Word of Prophecy).

I want you to note very carefully that Jesus did not say that the evidence of being baptized with the Holy Ghost was speaking in tongues, interpreting, prophesying, or shouting and dancing. He said the evidence would be that you would be in the TRUTH; you would be in the Word of God for your age. Evidence has to do with receiving that Word.

In I Corinthians 14:37,

"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

Now see that. The proof of the indwelling Spirit was to acknowledge and FOLLOW what God's prophet gave for his age as he set the church in order. Paul had to say to those who claimed another revelation, (verse 36)

"What, came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?"

The evidence of a Spirit-filled Christian believer is not to produce the truth (Word), but to receive the truth (Word), and to believe and obey it.

Have you noticed in Revelation 22:17

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come,--And let him that heareth say, Come."

See, the bride speaks the same Word as does the Spirit. She is a Word bride proving she has the Spirit. In every church age we hear these words,

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The Spirit gives the Word. If you have the Spirit you will hear the Word for your age, as those true Christians took the Word for their age.

Did you get that last thought? I repeat, every church age ends with the same admonition. "He that hath an ear, let him (an individual) hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." The Spirit gives the Word. He has the truth for each age. Each age has had its own elect, and that elect group always 'heard the word,' and received it, proving they had the Seed in them.

John 8:47,

"And he that is of God heareth God's Words. Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

They refused the Word (Jesus) and His Words for their days, but the true seed received the Word because they were of God.

"And ALL Thy children shall be taught of God." (Holy Spirit)

Isaiah 54:13.

Jesus said the same thing in John 6:45. Being ONE WITH THE WORD proves whether you are of God and Spirit-filled. No other criterion.

But what are tongues and interpretation and the other gifts? They are manifestations. That is what the Word teaches.

Read it in I Corinthians 12:7,

"But the MANIFESTATION of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."

Then Paul names those manifestations.

Now comes this very good question I know that you are all anxious to ask. Why isn't the manifestation an evidence of being baptized with the Holy Ghost, because you surely could not manifest the Holy Ghost unless you truly were Spirit-filled? Now I wish I could say that is right, because I don't like to hurt people or walk on their doctrine; but I wouldn't be a true servant of God if I didn't tell you the whole counsel of God. That is right, is it not?

Just let us take a little look at Balaam. He was religious, he worshipped God. He understood the proper method of sacrificing and approaching unto

God, but he was not a True Seed prophet for he took the wages of unrighteousness, and worst of all he led the people of God into sins of fornication and idolatry. Yet who would dare to deny that the Spirit of God manifested through him in one of the most beautiful portions of absolutely accurate prophecy the world has ever seen? But he never had the Holy Ghost.

Now then, what do you think of Caiaphas, the high priest? The Bible says that he prophesied the kind of death the Lord should die. We all know there is no record of him being a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led man like dear old Simeon or that sweet saint called Anna. Yet he had a genuine manifestation of the Holy Ghost. We can't deny that. So where is manifestation as an evidence? It isn't there. If you are truly filled with the Spirit of God you will have the evidence of the WORD in your life.

Let's show you how deeply I feel and understand this truth by a revelation God gave me. Now before I tell it, I want to say this. Many of you people believe me to be a prophet. I don't say that I am. You said it. But we both know that the visions God gives me NEVER FAIL. NOT ONCE. If anyone can prove a vision ever failed I want to know about it. Now that you follow me this far here is my story.

Many years ago when I first came across the Pentecostal people, I was in one of their camp meetings where there was much manifestations of tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy. Two preachers in particular were engaged in this kind of speaking more than any of the other brethren. I thoroughly enjoyed the services and was truly interested in the various manifestations, for they had a ring of reality to them. It was my earnest desire to learn all that I could about these gifts, so I decided to talk to the two men about them. Through the gift of God resident in me, I sought to know the spirit in the first man, whether he was truly of God or not. After a brief conversation with that sweet, humble brother, I knew that he was a genuine, solid Christian. He was real. The next young man was not at all like the first one. He was boastful and proud, and as I spoke to him a vision moved across my eyes and I saw that he was married to a blond lady but was living with a brunette and had two children by her. If ever there was a hypocrite, he was one.

Now let me tell you, I was shocked. How could I not be? Here were two men, one of which was a real believer and the other was a sinful impersonator. YET BOTH WERE MANIFESTING GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT. I was troubled by this confusion. I left the meeting to seek God for the answer. I went alone to a secret place and there with my Bible I prayed and waited on God for the answer. Not knowing just what portion of Scripture to read I casually opened the Bible to some place in Matthew. I read for awhile and then laid the Bible down. In a moment a wind blew into the room and turned the pages of the

Bible to Hebrews, chapter six. I read it through and was particularly impressed by those strange verses,

Hebrews 6:4-9,

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

And have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance: seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.

For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

But beloved we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."

I closed the Bible, laid it down, and meditated awhile and prayed some more. I still had no answer. I again opened the Bible aimlessly but did not read. Suddenly the wind blew into the room again, and once more the pages turned to Hebrews 6 and remained there as the wind ceased. I read those words over again, and when I did, then came the Spirit of God into the room and I beheld a vision. I saw in the vision a man dressed in the purest white who went forth into a freshly plowed field and sowed grain. It was a bright day, and the sowing was done in the morning. But late at night after the sower in white had gone, a man in black came and stealthily sowed some more seed amongst that which the man in white had sown. The days went by--the sun and rain blessed the ground; and one day there appeared the grain. How fine it was. But a day later appeared the tares.

The wheat and tares grew together. They partook of the same nourishment out of the same soil. They drank in the same sun and rain.

Then one day the skies turned to brass, and the plants all began to droop and to die. I heard the wheat lift their heads and cry to God for rain. The tares also lifted up their voices and pleaded for rain. Then the skies darkened and the rain came, and again the wheat, now full of strength lifted up their voices and cried in adoration, "Praise the Lord". And to my wonderment I heard the revived tares also look up and say, "Hallelujah!".

Then I knew the truth of the camp meeting and the vision. The parable of the Sower and the Seed, the sixth chapter of Hebrews, and the evident manifestation of Spiritual gifts in a mixed audience--all became wonderfully clear. The sower in white was the Lord. The sower in black was the devil. The

world was the field. The seeds were people, elect and reprobates. Both partook of the same nourishment, water and sun. Both prayed. Both received help from God, for He maketh His sun and rain to fall on both good and evil. And though they both had the same wonderful blessing and both had the same wonderful manifestations, **THERE WAS STILL THAT ONE GREAT DIFFERENCE, THEY WERE OF DIFFERENT SEED.**

Here also was the answer to Matthew 7:21-23

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father Which is in heaven.

Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

Jesus does not deny that they did the mighty works that only the Holy Ghost can accomplish by way of men. But He did deny ever knowing them. These weren't backsliders. These were wicked, unregenerate, reprobates. These were the seed of Satan.

And there it is. You CAN'T claim that manifestation is the evidence of being Spirit-born, Spirit-filled. No sir. I will admit that true manifestation is the evidence of the Holy Spirit doing mighty acts, but it is NOT the evidence of the individual being Spirit-filled, even though that individual has an abundance of those manifestations.

The evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost today is just the same as it was back in the day of our Lord. It is receiving the Word of truth for the day in which you live. Jesus never did stress the importance of the Works as He did the Word. He knew that if the people got the WORD the works would follow. That is Bible.

Now Jesus knew that there was going to be a terrible drift away from the Word in the Pergamean Age which was as yet two hundred years off from the Patmos vision. He knew that drift would cause them to go into the Dark Ages. He knew that the way man originally got away from God was by first leaving the Word. If you leave that Word, you have left God. Thus He is presenting Himself to the church at Pergamos, and indeed to all churches of all ages, "I am the Word. If you want Deity in your midst, then welcome and receive the Word. Don't ever let anyone or anything get between you and that Word. This which I am giving you (the Word) is a revelation of Myself. I AM THE WORD. Remember that!"

I wonder if we are sufficiently impressed with the Word in our midst. Let me give you a thought here. How do we pray? We pray in Jesus Name don't we? Every prayer is in His Name or there isn't any answer.

Yet in I John 5:14, we are told,

"This is the confidence that we have in Him that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."

Now we ask, "What is the will of God?" There is only ONE WAY to know His will and that is by the WORD OF GOD.

Lamentations 3:37,

"Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass when the Lord commandeth it not?"

There it is. If it isn't in the Word you can't have it. So we can't ask unless it's in the Word, and we can't petition or ask unless it is in His Name. There it is again. JESUS (the Name) is the WORD (will). You can't separate God and the Word. They are ONE.

Now then, this Word He has left behind on the printed page is a part of Him when you accept it by faith into a Spirit-filled life. He said that His Word was life. John 6:63b. But that is exactly what He is:

John 14:6,

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."

Romans 8:9b

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His."

There it is, He is Spirit and He is Life. That is exactly what the Word is; that is exactly what Jesus is. He is the Word. So when a Spirit-born, Spirit-filled man in faith takes that Word into his heart and places it upon his lips, why that is the same as Deity speaking. Every mountain has to go. Satan cannot stand before that man.

If the church, way back there in that third age had only held on to the revelation of the living Word in their midst, the power of God would not have faded as it did in those Dark Ages. And right today, when the church returns to the Word in faith, we can say without doubt that the glory of God and the wonderful acts of God will be in her midst again.

One night as I was seeking the Lord, the Holy Spirit told me to pick up my pen and write. As I grasped the pen to write, His Spirit gave me a message for the church. I want to bring it to you... It has to do with the Word and the bride.

"Here is what I am trying to say to you. The law of reproduction is that each specie brings forth after its own kind, even according to Genesis 1:11,

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, and the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so." Whatever life was in the seed came forth into a plant and thence into fruit. The very same law applies to the church today. Whatever seed started the church will come forth and be like the original seed because it is the same seed. In these last days the true Bride Church (Christ's seed) will come to the Headstone, and she will be the super church, a super race, as she nears Him. They in the bride will be so much like Him that they will even be in His very image. This is in order to be united with Him. They will be one. They will be the very manifestation of the Word of the living God. Denominations cannot produce this (wrong seed). They will produce their creeds and their dogmas, mixed with the Word. This mongrelizing brings forth a hybrid product.

The first son (Adam) was the spoken seed-Word of God. He was given a bride to reproduce himself. That is why the bride was given to him, to reproduce himself; to produce another son of God. But she fell. She fell by hybridization. She caused him to die.

The second Son (Jesus), also a spoken Seed-Word of God was given a bride like as was Adam. But before He could marry her, she also had fallen. She, like Adam's wife, was put to the test whether she would believe the Word of God and live, or doubt the Word and die. She doubted. She left the Word. She died.

From a little group of the true seed of the Word, God will present Christ with a beloved bride. She is a virgin of His Word. She is a virgin because she knows no man-made creeds or dogmas. By and through the members of the bride will be fulfilled all that was promised of God to be made manifest in the virgin.

The word of promise came to the virgin Mary. But that Word of promise was He, Himself, to be made manifest. God was made manifest. He, Himself, acted at that time and fulfilled His own Word of promise in the virgin. It was an angel that had brought her the message. But the angel's message was the Word of God. Isaiah 9:6. He fulfilled at that time all that was written of Him because she accepted His Word to her.

The members of the virgin bride will love Him, and they will have His potentials, for He is their head, and all power belongs to Him. They are subject to Him as the members of our bodies are subject to our heads.

Notice the harmony of the Father and the Son. Jesus never did anything until it was first showed Him by the Father. John 5:19. This harmony is now to exist between the Groom and His bride. He shows her His Word of life. She receives it. She never doubts it. Therefore, nothing can harm her, not even death. For if the seed be planted, the water will raise it up again. Here is the

secret of this. The Word is in the bride (as it was in Mary). The bride has the mind of Christ for she knows what He wants done with the Word. She performs the command of the Word in His name for she has "thus saith the Lord." Then the Word is quickened by the Spirit and it comes to pass. Like a seed that is planted and watered, it comes to full harvest, serving its purpose.

Those in the bride do only His will. No one can make them do otherwise. They have 'thus saith the Lord' or they keep still. They know that it has to be God in them doing the works, fulfilling His own Word. He did not complete all His work while in His earthly ministry so now He works in and through the bride.

She knows that, for it was not yet time for Him to do certain things that He must now do. But He will now fulfill through the bride that work which He left for this specific time.

Now let us stand like Joshua and Caleb. Our promised land is coming in sight even as theirs did. Now Joshua means "Jehovah Saviour", and he represents the end-time leader that will come to the church even as Paul came as the original leader. Caleb represents those that stayed true with Joshua. Remember, God had started Israel as a virgin with His Word. But they wanted something different. So did the last day church. Notice how God did not move Israel, or let her go into the promised land until it was His own appointed time. Now the people might have put pressure on Joshua, the leader, and said, "The land is ours, let's go and take it. Joshua, you are all through, you must have lost your commission, you don't have the power you used to have. You used to hear from God and know the will of God, and act quickly. Something is wrong with you." But Joshua was a God-sent prophet and he knew the promises of God, so he waited for them. He waited for a clear cut decision from God and when the time came to move, God placed the full leadership in Joshua's hands because he had stayed with the Word. God could trust Joshua but not the others. So it will repeat in this end day. The same problem, the same pressures.

Take the example we see in Moses. This mighty anointed prophet of God had a peculiar birth, being born at the right time for the deliverance of Abraham's seed from Egypt. He never stayed in Egypt to argue Scripture with them, nor fuss at the priests. He went to the wilderness until the people were ready to receive him. God called Moses to the wilderness. The waiting was not on Moses' part but because of the people who were not ready to receive him. Moses thought the people would understand but they did not.

Then there is Elijah to whom the Word of the Lord came. When he got through preaching the truth and that group back there that is the forerunner of the American Jezebel group would not receive the Word, God called him off the field and plagued that generation for rejecting the prophet and the message that God had given. God called him to the wilderness and he would not come

out even for the king. Those who tried to persuade him to do so, died. But God spoke to His faithful prophet by vision. Out of hiding he came and brought back the Word to Israel.

Then came John the Baptist, Christ's faithful forerunner, the mighty prophet for his day. He did not go to his father's school, nor the school of the Pharisees--he went to no denomination, but out to the wilderness called there by God. There he stayed until the Lord sent him out with the message, crying, 'The Messiah is at hand.'

Now let us take a Scriptural warning here. Was it not in the days of Moses whom God had vindicated that Korah rose up and withstood that mighty prophet? He disputed with Moses and claimed that he had as much from God to lead the people and that others shared in the Divine revelation as well as did Moses. He denied the authority of Moses. Now the people back there, after they had heard the true Word and were well acquainted with the fact that a true prophet was vindicated of God, I say those people fell for Korah and his gainsayings. Korah was not a Scriptural prophet but the people in great numbers with their leaders went for him. How like the evangelists today with their golden calf schemes like Korah's. They look good to the people as Korah looked good then. They have blood on their foreheads, oil on their hands and balls of fire on the platform. They allow women preachers, let women cut their hair, wear slacks and shorts, and bypass the Word of God for their own creeds and dogmas. That shows what kind of seed is in them. But not all the people turned on Moses and left the Word of God. No. The elect stayed with him. The same is happening again today. Many are leaving the Word but some are staying with it. But remember the parable of the wheat and tares. The tares have to be bundled for burning. These apostate churches are getting bound closer and closer together, ready for the fires of God's judgment. But the wheat is going to be gathered to the Master.

Now I want you to be very careful here and see this. God has promised that at the end time Malachi 4 is going to be fulfilled. It has to be for it is the Spirit-quickened Word of God spoken by the prophet Malachi. Jesus referred to it. It is just before Christ comes the second time. By the time Jesus comes all Scripture must be fulfilled. The Gentile dispensation will be in its last church age when that messenger of Malachi comes. He will be right with the Word. He will take the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation. He will start at the serpent's seed and carry on to the messenger in the latter rain. But he will be rejected by the denominations.

He has to be for that is history repeating itself from the time of Ahab. Israel's history under Ahab is happening right here in America where the prophet of Malachi appears. As Israel left Egypt to worship in freedom, pushed out the natives, raised up a nation with great leaders like David etc., and then

put an Ahab on the throne with a Jezebel behind him to direct, so have we done the very same in America. Our forefathers left for this land to worship and live in freedom. They pushed back the natives and took over the land. Mighty men like Washington and Lincoln were raised up but after awhile other men of such poor caliber succeeded these worthy men that soon an Ahab was set in the presidential chair with a Jezebel behind him to direct him. It is at such a time as this that the messenger of Malachi must come. Then in the latter rain will come a Mount Carmel showdown. Watch this carefully now to see it in the Word. John was the forerunner of Malachi 3. He planted the former rain and was rejected by the organizations of his day. Jesus came and had a Mount Transfiguration show down. The second forerunner of Christ will sow for the latter rain. Jesus will be the showdown between the denominations and creeds, for He will come to back up His Word and take His bride in the rapture. The first showdown was Mount Carmel; the second was the Mount Transfiguration, and the third will be Mount Zion.

The strange behaviour of Moses, Elijah, and John withdrawing from the people into seclusion left many confused. They did not realize that it was because their messages had been rejected. But the seed had been sown, the planting was over. Judgment was next. They had served their purpose as a sign to the people, so judgment was next.

I believe according to Revelation 13:16 that the bride will have to stop preaching for the beast is demanding the mark in the hand or forehead if permission to preach be granted. Denominations will take the mark, or be forced to quit preaching. Then the Lamb will come for His bride and judge the great harlot.

Now remember that Moses was born for a certain work, but he could not do that work until he had received the gifts which would enable him to do the work. He had to go out in the desert and wait there; God had an appointed time. There was to be a certain Pharaoh on the throne, and the people had to be crying for the bread of life, before God could send him back. This is true for our day.

But what do we have in this our day? Multitudes are working signs until we have a generation of sign seekers that know little or nothing about the Word, or a true move of the Spirit of God. If they see blood, oil and fire they are happy; it matters not what is in the Word. They will support any sign, even unscriptural ones. But God has warned us about that. He said in Matthew 24 that in the last days the two spirits would be so close together that only the very elect could tell them apart, for they alone would not be deceived.

How can you tell the spirits apart? Just give them the Word test. If they don't speak that Word, they are of the evil one. As the evil one deceived the first two brides, he will try to deceive the bride of this last day, by trying to get

her to hybridize herself through creeds, or just plainly turning from the Word to any sign that suits her. But God never placed signs ahead of the Word. Signs follow the Word, as when Elijah told the woman to bake a cake for him first, according to the Word of the Lord. When she did as the Word said, the proper sign came. Come to the Word first and then watch the miracle. The seed Word is energized by the Spirit.

How can any messenger sent from God believe only a part of the Word and deny some of it? The true prophet of God in this last day will proclaim the whole Word. Denominations will hate him. His words may be as harsh as John the Baptist who called them vipers. But the predestinated will hear and be ready for the rapture. The Royal Seed of Abraham, with like faith as Abraham's will hold to the Word with him, for they are predestinated together.

The last day messenger will appear in God's appointed time. It is the end time now as all know, for Israel is in the homeland. Any time now he will come according to Malachi. When we see him, he will be dedicated to the Word. He will be indicated (pointed out in the Word. Revelation 10:7.) and God will vindicate his ministry. He will preach the truth as did Elijah and be ready for the Mount Zion showdown.

Many will misunderstand him because they have been taught Scripture in a certain way which they consider truth. When he comes against that, they will not believe. Even some true ministers will misunderstand the messenger because so much has been called God's truth by deceivers.

But this prophet will come, and as the forerunner to the first coming cried, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," even so will he no doubt cry out, "Behold the Lamb of God coming in glory." He will do this, for even as John was the messenger of truth to the elect, so is this one the last messenger to the elect and Word-born bride."

CHRIST EULOGIZES THE CHURCH

Revelation 2:13

"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth."

"I know thy works." These are the identical words uttered to each of the seven messengers relative to the people of God in each age. As they are spoken to the two vines (true and false) they will bring joy and gladness to the hearts of one group, but they ought to strike terror in the hearts of the other. For

though we are saved by grace, apart from works, true salvation will bring forth works, or deeds that will please God.

I John 3:7,

"Little children, let no man deceive you; he that DOETH (worketh) righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous."

If this verse means anything at all, it means that what a man DOES he IS.

James 3:11,

"Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?"

Romans 6:2,

"How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?"

Matthew 12:33-35

"Either make the tree good and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his fruit.

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

Now if a man is born of the Word (Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. I Peter 1:23) he will produce the Word. The fruit or works of his life will be a product of the kind of seed or life that is in him. His works, therefore will be Scriptural. Oh, what an indictment this truth is going to be against the Pergamean Age. There stands that Matchless One, and in His hand the sharp sword with the two edges, the Word of God. And that Word will judge us in the last day. In fact the Word is judging even now, for it is the discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It cuts asunder the carnal from the spiritual. It makes us living epistles read and known of all men to the glory of God.

"I know thy works." If a man fears that he might not please God, then let him fulfill the Word. If a man wonders if he will hear those words, "Well done, good and faithful servant," let him fulfill the Word of God in his life, and assuredly he will hear those words of praise. The Word of truth was the criterion then; it is the criterion now. There isn't another standard; there isn't another plumb line. As the world is going to be judged by one Christ Jesus, even so it is going to be judged by the Word. If a man wants to know how he is making out, let him do as James suggested: "Look into the mirror of God's Word."

"I know thy works." As He stood there with the Word, examining their lives in the light of the blue print He had laid out for them, He must have been pleased in a goodly measure, for they, like the others who had gone on before,

were enduring the persecution of the unjust and still joyfully cleaving unto the Lord. Difficult though it was at times to serve the Lord, yet they served Him and worshipped Him in Spirit and in truth. But with the false vine it was not so. Alas, they had repudiated the life that is built upon the Word and were now going further and further away from the truth. Their actions bore witness to the depths to which they had sunk.

THOU HOLDEST FAST MY NAME

"To whom can we go? Thou alone hast the words of eternal life!" They held fast then; they were holding fast now, but not with fatalistic dread as men who live out barren lives. They were holding fast in His strength, in the assurance of the Spirit that they were one in Him. Theirs was the sure knowledge of sins forgiven and they bore the name of 'Christian' in testimony to it. They knew and loved that Name that was above every name. Their knees had bowed to that Name. Their tongues had confessed to it. Whatsoever they did, they did it all in the Name of the Lord Jesus. They had named that Name and departed from evil, and having taken their stand they were now prepared to die for that Name, being assured of a better resurrection.

Take the Name of Jesus with you,

Child of sorrow and of woe.

It will joy and comfort give you.

Take it then where ere you go.

Precious Name, O how sweet,

Hope of earth and joy of heaven.

Already in the second century those words "Father, Son and Holy Ghost" had spelled out 'Trinity' to many, and the polytheistic idea of three Gods had become a doctrine in the false church. It would not be long until the Name was taken away, as indeed it was in this age, and in its stead the titles of the ONE GREAT GOD would be substituted for the NAME, Lord Jesus Christ. While the many apostatized and embraced a trinity and baptized using the titles of Godhead, the Little Flock still baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ and so held to the truth.

With so many dishonoring God, turning Him into three gods, and changing His gracious Name to titles, one would wonder if the signs and wonders that attend such a great Name would still be visited amongst the people. Indeed those signs were mightily and wonderfully manifested, though certainly not in the false vine. Men like Martin were greatly used and God bore them witness both by signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Ghost. That Name was still

effectual as it always has been and ever will be where the saints honor Him through the Word and faith.

THOU HAST NOT DENIED MY FAITH

In Acts 3:16 when Peter was asked how the mighty miracle had taken place upon the crippled one at the Gate Beautiful, he explained it on this wise, "And His (Jesus) Name through faith in His (Jesus) Name hath made this man (former cripple) strong, yea, the faith which is by (from) Him (Jesus) hath given him (the man) this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." See, there it is. Jesus' Name, and Jesus' Faith brought about the miracle. Peter did not claim it was his own human faith any more than he claimed that it was his own name. He said that Jesus' Name used in the faith which is from Jesus performed that great work. This faith is what the Lord was speaking about in Revelation 2:13. It was HIS faith. It was not faith IN Him. But it was HIS OWN faith that He had given to the believers.

Romans 12:3

"According as God hath dealt to every man (according to verse 1 the men are BRETHREN) the measure of faith."

Ephesians 2:8,

"By grace are ye saved through faith, and that (Faith) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

And it also says in James 2:1,

"My brethren (notice he, too, is talking to BRETHREN) have not the faith OF (not in) our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons."

In this Pergamean Age where men were humanizing salvation, having turned from the truth that "Salvation is of the Lord,"--having cast aside the doctrine of election and opened wide the church door and their fellowship to any and all who subscribed to their tenets (never mind the Word), in this age of rapid degradation, there were still the few who had the measure of that faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not only used that faith in acts of power but withstood those who dared to say that they were saved simply on the grounds of joining a church. They knew that no man could truly believe unto eternal life and the righteousness of God apart from the measure of the faith of the Lord Jesus, Himself. As today's church is filled with mental believers who endorse the virgin birth, the shed blood, going to church and taking communion, and are not reborn at all, even so in that third age was the same problem. Human faith wasn't enough then and it is not enough now. It takes

the very faith of the Son of God to drop into a man's heart so that he can receive the Lord of glory into the temple not made with hands.

This was a living faith. "I live by the faith of the Son of God." Paul did not say that he lived by faith IN the Son of God. It was the faith of the Son of God that had given him life and kept him living in Christian victory.

No, they had not denied that salvation was supernatural from start to finish. They kept alive the truth of His Name and His Faith and they were blessed by the Lord and accounted worthy of Him.

ANTIPAS MY FAITHFUL MARTYR

There is no other record in the Word or in any profane history concerning this brother. But surely there need not be. It is more than enough that he was fore-known and known of the Lord. It is more than enough to see his faithfulness unto the Lord recorded in the living Word. He was a Christian. He had the Name of Jesus. He had the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and he was amongst those who lived by it. He had responded to the words of James, "Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons." Full of the Holy Ghost and faith as was Stephen, he respected no one, he feared no one; and when death was pronounced upon all who would take that Name and walk in the faith of Jesus Christ he took his stand with those who would not turn back. Yes, he died, but like Abel, he obtained a witness from God (his name is written in the Word), and though dead, his voice still speaks in the pages of God's Divine Record. Another faithful martyr was carried to his rest. But Satan did not triumph then, even as he did not triumph when he killed the Prince of Peace, for as Satan was despoiled at the cross, even so now will the blood of Antipas cry out to hundreds more who will take up their crosses and follow Him.

WHERE SATAN'S SEAT IS

The reason that this is part of the eulogy of the Spirit is because these brave soldiers of the cross were overcoming Satan right in the midst of his own throne room. They were winning the battle through the Name and Faith of Jesus right in the camp of the leaders of darkness. What a tremendous commendation. Like the mighty men of David who invaded the camp of the enemy to bring David thirst-quenching water, so these giants of faith invaded

the realm of Satan's earthly stronghold, and by preaching and exhorting brought the water of salvation to those who lived under the shadow of death.

Now as much as these words concerning the throne and realm of Satan are a part of God's praise for His elect, they actually set the stage for the denouncement of the evil that has gained supremacy in the church.

PERGAMOS: Satan's Throne and Dwelling Place. To many, these phrases have been merely pictorial rather than truly historical. But they are surely real and history bears that out. Pergamos was indeed the throne and dwelling place of Satan. It happened on this wise:

Pergamos was not originally the place where Satan (as concerning human affairs) dwelt. Babylon has always been literally and figuratively his headquarters. It was in the city of Babylon that Satanic worship had its origin. Genesis 10:8-10, "And Cush begat Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."

Genesis 11:1-9,

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

And it came to pass as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.

And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime they had for mortar.

And they said, Go to, let us build us 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 came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city.

Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."

Babel is the original name for Babylon. It means confusion. It was literally started by Cush, the son of Ham, but was brought to a kingdom of power and grandeur under his son, Nimrod, the mighty hunter. Nimrod, according to the

Genesis eleven account and also according to profane history, set out to accomplish three things. He wanted to build a strong nation, which he did. He wanted to propagate his own religion, which he did. He wanted to make a name for himself, which he also accomplished. His accomplishments were so monumental that the kingdom of Babylon was called the head of gold amongst all world governments. That his religion gained prominence is proven by the fact that Scripture identifies it with Satan completely in Isaiah Chapter 14 and in Revelation Chapters 17-18. And by history we can prove that it invaded the whole world and is the basis for every system of idolatry, and the theme of mythology, though the names of the gods differ in various sections of the land according to the language of the people. That he made a name for himself and his followers goes without saying, for as long as this present age goes on (until Jesus reveals Himself to His brethren) he will be worshipped and honored, though under a different name from Nimrod, and in a temple slightly different from the one in which he was originally adored.

Since the Bible does not deal in the histories of other nations in detail, it will be necessary to search the ancient profane records to find our answer as to how Pergamos became the seat of the Satanic religion of Babylon. The major sources of information will be in records of Egyptian and Grecian culture. The reason for this is that Egypt received her science and mathematics from the Chaldeans and in turn Greece received them from Egypt.

Now since the priests were in charge of teaching these sciences, and since these sciences were used as a part of religion, we already know the key as to how the Babylonish religion gained its strength in these two countries. It is also true that whenever a nation was able to overcome another nation, in due time the religion of the subduer became the religion of the subdued. It is well known that the Greeks had the very same signs of the Zodiac as did the Babylonians; and it has been found in the ancient Egyptian records that the Egyptians gave the Greeks their knowledge of polytheism. Thus the mysteries of Babylon spread from nation to nation until it appeared in Rome, in China, India and even in both North and South America we find the very same basic worship.

The ancient histories agree with the Bible that this Babylonish religion was most certainly not the original religion of earth's early peoples. It was the first to drift away from the original faith; but it was not itself the original one. Historians such as Wilkinson and Mallett have proven conclusively from the ancient documents that at one time all the peoples of the earth believed in ONE GOD, supreme, eternal, invisible, Who by the Word of His mouth spoke all things into existence, and that in His character He was loving and good and just. But as Satan will always corrupt whatever he can, we find him corrupting the minds and hearts of men so that they reject the truth. As he has always attempted to receive worship as though he were God and not the servant and

creation of God, he drew worship away from God to the end that he might draw it unto himself and so be exalted. He certainly did accomplish his desire to spread his religion throughout the whole world. This is authenticated by God in the Book of Romans, "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, until they became vain in their imaginations, and through darkness of heart accepted a corrupted religion to the extent that they worshipped creatures and not the Creator."

Remember, Satan was a creature of God (Son of the Morning). Thus we find that where once truth was disseminated amongst men, and all held to that one truth, there later came a day when a vast group turned from God and spread a diabolical form of worship around the world. History bears it out that those of the tribe of Shem that stood with the unchanging truth were in solid opposition to those of Ham who turned away from truth to the devil's lie. There is no time to engage in a discussion of this; it is merely introduced that you may see there were two religions and two only, and the evil one became world wide.

Monotheism turned to polytheism in Babylon. The devil's lie and the devil's mysteries rose up against the truth of God and the mysteries of God in that city. Satan truly became the god of this world and exacted worship from those that he had duped, causing them to believe that he was truly the Lord.

The polytheistic religion of the enemy began with the trinitarian doctrine. It was way back there in antiquity that the "one God in three persons" idea came into existence. How strange that our modern theologians have not spotted this; but evidently just as duped by Satan as their forebears were, they still believe in three persons in the Godhead. Let us be shown just one place in Scripture where there is any authority for that doctrine. Is it not strange that while the descendants of Ham went on their way in Satanic worship which involved a basic concept of three gods that there is not one trace of the descendants of Shem believing such a thing or having any ceremonial worship that involved even a type of it? It is not strange that the Hebrews believed, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is ONE God", if there were three persons in the Godhead? Abraham, the descendant of Shem, in Genesis 18 saw only ONE God with two angels.

Now how was this trinity expressed? It was expressed by an equilateral triangle even as it is expressed in Rome today. Strange, the Hebrews did not have such a concept. Now who is right? Is it the Hebrews or the Babylonians? In Asia the polytheistic idea of three gods in one came out in an image with three heads on one body. He is expressed as three intelligences. In India, they found it in their hearts to express him as one god in three forms. Now that really is good modern day theology. In Japan there is a great Buddha with three heads like the one we previously described.

But the most revealing of all is that which sets forth the trinitarian concept of God in a triune form of: 1. The head of an old man symbolizing God the Father, 2. A circle which in the mysteries signified "Seed" which in turn means the Son. 3. The wings and tail of a bird (dove). Here was the doctrine of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three persons in the Godhead, a veritable trinity. You can see the same thing in Rome. Now let me ask once again, is it not strange that the devil and his worshipers actually had more truth revealed than the father of faith, (Abraham) and his descendants? Is it not strange that the worshipers of Satan, knew more about God than the children of God? Now that is what modern theologians try to tell us when they talk about a trinity. Just remember this one thing from now on: these records are facts and this is a fact--Satan is a liar and the father of lies, and whenever he comes with any light it is still a lie. He is a murderer. And his doctrine of the trinity has destroyed the multitudes and will destroy until Jesus comes.

According to history it did not take long for a change to be made in this concept of a Father and a Son and the Holy Ghost. Satan took them a step at a time away from the truth. The evolved concept of Deity was now: 1. The eternal father, 2. The Spirit of God incarnate in a HUMAN mother. (Does that make you think?) 3. A Divine Son, the fruit of that incarnation, (Woman's seed).

But the devil is not content. He hasn't achieved worship of himself yet, except in an indirect way. So he takes the people away from the truth still further. Through his mysteries he reveals to the people that since the great invisible father God does not concern himself in the affairs of men, but remains silent relative to them, then it follows that he may well be worshipped in silence. Actually it means to ignore him as much as possible, if not altogether. This doctrine spread around the world also, and right today in India you can see that temples to the great creator, the silent god, are strikingly few in number.

Since it was not necessary to worship the creator-father, it was only natural that worship swung to the "Mother and Child" as the objects of adoration. In Egypt there was the same combination of mother and son called Isis and Osiris. In India it was Isi and Iswara. (Note the similarity of names even.) In Asia it was Cybele and Deoius. In Rome and in Greece it followed suit. And in China. Well, imagine the surprise of some Roman Catholic missionaries as they entered China and found there a Madonna and Child with rays of light emanating from the head of the babe. The image could well have been exchanged for one in the Vatican except for the difference of certain facial features.

It now behooves us to discover the original mother and child. The original goddess-mother of Babylon was Semiramis who was called Rhea in the eastern

countries. In her arms she held a son, who though a babe, was described as tall, strong, handsome and especially captivating to the women. In Ezekiel 8:14 he was called Tammuz. Amongst classical writers he was called Bacchus. To the Babylonians he was Ninus. What accounts for the fact that he is represented as a babe in arms and yet described as a great and mighty man is that he is known as the "Husband-Son". One of his titles was "Husband of the Mother", and in India where the two are known as Iswara and Isi, he (the husband) is represented as the babe at the breast of his own wife.

That this Ninus is the Nimrod of the Bible we can affirm by comparing history with the Genesis account. Pompeius said, "Ninus, king of Assyria, changed the ancient moderate ways of life by the desire for conquest. HE WAS THE FIRST WHO CARRIED WAR AGAINST HIS NEIGHBORS. He conquered all nations from Assyria to Lybia as these men knew not the arts of war." Diodorus says, "Ninus was the most ancient of Assyrian kings mentioned in history. Being of warlike disposition he trained many young men rigorously in the arts of war. He brought Babylonia under him while yet there was no city of Babylon." Thus we see this Ninus started to become great in Babylon, built Babel and took over Assyria, becoming its king, and then proceeded to devour other vast territories where the people were unskilled in war and lived in a moderate way as said Pompeius.

Now in Genesis 10, speaking of the kingdom of Nimrod it says,

"And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur and builded Nineveh, and Calah etc."

But the translators made a mistake in translating Asshur as a noun for it is a verb, and in the Chaldee means 'to make strong.' Thus it is Nimrod, who having been made strong (he established his kingdom by building the world's first army which he trained by drilling and through the rigors of hunting) went beyond Shinar with his strong army and subdued nations and built such cities as Nineveh, which was named after him, for even today a chief part of the ruins of that city is called Nimroud!

Since we have discovered who Ninus was, it is now necessary to discover who his father was. According to history it was Bel, the founder of Babylon. (Now it is to be noted here that Bel founded it in the sense that he started this whole move, but it was the son, Ninus, that established it and was the first king etc.) But according to the Scripture, the father of Nimrod was Cush: "And Cush begat Nimrod." Not only is this so but we find that Ham begat Cush. Now, in the Egyptian culture Bel was called Hermes, and Hermes means, "THE SON OF HAM". According to history Hermes was the great prophet of idolatry. He was the interpreter of the gods. Another name by which he was called was Mercury. (Read Acts 14:11-12)

Hyginus says this about that god who was known variously as Bel, Hermes, Mercury etc, "For many ages men lived under the government of Jove (not the Roman Jove, but Jehovah of the Hebrews who predates Roman history) without cities and without laws, and all speaking one language. But after that Mercury (Bel, Cush) interpreted the speeches of men (whence an interpreter is called Hermeneutes) the same individual distributed the nations. Then discord began." It is seen from this that Bel or Cush, the father of Nimrod, originally was the ring leader that led the people away from the true God and encouraged the people as the "interpreter of the gods" to take another form of religion. He encouraged them to go ahead with the tower which his son actually built. This encouragement is what brought the confusion and the division of men, so that he was both, "interpreter and confuser".

Cush, then, was the father of the polytheistic system and when men were deified by men, he of course, became the father of the gods. Now Cush was called Bel. And Bel in Roman mythology was Janus. He is pictured as having two faces and he carried a club by which he confounded and "scattered" the people. Ovid writes that Janus said concerning himself, "the ancients called me Chaos". Thus we find that the Cush of the Bible, the original rebel against monotheism was called Bel, Belus, Hermes, Janus, etc. amongst the ancient peoples. He purported to bring revelations and interpretations from the gods to the people. In so doing he caused the wrath of God to scatter the people, bringing division and confusion.

Now up to this point we have seen whence polytheism or the worship of many gods came. But did you notice that we also found a mention of a man named Cush who was given a title of "the father of the gods."? Did you notice here the old theme of ancient mythologies, that gods identify themselves with men? That is where ancestor worship comes from. So we might just examine history to find out about ancestor worship. Well, it was brought out that Cush introduced a three god worship of father, son and spirit. Three gods who were all equal. But he knew about the seed of the woman coming, so there would have to be a woman and her seed come into the picture. This was brought to pass when Nimrod died. His wife, Semiramis deified him, and thus made herself the mother of the son and also the mother of the gods. (Just exactly as the Roman church has deified Mary. They claim she was without sin and was the Mother of God.) She (Semiramis) called Nimrod "Zeroashta" which means, "the woman's promised seed".

But it wasn't too long until the woman began to attract more attention than the son, and soon she was the one who was depicted as trampling underfoot the serpent. They called her "the queen of the heaven" and made her divine. How like today wherein Mary, the mother of Jesus, had been elevated to immortality and right now as of September 1964 the Vatican council is attempting to give a quality to Mary she does not possess, for they would like

to call her, "Mary the Mediatrix," "Mary the Mother of All Believers," or "Mother of the Church." If there was ever Babylonish ancestor worship in a religion, it is the religion of the Church of Rome.

Not only was ancestor worship originated in Babylon but so also was the worship of nature. It was in Babylon the gods were identified with the sun and moon, etc. The chief object in nature was the sun which has light giving and heat giving properties and appears to man as a ball of fire in the heavens. Thus the chief god would be the sun god whom they called Baal. Often the sun was depicted as a circle of flame and soon around that flame there appeared a serpent. It wasn't long until the serpent became a symbol of the sun and consequently worshipped. Thus the desire of Satan's heart became full-fledged. He was worshipped as God. His throne was established. His slaves bowed to him. There in Pergamos in the form of a living serpent he was worshipped. The tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, now symbolized in the form of a living serpent had not only seduced Eve but the majority of mankind.

But how did Pergamos become the seat of Satan if Babylon was the seat? The answer again is in history. When Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians, the priest-king, Attalus fled the city and went to Pergamos with his priests and sacred mysteries. There he set up his kingdom outside the Roman empire, and thrived under the care of the devil.

This has been a very short resume of the history of the Babylonish religion and its advent to Pergamos. Many questions are no doubt left unanswered and much more, no doubt, could have been said to enlighten us, but this is not intended to be a study of history, rather it is intended to be a help to the study of the Word.

THE DENUNCIATION

Revelation 2:14-15

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."

In this Pergamean Age the Lord denounces two doctrines which He hates: 1. The doctrine of Balaam which brought idolatry and sinful excesses to Israel at Baal-Peor, and 2. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which had been but deeds in the Ephesian Age. Combine this denouncement with the fact that He

has been emphasizing Pergamos as the seat of Satan, and it is very easy and proper to conclude that somehow the religion of Babylon has become intermingled with Christianity.

Now this is not merely an assumption but an historical fact which we will prove by going back into history to about 36 A.D. and coming up to the Nicene Council of 325. When the Christians (mainly Jews by birth) were scattered abroad from Jerusalem they went everywhere preaching the Gospel, particularly in the synagogues. Thus within three years, or about in 36 A.D. the Gospel had been taken to Rome by Junius and Andronicus, who according to Romans 16:7 were apostles. The work flourished there for several years until the constant altercations of the Jews amongst themselves caused Emperor Claudius to expel them from Rome. With the Jews banished from that city the backbone of that little church was practically broken. Perhaps even the elders had been Jewish and so would be gone. The flock would be unattended and since the Word had not been written as a guide it would be very easy for this little flock to drift or be inundated by the philosophers and pagans of that day. With grievous wolves on the prowl, and the spirit of antichrist released, we find from history that this little church in Rome became hopelessly backslidden, and began to introduce pagan ceremonies under Christian titles.

As the period of banishment lasted for 13 years, the founders, Junius and Andronicus, did not come back until 54 A.D. Imagine their horror to find a church with a Christian title that was woefully pagan. There were altars in the church upon which they placed incense and celebrated pagan rites. The established leaders of that church could not be approached, so with the few who had tried to remain faithful they started a new church, or the Second Church of Rome. God graciously worked amongst them by signs and wonders so that a third church was started. And though the First Church was reproached for being pagan and NOT Christian in its worship it would not give up its title but remained and STILL REMAINS the First Church of Rome--The Roman Catholic Church.

Now the majority of us have the mistaken idea that any and all who call themselves Christians would be the target of the devil and consequently the brunt of governmental tyranny. But not so. This first church had begun to thrive and multiply so in numbers that the emperors and various officials of the government actually favored that church for political reasons.

Thus when the leaders of the First Church in Rome found themselves in favor, they took the opportunity to turn the government against the true believers and demand their persecution unless they came into their fold. One such bishop of the First Church of Rome was Anicetus who lived in the second century and was contemporary with Polycarp.

When the venerable Polycarp heard that the First Christian Church of Rome was involved in pagan ceremonies and had corrupted the truth of the Gospel, he went there to implore them to change. He saw them prostrate themselves before images named after apostles and saints. He saw them light candles and burn incense on the altar. He saw them celebrate the Passover under the name Easter, where they elevated the disc shaped bread that honored the sun god, and then they poured the wine out as a libation to the gods. But this aged saint who had traveled 1500 miles could not arrest their downward plunge. God spoke through him just as he was leaving, "Ephraim is married to his idols, let him alone," Hosea 4:15. Polycarp never more returned.

Following Anicetus was the wicked bishop of Rome called Victor. He introduced even more pagan festivals and ceremonies into the First Church, and also went about trying his utmost to persuade the true Christian churches to incorporate the same ideas. They would not do as he requested so he prevailed upon government officials to persecute the believers, hailing them into court, casting them into prison and even meting out death to many. Such an example of his vile deeds is found in history where Emperor Septimus Severus was prevailed upon by Callistus (the friend of Victor) to kill 7000 at Thessalonica because these true believers celebrated the Passover according to the Lord Jesus and not according to the worship of Astarte.

Already the false vine was turning loose its anger against the living God by killing the elect, even as did its forebear, Cain, kill Abel.

The true church kept trying to get the First Church to repent. It would not do so. It increased in size and influence. It embarked upon a constant campaign to discredit the true seed. They claimed that they and they alone were the true representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, and vaunted the fact that they were the original church in Rome, and they alone were the First Church. Indeed they were The First Church, and INDEED THEY ARE.

Thus by the time of this third church age we have two churches bearing the same name but with a bitter difference between them. One has departed from the truth, married idols and has no life in her. She has hybridized herself and the signs of death, (not life), follow in her wake. She is powerful with many members. She is favored by the world. The other is a little persecuted group. But she follows the Word, and the signs follow her. The sick are healed and the dead are raised. She is alive with the Life and Word of God. She loves not her life, but holds to His Name and His faith even unto death.

And so the terrible persecution of official Rome fell upon the true believers until Constantine arose and granted freedom of religious worship. There seems to be two reasons why this freedom was granted. In the first place various good emperors had not allowed persecution, but as they passed on, they were followed by those who killed Christians. It was so senseless that it finally came

to public heed that the Christians ought to be left alone. The second and best noted reason is that Constantine had a very difficult battle ahead of him in taking over the control of the empire. One night in a dream he saw a white cross appear before him. He felt that this was an omen unto him that if the Christians prayed for a victory for him, he would win the battle. He promised freedom for them in the event that he was victorious. He was victorious and the freedom of worship was granted in the edict of Nantes 312 A.D.

But this freedom from persecution and death was not as magnanimous as it first appeared. Constantine was now the patron. As a patron his interest was somewhat more than that of an observer, for he decided that the church needed his help in her affairs. He had seen them disagreeing over various matters, one of which involved Arius, Bishop of Alexander, who taught his adherents that Jesus was not truly God but a lesser being, having been created by God. The Western Church held the opposite view, believing that Jesus was the very essence of God and as they said 'co-equal with the Father.' With such matters, along with the intrusion of pagan ceremony into worship, the emperor called for the Nicene Council in 325 with the thought that he would bring all groups together where they could iron out their differences, and come to a common understanding, and all be one. Isn't it peculiar that though this started with Constantine it didn't die but is very much alive today as the "World Council of Churches"? And where he failed to truly achieve it, it will be achieved in this day through the ecumenical move.

Now this interference of the state with the church is a foolish thing for the world does not understand either the truth found in the Word or the ways of the church. Why, the very decision handed down by the council that Arius was wrong was reversed two years later by the emperor and for many years that false doctrine was foisted upon the people.

But that the church and state would come together was truly fore-known of the Lord. The very name Pergamos means "thoroughly married". And indeed state and church were married; politics and religion were united. The offspring of that union have been consistently the most horrible hybrids the world has ever seen. The truth is not in them, but all the evil ways of Cain (the first hybrid) is.

Not only was state and church wedded in this age, but the Babylonian religion was officially joined to the First Church. Satan now had access to the Name of Christ and he was enthroned as God in worship. With the help of federal aid the churches fell heir to beautiful buildings which were lined with altars of white marble and images of the departed saints. And right in this age is when the "beast" of Revelation 13:3 that was wounded to death: (the pagan Roman Empire) came back to life and power as the "Holy Roman Empire." Rome as a material nation had suffered much depletion and soon would suffer

it completely; but it mattered not now, for her religious empire would keep her on top of the world governing from the inside where she would not appear to do so from the outside.

Let me show the exact Scriptural truth of this matter, for I do not want anyone to think that I am giving a revelation of my own--one not found in Scripture.

Daniel 2:31-45,

"Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.

This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

Herein is revealed an exact account of future, unfilled history that was prophesied to come upon the earth from the time of Daniel until Jesus would come and reign as the Son of David. It is known as "The Times of the Gentiles." It had within it four historical divisions which were known by the dominating empire in each division: Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman.

The greatest and most absolute monarchy was the Babylonian which was typified as the head of gold.

The next in glory was the Medo-Persian which as history bore out was truly less glorious and was typified as the breast and arms of silver.

Then there followed the Grecian age whose king was the most brilliant of all military leaders the world has ever known so it was fittingly typified as the belly and thighs of brass. It was less glorious than the other two preceding it.

Finally came the last kingdom which was the Roman Empire typified as the legs and feet. But wherein the former kingdoms were typified as pure minerals (pure gold, silver and brass) this last empire was pure iron only in the legs, for when it came to the feet it was a mixture of iron and clay, and mineral and soil just don't mix and produce constancy and strength. But not only is this so, but most amazing, this last empire (Roman) would endure in its peculiar 'mixed state' right up until Jesus returns.

This Roman Empire of iron (iron signifying power and great destructive force against opposition) was to be made of two main divisions. And it certainly was for the empire literally split into two--East and West. Both were very powerful, crushing all before them.

But as the glory and power of all empires fail, so this empire began to fall also. Thus Rome fell. Pagan Imperial Rome was no longer iron. She crumbled. She was wounded to death. Rome could not now rule. It was all over. So thought the world. But how wrong the world was, for that head (Rome) though wounded was not wounded unto death. (Wuest, translation of Revelation 13:3, "And one of his heads appeared to have been mortally wounded, the throat

having been slashed. And his death stroke was healed. And the whole earth followed after the Wild Beast in amazement.")

People look at Rome. They look at the nation of Italy. And as they look they do not realize that Rome with her strict confines where the pope has an actual area as his domain is literally a nation within a nation, and she has ambassadors and receives ambassadors. PAPAL FALSE CHRISTIAN ROME (she is even called the eternal city--how blasphemous) NOW CONTROLS BY RELIGION EVEN MORE ABLY THAN WHEN PAGAN IMPERIAL ROME CONTROLLED BY THE PURE IRON OF FORCE. Rome took on a new lease of life when Constantine joined church and state and backed the union by force. The spirit that motivated pagan Rome is the same spirit that now motivates false Christian Rome. You can see that is so because you now know that the fourth empire never went out of existence; it just changed in its outer texture.

Once the Nicene Council had swung the power of political Rome to the church, it seemed that there were no limits to which this First Christian Church would go. The name, Christian, which originally brought persecution, now became the name of the persecutors. It was in this age that Augustine of Hippo (354-430) set forth the precept that the church ought and MUST use force if necessary to bring her children back into the fold, and that it was in harmony with the Word of God to kill the heretics and apostates. In his controversy with the Donatists he wrote... "It is indeed better that men should be led to worship God by teaching than that they should be driven to it by fear of punishment or pain, but it does not follow that because the former course produces the better men, therefore those who do not yield to it should be neglected. For many have found advantage (as we have proved and are daily proving by actual experience) in being first compelled by fear or pain, so that they might afterwards be influenced by teaching, so that they might follow out in act what they have already learned in word... whilst those are better who are guided aright by love, those are certainly more numerous who are corrected by fear. For who can possibly love us more than Christ, Who laid down His life for the sheep?

Yet after calling Peter and the other apostles by His words alone, when He came to summon Paul, He not only constrained him with His voice, but even dashed him to the earth with His power; and that He might forcibly bring one who is raging amidst the darkness of infidelity, to desire the light of the heart, He first struck him with physical blindness of the eyes. Why therefore should not the Church use force in compelling her lost sons to return? The Lord Himself said, 'Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.' Wherefore if the power which the Church has received by divine appointment in it's due season, through the religious character and faith of kings, be the instrument by which those who are found in the highways and

hedges--that is in heresies and schisms--are compelled to come in, then let them not find fault with being compelled."

The thirst for blood was growing apace. The false vine in Spain now played upon the Emperor Maximus to join in the attack upon the true believers who had the Word and the signs and wonders with them. Thus some Priscillianists were brought to Treves by Bishop Ithacus (385). He accused them of witchcraft and immorality and many were executed. Martin of Tours, and Ambrose of Milan protested this, and pleaded in vain for the persecution to cease. When the persecution was prolonged these two bishops refused to fellowship with bishop Hydatus and others like him. Strange to say the Synod in Treves approved of the murders.

From this time on, especially through the Dark Ages, we will see the children of the flesh persecute and destroy the children of the Spirit, though both claim one Father even as was in the case of Ishmael and Isaac. The darkness of spiritual corruption will deepen and the true light of God will fade until number-wise it glows ever so faintly. Yet the promise of God will hold true, "The light shineth in darkness and the darkness can do nothing about it."

Now up to this time I have not brought out that point in history that I promised to cover, that is, the intermingling of the religion of Nimrod and the Christian religion. You will recall that Attalus fled from Babylon to Pergamos and set up his kingdom outside the reaches of the Roman Empire. It flourished over the years, nurtured by the god of this world. A succession of priest kings followed Attalus until the reign of Attalus III when for reasons known only in the sovereignty of God he willed the kingdom to Rome. Julius Caesar then took both the kingdom physical and spiritual for he became Pontiff Maximus of the Babylonish religion and was therefore priest-king. This title passed on to the following emperors until the time of Maximus III who refused it. According to Stevens' History it was then that the pope took the headship the emperor rejected and today there is still a pontiff in the world, and he is truly Pontiff Maximus. He wears a triple crown and resides in Rome. And in Revelation 17 God does not any longer refer to Pergamos as Satan's seat nor does he say that is where Satan dwells. No, the throne room is no longer in Pergamos, but it is MYSTERY Babylon. It is not in Babylon but in MYSTERY Babylon. It is in a city on seven hills. Its head is antichrist for he has usurped the position of Christ Who alone is mediator and Who alone can forgive sins. Yes, Pontiff Maximus is with us today.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANES

Revelation 2:15,

"So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."

You will recall that I brought out in the Ephesian Age that the word, Nicolaitane, comes from two Greek words: Nikao which means to conquer, and Lao which means the laity. Nicolaitane means, "to conquer the laity". Now why is this such a terrible thing? It is terrible because God has never placed His church in the hands of an elected leadership which moves with political mindedness. He has placed His church in the care of God-ordained, Spirit-filled, Word-living men who lead the people through feeding them the Word. He has not separated the people into classes so that the masses are led by a holy priesthood. It is true that the leadership must be holy, but then so must be the whole congregation. Further, there is no place in the Word where priests or ministers or such mediate between God and the people, nor is there a place where they are separated in their worship of the Lord. God wants all to love and serve Him together. Nicolaitanism destroys those precepts and instead separates the ministers from the people and makes the leaders overlords instead of servants.

Now this doctrine actually started as a deed in the first age. It appears that the problem lay in two words: 'elders' (presbyters) and 'overseers' (bishops). Though Scripture shows that there are several elders in each church, some began (Ignatius among them) to teach that the idea of a bishop was one of preeminence or authority and control over the elders.

Now the truth of the matter is the word 'elder' signifies who the person is, while the word 'bishop' signifies the office of the same man. The elder is the man. Bishop is the office of the man. 'Elder' always has and always will refer simply to a man's chronological age in the Lord. He is an elder, not because he is elected or ordained, etc., but because he IS OLDER. He is more seasoned, trained, not a novice, reliable because of experience and long standing proof of his Christian experience.

But no, the bishops did not stick to the epistles of Paul, but rather they went to Paul's account of the time he called the elders from Ephesus to Miletus in Acts 20. In verse 17 the record states, "elders" were called and then in verse 28 they are called overseers (bishops). And these bishops, (no doubt political minded and anxious for power) insisted that Paul had given the meaning that 'overseers' were more than the local elder with official capacity only in his own

church. To them a bishop was now one with extended authority over many local leaders. Such a concept was neither Scriptural nor historical, yet even a man of the stature of Polycarp leaned toward such organization.

Thus, that which started as a deed in the first age was made a literal doctrine and so it is today. Bishops still claim power to control men and deal with them as they desire, placing them where they so will in the ministry. This denies the leadership of the Holy Ghost Who said, "Separate Me Paul and Barnabas for the work where-unto I have called them" This is anti-Word and anti-Christ.

Matthew 20:25-28,

"But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Matthew 23:8-9,

"But be not ye called Rabbi: for One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for One is your Father, Which is in heaven."

In order to clarify this even more, let me explain Nicolaitanism in this way.

You recall that in Revelation 13:3 it says,

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death: and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."

Now we know that the wounded head was the pagan Roman Empire, that great political world power. This head rose again as the "Roman Catholic spiritual empire". Now watch this carefully. What did political pagan Rome do that was the basis of her success? She, "divided and conquered." That was the seed of Rome--divide and conquer. Her iron teeth tore and devoured. Whom she tore and devoured could not rise again as when she destroyed Carthage and sowed her to salt. The same iron seed remained in her when she arose as the false church, and her policy has remained the same--divide and conquer. That is Nicolaitanism and God hates it.

Now it is a well known historical fact that when this error crept into the church, men began to vie for the office of bishop with the result that this position was being given to the more educated and materially-progressive and politically-minded men. Human knowledge and program began to take over

Divine wisdom's place and the Holy Spirit no longer controlled. This was indeed a tragic evil, for the bishops began to maintain that it no longer required a transparent Christian character to minister either the Word or the rites in the church for it was the elements and the ceremony that counted. This allowed evil men (seducers) to rend the flock.

With the man-made doctrine of the elevation of bishops to a place not accorded them in Scripture, the next step was the handing out of graded titles that built up into a religious hierarchy; for soon there were archbishops over bishops and cardinals over the archbishops and by the time of Boniface the third there was a pope over all, a Pontiff.

What with the Nicolaitane doctrine and the amalgamation of Christianity with Babylonianism the net results had to be what Ezekiel saw in Chapter 8:10,

"So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall around."

Revelation 18:2,

"And he cried mightily, with a strong voice saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird, for all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

Now this Nicolaitane doctrine, this rule that was established in the church did not hit it off too well with a lot of the people for they could read the odd epistle or essay on the Word written by some godly person. So what did the church do? It excommunicated the righteous teachers and burned the scrolls. They said, "It takes a special education to read and understand the Word. Why even Peter said that many things Paul wrote were hard to understand." Having taken away the Word from the people, it soon came to the people listening only to what the priest had to say, and doing what he told them. They called that God and His holy Word. They took over the minds and lives of the people and made them the servants of a despotic priesthood.

Now if you want proof that the Catholic Church demands the lives and minds of men, just listen to the edict of Theodosius X. Theodosius' First Edict.

This edict was issued immediately after he was baptized by the First Church of Rome. "We three emperors will that our subjects steadfastly adhere to the religion which was taught by Saint Peter to the Romans, which has been faithfully preserved by tradition and which is now professed by the pontiff, Damasus of Rome, and Peter, bishop of Alexandria, a man of Apostolic holiness according to the institution of the Apostles, and the doctrine of the Gospel; let us believe in one Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy

Spirit, of equal majesty in the Holy Trinity. We order that the adherents of this faith be called Catholic Christians; we brand all the senseless followers of the other religions with the infamous name of heretics, and forbid their conventicles assuming the name of churches. Besides the condemnation of divine justice, they must expect the heavy penalty which our authority, guided by heavenly wisdom shall think proper to inflict..."

The fifteen penal laws that this emperor issued in as many years deprived the evangelicals of all rights to the exercise of their religion, excluded them from all civil offices, and threatened them with fines, confiscation, banishment and even in some cases, death.

Do you know what? We are headed right that way today.

The Roman Catholic Church calls herself the Mother church. She calls herself the first or original church. That is absolutely correct. She was the original First Church of Rome that backslid and went into sin. She was the first that organized. In her was found the deeds and then the doctrine of Nicolaitanism. No one will deny that she is a mother. She is a mother and has produced daughters. Now a daughter comes out of a woman. A woman robed in scarlet is sitting on the seven hills of Rome. She is a harlot and has borne daughters. Those daughters are the Protestant churches that came out of her and then went right back into organization and Nicolaitanism. This Mother of the daughter-churches is called a whore. That is a woman who was untrue to her marriage vows. She was married to God and then went off fornicating with the devil and in her fornications she has brought forth daughters that are just like her. This mother and daughter combination is anti-Word, anti-Spirit and consequently anti-Christ. Yes, ANTICHRIST.

Now before I get too far along I want to mention that these early bishops thought that they were above the Word. They told people they could forgive their sins upon confession of those sins. That never was the truth. They began to baptize infants in the second century. They actually practiced regenerative baptism. No wonder people are mixed up today. If they were so mixed up then, so close to Pentecost, now they are in a most desperate condition, being about 2000 years away from original truth.

Oh, Church of God, there is only one hope. Get back to the Word and stay with it.

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM

Revelation 2:14,

"Thou hast them that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

Now you just can't have a Nicolaitane set-up in the church and not have this other doctrine come in, too. You see, if you take away the Word of God and the moving of the Spirit as a means of worship (they that worship Me must worship Me in Spirit and in truth) then you will have to give the people another form of worship as a substitute, and substitution spells Balaamism.

If we are going to understand what the doctrine of Balaam is in the New Testament church we had better go back and see what it was in the Old Testament church and apply it to that third age and then bring it up to the present.

The story is found in Numbers Chapters 22 through 25. Now we know that Israel was the chosen people of God. They were the Pentecostals of their day. They had taken refuge under the blood, they had all been baptized in the Red Sea and they came up out of the waters singing in the Spirit and dancing under the energy of the Holy Ghost, while Miriam, the prophetess, played her tambourine. Well, after a certain time of journeying these children of Israel came to Moab. You remember who Moab was. He was the son of Lot by one of his own daughters, and Lot in turn was a nephew of Abraham, so Israel and Moab were related. I want you to see that. The Moabites knew the truth, whether they lived up to it or not.

So Israel came up to the borders of Moab and sent messengers to the king saying, "We are brothers. Let us pass through your land. If our people or our animals eat or drink anything, we will gladly pay for it." But King Balak got very excited. That head of that Nicolaitane bunch was not about to let the church come through with its signs and wonders and divers manifestations of the Holy Ghost, with their faces shining with the glory of God. It was too risky, as he might lose some of his crowd. So Balak refused to let Israel pass through. In fact, so great was his fear of them, that he went to an hireling prophet called Balaam and asked him to mediate between him and God and petition the Almighty to curse Israel, and render them impotent. And Balaam, being eager to take part in political affairs and become a great man, was only too glad to do so. But seeing that he had to approach to, and receive an audience from God to get the people cursed as he could not do it by himself, he

went to ask God if he could have His permission to go. Now isn't that just like the Nicolaitanes we have with us today? They curse everyone that won't go their way.

When Balaam asked God for permission to go, God turned him down. My that stung! But Balak insisted, promising him even greater rewards and honor. So Balaam went back to God. Now one answer from God should have been enough. But not for self-willed Balaam. When God saw his perversity, He told him to get up and go. Quickly he saddled the donkey and away he went. He should have realized that this was simply God's permissive will and he wouldn't be able to curse them if he went twenty times and tried twenty times. How like Balaam are people today! They believe in three Gods, get baptized in three titles instead of the NAME, and yet God will send the Spirit upon them as He did upon Balaam, and they will go on believing that they are exactly right, and here they are actually perfect Balaamites. See, the doctrine of Balaam. Go ahead anyway. Do it your way. They say, "Well, God has blessed us. It must be all right." I know He has blessed you. I don't deny that. But it's the same organizational route that Balaam took. It's defiance to God's Word. It's false teaching.

So Balaam went wildly down the road until an angel from God stood in his way. But that prophet (bishop, cardinal, chairman, president and general overseer) was so blinded to Spiritual things by the thought of honor and glory and money that he could not see the angel standing with drawn sword. There he stood to block the mad prophet. The little donkey saw him and dodged back and forth until he finally crushed Balaam's foot against a stone wall. The ass stopped and would not go on. He could not. So Balaam jumped off and began beating him. The donkey then began to talk to Balaam. God let that donkey speak in a tongue. That donkey was no hybrid; he was original seed. He said to the blinded prophet, "Am I not your donkey, and haven't I carried you faithfully?" Balaam replied, "Yes, yes, you are my donkey and you have carried me faithfully until now; and if I can't get you going, I'm going to kill you... whoa! what's this, talking to a donkey? That's funny, I thought I heard the donkey talking and I was answering it back."

God has always spoken in a tongue. He spoke at Belshazzar's feast and then at Pentecost. He is doing it again today. It's a warning of soon coming judgment.

Then the angel was made visible to Balaam. He told Balaam that except for the donkey he would be dead even now for tempting God. But when Balaam promised to go back, he was sent on with the admonition to say only what God gave him.

So Balaam went down and set up seven altars for the clean beasts of sacrifice. He killed a ram signifying the coming of the Messiah. He knew what

to do to approach unto God. He had the mechanics just right; but not the dynamics; same as now. Can't you see it Nicolaitanes? There was Israel down there in the valley offering the same sacrifice, doing the same things but only one had the signs following. Only one had God in their midst. Form won't get you anywhere. It can't take the place of Spirit-manifestation. That is what happened at Nicaea. They put over Balaam's doctrine, not the doctrine of God. And they stumbled; yea they fell. They became dead men.

After the sacrifice was made, Balaam was ready to prophesy. But God tied his tongue up and he could not curse them. He blessed them.

Balak was very angry, but there was nothing that Balaam could do about the prophecy. It had been spoken by the Holy Ghost. So Balak told Balaam to go down below, into the valley, and look upon their back parts to see if there wasn't possibly some way he could curse them. The tactics that Balak used are the same tactics they use today. The big denominations look down at the little groups, and anything they find amongst them to make out a scandal they bring it out and shout it. If the moderns live in sin, no one says anything about it; but let one of the elect get into trouble and every paper blasts it across the country. Yes, Israel had her back (carnal) parts. They had their side that wasn't praiseworthy; but in spite of their imperfections, by the purpose of God that works through election, by grace and not by works, **THEY HAD THE CLOUD BY DAY AND THE PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT, THEY HAD THE SMITTEN ROCK, THE BRAZEN SERPENT AND THE SIGNS AND WONDERS.** They were vindicated--not in themselves, but in God.

God didn't have any respect for those Nicolaitanes with their PHD's, LLD'S and D.D.'s and all their fine organizations and the best that man could boast; but He did have respect unto Israel for they had the Word vindicated amongst them. Certainly Israel didn't look too polished up, just having come out of Egypt in precipitous flight, but she was a blessed people anyway. All she had ever known for over 300 years was herding flocks, tending fields and slaving away in fear of death under the Egyptians. But she was free now. She was a blessed people through the sovereignty of God. Certainly Moab looked down on her. All the other nations did, too. Organization always looks down on the unorganized and either will by determination bring them into organization or destroy them when they won't come.

Now someone might ask me, "Brother Branham, what makes you think that Moab was organized while Israel was not? Where do you get that idea?" I get it right here in the Bible. It is all typed out here. Everything written in the Old Testament that is in story form is written for our admonition so that we can learn from it.

Here it is right in Numbers 23:9,

"From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him; lo the people shall dwell ALONE, and shall NOT BE RECKONED AMONG THE NATIONS."

There it is. God looking down from the top of the rocks, not in some valley looking for their bad points and condemning them. God seeing them the way He wanted to see them--from the height of love and mercy. They dwelt ALONE and they weren't organized. They didn't have a king. They had a prophet, and the prophet had God in him by the Spirit; and the Word came to the prophet and the Word went to the people. They didn't belong to the U.N. They didn't belong to the World Council of Churches, to the Baptists, Presbyterians, Assembly of God or any other group. They didn't need to belong. They were joined to God. They didn't need counsel from any council--they had "Thus saith the Lord" in their midst. Hallelujah!

Now in spite of the fact that Balaam knew the proper approach to God and could bring forth a revelation from the Lord by means of a special enduement of power, he was still for all of that a bishop in the false group. For what did he do now in order to win favor with Balak? He formulated a plan wherein God would be forced to deal with Israel in death. Just as Satan knew that he could beguile Eve (cause her to fall in fleshly sin) thus causing God to pass His pronounced sentence of death against sin, so Balaam knew that if he could get Israel to sin, God would have to deal with them in death. So he planned a way to get them to come over and join in sin. He sent out invitations to come to the feast of Baal-peor (come over and worship with us). Now Israel, no doubt, had seen the feasts of the Egyptians so they did not feel it was too wrong to go and just look on and perhaps eat with the people. (What is wrong with fellowship any way? We are supposed to love them aren't we, or how can we win them?) Being friendly never hurt anyone--or so they thought. But when those sexy Moabitish women began to dance and undress while they whirled around doing their rock and roll and twist, the lust rose up in the Israelites and they were drawn into adultery and God in wrath slew forty two thousand of them.

And that is what Constantine and his successors did at Nicaea and after Nicaea. They invited the people of God to the convention. And when the church sat down to eat, and rose up to play (partaking of church form, ceremonies, and pagan feasts named after Christian rites) she was trapped; she had committed fornication. And God walked out.

When any man turns from the Word of God and joins a church instead of receiving the Holy Spirit, that man dies. Dead! That is what he is. Don't join a church. Don't get into organization and get taken up with creeds and tradition or anything that takes the place of the Word and the Spirit or you're dead. It's all over. You're dead. Eternally separated from God!

That is what has happened in every age since. God delivers the people. They come out by the blood, sanctified by the Word, walk through the waters of baptism and get filled with the Spirit; but after awhile the first love cools off and someone gets the idea that they ought to organize in order to preserve themselves and make a name for themselves, and they organize themselves right back in the second generation and sometimes even before then. They no longer have the Spirit of God, just a form of worship. They are dead. They have hybridized themselves with creed and form and there is no life in them.

So Balaam got Israel to commit fornication. Do you know that physical fornication is the very same spirit that lies in organized religion? I said that the spirit of fornication is the spirit of organization. And all fornicators will have their place in the lake of fire. That is what God thinks of organization. Yes sir, the whore and her daughters will be in the lake of fire.

Denominations are not of God. They never have been and never will be. It's a wrong spirit that separates the people of God into hierarchy and laity; and it's, therefore, a wrong spirit that separates the people from the people. That's what organization and denominations do. In organizing they separate themselves from the Word of God, and bring themselves into spiritual adultery.

Now notice that Constantine gave special feasts unto the people. They were the old pagan feasts with new names taken from the church, or in some cases Christian rites were taken and abused with pagan ceremonies. He took the worship of the sun god and changed it to the Son of God. Instead of celebrating on December 21, which is when they used to celebrate the feast to the sun god, they put it up to December 25th and called it the Son of God's birthday. But we know that He was born in April when life comes forth, not in December. And they took the feast to Astarte and called it the Easter celebration wherein the Christian is supposed to celebrate the death and resurrection of the Lord. Actually it was a pagan feast to Astarte.

They placed altars in the church. They put in images. They gave the people what they called the apostles' creed, though you can't find it in the Bible. They taught the people ancestor worship thereby making the Roman Catholic Church the greatest spiritistic church in the world. Every foul bird was in that cage. And you have the Protestants with their organizations doing the same thing.

They ate things sacrificed to idols. Now I don't say that this really means they were literally eating meats sacrificed to idols. For though the council of Jerusalem had spoken against such, Paul did not make much of it as he said the idols were nothing. It was just a matter of conscience except where it offended a weaker brother and then it was not allowed. Furthermore, this Revelation has to do with Gentiles and not Jews as these are Gentile Churches. I see this in the

same light I see the words of the Lord, "Except ye eat My flesh and drink My blood you have no life in you. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." You can see that eating is actually partaking in a spiritual sense.

So when these people were bowing to the images, lighting candles, using pagan holidays, confessing their sins to men (all of which belongs to the devil's religion,) they were partakers with the devil and not of the Lord. They were in idolatry whether they admitted it or not. They can talk all they want that the altars and the incense are only to remind them of the prayers of the Lord or whatever they think it means; and they can say that when they pray before the image it is just for the sake of emphasis; and that when they confess to the priest, it is really to God they are doing it in their hearts, and when they say the priest forgives them, it is just that he is doing it in the Name of the Lord; they can say what they want but they are partaking in the well known Babylonian, Satanic religion and have joined themselves to idols and committed spiritual fornication, which means death. They are dead.

So the church and the state were married. The church joined up with idols. With the power of the state behind them they felt that now, "The kingdom had come and God's will had been enforced upon the earth." No wonder the Roman Catholic Church is not looking for the return of the Lord Jesus. They are not millennialists. They have their millennium right here. The pope is reigning right now and God is reigning in him. So when He comes according to them, it has to be when the new heavens and the earth are prepared. But they are wrong. That pope is the head of the false church, and there is going to be a millennium, but while that is going on he won't be in it. He will be somewhere else.

THE WARNING

Revelation 2:16.

"Repent or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth."

What else can He say? Can God overlook the sin of those who have borne His Name in vain? There is only one way to receive grace in the hour of sin, REPENT. Confess you are wrong. Come to God for forgiveness and for the Spirit of God. This is a command from God. To disobey is death, for He says, "I will make war with you with the sword in My mouth." The beast made war with the saints, but God will make war with the beast. Those who fought the Word will one day find the Word fighting them. It is a serious thing to take

from, or add to the Word of God. For those who changed it, and did with it as it suited them, what will their end be but death and destruction? But still the grace of God cries out, "Repent". Oh, how sweet are the thoughts of repentance. Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling. I bring my sorrow. I repent that I am what I am, and what I have done. Now it is the blood, nothing but the blood of Jesus. What will it be? Repentance, or the sword of death? It's up to you.

THE REWARDS

Revelation 2:17.

"He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Each message to each age holds out an incentive to the believer, encouraging him to be an overcomer and thereby be rewarded of the Lord. In this age the Spirit is promising the hidden manna and a new name written in a white stone.

Now since each of these messages is directed to the 'angel'-- (human messenger) a very great responsibility as well as a wonderful privilege is his lot. To these men God makes special promises, as in the case of the twelve apostles sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Then, remember Paul was given a special promise: that of presenting the people of the bride in his day to Jesus,

II Corinthians 11:2

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

So it will be with every messenger who has been faithful to the Word of his hour and his age. It will be so in the last day. It will be the same special reward that was given to Paul. I think most of you remember how I said I had always been afraid to die lest I should meet the Lord and He should not be pleased with me as I had failed Him so many times. Well, I had been thinking of that one morning as I lay in bed and suddenly I was caught up in a most peculiar vision. I say it was peculiar for I have had thousands of visions and not once did I seem to leave my body. But there I was caught up; and I looked back to see my wife, and I saw my body lying there beside her. Then I found myself in the most beautiful place I have ever seen. It was a paradise. I saw throngs of the most beautiful and happiest people I have ever seen. They all looked so

young-- about 18 to 21 years of age. There was not a gray hair or a wrinkle or any deformity amongst them. The young women all had hair down to their waists, and the young men were so handsome and strong. Oh, how they welcomed me. They hugged me and called me their darling brother, and kept telling me how glad they were to see me. As I wondered who all those folks were, one beside me said, "They are your people".

I was so astonished I asked, "Are all these Branhams?"

He said, "No, they are your converts." He then pointed to one lady and said, "See that young lady that you were admiring a moment ago. She was 90 years old when you won her to the Lord."

I said, "Oh my, and to think this is what I was afraid of."

The man said, "We are resting here while waiting for the coming of the Lord."

I replied, "I want to see Him."

He said, "You can't see Him just yet; but He is coming soon, and when He does He will come to you first, and you will be judged according to the Gospel you have preached, and we will be your subjects."

I said, "Do you mean I am responsible for all these?"

He said, "Every one. You were born a leader."

I asked him, "Will every one be responsible? What about Saint Paul?"

He answered me, "He will be responsible for his day."

"Well," I said, "I've preached the same Gospel that Paul preached." And multitude cried, "We're resting on that."

Yes, I can see that God is going to give a special reward to His messengers who have faithfully discharged the responsibility He has placed upon them. If they have received the revelation of the Word for that age and faithfully preached in their day, and lived what they preached, they will receive a great reward.

Now with this thought in mind, look at the verse again. "I will give him the hidden manna." We all know that the manna was angel food; it was what God sent down upon the grass for Israel at the time of their wanderings. It was perfect food. It was amazing how those little pellets of food kept them in perfect health. No one got sick. It was all they needed. When the ark was made they put some of that manna into it. Then the ark was put behind the veil and only the high priest would dare approach unto it and then he had to have the sacrificial blood. The Bread from heaven, symbolized by manna, one day came down from heaven and became Life for all who believe on Him. He said, "I am the bread of life. I am the living bread that came down from heaven, if any man shall eat of this bread he shall live forever." When He went away He left

us His Word, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

His Word was bread. It was the perfect manna, which, if a man live by, he shall never die. But right after the death of the fathers, no one seemed to know the exact truth and in a short while this manna seemed to have become hidden to the people. But in every age God began to give back by revelation that which was hidden until in this last day according to Revelation 10:7, a prophet will come and reveal all the mysteries and then the Lord will come. Now in each age, I say, the messengers received hidden truth. But they did not receive it for themselves only. But it is as it was when the disciples were asked to serve the multitudes loaves and fishes; Jesus gave them the broken food, but they in turn gave it to the people. God gives His hidden manna to the overcomer. It cannot be otherwise. He would not open His treasures to those who spurn what is already revealed.

What I have been saying about the messenger of each age receiving from God some of the original truth of Pentecost is typed out in the Old Testament where Moses was commanded to take up three and one half pints of manna and place it in a golden vessel behind the veil of the holy of holies. There the high priest of every generation could enter with sacrificial blood. Then he could take a small portion of this manna (for it did not corrupt) which was part of the original and eat it. Now in every age the messenger of the Lord to that age was given the revelation of God for that specific period. Once the messenger was enlightened by truth, he would bring that truth to the people. And they whose ears had been opened by the Spirit would hear that truth, believe it, and live it.

Now then, there is also the thought of the future partaking of the hidden manna. I think it will be the eternal partaking of the revelation of Jesus Christ in the eternal ages to come. How else could we begin to know the unsearchable riches of His own Being? All that we have longed to know, all our unanswered questions, all that will be revealed. It will be from Christ Who is our life that we receive it. Oh, sometimes we think we get to know a little of Him and His Word down here, and it is so good, it makes us rejoice; but one day when our flesh changes, that Word and He will become what we had never dreamed possible.

It also says here that He is going to give the overcomer a white stone and in (not on) the stone a new name, which the owner alone knows. Now the idea of a new name is a familiar one. Abram was changed to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah, Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter, and Saul to Paul. These names either brought about a change, or were given because of a change. It was only after Abram and Sarai had their names changed by the Lord that they were made ready to receive the coming son. In Jacob's case, he had to overcome and then he was

called a prince. In the case of Simon and Saul, when they had received the Lord, their change came. And today each one of us true believers has had a change in name. We are Christians. It is a name common to all of us. But one day we will have another change; we will of a certainty receive a new name. It could well be that name was our true and original name written in the Lamb's Book of Life from the foundation of the world. He knows the name, but we do not. One day at His good pleasure, we will know also.

A white stone. How beautiful. Here is another picture of the saint receiving recompence from the hand of God for his trials upon earth. You know, after Constantine, the false church was able to dip its hand in the state treasury and thereby erect beautiful buildings full of lovely statuary. These statues, made of white marble, were actually Roman idols renamed as saints. The churches and their furnishings were exceptionally beautiful, even as one sees today. But God was not with them. Where was God? He was with His saints in some little home, or in a cave, or some wild mountain area where they hid from the false church members. They did not have beautiful buildings, gowned choirs, fine clothes, and other worldly attractions. But now in this special promise to the true believers of all ages, God has declared He will give them rewards of great beauty and eternal duration. Let the wealthy look down on the poor. Let them give large sums to the church that it in turn might honor the donor by placing a marble plaque or some statuary in their honor on public display that all may applaud. Some day the God Who sees and knows all will once more commend the widow for giving her all, though it be but two mites, and He, Himself, reward with the treasures of heaven.

Yes, hidden manna and a new name in a white stone. How good is the Lord to us to reward us so wonderfully, and we so underserving. Oh, I want to be ready at all times to do His will, and to lay up treasures in heaven.

CHAPTER SIX

THE THYATIREAN CHURCH AGE

REVELATION 2:18-29

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass;

I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He Which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father.

And I will give him the morning star.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

THYATIRA

Historically, the city of Thyatira was the least noteworthy of all the seven cities of the Revelation. It was situated on the confines of Mysia and Ionia. It was surrounded by many rivers, but they were full of leeches. Its most

commendable feature was that it was well off financially due to the corporate guilds of potters, tanners, weavers, dyers, robe makers, etc. It was from this city that Lydia, the seller of purple, came. She was Paul's first European convert.

Now the reason that the Spirit chose this city as the one already containing the spiritual elements for the fourth age was because of its religion. The major religion of Thyatira was the worship of Apollo Tyrimnaios which was joined with the emperor worship cult. Apollo was the sun god, and the next in power to his father, Zeus. He was known as the 'averted of evil'; he presided over religious law and expiation (means of atonement, making amends for wrongdoing or guilt). Plato said of him, "He explains to men the institution of temples, sacrifices and services to deities, besides rites connected with death and after life." He communicated his knowledge of 'the future' and his 'father's will' to men through the prophets and oracles. In Thyatira this ritual was conducted by a prophetess who sat on a tripod chair and delivered the messages while entranced.

The hold of this religion was remarkable. Its formidable power did not lie exclusively in the realm of mystery, but lay in the fact no one could belong to the guilds which offered the people their living unless they belonged to the temple worship of Apollo. Anyone who refused to join in the idolatrous feasts and licentious orgies was barred from these first century unions. In order to be a part of the social and commercial life one had to be a practising pagan idolater.

It is most worthy of note that the very name Thyatira means, "Dominating Female." Thus this age is characterized by a dominant force, a force that ruthlessly invades all, conquers all and despotically controls. Now a dominating female is the greatest curse in the world. The wisest man the world ever saw was Solomon, and he said,

"I applied my heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness;

And I find more BITTER THAN DEATH THE WOMAN, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the SINNER shall be taken by her.

Behold, this I have found, saith the preacher, counting one by one to find out the account;

Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not. One man amongst a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found."

Ecclesiastes 7:25-28.

Paul said,

"I suffer not a woman to teach or to USURP authority."

From the Garden of Eden onward, woman has constantly and successfully tried to take control over the man, and right today it is a woman's world with the goddess of America being a naked female. As the female idol falling out of the skies (remember her arms were iron bars) characterized the first or Ephesian Age, so her power has grown until she has gained absolute authority, such authority being usurped by her iron disposition.

Now a woman is not meant to have an iron disposition. She is, according to the Holy Scripture, to be submissive to the male. That is commanded of her. Woman who is truly female, all female, will be of that disposition. Not a doormat. No real male makes a female a doormat. But she will want to be under authority and not rule over the male, for he is the head of the house. If she breaks that image that God made for her, she is perverted. Any male that lets the woman take authority has also broken that image and he is perverted. That is why a woman CANNOT WEAR THAT WHICH PERTAINETH TO A MAN OR CUT HER HAIR. She is never to wear garments that pertain to a male or cut her hair. When she does she is intruding into the male domain taking authority and perverting herself. And when a woman invades the pulpit which it is COMMANDED SHE MUST NOT DO, she shows what spirit she is of. Being a dominating female is antichrist and the seeds of the Roman Catholic Church are in her though she may deny this ever so vehemently. But when it COMES TO THE WORD, Let God be true and every man's word a lie. Amen.

Let us go back to the beginning. In the original physical creation as we know it today, God made everything in pairs, male and female. There were two chickens--rooster and hen. There were two cattle, the cow and the bull. And right down the line. But when it came to man, there was only one. They were not a pair. Adam had been made in the image of God. He was a son of God. As a son of God he could not be tempted and fall. That would be impossible. So God took a byproduct of man to cause the fall. Woman never stepped fresh from the hand of God as a true product of God. She was produced from man. And when God caused her to be brought forth from man she was vastly different from the other females He had created. She was able to be seduced. No other female in creation can be immoral; but the human female may be touched at almost any time.

And that weakness in her allowed Satan to seduce her by way of the serpent, and has brought the woman to a very peculiar position before God and His Word. She is the type of all things vulgar, foul and loathsome on the one hand, and on the other hand she is the type of all things clean and beautiful, and holy as the receptacle of the Spirit and blessings of God. On the one hand she is called the whore who is drunk with the wine of her fornications. On the

other she is called the Bride of Christ. On one hand she is called Mystery Babylon, the abomination before God; and on the other hand she is called New Jerusalem, our mother. On the one hand she is so foul and wicked and lewd that she is summarily cast into the lake of fire as the only fit place for her; and on the other hand she is exalted to heaven, sharing the very throne of God as the only place befitting such a queen.

And in this Thyatirean Church age she is a DOMINATING FEMALE. She is Mystery Babylon. She is the great whore. She is Jezebel the false prophetess. WHY? Because the true female is submissive to God. Christ is her head. She has no word but His, no thoughts but His, no leadership but His. But what about this church? She has cast out the Word, destroyed the Bibles and worthy essays of the godly. She has slain those who would preach the truth. She has taken over kings, princes and nations-- controls armies and insists that she is the true body of Christ and that her popes are the vicars of Christ. She is entirely seduced by the devil until she in turn has become the seducer of others. She is the bride of Satan and has produced his bastard-child religions.

All through the Dark Ages she has dominated. For over nine hundred years she plundered and destroyed. She killed the arts, destroyed the sciences, produced nothing but death until the light of the Truth was almost entirely gone and only the barest sliver of light remained. The oil and the wine had almost ceased to flow; but though she dominated the world kingdoms and demanded that all men find their citizenship in her, there was a little group who belonged to God and their citizenship was in heaven, and them she could not destroy. God kept His little flock; they could not be destroyed. This Church of Rome was as heathen and wicked as Queen Athalia who tried to destroy all the royal seed and almost succeeded, but GOD PRESERVED ONE, and of him there came more of the faithful. So God preserved a little flock in that long dark night and of their truth there finally arose a Luther.

Anyone who knows anything at all about the Roman Catholic Church and its form of worship can tell why this city of Thyatira was chosen by the Spirit to represent the church in the Dark Ages. There it is, right before our eyes.

THE AGE

The Thyatirean Age lasted the longest of them all, about 900 years, from 606 to 1520.

THE MESSENGER

The church had long been split into two groups, Western and Eastern. Every now and then a reformer would arise in either or both divisions and for awhile lead some segment of the church into a deeper relationship with God. Such a man in the West was Francis of Assisi. Truly successful for a time, his work was finally put under by the hierarchy of Rome. Peter Waldo of Lyons, a merchant who renounced his secular life, became very active in serving the Lord and drew many unto Him; but he was thwarted in his work and excommunicated by the pope. Neither the Western or the Eastern groups had within them a man who could possibly be the messenger to this age when examined in the light of Scripture. However, there were two men in the British Isles, whose ministry in Word and deed could stand the test of truth. They were Saint Patrick and Saint Columba. It was to Saint Columba that the lot of being the messenger fell.

Though the messenger to the Thyatirean Age was Saint Columba, I want to dwell a little on the life of Saint Patrick as an example to us and also to give the lie to Rome's claim that Saint Patrick was any more one of her than was Joan of Arc. Patrick was born to the sister of Saint Martin in the little town of Bonavern on the banks of the river Clyde.

One day while playing on the shoreline with his two sisters, pirates approached and kidnapped all three. Where the sisters went, no one knows, but Patrick (his name was Succat) was sold to a chieftain in Northern Ireland. His duty was to tend to the swine. To do this he trained dogs. So well trained were his dogs that many people came from far and near to buy them. In his loneliness he turned to God and was saved.

Then came the urgent desire to escape and return home to his parents. He formed a plan that put his ability as a trainer to great use. He taught the dogs to lie on him and cover his body carefully and not move until commanded. Thus one day when his owner sold several dogs, Patrick commanded the dogs, except the leader of the pack, to get into the boat. The leader of the pack to which he then gave a secret signal ran off and refused to come aboard. While the master and the buyer attempted to get the dog, Patrick got into the boat and signaled the dogs to cover him. Then with a whistle he brought the leader of the pack into the boat and on top of him. Since Patrick was nowhere to be seen the buyer put up sail and moved out to sea.

After making sure that the captain was too far out to turn back, Patrick gave another signal to the dogs which caused them to riot. Then he came forth

and told the captain that unless he would put him ashore at his home he would command the dogs to keep rioting, and he would take over the ship.

However, the captain was a Christian, and when he heard the boy's story he gladly put him ashore at his home. There Patrick went to Bible school and returned to Ireland where by the Word and the power of God in many signs and wonders he won thousands to the Lord. At no time did he ever go to Rome nor at any time was he commissioned by Rome. The truth of the matter is that when Rome finally gained a foothold on the island and when they saw the time was opportune, they killed over 100,000 Christians who had over the years grown out of the original group that had come to the Lord under Saint Patrick.

About 60 years after the death of Saint Patrick, Columba was born in County Donegal, North Ireland, to the royal family of Fergus. He became a brilliant, consecrated scholar, committing to memory most of the Scripture. God called him in an audible voice to be a missionary. After he had heard the voice of God, nothing could stop him, and his miraculous ministry has caused many historians to acclaim him next to the apostles. So great was his ministry with the supernatural signs following that some (especially students in Rome) have thought the accounts were exaggerated.

In one of his missionary journeys, as he approached a walled city, he found the gates barred against him. He lifted his voice in prayer that God might intervene and allow him access to the people in order to preach. But as he prayed the court magicians began to harass him with loud noises. He then began to sing a psalm. As he sang, God so increased the volume of his voice that he drowned out the cries of the heathen. Suddenly the gates burst open of their own accord. He entered in and preached the Gospel, winning many to the Lord.

On another occasion when he was also shut out from a village, as he turned away to depart, the son of the chief suddenly became violently ill, even unto death. Saint Columba was quickly sought after and recalled. When he prayed the prayer of faith the boy was instantly healed. The village was then opened to evangelization by the Gospel.

The pure Gospel that was preached by Columba and his fellow workers spread over the whole of Scotland, turning it to God. It also overflowed into Ireland and over Northern Europe. His means of spreading the Gospel was one wherein perhaps twelve men under a leader would go into a new area and literally build a Gospel-- centered town. Amongst these twelve men would be carpenters, teachers, preachers, etc., all wonderfully versed in the Word and holy living. This little colony was enclosed by a wall. Soon this enclosure would be surrounded by students and their families in their own homes, learning the Word and preparing to go out and serve the Lord as missionaries, leaders, and preachers. The men were free to marry though many did not, in

order to serve God the better. They remained free from state help, and thereby steered clear of politics. Instead of ever attacking other religions they taught the truth for they believed that the truth was weapon enough to accomplish the ends that God had in mind for them. They were absolutely independent of Rome.

Saint Columba was the founder of a great Bible school on the island of Hy (off the S.W. coast of Scotland). When he went there the island was so barren and rocky that it could not bear enough food for them all. But Columba planted seed with one hand while he held the other aloft in prayer. Today the island is one of the most fertile in the world. From this Bible-centered island went forth mighty scholars endowed with wisdom and the power of God.

When I read the history of this great servant of God and the wonderful work he did, it saddened my heart to find that the papal power, lusting to bring all men into its grasp, came and eventually defiled these mission fields and destroyed the truth as it was taught by Columba.

THE SALUTATION

Revelation 2:18,

"These things saith the Son of God, Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass."

The revelation of Godhead to the Thyatirean Age is that Jesus is the Son of God. Once in the days of His flesh He was known as the Son of Man. But henceforth we know Him no more after the flesh. He is no longer the Son of Man, the Great Prophet, Who in Himself gathered together all prophecies. The Only Begotten is back in the bosom of the Father. Now we know Him after the power of the resurrection. He is risen and has taken unto Himself His mighty power and is above all and over all to the praise of His own glory. His glory will He not share with another. His leadership over the church He will not surrender to any man.

He looks down upon Thyatira, and here He sees in that city and in that fourth age the honor which belongs to Him alone, bestowed upon another. His eyes blaze with the fire of wrath and judgment as He sees Apollo revered as the Son of God, when He alone is the Only Begotten of the Father. How awful must be His judgment upon the religion of the Thyatirean Age wherein the church members like the pagan worshippers of the son of god (Apollo the son of Zeus), elevate a human ruler to adoration, backed by the power of the state. For that is exactly what He saw. The Roman Catholic Church, fully immersed in idol worship based upon the rites of the sun god (Apollo) had elevated a

man to actual deity (pope) through the marriage of the church to the state. For Thomas Aquinas and Alverus Pelagius formulated and stated that: "The Pope seems to those who view him with the spiritual eye, to be, not a man but a God. There are no bounds to his authority. He can declare to be right what he will and can take away from any their rights as he sees fit. To doubt this universal power leads to being shut out from salvation. The great enemies of the church are the heretics who will not wear the yoke of true obedience."

"There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (the Son of God.)"

I Timothy 2:5.

But the pope of Rome has changed the Word. He made it, "one mediator between God and man (not men)". So now he mediates between the mediator and men. But there is no other mediator save the Son. The pope pronounces salvation through the church of Rome. But there is no salvation except through the Son of God. No wonder the eyes blaze in fiery judgment. No wonder the feet are like fine brass as He stands ready to trample into powder and dust the wicked kingdoms of this world. Thank God for those strong feet of brass. They have passed through the judgment for us. They are now our foundation for what He gained is ours. We stand identified in Him, Jesus the Son of God.

It was in this age that we witness the rise of Mohammedanism that denied the Son of God and determined death upon all who called themselves Christians.

It was also in this age that the false church defied the first commandment of Almighty God and launched swiftly into breaking the second commandment for it put its pope in the place of Jesus Christ and established and enforced idol worship to such an extent that it meant death to those who refused the icons a place within the church. Under Empress Theodora, alone, from 842 to 867 over 100,000 saints were killed because they reputed the images of no value.

Surely this age must repent or lose all. There stands the Lord of glory, God very God--His Word cast aside, His person rejected, but human hands and human hearts cannot depose Him. Let them deny Him, He remaineth faithful. "Fear not little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. And when I come with feet of brass and flaming eyes I will recompense; judgment is mine, I will repay," saith the Lord.

THE EULOGY

Revelation 2:19,

"I know thy works, and love, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first."

Here again we find the same introductory remarks, "I know thy works." The Son of God, Himself, said, "Believe Me for the very works' sake." He put an emphasis on His own works while on earth. The works that He did were ordained of God to inspire faith in Him. It was a great part of His ministry.

His Holy Spirit in the apostle Paul said,

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them."

Ephesians 2:10.

These works were to inspire faith in Him as they would show forth that relationship to Him that Paul described as "created in Him".

Now works will never take the place of faith in God for our salvation. But works will show forth our faith already placed in Him. Good works won't save you, but they will come forth out of a saved life as fruit unto the Lord. I believe in good works. Even if a man is not saved, he ought to do good works and do the best he can. What is horrible in the sight of God is for men to do evil works and then say that they are doing the will of the Lord. That is what the bishops and popes and the hierarchy of Rome were doing. They were killing, maiming, and doing all manner of evil in the Name of the Lord. They lived out lives exactly opposite to what the Word teaches. In that evil day those true believers shone like a light in a dark place as they continually did good; for they returned cursing with blessing, and did the truth to honor God even though many died for it.

In this verse He is commending His children because they were living changed lives. Their works testified to a new Spirit within. Men saw their good works and glorified God. Yes sir, if you are a Christian you are going to do what is right. Your works will show that your heart is right. And it won't be something that you put on, for you will do His will when no one but God sees you, and you will do His will even if it costs you your life.

"I know your love, service, faith and patience." You will note that their love is placed between 'works' and 'service.' And that is the right place for it, because without love our works are not accepted before God and neither is our service. Paul speaking to the Corinthians said, "Without love, I am nothing, and whatever I do is without profit unless it is done in love." Now you can see

right here that these believers weren't in that Nicolaitane class that did works as a means of salvation or to be admired by men. They did their works out of the love of God that was shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. That love in their hearts was God's love for His own. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are MY disciples, that you have love one for another." The pagans who saw the lives of the early Christians said, "Behold how they love each other". John said

"Everyone that loveth is born of God."

I John 4:7.

I want to give a warning right here. It says concerning the last days that because of abounding iniquity the love of many will wax cold. In the Laodicean, or last age, self love, and love for material things will take the place of the true love of God. We need to guard against the power of sin in these last days. So many are getting so hard because they haven't realized the effect of this last day spirit. It is time to draw nigh to God and let him fill our lives with His love, or we will feel the coldness of the last day church, and reject the truth of God which alone is able to help us.

In those dark and dreadful years the true vine held its love for God and love of the brethren. God commended them for it.

"I know your service." Jesus said, "He that is greatest of all is servant to all." A wise man commented on that saying. Here is what he said, "Only history will prove the truth of that dictum." That man was right. All the truly great men of history have been servants. They who demanded to be served; they who oppressed; they who sought to always be at the head, have gone down in shame. Even the very rich are condemned by God when they have not used their wealth right. But look into history and you will find that the truly great were those who served others. History can never acclaim those for whom much was done, but it will forever praise those who did much for others.

Now let us apply that to ourselves. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, so we are to follow that example. See Him as He bows Himself over the feet of the apostles and washes their tired and dirty feet. He said, "You don't know now what I am doing, but you will know hereafter. But what you see me doing, you ought also to do." He became a servant in order that God could elevate Him to the highest heights. And one day in the judgment of the saints we are going to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful SERVANT, enter thou into the joy of the Lord." It is hard to be always a servant. But those who spend and are spent for others will one day be seated with Him in His throne. It will be worth it all, then. "Let us labor for the Master, from the dawn till setting sun, Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care, And when all of life is over and our work on earth is done, And the roll is called up yonder I'll be there."

"I know your faith." Now he does not say here as He did to the church in Pergamos, "you hold MY faith". He is not talking about His faith now, but He is commending them for their faithfulness. And as He does He also mentions their 'patience.' Now faithfulness and patience go together.

In fact patience is the outcome of faithfulness, for it says in James 1:3,

"The trying of your faith worketh patience."

There is absolutely no other way in which to gain patience. It has to come by the trial of our faith.

Romans 5:3,

"Tribulation worketh patience."

How highly God regards this outworking of our patience is seen in James 1:4,

"But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire lacking nothing."

God's will for us is Perfection. And that perfection is patience--waiting on God and waiting for God. This is the process of character development. How highly God has commended these saints of the Dark Ages. Patient as lambs led to the slaughter, lovingly, faithfully they served God. That is all they wanted out of life, just service to their Lord. How great was to be their reward.

"I know thy works; and the last to be more than the first."

This is certainly remarkable. As the darkness of the age increased; as the honor roll of the martyrs grew lengthier day by day, they worked all the harder, they served all the more, and their faith increased. How tragic it was that in the Ephesian Age love waned. And truly nothing is said of the increased labor of love in the other ages; but in this age, in the darkest of all ages, they served Him even more. What a lesson that is. There is no ceasing of this gracious service of love unto the Lord, but rather an increasing of it. That is the secret. Let the enemy attempt to thwart our service to the Lord--our reply is increased service. When the faint are crying in fear, that is the time to shout the victory.

"I know thy works, and the last to be more than the first."

Now as we have already said, this age is called the Dark Ages because it was indeed the darkest period of all history. It was the age of Pope Innocent III who claimed that he was the "vicar of Christ --supreme sovereign over the church and the world," who instituted the INQUISITION which under his direction shed more blood than at any other time except in the Reformation. It was the age of Pornocracy, the rule of harlots. Sagarius III had a mistress and "filled the papal choir with paramours and bastard sons and turned the papal palace into a den of robbers." Anastasius III was smothered to death by Marozia who was mistress to Sagarius. John XI was Marozia's illegitimate son.

John XII was the grandson of Marozia and he "violated widows and virgins and was killed while in the act of adultery by the woman's enraged husband." It was the age of Papal Schism for two lines of popes (one ruling from Avignon and the other from Rome) cursed and fought each other. These popes were not only guilty of immoral sex acts (fathering scores of illegitimate children, committing sodomy etc.) but were guilty of selling priestly offices to the highest bidders.

It was the age when the light glowed ever so faintly, yet the few believers labored more fervently as the darkness increased until toward the end of the age many arose attempting reforms. Their labors were so fervent that they paved the way for the oncoming reformation. Therefore as the Word says concerning that age, "your last (end of the age) works are more than the first".

The word, Thyatira, has various meanings amongst which is "Continual Sacrifice". By many this is believed to be a prophecy concerning the use of the Mass which is a continual presentation of the sacrifice of Christ. That is an excellent thought, but it might also mean the continual sacrifice in lives and labors of the true believers of the Lord.

Surely these Thyatirean saints were the cream of the crop, full of the Holy Ghost and faith, created unto good works, showing forth His praise, holding not their lives dear unto themselves, but gladly giving their all as a sweet sacrifice unto the Lord.

THE REBUKE

Revelation 2:20,

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest (tolerate) that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols."

Now with this verse I want you to drop down to verse 23 and see the proof of a great truth I have been bringing to your attention all along. "And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts." I have been saying right along that there are actually two churches, though the Spirit speaks to both of them in each age, as though they were but one. Here it is plainly stated that there are churches, and it states just as plainly that some of those churches most evidently do NOT know that He is the One Who searcheth the reins and the hearts. He is going to prove to them that is so. Now then, what churches will be those that do not know this truth? Of course it is the false vine group because the true believers

certainly know that judgment begins at the house of God, and they being God-fearing, judge themselves that they be not judged.

Now why does God call these churches His churches even though they are the false vine? The truth of the matter is that they are Christians. But they are not Christians of the Spirit. They are Christians of the flesh. They are bearing the Name in vain. Mark 7:7, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." But indeed they are Christians for what else could they be? A Mohammedan is a Mohammedan. That is his religion no matter how he lives it because he subscribes in theory to what the Koran teaches.

In the same way a Christian is a Christian as long as he subscribes to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, born of a virgin, was crucified and died and rose again, that He is the Saviour of mankind, etc. (In fact, in the Laodicean Age there will be those who call themselves Christians because they subscribe to the fine qualities of Jesus, while reserving to themselves the right to deny His Deity. Christian Scientists have done that already as well as multitudes who preach a Social Gospel). He is a nominal Christian and belongs to the church. But He is not a TRUE or Spiritual believer. That kind of a believer is one who has been baptized into the body of Christ and is a member of Him. But nonetheless, it is in God's order that the tares grow up with the wheat and they are not to be uprooted. That is the command of God. Their day for binding and burning is coming; but not yet.

So the Spirit is speaking to this mixed group. On the one hand He is praising, and on the other He is rebuking. He has told what is right with the true believer. Now He warns what the false vine must do if it is to stand justified before the Lord.

THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL

The apostle James showed us the course that sin takes.

James 1:14-15,

"But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Now that is a picture of exactly what is happening in the church ages. As sin started in nothing but a feeling, so the death to the church started with the simple, little noticed deeds of the Nicolaitanes. From the deeds it went to a doctrine. From the doctrine it embraced the power of the state and the

introduction of paganism. Now in this age it goes to its own prophetess (teacher) and so it travels on until it will find itself in the lake of fire, for that is exactly where it is going to end up, in the second death.

Now the whole cry of God against this fourth age is found in His denunciation of this prophetess, Jezebel. And to understand exactly why He denounces her so, we will have to look up her history in the Bible and when we find what she did back there, we will know what is going on at this time.

The first and very important thing that we learn about Jezebel is that she is NOT a daughter of Abraham, nor is her induction into the tribes of Israel one of spiritual admission as was that of Ruth, the Moabitess. No sir. This woman was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon (I Kings 16:31), who was the priest unto Astarte. He had gained the throne by murdering his predecessor, Pheles. So we see right away that she was the daughter of a murderer. (This certainly reminds us of Cain.) And the way she became a part of Israel was not through the spiritual channels that God had ordained for Gentile admission; but she came in by MARRIAGE to Ahab, the king of the ten tribes of Israel. Now this union as we have seen was not Spiritual; it was political. And so this woman who was steeped in idolatry did not have the least desire to become a worshipper of the One True God, but rather she came with the avowed intentions of turning Israel away from the Lord.

Now Israel (the ten tribes) had already known what it was to worship the golden calves, but as yet they were not sold out to idolatry, for God was worshipped and the law of Moses was acknowledged. But from the time of Ahab's marriage to Jezebel, idolatry progressed in a deadly fashion. It was when this woman became a priestess in the temples that she erected to Astarte (Venus) and Baal (sun god) that Israel came to the crisis point of her life.

With this in mind we can now begin to see what the Spirit of God is setting forth in this Thyatirean Age. Here it is.

Ahab married Jezebel and he did it as a political maneuver to strengthen his kingdom and secure it. That is exactly what the church did when it married under Constantine. They both got together for political reasons, though they put a spiritual air to it. Now no one can convince me that Constantine was a Christian. He was a pagan with what looked like Christian trappings. He painted white crosses on the soldiers' shields. He was the originator of the Knights of Columbus. He put a cross on the steeple of Saint Sophia's thereby starting a tradition.

It was Constantine's idea to get everyone together, the pagans, nominal Christians and true Christians. And for awhile it looked as if he would succeed for the real believers came along to see if they could bring back the ones that had drifted away from the Word. When they saw that they couldn't bring them

back into the truth, they were forced to break away from the body political. Then when they did, they were called heretics and persecuted.

Let me say right here that we have the very same thing going on right now. The people are all coming together. They are writing a Bible that will suit everyone whether it be a Jew, Catholic or Protestant. They have their own Nicene Council but they call it the Ecumenical Council. And do you know whom all these organizations fight? They fight the true Pentecostals. I don't mean the organization called Pentecostal. I mean the ones who are Pentecostal because they are filled with the Holy Ghost and have the signs and gifts in their midst because they walk in truth.

When Ahab married Jezebel for political reasons he sold his birthright. You join up with an organization and you sell your birthright, brother, whether you want to believe it or not. Every Protestant group that ever came out and then went back sold their birthright, and when you sell your birthright, you're just like Esau--you can cry and repent all you want, but it won't do you any good. There is only one thing you can do and that is, "Come out of her, my people, and stop partaking of her sins!" Now if you don't think I am right, just answer this one question. Can any man living tell me what church or what move of God ever had revival and came back after she went into organization and became a denomination? Read your histories. You can't find one--not even one.

It was the midnight hour for Israel when she joined with the world and left the Spiritual for the political. It was the midnight hour at Nicaea when the church did the same thing. It is the midnight hour now that the churches are coming together.

Now when Ahab married Jezebel he allowed her to take the state money and erect two huge houses of worship of Astarte and Baal. The one that was erected for Baal was big enough for all Israel to come and worship thereat. And when Constantine and the church married he gave the church buildings, and set up altars and images, and organized the hierarchy that had already been shaping up.

When Jezebel got the power of the state behind her she forced her religion on the people and killed the prophets and priests of God. It got so bad that Elijah, the messenger to his day, thought he was the only one left; but God had 7000 more that hadn't bowed the knee to Baal. And right now out there amongst those denominations of Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc., there are some that will come out and come back to God. I want you to know I am not, now, and never have been against the people. It is the denomination--the system of organization that I am against. I have to be against it for God hates it.

Now just let us stop a minute here and rehearse what we brought out about the worship in Thyatira. I said that they worshipped Apollo (who was the sun god) along with the emperor. Now this Apollo was called the 'averted of evil.' He turned evil away from people. He blessed them and was a real god to them. He was supposed to teach the people. He explained about worship, and temple rites, services to gods, about sacrifices and death and life after death. The way he did this was through a prophetess who sat entranced upon a tripod chair. My! Do you see it? Here is that prophetess called Jezebel and she is teaching the people. And her teaching is seducing the servants of God and causing them to commit fornication. Now fornication means 'idol worship.' That is what its spiritual meaning is. It is an illegal union. Ahab's union and Constantine's union were both illegal. Both committed spiritual fornication. Every fornicator will wind up in the lake of fire. God said so.

Now then, the teaching of the Catholic Church (the church is female, it is a woman) denies the Word of God. The pope who is literally Apollo in a modern version has taught the people to join themselves to idols. The Roman Church has now become a false prophetess to the people because she has taken away the Word of the Lord from the people and given her own ideas as to what constitutes forgiveness of sins, what brings the blessings of God; and the priests have gone so far as to state categorically that they have power not only in life but in death. They teach on their own that there is a purgatory, but you can't find that in the Word. They teach that prayers and masses and money will get you out of purgatory and into heaven. The whole system that is based upon its teaching is false. It does not lie on the sure foundation of the revelation of God in His Word but lies on the shifting, sinking, sands of its own diabolical untruths.

The church went right from organization to denomination and hence to false teaching. That is right. The Roman Catholics don't believe that God is in His Word. No sir. If they did they would have to repent and back up, but they say God is in His church. That would make the Bible the history of the Catholic Church. That isn't so. Look what they did to water baptism alone. They took it away from being Christian Baptism and made it a pagan one of titles.

Let me tell you about an experience I had with a Catholic priest. A girl that I had baptized at one time turned Catholic, so the priest wanted to interview me about her. He asked what kind of baptism she had. I told him I baptized her in Christian Baptism which is the only kind there was to my knowledge. I had buried her in water in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The priest remarked to me that at one time the Catholic Church did that. Right away I asked him when the Catholic Church did that, for I have read their histories and I could not find what he said. He told me that it was found in the Bible, and that Jesus had organized the Catholic Church. I asked him if he thought Peter was really

the first pope. He emphatically said that Peter was. I asked him if the masses were said in Latin in order to ensure that they were correct and would never change. He said that was true. I told him that I thought they had wandered a long way from what they had in the beginning, I let him know that if the Catholic Church really believed the Book of Acts, then I was an old fashioned Catholic. He told me that the Bible was the record of the Catholic Church and that God was in the church. I disagreed with him for God is in His Word.

Let God be true but every man a liar. If you take away or add to that Book, God has promised that He will add plagues to those who add and take away their part from the Book of Life if they dare to subtract from it. Revelation 22:18, 19.

Let me just show how the Roman Catholic Church believes that God is in the church instead of the Word. Here is an excerpt from the diary of Pope John the 23rd. "My experience during these three years as Pope, since 'in fear and trembling' I accepted this service in pure obedience to the Lord's Will, conveyed to me through the Sacred College of Cardinals in conclave, bears witness to this maxim and is a moving and lasting reason for me to be true to it; absolute trust in God, in all that concerns the present, and perfect tranquillity as regards the future." This pope states that God spoke through the church revealing His will. How false. God is in His Word and speaks by the Word revealing His will. He also stated that he placed absolute trust in the word of men and thereby obeyed it with tranquillity. It sounds so beautiful but it is so false. Just like the perversion in the Garden of Eden.

Now let us get over here in Revelation 17 and see this woman, the church, who is living on false prophecies and not the Word of God. In verse 1 God calls her the great whore. Why is she a whore? Because she is in idolatry. She has caught the people up into the same thing. What's the cure for idolatry? The Word of God. So this woman is a whore because she has left the Word. There she is sitting upon many waters, which means multitudes of people. This surely has to be the false church because the church of God is small--few there be that find it.

Notice what she is like in the eyes of God, no matter how wonderful she looks to people and how philosophical she sounds. She is filthy drunk on her fornications. Now she was drunk with the blood of the martyrs. Just like Jezebel who killed the prophets and priests and destroyed the people of God who would not bow down and worship Baal. And that is exactly what the Catholic Church did. They killed those that would not bow down to the popish rule. Those who wanted the Word of God instead of the words of men were put to death, usually by cruel methods. But this church that dealt in death was dead herself and didn't know it. There was no life in her and no signs ever followed her.

SPACE TO REPENT

Revelation 2:21;

"And I gave her space to repent of her fornications; and she repented not."

Do you know that this church was actually more wicked than Ahab? Do you know that he repented for awhile and walked softly before God? You can't say that of the Roman Catholic Church. No sir. She has never repented but has stubbornly destroyed any and all who tried to help her repent. That is history. Now God kept raising up not only the messengers to each age but He raised up some wonderful helpers for those messengers. He gave every age some wonderful men of God and they did everything they could to bring the church back to God. God certainly gave her opportunity and help to repent. Did she ever repent and show she did by her fruits? No sir. She never has and she never will. She is drunk. She has lost her senses in spiritual things.

Now don't be confused and start thinking that the Church of Rome has repented of her slaughter of the saints because she is attempting to unite with the Protestants by making her creeds to line up with Protestant Creeds. Not once has she ever apologized and said she was wrong for her mass murders. And she won't either. And no matter how mellow and sweet she appears at this particular time, she will yet rise up to kill, for murder lies in her evil and unrepentant heart.

SENTENCE AGAINST THE HARLOT PASSED

Revelation 2:22-23,

"Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He Which searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

What? This woman has children? And she a whore? If that is the case that she had children by her whoredoms then she must be burnt with fire as the Word has said. That is exactly true. That is her end for she will burn with fire. Her end is the lake of fire. But stop and think about these children for a moment. A woman is the one out of whom the children come. It is evident that this woman had children that came out of her but they did the same thing she

did. Show me one church that ever came out of organization that didn't go right back into it. There isn't one. Not one. The Lutherans came out and then organized right back and today they are hand in glove with this ecumenical move. The Methodists came out and they organized right back. The Pentecostals came out and they organized right back. There is going to be another coming out, and praise God they won't organize back because they know the truth. That group will be the bride of the last day.

Now it said here that this whore had children. Now what were they? They were daughters, for they were churches just like her. Now here is a very interesting point. Jezebel and Ahab had a daughter. That daughter married Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat and in II Kings 8:16 it says that

"Jehoram walked in the ways of his father-in-law."

He went right into idolatry by this marriage. He brought God-fearing and God-worshipping Judah into idolatry. That is exactly what all these daughter churches have done, even as I have pointed out to you. They start in the truth and marry into organization and leave the Word for tradition, creeds etc. Now let me get this across.

In Hebrews 13:7 it says,

"Obey them which have the rule over you who have spoken unto you the Word of God."

It is the Word that rules us, not men. Now a man as a husband is head of the woman. He rules her. But the church is a woman, too, and her ruler is the Word. Jesus is the Word. If she rejects the Word and takes any other headship she is an adulteress. Now you name me one church that hasn't given up the Word for traditions and creeds. They are all adulteresses--like mother, like daughter.

What will be the punishment of the harlot and her children? Well, it is going to be twofold. First He said, "I will cast her into a bed." According to the last part of verse 22 it will be a bed of tribulation, or the great tribulation. That is exactly what Jesus said in Matthew 25:1-13. There were ten virgins. Five were wise and five were foolish. The five wise had oil (the Holy Spirit) but the other five did not. When the cry went up, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh," the five foolish had to run seeking oil while the five wise virgins went in to the marriage. The five that remained outside were left to the great tribulation. That is what will happen to all who do not go up in the rapture. That is what will come upon the harlot and her daughters. Secondly, it says that he will kill them with death or as a literal translation says, "Let them be put to death with death." This is a strange saying. We might say, "let a man be put to death by hanging, or by electrocution or some other way." But this says, "Let them be put to death by death." Death itself is the cause of their death.

Now I want you to see this clearly so I will take our illustration again of the daughter of Jezebel marrying into the house of Judah and thereby bringing it right into idolatry and causing God to deliver Judah to death. That is what Balaam did, too. So here was Jezebel with her paganism. Over there is Judah properly worshipping God and living under the Word. So Jezebel marries her daughter to Jehoram. The minute that happens, Jehoram causes the people to become idolaters. The minute that marriage took place Judah was dead. Spiritual death came in. The minute the first church of Rome organized, it died. The minute that the Lutherans organized, death came in and they died. The Pentecostals came along last and they organized. The Spirit left, though they don't believe it. But He did. That marriage brought death. Then the light of Oneness of the Godhead came. They organized and they died too. Then after the fire of God fell on the Ohio River in 1933 a healing revival swept the world, but it never came through any organization. God went outside the Pentecostal groups, outside of organization, and what He is going to do in the future is going to be outside organization, too. God can't work through the dead. He can only work through the LIVING members. Those living members are outside of Babylon.

So you see, "Death" or "Organization" came, and the church died, or to make it plainer death became a resident wherein shortly before only LIFE reigned. As the original Eve brought death to mankind so now organization has brought death, for organization is the product of the double corrupters, Nicolaitanism and Balaamism, propagated by the prophetess Jezebel. Now Eve should have been burned along with the serpent for their awful deed. But Adam intervened, taking her quickly to himself so that she was saved. But when this Satanic religion has gone the full course of the ages, there will be no one to intervene, and she will be burned with her seducer, for the whore and her children and the antichrist and Satan will all find their places in the lake of fire.

Right here I will be getting ahead of myself and maybe I ought to reserve this for the message on the last age, but it seems just right to put it in now because it deals so clearly with organization and what is going to happen through it. And I want to warn you.

Revelation 13:1-18,

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat and great authority.

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

If any man have an ear, let him hear.

He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six."

This chapter shows the power of the Roman Catholic Church and what she will do through organization. Remember this is the false vine. Let it name the Name of the Lord, it does so only in a lie. Its headship is not of the Lord but of Satan. It finally ends up completely identified with the beast. The whore riding on the scarlet beast distinctly shows her power is the god of force (Satan) and not our God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse 17, it emphatically shows that she will gain absolute control of the commerce of the earth, for no man can buy or sell apart from her. This is borne out in Revelation 18:9-17 which shows her involvement with kings, princes, merchants, all of whom have to do with Rome and commerce.

In Revelation 13:14, we learn that the beast spreads his influence through the image which was built for him. The image that is made is a world-wide ecumenical council, wherein all the organized churches will get together with the Roman Catholics (they are doing it even now.) It is quite possible this union will come in order to stop the power of communism. But since communism like Nebuchadnezzar has been raised up to burn the flesh of the harlot, Rome will be overcome and destroyed. Take note that everywhere the Romish church went, communism followed. It has to be that way. And let me warn you now, don't get thinking communism is your only enemy. No sir. It is the Catholic Church also, and even more so.

Now let us read Revelation 13:1-4, and compare this with Revelation 12:1-5.

Revelation 13:1-4,

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat and great authority.

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

Revelation 12:1-5,

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and it cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne."

Satan and his Satanic religion are in both of these beasts. In Revelation 14, the beast that was wounded unto death but lived again is imperial pagan Rome that fell to the onslaught of the barbarians and thereby lost her temporal power. But she regained it in papal Rome. Do you see it? The nation that ruled by crushing all and which became the strongest empire ever known, was finally wounded to death. Her power was gone physically as to control by armies etc. But under Constantine she came back to life, for papal Rome has infiltrated the whole world, and her power is absolute. She uses kings and merchants and in her deadly religious and financial strength she is governing as the goddess of this present age. She is also the dragon that stood waiting to devour the man child. Herod tried to kill the Lord Jesus and failed. Later Jesus was crucified by Roman soldiers, but now is caught up to the throne.

Now along with what I have just said, recall the vision of Daniel. The last part of the image, the last world power was in the feet. That was iron and clay. See the iron is the Roman Empire. But now it is no longer solid iron. Clay is mixed in it. Yet it is there and running world affairs in both the democratic nations and the more despotic ones. The Romish church is in every nation. It is mixed up in it all.

Let me give you a little something on the iron and clay. Remember when Khrushchev beat his shoe on the desk at the U.N.? Well, there were five eastern nations there and five western. Khrushchev spoke for the East and President Eisenhower for the West. In Russian, Khrushchev is clay and Eisenhower means iron. The two main leaders of the world, the two big toes of the feet of iron and clay, were side by side. We are in the end of it all.

In verse 4 it asks,

"Who is able to make war with the beast?"

Now there are at present some great names in the world. There are some mighty nations, but right now Rome is calling the tune. The pope is in the driver's seat. And his power is going to increase. No one can war against him.

Verse 6

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy."

(Teaching for doctrine the commandments of men, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure, having a form of godliness and denying the power thereof.)

He blasphemed the Name of God--changing that Name to titles and refusing to do otherwise.

Verse 7

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints."

Persecution--death to the true believer and all in the Name of the Lord in order that the Name of God be blasphemed, even as it is in Russia, because of what the Catholic religion did there.

Verse 8,

"And all that dwell upon the earth (all whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world) shall worship him."

Thank God the sheep will not worship him. Everyone but the very elect will be deceived. But they will not be deceived. For they hear the Shepherd's voice and they follow Him.

Now then, see this, what we have been trying to show you. This seed of death that started in the first age--this seed of organization, has finally grown into the tree in which every foul bird is lodged. In spite of her claims that she is the giver of life, she is the giver of death. Her fruit is DEATH. They that partake of her are dead. This mighty world church system that fools the world that in her is physical and spiritual salvation deceives and destroys the multitudes. But not only is she death personified, but this dead carrion creature will be itself put to death with death which is the lake of fire. Oh, that men would perceive what their end will be by remaining in her. "Come out of her, for why will ye die?"

A FINAL WARNING

Revelation 2:23.

"And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He Which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

God looketh on the heart. That has never changed. Neither will it ever change. Here, as through all the ages there are two groups, both proclaiming their revelation from God and their relationship to God.

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them which are His."

II Timothy 2:19.

"The Lord searcheth the reins."

The word 'search' means to 'track' or 'follow up.' God tracks down our thoughts (reins); He knows what is in our hearts. He sees our works which are a definite manifestation of what lies within us. It is out of the heart that proceeds either righteousness or wickedness. Our motives, our purposes--all are known unto Him as He watches every action. And every action, every word shall be brought into judgment when the accounting for our lives is given. There was no fear of God before the false vine and dearly shall they pay. Let all who name His Name, so live as becometh saints. We might fool the people but we will never fool the Lord.

The Promise In Those Dark Days

Revelation 2:24-25.

"But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depth of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

But that which ye have already hold fast till I come."

Now before we go into the promise let me show again that the church as spoken of by the Spirit in this book has two vines whose inter-winding branches compose it.

"But I say unto you, and unto the rest in Thyatira as many as have not this doctrine."

There it is. He is speaking to the two groups. One has the doctrine, another has not. There they are, scattered abroad across the nations with each one's doctrine opposing the other. One is of God, knowing His depths, the other of Satan, knowing the depths of Satan.

"I will put upon you none other burden."

The word for burden is weight or pressure. The pressure of the Dark Ages was either bend, or be broken. Bow or die. It was the inquisition, the power of the empire backing up Satanic worship. Be organized or pay with your life. Each age had its pressures. For example a great burden of the last age is the pressure of riches, soft living and nervous tensions in a complex age that we seem unfitted to live in. This fourth age seems to have had a clear cut burden. It was to defy Rome, stand up for the Word even unto death.

"They have not known the depths of Satan."

It seems that this verse has been left out by the commentators for they were not able to figure out what doctrine or what experiences are meant by this phrase. Actually it is simple to know what is meant. Let us first know what the depth of God is, and the opposite will be true for the depth of Satan.

In Ephesians 3:16.

"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man;

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

Now according to these verses, when a man experiences the depth of God in his life, it is an actual personal experience of the Spirit of God indwelling him, and his mind is illuminated by the wisdom and knowledge of God through the Word. But the depth of Satan will be in that he will attempt to destroy this. He will as always attempt to make a substitute for this reality of God. How will he do it? He will take away the knowledge of the truth of God--destroy the Word by putting forth his own, "Yea hath God said?" He will then substitute the personal Christ in our spirits. He will do it, as he caused Israel to do the same; by a human being reigning as king instead of God. The born-again experience will be rejected in favor of church joining. The depths of Satan had been entered into in that age. And the fruit of that depth of Satan which are lies, murders and horrible crimes came forth from it.

THE REWARDS

Revelation 2:26-29.

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father.

And I will give him the morning star.

He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

"He that overcometh and keepeth My works to the end."

It is very evident from the remarks of the Spirit on works that the Lord is trying to get His own to see His opinion of righteous works. Four times He mentions works. And now He says, that he who keeps doing His works faithfully until the end will be given power over nations, and will be a strong, capable, unbending ruler who can cope so powerfully with any situation, that even the most desperate enemy will be broken if need be. His demonstration of rule by power will be like unto the very Son's. This is very amazing.

But let us look at this promise in the light of the age. Powerful Rome with state backing, employing kings and armies and legislators, breaks and grinds all before it. She has killed millions and hungers to kill millions more who will not bow to her. She intolerantly sets up kings or brings them low whenever she can. Yea, her interference has actually caused nations to fall because she has determined to destroy the elect of God. Her works are the works of the devil, for she murders and lies as did he. But there is coming a day wherein the Lord is going to say, "Bring these Mine enemies before Me and slay them." Then shall the righteous be with their Lord when His righteous indignation will fall upon the blasphemers. The righteous coming with Him in glory, shall destroy those who destroyed the earth and made havoc of the saints of God. This was the age of turning the cheek, of terrible distress; but a day is coming when truth shall prevail and who shall stand in its fire and be safe? Only the redeemed of the Lord.

"And I will give him the morning star."

According to Revelation 22:16, and II Peter 1:19, Jesus is the Morning Star.

"I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star."

"Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

The Spirit is, therefore, making a promise to the elect of the Dark Ages relative to Himself and then in the ages to come.

As we have already stated, Jesus identifies Himself with the messengers of each age. They receive from Him the revelation on the Word for each period. This Word revelation brings the elect of God out of the world and into full union with Jesus Christ. These messengers are called stars because they shine with a borrowed or reflected light of the Son, even Jesus. They are also called stars because they are 'holders of light' at night. Thus in the darkness of sin, they bring the light of God to His people.

This is the Dark Ages. It is especially dark for the Word of the Lord is almost entirely hidden from the people. Knowledge of the Most High has almost ceased. Death has overcome vast numbers of the believers until their ranks are decimated. The things of God are at the lowest ebb to this date, and it seemed that Satan would surely conquer God's people.

If ever a people needed a promise embracing the land where there is no night, it was the people of the Dark Ages. And that is why the Spirit is promising them the morning star. He is telling them that the Chief Star, even Jesus, Who dwelleth in Light unto which no man can approach, will in the future kingdom illuminate them by His own personal presence. He will not be using the stars (messengers) to give light in darkness any longer. It will be

Jesus, Himself, speaking to them face to face as He shares His kingdom with them.

It is the morning star that is visible when the light of the sun commences to shine. When our Sun, (Jesus) comes, there will be no further need of messengers; He will bring us His message of cheer Himself; and as He rules His kingdom, and we live in His presence, the light of the Word will become brighter and brighter in our perfect day.

What else could we desire above Jesus Himself? Is He not everything, even Perfect Everything?

He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. Amen. Even so, Lord God, by Thy Spirit, let us hear Thy truth.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SARDISEAN CHURCH AGE

REVELATION 3:1-6

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He That hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy.

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

SARDIS

Sardis was the capital of ancient Lydia. It passed from the hands of Lydian monarchs to the Persians and thence to Alexander the Great. It was sacked by Antiochus the Great. The kings of Pergamos then succeeded to the dominion until the Romans took over. In the time of Tiberius it was desolated by earthquakes and plagues. Today it is a heap of ruins and uninhabited.

This city was at one time very important commercially. Pliny said that the art of dying wool was invented here. It was the center of wool-dying and carpet weaving. It had a goodly amount of silver and gold in the area and it is said that gold coins were first minted there. It also had a slave market.

The religion of this city was the impure worship of the goddess Cybele. The massive ruins of the temple may still be seen.

You will recall that in the Pergamean Age I mentioned that the Babylonish concept of "mother and son" known as Semiramis and Ninus became the

Cybele and Deoious of Asia. The attributes attached to these two are most enlightening as we view them side by side.

He was the sun god; she the moon goddess.

He was the lord of heaven; she the queen of heaven.

He the revealer of goodness and truth; she of gentleness and mercy.

He the mediator; she the mediatrix.

He with the key that opens and shuts the gates of the invisible world; and she with an identical key doing likewise.

He as the judge of the dead; she as standing at his side.

He being killed, raised and ascended into heaven; she carried there bodily by the son.

Now in Rome this same god is given the title of our Lord: he is called the Son of God while she is called the mother of God.

Now that is what we found back there in the other two ages, where the 'mother and son' concept took on such tremendous proportions. But now notice that even as it was back in Babylon that the worship of the son began to lose out in favor of the worship of the mother, so, she literally began to take the place of the son. We see in this age that the pagan worship of Sardis was the worship of the woman. It is Cybele alone, not Cybele and Deoious. The mother has literally taken the place of the Son, endowed with the merits of Godhead. All one needs to do is go over her various titles and recall the lovely attributes accorded Mary by the Roman Church to understand where the religion of this age came from.

Two things really struck me with force as I looked into this worship of Cybele. One was the fact that she wore a key like Janus which gave her the same authority as Janus, (key to heaven and earth and the mysteries) and the fact that the worshipers whip themselves until blood spurts from their bodies, which thing is done right today by the Catholics who feel they are suffering like the Lord.

The fact that this is the age of the first real break with papal Rome that actually flourished, no doubt caused the Jezebel prophetess to consolidate and emphasize her doctrine of Maryolatry in decided opposition to the Protestants who denied her any part whatsoever in the plan of Salvation apart from her favor with God as the virgin chosen to bear the Babe. As Luther crystallized the doctrine of justification by faith they held to works, penance, prayers and other unscriptural means. And as the freed Christians glorified the Son, the Roman Catholics increased their deification of Mary until the twentieth century saw (in opposition to most high ranking Roman theologians) Pope Pius literally exalt Mary to glorification in a resurrected body. That doctrine is

absolutely the Babylonish one of the son carrying the mother bodily into heaven.

No wonder this fifth age goes right along with the other ages and will do so until it ends in the lake of fire where the whore and her children are killed in the second death. There it is, Maryolatry, the worship of Cybele. By the way, did you know that Cybele was the Astarte that Jezebel was priestess to and caused Israel to stumble by the licentious rites that she conducted? Yes, that is who she was in the Bible.

THE AGE

The Sardisean or fifth church age lasted from 1520 to 1750. It is usually called the Age of the Reformation.

THE MESSENGER

The messenger to this age is the best known messenger of all the ages. He was Martin Luther. Martin Luther was a brilliant scholar of gentle disposition. He was studying to be a lawyer when the lingering illness and death of a near friend caused him to become serious concerning the spiritual condition of his life. He entered the Augustinian convent at Erfurt in 1505. There he studied philosophy and also the Word of God.

He lived the life of severest penance but all the outward acts could not banish his sense of sin. He said, "I tormented myself to death to make peace with God, but I was in darkness and found it not." The vicar-general of his order, Staupitz, helped him to gain the insight that his salvation would have to be the experience of an inner work rather than a ritual. With this encouragement, he further sought God. Later he became a priest. As yet he was not saved.

He became an avid and deep student of the Word and of the great theological works extant. He was sought out as a teacher and preacher for his depth of knowledge and great sincerity. To fulfill a vow he had made to himself he went to Rome. There he saw the futility of the church's imposed works that were to bring salvation, and the Word of God struck home to his heart, "The just shall live by faith."

On his return home the evangelical truth of this Scripture flooded his mind and he was set free from sin and born into the kingdom of God. Soon after this he was elevated to Doctor of Divinity and commissioned, "to devote his whole

life to study and faithfully expound and defend the holy Scripture." This he did, and with such effect that his heart and the hearts of those around him were deeply fixed upon the truth of the Word. The Word soon came into open conflict with the abuses of church creeds and doctrines.

Thus when Leo X become pope, and John Tetzel came to sell indulgences for sin, Luther had no choice but to rise up against this anti-Scriptural teaching. First, he thundered from the pulpit against it and then wrote his famous 95 theses which on October 31, 1517 he nailed to the door of Castle Church.

In a short time Germany was ablaze and the reformation was on. Now let it be remembered that Martin Luther was not the only one who had protested the Roman Catholic Church. He was but one of many. Others had denied the popes their self-granted temporal and spiritual power, and even amongst the popes there were minor temporary reforms. Yes, there were many others who raised issues, but in the case of Luther, God's time was ripe for a definite move that would be the beginning of the restoration of the church to an outpouring of the Holy Ghost at a much later date.

Now Martin Luther, himself, was a sensitive Spirit-filled Christian. He was definitely a man of the Word for he not only had a profound passion to study it but to make it available to all in order that all might live by it. He translated the New Testament and gave it to the people. This laborious work he did himself, correcting a passage as much as twenty times. He gathered around him a group of Hebrew scholars amongst whom were Jews and translated the Old Testament.

This monumental work of Luther is still the work upon which all successive works of the Scripture in Germany have rested.

He was a mighty preacher and teacher of the Word, and insisted especially in his first years of public eminence, that the Word was the sole criterion. Thus he was against works as a means of salvation and baptism as a means of regeneration. He taught the mediation of Christ apart from man as was the original and Pentecostal concept. He was a man given to much prayer and had learned that the more work he had to do, and the more sorely he was pressed for time, the more of his time he gave to God in prayer in order to ensure satisfactory results. He knew what it was to battle with the devil and it is said that Satan one day visibly appeared to him, and he flung the ink well at him, bidding him go. Another time two fanatics came to him to induce him to join with them in banishing all priests and Bibles. He discerned the spirit within them and sent them off.

It is recorded of Dr. Martin Luther in Sauer's History Vol. 3, page 406 that he was, "a prophet, evangelist, speaker in tongues, interpreter, in one person, endowed with all nine gifts of the Spirit."

What stirred his heart by the Holy Ghost, and which was the little green shoot that signified that truth was coming back to the church as it was known at Pentecost, was the doctrine of justification: salvation by grace, apart from works. I recognize that Dr. Luther did not believe only, and preach only, justification, but that was his major theme as indeed it had to be for that is the basic doctrine of the truth of the Word. He will be forever known as the instrument in the hand of God who revived this truth. He was the fifth messenger and his message was, "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." Surely we admit that he knew and did teach that we are to go from faith to faith. His marvelous understanding of sovereignty, election, predestination and other truths show him to be a great man in the Word, yet I say again, as do historians, God used him to bring to the people God's standard against works-- "The just shall live by faith."

Now as I mentioned already, this age has been called by the historians, the Period of Reformation. That is exactly right. That is what it was. It had to be that for Martin Luther was a reformer, not a prophet. Now I know the history book calls him a prophet, but it doesn't mean that the history book is right, for there is no record of Martin Luther qualifying as a true prophet of God in the grand Scriptural sense of that word. He was a fine teacher with some of the manifestations of the Spirit in his life and we praise God for that. So he was not able to lead the church back to the whole truth as would a man like the apostle Paul who was both apostle and prophet.

Now as time went on we find a great change in the way he conducted the affairs in which he was involved. At first he had been so gentle, so fearless, so patient and constantly waiting on God to work out the problems. But then vast numbers began to come to his banner. Their purpose was not a truly spiritual one. Rather they had political motivations. They wanted to break the yoke of the pope. They disliked sending money to Rome. Fanatics rose up. Soon he was dragged into political affairs and decisions that actually lay outside the realm of the church except that the church through prayer, preaching and conduct might set up a standard to be heeded. These problems of politics mounted until he was forced into an untenable position of mediating between lords and peasants. His decisions were so wrong that an uprising took place and thousands were killed. He meant well, but once he had let himself be entangled again in a Church-State Gospel he had to reap the whirlwind.

But for all that, God used Martin Luther. Let it not be said that his intentions were wrong. Let it only be said that his judgment failed. Truly if the Lutherans could get back to his teaching and serve God as this gracious brother served Him, then that people would surely be a credit and praise to the great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

THE SALUTATION

Revelation 3:1,

"These things saith He That hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars."

Once again as in the previous four ages the Spirit is revealing our gracious Lord to us by setting forth His wonderful attributes. This time as He is standing in the midst of the church, we see Him as the One with the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. We know who the seven stars are, but we will have to find what the seven Spirits refer to.

This same phrase is found four times in the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 1:4,

"From the seven Spirits Which are before His throne."

Revelation 3:1,

"These things saith He That hath the seven Spirits."

Revelation 4:5,

"And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God."

Revelation 5:6,

"And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as It had been slain having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

To begin with, we know for a certainty that these verses are not teaching a new and contrary doctrine to John 4:24a "God is A (one) Spirit." But this is like I Corinthians 12:8-11 wherein we find ONE Spirit manifesting Himself in NINE ways. Thus we know that the seven Spirits of God mean it is the one and same Spirit coming forth in a sevenfold way. Now in Revelation 4:5 these same seven Spirits are called 'lamps of fire burning' before the Lord. Since John always used nothing but Old Testament symbols in the Revelation we go to the Old Testament and find from Proverbs 20:27 that "the spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord." These seven Spirits are found to be associated with man. John the Baptist in John 5:35 was called a 'burning light' which should actually be translated as 'burning lamp.' Again in Revelation 5:6 the seven Spirits are identified as seven eyes.

In Zechariah 4:10,

"For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven, they are the eyes of the Lord."

It is very evident that the word, 'they' refers to men. Thus we see that the eyes of the Lord in this instance are men--of course they will be anointed men, full of the Holy Ghost, for God's ministries are not in the power of men but of the Holy Ghost. Putting our Scriptural discoveries together it is evident that the seven Spirits of God refer to the continuous ministry of the same Holy Spirit in the lives of seven men with whom God identifies Himself very closely. They are His eyes, and they are His lamps. Who these seven men are can easily be seen because the next phrase calls them the seven stars which are already known to us as the seven messengers to the seven ages. How beautiful that is. See, the star was meant to reflect light at night, for the sun has gone. Just so the messenger (typified as a star) to each age was to reflect the light of the Son. They all did this by the Holy Spirit.

Paul was the first messenger and he said in Galatians 1:8 that if any angel, any messenger, any vicar, no matter who he was--if he preached any other gospel than what Paul preached, let him be accursed. Paul knew that after he was gone grievous wolves would come in. He knew that Satan, himself, could appear as an angel of light so how much more his ministers. So he warns that this Gospel would always be the same. Now Paul had baptized in Jesus Name and rebaptized where people had not been so immersed. He set the church in order and taught the proper use of the gifts of the Spirit and confirmed that they were to remain in the church till Jesus came. Thus the next messengers, all the remaining six, would by the same Holy Ghost, burn with the same fire and give the same light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the signs would follow them. Did Irenaeus qualify? Yes. Did Martin? Yes. Did Columba? Yes. Did Martin Luther? Most assuredly. Did Wesley? Yes sir, he had a great ministry and even prayed for his horse to get well and it did. There you are. Seven church ages and seven messengers who were alike, and Paul pronounced a curse on anyone who said he was a messenger but had a different gospel and lived in a different light.

Now does that last statement of mine bear up with the rest of the Word? Yes. It says in the Word that if any man adds to this book or takes from it, he would be plagued and judged unto condemnation by God.

God said,

"I will add the plagues written in this book or I will take his part out of the Book of Life."

Revelation 22:18.

So we see that the Seven Spirits actually refer to the One Spirit of God working out the will and Word of God in different generations. I would like to

illustrate that from the Word. The Spirit of God was mightily upon Elijah. Then that same Spirit came upon Elisha in a twofold effect. Then centuries later, the same Spirit Which we call the Spirit of Elijah in order to describe Its ministry, came back upon John the Baptist. One day that same Spirit identified by the same manner of ministry will come upon a man for the end of the Gentile church age.

Again: the Scripture says that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and power and He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil. As Jesus went away He told His disciples to tarry until Pentecost at which time the very same Spirit that was upon Him would come back and fall upon them and fill them. Then that 'called out' body (the church) would be in His stead upon the earth, taking His place. And because that same Spirit That was in Him would be in them, they would do the very same works. And any people that is truly the Body of Jesus Christ (the true church) will manifest the same works as did Jesus and the Pentecostal church because the same Spirit will be in them. Any other church that does not have the Spirit and the manifestations is going to have to account to God.

It also says here that these seven stars, or seven messengers to the seven ages are in His hand. He is holding them. You know right away that if they are held in His hand they are associated with His power. That is what the hand signifies. It signifies the power of God! And authority of God. Not one of them came in his own power and authority. That is what Paul said. No man would dare to. It takes the authority of God and the power of the Holy Ghost. The Gospel is preached by the authority of God in the power of the Spirit. These men were all empowered by the Holy Ghost. They all stood up to the world. They could do that. They were full of God. They were SENT or authorized by God NOT by self or other men.

Now they had what the world could not have. Jesus said that when He went away He would send His Spirit Which the world could not receive. That is right. The world, or world systems could not receive Him. That is what organization is--it is world system. Show me a world system church that is full of the Holy Ghost. I want to see it. If you can show me such a church you are finding a mistake in the Word. No sir. Not one of these messengers was organized. Either they were put out or got out because they were convicted of the sin of organization. How can the Holy Spirit possibly be in organization when it is organization that takes the place of the Spirit and denominations take the place of the Word? Remember, "Organization" is "DEATH". It just can't be any other way. If the world takes over, the Spirit departs.

Yes, the Spirit is not seven Spirits but ONE. He will always be the same and act the same. And the seven messengers will have the same Spirit and teach the same Word and have the same power. And if the church is the true

church it will have the very same Spirit and Word and acts of power that they had at Pentecost. By experience it will be a Pentecostal church; and there will be tongues, and interpretation and prophecy and healings. God will be in the midst of her and God will declare Himself in the midst of her as He always has. Hallelujah! And she will be UNorganized. Don't forget that.

Now we can see that Jesus Christ is revealing Himself through the ages by His Spirit in the messengers. They are as Moses was to the children of Israel. As he had the revelation for his day, so each messenger had God's revelation and ministry for that day.

Thus when we see that the messengers are in His hand, we see the Lord identifying Himself with these men and granting them His power. It is not enough that He has associated Himself with the whole church, which we saw when He was seen standing amongst the seven golden lamp-stands. Nor is it even enough that we see the five fold ministry of Ephesians 4 (apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors). For in each age the church goes astray, and it is not just the laity but the clergy group--shepherds are wrong as well as sheep. Then God brings Himself on the scene as the Chief Shepherd in the ministries of these seven men to lead His people back to the truth and the abundant power of that truth.

God is in His people--all of His people, for if any man has not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. And He is the Word. That would be the Word recognized in the people. But He has placed a special leadership in these men of His own choosing and through the determined counsel of His own will. They appear once in each age. It is the same Spirit in them. What a far cry is this from the heresy of Rome. They have a man of their own choosing--one after the other--none producing the power of God--none abiding in the Word of God--each one differing from the one before him and adding what he desires as though he were God. God is not in it. But He is in His messenger and he who would have the fullness of God would follow the messenger as the messenger is a follower of the Lord by His Word.

"He that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars."

Revelation 3:1.

As this same Lord identified Himself with man in the incarnation, He is again identifying Himself with man by His Spirit within man. "These are mine," saith the Lord. The seven Spirit-filled messengers are the Lord's. They may be repudiated. They may be questioned. Indeed, to human minds they may not even seem to qualify--nevertheless, they are the messengers for their age. God used an Abraham (he lied), He used a Moses (he rebelled), a Jonah (he disobeyed), a Samson (he sinned), a David (he murdered). He also used a Joshua, and a Joseph. And those with severe blemishes far outnumber those whose histories seem to be perfect. ALL WERE, AND ARE HIS. None dare

deny that. He used them by and through the Holy Spirit that He put within them. To their own Master they stood or fell. And in them all was accomplished the sovereign will of God. Let external history attempt to refute this, it still stands. The Eternal God still walks amongst the golden lamp stands and sends His messengers by His Spirit with the Word to the people of every age.

THE DENUNCIATION

Revelation 3:1b,

"I know thy works, that thou has a name that thou livest, and art dead."

Revelation 3:2b,

"For I have not found thy works perfect before God."

Now here, indeed, is a very strange thing. In every age to this point the Spirit has first of all praised the true believers, and then denounced the false vine. But in this period there is evidently such wanton disregard for the Lord and His Word that the entire message to this fifth age rings with condemnation.

"I know thy works."

What were these works that came up before the Lord and caused His displeasure? Well, you know that each age lapped over into the next age, so we have a continuation of the works of the fourth age into the fifth. These works as you are well aware were:

1. The leadership of the Holy Spirit was superseded by a human hierarchy.
2. The pure Word of God and its free benefit to all men was deposed for creeds, dogmas, church orders, etc.
3. The worship in the Spirit and Gifts of the Spirit and all that which pertains to true community fellowship of the saints was cast aside for liturgy and literal idol worship, pagan feasts, etc.
4. Maryolatry was assuming a greater place in the Christian worship, until she had actually assumed a place of Godhead and the Son was brought from His lofty position of over all to being subservient to a man called the pope, who termed himself the vicar of Christ.

Those who fought this terrible anti-Christ church were destroyed. Those who stayed with it found themselves the pawn of the church whether they be peasants or kings. Their lives were not their own, and neither were their lives Christ's, but they belonged body, soul, and spirit to the Church of Rome. They talked about the blood of Christ, yet they purchased their salvation with

money, and bought forgiveness of sins either by gold or penance. The wealthier of them found it a happy situation when Pope Leo X allowed them to buy indulgences for sins not yet committed so that they with ease of conscience could plan their awful crimes and then proceed to carry them out, knowing that the pope had already remitted their sins. The Word of God was kept from them, so who was to know the truth! Since truth comes only from the Word, the people were shut up in a dungeon of the Roman Church, awaiting death, and after death the judgment. But the great whore, drunk with the blood of martyrs and with no thought of the judgment, reeled savagely on to kill men with both spiritual and physical death.

Now toward the end of the fourth age which would be the beginning of the fifth age also, the invasion of Constantinople by the Turks sent the learned scholars of the East with their Greek manuscripts to the West. The purity of the Word and the teachings of true believers were thus disseminated. And not only were these fine teachers of great importance but also the invention of what became the basis of our modern printing presses was discovered, facilitating the production of books. Thus we find the great hunger and demand for the Bible could be answered.

God raised up many mighty men of which Luther was but one. Calvin and Zwingli were two other luminaries and besides these were many, many more who are not so well known. However, though all this was not in vain, the mighty work of God was actually hindered by these very men. For one thing, they did NOT oppose the Church-State marriage of the Nicene Council but actually fostered that union.

The defense of the Gospel by the state was welcomed though there was no Word for it. And though we can see "the wrath of man praising God," in such events as Henry the Eighth taking up for the reformation and the rejection of papal authority, it was a far cry from the truth of Pentecost and protection of an omnipotent God.

In spite of Luther's constant teaching against outside interference in local church matters he was not able to clear men's minds of the "Bishop, Archbishop" concept of church government. Thus the church took one step in the right direction but still remained shackled, so in short order she was again imprisoned in the same dungeon whence she had attempted to escape.

Still the cup of the abominable works was not yet full. Not only did Luther through poor judgment incite to battle and thereby cause the death of multitudes; but Zwingli's party persecuted unto prison the godly Dr. Hubmeyer, and though it did not commit him to the stake, it was actually responsible in great measure for his eventual death by fire. And Calvin did no less, for he demanded the arrest of Servetus who had seen and taught the

oneness of the Godhead. The State then tried this brother, and to Calvin's dismay he was burned at the stake.

If there was ever a time of denominational zeal it was at this tragic time. The words of Comenius describe much of this era. Comenius wrote the "ONE THING NEEDFUL." He compares the world to the labyrinth, and shows that the way out is by leaving what is needless, and choosing the one thing needful--Christ. The great number of teachers, he says is the reason of the multitudes of sects, for which we shall soon have no names left. Each church reckons itself as the true one, or at least as the purest, truest part of it, while among themselves they persecute each other with the bitterest hatred. No reconciliation is to be hoped for between them; they meet enmity with irreconcilable enmity.

Out of the Bible they forge their different creeds; these are their fortresses and bulwarks behind which they entrench themselves and resist all attacks. I will not say that these confessions of faith--for we can admit in most cases that they are so--are bad in themselves. They become so, however, in that they feed the fire of enmity; only by putting them away altogether would it be possible to set to work on healing the wounds of the Church. "To this labyrinth of sects and various confessions another belongs; the love of disputation... What is attained by it? Has a single learned strife ever been settled? Never. Their number has only been increased.

Satan is the greatest sophist; he has never been overcome in a strife of words... In Divine service the words of men are usually heard more than the Word of God. Each one chatters as he pleases, or kills time by learned disquisitions and disproving the views of others. Of the new birth and how a man must be changed into the likeness of Christ to become partaker of the Divine Nature (II Peter 1:4), scarcely anything is said. Of the power of the keys, the Church has almost lost the power of binding, only the power of loosing remains... The sacraments, given as symbols of unity, of love, and of our life in Christ, have been made the occasion of bitterest conflict, a cause of mutual hatred, a centre of sectarianism...

In short, Christendom has become a labyrinth. The faith has been split into a thousand little parts and you are made a heretic if there is one of them you do not accept... What can help? Only the one thing needful, return to Christ, looking to Christ as the only Leader, and walking in His footsteps, setting aside all other ways until we all reach the goal, and have come to the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:13). As the heavenly Master built everything on the ground of the Scriptures so should we leave all particularities of our special confessions and be satisfied with the revealed Word of God which belongs to us all. With the Bible in our hand we should cry: I believe what God has revealed in this Book; I will obediently keep His commands; I hope for that

which He has promised. Christians, give ear! There is only one life, but Death comes to us in a thousand forms. There is only one Christ, but a thousand Antichrists... So thou knowest, O Christendom, what is the one thing needful. Either thou turnest back to Christ or thou goest to destruction like the Antichrist. If thou art wise and wilt live, follow the Leader of Life.

But you, Christians, rejoice in your being caught up,... hear the words of your Heavenly Leader, 'Come unto Me.'... Answer with one voice, 'Even so, we come'".

Now I just said that this era gave tremendous growth to the denominational spirit. If the Corinthian attitude of "I am of Paul, I of Cephas" was ever exhibited, it was now. There were Lutherans, Hussites, Zwingli's party, etc. Such fragmentation of the Body was deplorable. They were living a name but were dead. Certainly they were dead. They died the minute they organized. The great groups organized and tied themselves in matrimony to the state. That did it. They were finished. Here were those Lutherans who had criticized the Roman Church. They knew the unrighteousness of political and spiritual unions--yet Luther (as when Peter was overbalanced by the Judaizers) went right ahead and made the state instead of God, the defender of the faith. This is the first denomination of repute that came out of the harlot, but when Luther died it was not long until it had a hierarchy like the one it had fought. This move of God, by the time the second generation came along was right back under the wing of her mother. She had gone back and did not even know it. They had taken on their own name above His Name. They were living their own name, too.

And all the denominations are doing that very thing today. They are living their own name, and not the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is easily seen for every church is known by the way it worships but none are known by the power of God. There is your test. And I want you to notice right here that this era did not have the signs and wonders amongst them. They gave up the power of God for the power of the state. They clung to their own name; they made their names great. It was that old spirit of getting everyone into its fold. Today the Baptists want the Methodists to come over to the Baptists. The Methodists are out to proselytize the Presbyterians. And the Pentecostals want them all. Each claims to offer the most and to hold out the greatest hopes--a sort of door to heaven, or at least, the way to a more abundant entrance. How tragic it all is.

This denominational spirit has made all the denominations write their manuals and teach their creeds, set up their offices and church governments and then each claims that she, and she alone, truly speaks for God as she is the best qualified. Now if that isn't exactly what the pope and the Roman Church are doing! They are right back there with their mother, the harlot, and don't know it.

In closing our comments on this verse, "thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead," I cannot impress upon you too strongly that this age, though it brought the reformation, was most sternly rebuked by God instead of being praised, because IT SOWED THE SEED OF DENOMINATION THAT ORGANIZED RIGHT BACK TO THE HARLOT, after God had opened a door of escape. When the move away from the Catholic Church took place, it was not truly Spiritual as a whole, but more political. Most of the people took up with Protestantism because as I have stated, they hated the Roman system of political and financial bondage. Thus, instead of this being a great Spiritual move with all the earmarks of Holy Spirit influence as when God used purely Spiritual means to accomplish His ends at Pentecost, it was indeed a WORK WHEREIN THE WRATH OF MAN PRAISED GOD, and the results paralleled the history of Israel when she left Egypt and wandered in the desert, not making it to Canaan Land. However, much was accomplished in that where the yoke of Rome was even partly broken, men could now receive the Word of God and yield to the influence of the Spirit without such great fear as formerly. This opened the door to the great missionary age that followed.

The Jezebel of Thyatira was in no mood to give up her hold upon the people, and thus we see her daughter Athaliah raise her head in the Sardisean Age with the hopes that she would be able to strangle the true seed by her schemes of organization.

THE WARNING

Revelation 3:2,

"Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die for I have not found thy works perfect before God."

I wish it could be said that the Sardisean Age was a restoration instead of a reformation. I cannot say that. The Word does not call it a restoration, but certainly calls it a reformation. Had it been a restoration, that age would have been another Pentecostal age. But it was not. The best that could be said of it was, "Strengthen that which remains, that is ready to die." There was something missing. My, yes, there certainly was. This age had justification, but it had missed sanctification and the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. That is what God's original plan was. That is what they had at Pentecost. They were justified, they were sanctified, and were filled with the Holy Ghost. Why, listen to me, the reason for being justified and sanctified is to the end that you might be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

That is the reason that there is a church. It is the temple of God filled with God, even the Holy Ghost. The same Spirit that was in Jesus while He was here on earth, causing Him to do the mighty works which He did came back upon the church at Pentecost so that they did the works that He did. This age did not have those works. Oh, they had the written Word, (but not the revealed Word). This was the reformation period. But fear not little flock, God said, "I will restore," and this reform was going to be the start of it. He was going to (according to His promise) take the church back from the depth of Satan in the Dark Ages to the Depth of God that they had at Pentecost and in the first few years of the existence of the church.

Now be careful, and get this. It says in this second verse that I read, "For I have not found thy works perfect before God." Do you know what the meaning of 'not perfect' really is? It is 'unfulfilled.' This age was an unfulfilled age. It was just the start of getting back. That is why I said the Bible called it Reformation--not restoration. It had started out in the doctrine of justification which meant salvation was all of God. Oh, how Luther preached the sovereignty of God and election. He knew it was all of grace. He separated the church from rule by ecclesiastical hierarchy. He tore down the idols. He cast out the confessions to the priests. He denounced the pope. It was wonderfully good, as he started, but God had said 1500 years before, "Luther, you are going to start things, but your age will see it all unfulfilled, I am leaving that to later." Hallelujah, our God reigneth! He knows the end from the beginning. Yes, Luther was His messenger. It didn't look like it, as we examine the flaws. But there was a man called Jonah, he had flaws in his life too. He was a prophet though you and I might not want to say so on the basis of how he acted. But God knows them that are His and He has His way just as He did with Jonah. He had His way with Luther in that age, and He will have His way until the consummation.

Now this was an unfulfilled age. It was an age of reformation. But that is how God wanted it. I want to illustrate that to you the way I did to a very wonderful Lutheran brother who is a president of a very fine seminary out West. I had been invited to his place to have dinner with him and to speak to him concerning the Holy Spirit. He was puzzled about many things and he said to me, "What have we Lutherans got?"

I said, "Well, you have Christ."

He said, "We want the Holy Ghost. Do you think we've got It?"

I said, "Potentially, you are believing unto It."

He said, "What do you mean, potentially? We are hungry for God. We read a book on Pentecost and the gifts of the Spirit, so some of us flew out to California to see the author. When we got there he told us that though he had written the book, he did not have the gifts. Now when we saw the operation of

gifts in your ministry we wanted to talk to you, for you must know something about them."

Now this brother's seminary is out in the country and surrounded by many acres of farm land on which the students can work and thereby pay their way through college. He also has factories that go along with the farm to give added employment. So using his fields to illustrate my case I said, "Once there was a man who went forth on his own ground to plant a field of corn. He pulled up the stumps, cleared off the rocks, ploughed and disked it and then planted his corn. Each morning he looked out across the field; but one morning instead of barren ground he saw myriads of little blades coming up. He said, "Praise God for my field of corn." I then asked him, "Did the man have corn?"

He said, "Well, in one way he did."

I said, "Potentially, yes; and that was you Lutherans in the reformation, putting forth your blade, see? The corn began to grow. (After it had rotted in the ground during the Dark Ages). After several joints there were fine large stalks, and one day a tassel of silk appeared. That tassel of silk looked down at the blades and said, "You old formal Lutherans haven't anything. Look at us, we're the breeders, the great missionaries. Our day is the missionary era." That tassel age was the Wesleyan Age. They were the greatest missionaries and even excelled us in our age. What did that age do? It scattered like pollen in the breeze.

"Now what is the next step? Logically we think that is the actual forming and harvesting of the grain--the completed cycle. But not so. There is another stage. That stage is when the husk or chaff is formed to cover the seed. And that is exactly what happened in this Spiritual cycle. At the turn of the twentieth century, in the start of the Laodicean Age, there was widespread belief that the Holy Ghost was falling exactly as He did at Pentecost. People were talking in tongues and claiming to be baptized with the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues. But I have walked in the grain fields many times, and there in late summer I have plucked the heads of wheat and rubbed them in my hand to get some grain, when to my surprise there WASN'T ANY CORN OF WHEAT IN THAT CHAFF, THOUGH INDEED IT SURELY LOOKED AS IF WHEAT WERE THERE. This is a perfect picture of the so-called Pentecostal move.

And that this is a proven fact is found in that these people ORGANIZED ON A DOCTRINE and bound themselves right back as did the organization ahead of them, proving that instead of being the real seed, they were the chaff or protecting cover for the wheat seed which should come. This chaff stage was the danger period that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:24, "deceiving the very elect if it were possible." Oh, man felt that this husk, the so-called Pentecostal Age was the true seed. But it proved to be just the carrier to carry

the life over into the age in which the true restoration comes and the Wheat Bride is manifested in the power spoken of by Ezekiel 47:2-5,

"Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over."

"And the way that it was done was by God's perfect will and programming. The Lutherans had the Holy Ghost potentially under justification; the Methodists had It potentially under sanctification and today It is brought back, a restoration--the Holy Ghost is here."

"Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die."

Now the ideas expressed in the two words, "watchful" and "strengthen" are these. To watch contains not only the idea of being awake but to be alert. To be otherwise insinuates danger and loss. To strengthen means more than just to give strength, it means to fix and establish for permanency. These two commands refer to what is left of the TRUTH which itself is ready or "about" to die. This expression of the Spirit comes before me as an illustration. A group of slaves, in total bondage physically and morally have risen up and escaped from their captors (indeed that is what Sardis means: the escaped ones). They are pursued and their great and glorious gains are all but lost. They have not been retaken, but about all that can be said is that they have escaped--not clean escaped as some were according to the Word. They had lost much of their liberties.

Now the Lord says, "You are potentially back in captivity; see that you don't go back. To keep from going back become alert and remain ever watchful concerning the things of your captivity or you will lose all. Strengthen yourself now in what you have left in such a manner as to permanently establish what you have and thus ensure against future loss. This will be your opportunity to fulfill what you have not fulfilled." But did they go on? No sir. They did not heed the voice of the Spirit and another age went into captivity and so God raised up others who would carry out His will. God bypassed the Lutheran denomination as He has all others, and they will never

come back. God had to go on and in a new age bring further truth and a little more restoration.

JUDGMENT

Revelation 3:3,

"Remember therefore how thou has received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know the hour I will come upon thee."

I want to read another translation (Wuest) of this verse,

"Be remembering, therefore, in what way you have received (the truth as a permanent deposit) and what way you heard (it) and be safeguarding (it), and have a change of mind at once."

It is very evident from this verse that God had given them truth as a permanent deposit. It was received and is irrevocably theirs. It now remains to be seen what they will do with it, whether they will regard it or not. And that is true. They had been given the basic truth of the whole Gospel, "The just shall live by faith", "Salvation is of the Lord." They had heard the truth of the Bible which cast down the doctrines of Rome and set at naught all papal authority. They knew the truth that the church does not save. They understood the Lord's supper. They had light on water baptism. They put out the images. Truth? Why there never was an age with any more men with so much light to shed. They had enough illumination to completely overhaul the old system or start out fresh and let God lead them, line upon line and precept upon precept. They received the truth. They wanted it and heard it.

But the question was, how did they hear it? Did they hear it to build upon or was it with the same attitude that many Greeks had--something to discuss and theorize over? Evidently the rich Word of truth was being heard in an academic manner, rather than for practical outworking, for God was demanding a change of mind concerning it. If this is the Word of God which indeed it is, then it must be obeyed. Failure to obey would bring judgment. When the guards of the sacred temple were found sleeping, they were beaten and their garments burned. What shall the Lord do to those who in this age have relaxed their guard?

"I will come on thee as a thief."

Ancient Sardis was constantly harassed by bandits that swooped down from the hills and pillaged the people. Thus they knew only too well what the Spirit was saying in that the coming of the Lord is as a thief. Vigilance and preparation alone will suffice to be ready for His coming. Now we know that

this is a message for the false vine, for the coming of the Lord will be as it was in the days of Noah. The eight saved were well aware of the impending flood, and being aware were prepared and saved. But the world of the ungodly was swept away. Though they daily were in contact with the righteous and heard the truth, they turned it aside until it was too late. Those completely carnal people in that ancient period type out today the nominal Christians whose lives are full of earthly things, and take pleasure in them to such an extent that they have no desire for the Spiritual, and are not at all aware of, nor readied for His appearing.

THE EULOGY

Revelation 3:4,

"Thou has a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy."

Of course the word 'names' means 'people' as it says in Acts 1:15 concerning those in the upper room, "the number of names together were about 120." But to me it goes far beyond just signifying people; it brings out that truth that is set forth in every age which was spoken to us by our Lord with great emphasis. It is this: the church system of these ages is made up of two vines, true and false. God in His own sovereign purpose has put them all together, calling them the church.

See in this age how He has rebuked them saying, "unto the church which is"--not "churches are" in Sardis,--but lumping them together--"the church which is"... "I know thy works... you are dead... your works are unfulfilled..." And then He goes on--"Thou (this church in Sardis) hast a few people in you that are right, and not wrong like the majority. These walk in clean garments and they are worthy of Me." Now these people that were the true saints of God were walking "all pleasing unto the Lord." Their garments were clean. You see in those days the garments would sweep along on the road and pick up dirt and defilement. These were watching how they walked so that they were not corrupted by the world. They were in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit. They were holy and without blame before Him. Thus they were fulfilling their purpose for that is what Ephesians 1:4 says is the purpose of God for us, "that we should be holy and without blame before Him."

Now from this verse which shows the elect of God to be a "Few Names," you can see clearly what we have been teaching about this age. It was chaotic. It was UNFULFILLED. It was split scores of ways, and God rebuked it almost in its entirety. It was weak and sickly and ready to die. It was not the glorious

era that carnal minded Protestant historians have tried to make it. One quick look at that tree saw it was cankered and blighted, denuded of leaf and barren of fruit except for some deformed and wormy fruit that was fast dropping to the ground. But hold a moment! Look closer. There at the top, in the light of the sun, were some 'first fruits'--a 'Few Names'--perfect in Him for they were born of Him, filled with Him and walking with Him by His Word.

Thank God for 'those few.'

"And they shall walk with Me."

That is what God says He will bestow upon them for this upright walk. That is part of their inheritance that He has reserved for them. If they were willing to walk with Him through the toils and snares of life and be an honor to Him, He was going to reward them. He is not forgetful of our labour of love. God will always recompense us for our efforts to please Him.

Yes, they had walked through the world and had not partaken of it. They had not let the world systems overcome them. When the illustrious names of that age had yielded to the blandishment of the state and chosen political mindedness rather than Spiritual mindedness and were on their way back into the world, these few stood for the Word of God, and thereby honored the Lord. Now He would honor them in return. For they shall walk with Him in white. They had identified themselves with Him on earth and now He would identify Himself with them in the New Jerusalem. And how marvelous will be that identification! It makes me rejoice and yet it makes me weep to think of His condescension, for you will note that He is not dressed in another color different from the saints, as earthly leaders would so do. No, they are like Him; He is like them. They are like Him, even as John said; for "they see Him as He is."

"For they are worthy." Do you realize Who is saying this? It is Jesus, the Worthy One, Himself. This is the only One Who is accounted worthy to take the book out of the hand of Him Who sits upon the throne. And now this Worthy One is saying to His saints, "You are worthy." Here is this One, the only One qualified to judge, (and indeed all judgment is committed unto Him,) and He says, "You are worthy."

These words are as astounding as are the words in Romans 8:33b,

"God says I am righteous."

(Way Translation.) There in the white light of God's righteousness, hear the sweet voice of Jesus as He says, "These are Mine. They are righteous. They are worthy. They shall walk with Me in white."

THE PROMISE TO THE OVERCOMER

Revelation 3:5,

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment: and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and His holy angels."

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment."

This is actually a repetition of verse 4, wherein is made reference to the few who have not defiled their garments. We used to have a saying years ago that no doubt was taken from this verse. It was, "Keep your skirts clean." It meant: don't get involved in questionable things; others will be involved and you might be tempted to be involved, or someone might even try to involve you; but stay clear of it all by steering a course away from it. Now God is going to reward those who follow this advice. They are going to be clothed in white even as He is clothed in white. Peter, James and John saw Him on Mount Transfiguration and His clothes were as white as light. That is how the saints are going to be clothed. Their garments will be shining, exceedingly white.

You know we are living in the end time. It is in this age that the churches are going to come together. And as they are even now controlling world politics, they will soon control the finances of the world. Then, if you don't belong to the world organization of churches, you won't be able to buy or to sell. You will lose all. Those who stay true to God and keep their garments clean from the defilement of this 'world-system' of church orders will be physically bereft. There will be presented to them a great temptation to give in. Preachers will give in with the excuse that they will serve God within the framework of the antichrist beast-system. They will give in to the flatteries and blandishments of the hierarchy. And the people will follow these false shepherds right into the slaughter. But in the judgment they will all be found naked. They will not be given those white robes; neither will they walk with Him. You can't walk in the spotted garments of the world, holding hands with the devil here, and then expect to be with God. It is time to wake up and hear the voice of God crying, "Come out of her (organized religion) My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues." Amen. God is speaking. Shun the religions of this world like you shun the plague. Leave off walking with the world and make your garments white by repentance and the blood of the Lamb. But do it now, for tomorrow may be too late.

"And he that overcometh, I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life."

Once again we come to a most difficult portion of the Word. This verse superficially regarded will be used by both the Arminians and the Calvinists to suit their purposes.

The Arminians will declare that this verse assuredly annuls John 6:37-44,

"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.

For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him That sent Me.

And this is the Father's will Which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, Whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?

Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

No man can come to Me except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

Arminianism makes the will of the Father, not a sovereign purpose, but merely a complacent desire as He stands back to see what all men do with His good and gracious gifts, and even life eternal.

The Calvinists do not see that. They see in this verse strong consolation given to the suffering, burdened saints, that no matter how evil are the times, how terrible the persecution, because the overcomer is one, "who believeth that Jesus is the Christ," he will not have his name removed from that book. Some also say that this 'Book of Life' is not the 'Lamb's Book of Life.' But as usual, when one regards a verse superficially, he comes up with a superficial understanding.

The possibility of the removal of a name from the records of God deserves more than a casual study, for up until now most students have merely drawn a conclusion that God places the names of those born again within the Lamb's Book of Life at the time of their rebirth; and if for any reason that name must be removed, the space on the record will simply be a blank as it was before a name had been placed there. This is one hundred percent opposite to what the Word actually teaches.

At the very start of our study, let it be known that there is NOT ONE Scripture that teaches that God is presently compiling a record of names. This

was all done before the foundation of the world, as we will point out shortly. Also, it is not a question of simply involving ourselves with two groups of people both of whom had opportunity to receive eternal life, wherein one group received it and had their names placed on record while the others who refused did not have their names so placed. We will actually show by Scripture that multitudes who were not even born again will go into eternal life. As strange as this may sound, it is certainly true. We will also show that there is a group of people whose names having been placed on that record before the foundation of the world, CANNOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE THOSE NAMES REMOVED; but will also show that another group WHOSE NAMES WERE ON THAT RECORD BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD WILL HAVE THEIR NAMES REMOVED.

To begin with, there is no basis for the claims that the 'Lamb's Book of Life' is not the same as the 'Book of Life.' The Book of Life might be called the Lamb's Book of Life, or Christ's Book of Life, or even Thy Book and Book of the Living. Only names are written in it.

Revelation 13:8,

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, (the beast) whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Revelation 17:8,

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

Revelation 20:12-15,

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

You can see that though there are other books mentioned, there is always the reference to ONE book containing names. In the Revelation it is called the 'Lamb's Book of Life', or the 'Book of Life.'

Now where is this book located? Luke 10:17-24,

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy Name.

And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit, and said, I Thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for it seemed good in Thy sight.

All things are delivered Me of My Father: and no man knoweth Who the Son is, but the Father: and Who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.

And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

For I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

The Book of Life is definitely located in heaven, and will appear at the great White Throne judgment. In these verses Jesus said that their NAMES were written in heaven. They were written in the Book of Life, for that is where names are placed. Jesus was speaking to the seventy (verse 17), but He was also speaking to the twelve (verse 23). These had all been rejoicing that devils were subject to them in Jesus' Name. Christ's rejoinder was, "Rejoice not that spirits are subject to you, but rather that your names are written in heaven (Book of Life)." You will note here that Judas was one of those who were casting out devils in Jesus' Name, but we know that he was a devil, the son of perdition.

John 6:70-71,

"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, being one of the twelve."

John 17:12,

"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy Name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition: that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

John 13:10-11, 18,

"Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit, and ye are clean but not all.

For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean.

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me."

Now if language means anything at all we must admit that Judas was chosen by Jesus (John 13:18), yet he was not clean. (John 13:10-11), Judas was also given to Jesus by the Father. John 17:12. (Let it be noted here that the "choosing" and giving is the exact parallel as in the illustration of Moses and Pharaoh, Jacob and Esau, for though Esau and Pharaoh were both fore-known, they were predestinated to wrath, while the end of Moses and Jacob was glorification. I Peter 2:8-9a shows both reprobates and elect "even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient: where-unto also they were appointed. But Ye are a chosen generation.") Judas was numbered with the twelve and actually had a part with them in the ministry previous to Pentecost.

Acts 1:16-17,

"Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry."

The part that Judas obtained amongst the twelve and then lost was neither inferior to the ministries of the other eleven, nor was it a devilish foreign ministry interjected amongst the ministries of the others.

Acts 1:25,

"That he may take part of this ministry and apostle-ship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

Judas, a devil, lost a God-given Holy Ghost ministry, and killed himself and WENT TO HIS OWN PLACE. His name was even in the Book of Life. But his name was blotted out.

Now before we pursue this thought on Judas, let us go back to the Old Testament and see where God did the same thing. In Genesis 35:23-26, the sons of Jacob were twelve in number and their names were as follows: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun; Joseph and Benjamin;

Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. These twelve sons' descendants become the twelve tribes of Israel with the exception that Joseph did not have a tribe named after him, for in the providence of God there were to be thirteen tribes, and Joseph's two sons were given the honor of bringing the twelve to thirteen. You know, of course, that this was necessary as Levi was separated unto God for the priesthood. Thus when Israel left Egypt and God gave them the tabernacle in the wilderness, we find the tribe of Levi ministering to twelve tribes named Reuben, Simeon, Issachar, Judah, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Ephraim and Manasseh. The order of the host names them thus in Numbers 10:11-28. There is no mention of Joseph or Levi. But when we look at Revelation 7:4-8, where it says "there were sealed one hundred forty-four thousand of ALL the tribes of the children of Israel," it names them thus: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin. We are back to the twelve tribes with Levi and Joseph named amongst them, but with Dan and Ephraim missing.

The question now arises, why are these two tribes deleted? The answer lies in Deuteronomy 29:16-20,

"For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt; and how we came through the nations which ye passed by;

And ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them:

Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;

And it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst:

The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven."

Herein is pronounced the curse against idolatry, or spiritual fornication. The tribe that turned to idolatry was to have its name blotted out. And the history of the two tribes whose names were blotted out because of idolatry is found in I Kings 12:25-30,

"Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence and built Penuel.

And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:

If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other one put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan."

Hosea 4:17,

Ephraim is joined to his idols: let him alone.

Note particularly that the punishment for idolatry was that the name of that tribe was to be blotted out 'from under heaven.' Deuteronomy 29:20. It does not say that it would be blotted out 'in heaven,' but from under heaven. And that is exactly as it is, for now Israel is back in Palestine, and soon the Lord will seal 144,000 of them. But from that number Dan and Ephraim are missing.

Revelation 7:4-8,

"And I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of ALL the tribes of the children of Israel.

Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand."

(Note, Dan and Ephraim missing).

Now with this see Daniel 12:1 which refers to these one hundred and forty-four thousand being sealed during the sixth seal and the time of the Great Tribulation or Jacob's trouble.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered every one **THAT SHALL BE FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK.**"

However, after this period of tribulation, (during the millennium,) as seen by Ezekiel in 48:1-8, and 22-29 we see the tribes back once more in Divine order. But, from the time that Ephraim and Dan joined themselves to idols, they died, and those tribes have no more recognition. Now I realize that since the destruction of Jerusalem, all records of all tribes have been lost, so that no one can say for sure what tribe he is from, **BUT GOD KNOWS.** That great God Who is bringing Israel back to Palestine knows exactly which tribe every true Israelite is from, and from all the assembled one hundred forty-four thousand Dan and Ephraim will be missing.

Here are the tribes of Israel. Ezekiel 48:1-8 and 22-29,

"Now these are the names of the tribes. From the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, northward, to the coast of Hamath; for these are his sides east and west; a portion for Dan.

And by the border of Dan, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Asher.

And by the border of Asher, from the east side even unto the west side, a portion for Naphtali.

And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Manasseh.

And by the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Ephraim.

And by the border of Ephraim, from the east side even unto the west side, a portion for Reuben.

And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Judah.

And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, etc.

Moreover from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, being in the midst of that which is the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the **PRINCE.**

As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side unto the west side, Benjamin shall have a portion.

And by the border of Benjamin, from the east side unto the west side, Simeon shall have a portion.

And by the border of Simeon, from the east side unto the west side, Issachar a portion.

And by the border of Issachar from the east side unto the west side, Zebulun a portion.

And by the border of Zebulun, from the east side unto the west side, Gad a portion.

And by the border of Gad, at the south side southward, etc."

Another illustration that we might take is the story of Israel leaving Egypt for Canaan land. God's purpose in this age was to bring Israel OUT, and to take them IN, to the end that they might serve Him. Thus when they left Egypt they ALL came out under the blood of the sacrificial lamb; they ALL went through the waters of baptism in the Red Sea; they ALL enjoyed the mighty miracles; ALL ate of the manna; ALL drank of the rock; and in so far as obvious external blessings and manifestations were concerned they ALL partook in like and equal manner. But, when they came to Moab those who joined in the feast of Baal-Peor all died. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness, for it was there that they refused the Word of God and turned from it. Now this is what Hebrews 6:1-9 speaks of, which was brought out so carefully in the Pergamean Age. You can't go along with just part of the Word, you have to take ALL the Word. There are people who seem involved in the things of God almost one hundred percent. They are like Judas. No one but Jesus knew exactly what kind of a person Judas was. So the day came that Judas did exactly what Israel did at Baal-Peor. He decided that he wanted to join with the false vine forces--enter into the financial, political organization of anti-Word, anti-Christ religion and he did so. He was fooled! The other eleven were not. They could not be, for they were of the very elect. So when Judas left and betrayed the Lord, his name was removed from the Book of Life. (Revelation 22:19).

Now I am sure that you have noticed that those whose names were in the Book of Life were a part of the religious order of that day that centered around the true God and worship of Him, though they did not worship according to Truth (Word). Like Judas they didn't go all the way. See how Judas was chosen of God. He was instructed in truth. He shared knowledge of the mysteries. He had a ministry of power granted unto him and he healed the sick and cast out devils in Jesus' Name. But when the show-down came, he sold out for gold and political power. He did not go up to Pentecost to receive the Spirit of God. He was devoid of the Spirit. Make no mistake about it, a person that is truly baptized by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ receiving the fullness of the Spirit will be in the WORD ALL THE WAY. That is the evidence of being baptized with the Holy Ghost. Judas failed. Multitudes fail right there.

And when they fail to go on in that Word, their names are taken off the Book of Life.

In order to further clarify this removal of a name from the Book of Life we ought to extend our thoughts to Israel in the days of Moses.

Exodus 32:30-34,

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sins.

And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sins--; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.

And the Lord said unto Moses, whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.

Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold Mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them."

It is more than evident that names have been, and will be removed from the Book of Life ere time shall be no more. In this particular place it was because of idolatry, even as when Dan and Ephraim lost their rights as tribes for worshipping the golden calves. All who worshipped the idols had their names removed from the Book of Life.

When Israel rejected the leadership of God in the pillar of fire, and turned to worship the golden calves their names were removed from the Book of Life. Exodus 32:33. (Whosoever has sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.) If such turning to idols demands the penalty of the removal of names from the Book of Life, then most assuredly Israel's rejection of Jesus Christ as Messiah would demand as severe a penalty. This is exactly so.

In Psalms 69 which sets forth the humiliation of Jesus it says in verses 21-28,

"They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.

Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.

Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.

Pour out Thy indignation upon them and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.

For they persecute Him Whom Thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom Thou hast wounded.

Add iniquity unto their iniquity; and let them not come into Thy righteousness.

Let them be blotted out of the Book of the Living, and not be written with the righteous."

When the Jews rejected Jesus there was a literal turning away of God from them to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:46-48,

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

This is not to suggest that there will be no more names from the tribes of Israel remaining in the Book of Life, for many of these (but not multitudes) through the principle of election will be in the Gentile church age and come into the body of Jesus Christ, showing that their names did indeed remain in the Book of Life. Also, as we will show, according to the fifth seal multitudes of martyred Jews will be given white robes and eternal life by the Lord. Also the hundred and forty-four thousand will be sealed at His coming, proving that their names were not deleted either. But it is even as most accurately set forth in Psalms 69 that it is the wicked or unrighteous rejecters of Christ and the destroyers of His people whose names are removed.

As Israel (chosen people of God) in majority forfeited their rights in the Book of Life by rejecting Jesus, so the majority of the Gentile church will also come into condemnation with the resultant removal of their names from the Book of Life by rejecting the Word and thereby entering into the world ecumenical movement which is the image erected unto the beast.

There is another point to see here. In the great White Throne judgment there will be a separation of people. The Book of Life will be opened and another book will be opened.

Matthew 25:31-46,

"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory:

And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left.

Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger and ye took Me in:

Naked and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.

Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered and fed Thee? or thirsty and gave Thee drink:

When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee?

Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink:

I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: Naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not:

Then shall they also answer Him saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison and did not minister unto Thee?

Then shall He answer them saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto Me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Revelation 20:11-15,

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away: and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works,

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

There will be both the righteous and the unrighteous in this judgment. It says so. **THESE RIGHTEOUS WILL NOT BE THE BRIDE FOR THE BRIDE SITS WITH HIM IN JUDGMENT.**

I Corinthians 6:2-3,

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"

Revelation 3:21,

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

See, the bride is with Him in the throne. As she is to judge the world she has to be sitting in the judgment with Him. That is exactly what Daniel saw.

Daniel 7:9-10,

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire.

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened."

See, it is the same scene, for the thousand thousands who are ministering to Him are the bride, for who ministers to the husband but the wife?

The question now arises, why are these righteous ones in the judgment? There is no other place that they can come up, for there are but two resurrections and since they could not qualify for the first resurrection they must come up in the second which is a resurrection unto judgment. The ones who qualify for the first resurrection (the bride) are not in the judgment. John 5:24, "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life (that is, the believer is already the recipient of eternal life which he has in his possession now) and shall not come into condemnation (shall not come into the judgment, is what it really says) but is passed (permanently) from death unto life." But notice carefully, Jesus must have yet another group in mind who at a certain resurrection will receive

eternal life. They will receive it at the resurrection, NOT HAVING PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED IT AS A MEMBER OF THE BRIDE.

John 5:28-29,

"Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Now we all know that John 5:28-29 is NOT THE RAPTURE for only the dead in Christ will arise from the graves at that time along with the living bride who still is on the earth.

I Thessalonians 4:16-17,

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

But it says in John 5:28-29 that ALL are going to come forth from the grave. This is the very same resurrection that is spoken of in Revelation 20:11-15 wherein THE DEAD were brought before the Lord and judged according to their works, and all whose names were not in the Book of Life were then cast into the lake of fire.

We now face the question as to why they should be given eternal life at the judgment since the Epistles seem to conclusively point out that one must possess the Spirit of Christ or perish. Though it seems thus, we must not discredit the words of Jesus Who most pointedly sets forth that there are some found in the Book of Life who will either receive eternal life before the general resurrection or after it.

Paul does not evade this truth for he most clearly says in Philippians 3:11,

"If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead."

Now this statement is most peculiar. We all know that we are ALL going to be in a resurrection whether we want to be or not. All will be resurrected. So Paul could hardly be saying, "If by ANY MEANS I might attain to a resurrection of the dead." The truth of the matter is, he is not saying that. The literal reading is, "If by any means I might attain to the 'out-resurrection' from among the dead." This is not the attaining to the general or second resurrection, but attaining to the first resurrection, of which is said, "Blessed and Holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years." The first resurrection has nothing to do with the

second death. That is at the end of the thousand years when ALL THE REST of the dead live again. And in that day there will be those who come forth to eternal life and those others who are caught in the second death. Now we do not need to guess about those who in the second resurrection are given life. We are told it is given to them on the grounds that they have been kind and good to the "Brethren". Those who are raised and cast into the lake of fire will be so treated because of their mistreatment of the "Brethren". Since this is the Word of God we simply accept it. There is no argument here, just a simple statement of fact.

To further clarify, notice specifically the words of Matthew 25:31-46. It does not say that a shepherd is literally separating sheep from goats, but it is AS a shepherd dividing sheep from goats. These are not sheep in this particular area of time (White Throne Judgment). The sheep are in His fold, they heard His voice (Word) and they followed Him. **THEY ALREADY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE AND CANNOT COME INTO THE JUDGMENT.** But these do NOT have eternal life, and they are in the judgment. They are allowed to GO INTO eternal life. But upon what grounds do they enter into life eternal? Certainly not upon the fact that they already have His life as does the bride, but they receive it because they were kind to His brethren. They are not His brethren: that would make them joint-heirs with Jesus. They are NOT heirs to anything but life. They share no throne, etc. with Him. **THEIR NAMES MUST HAVE BEEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE AND NOT REMOVED.** Now because of their love of the people of God they are recognized and saved. No doubt these served and helped the children of God. Perhaps like Nicodemus and Gamaliel they stood for the children in a time of trouble.

If this seems to smack of "restoration," watch carefully now, for the wicked are NOT restored, but turned into the lake of fire. The names of many of those destroyed were in the Book of Life also; but they were blotted out because they failed to honor the people of God who were the living manifested Word (living epistles) for their day.

Now let us be very clear here. These are not nations being judged and going into the millennium because they have harbored and helped the Jews. That is very clear because of the conclusion of these verses. "And these (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment (lake of fire), but the righteous into everlasting life." There is no record of TWO judgments set where the wicked are cast into the lake of fire. Only the beast and false prophet are judged at the end of the great tribulation. No, this is the White Throne judgment, and they are judged according to what is written in the books.

It is the second resurrection that the "souls under the altar" as set forth in the fifth seal (Revelation 6:9-11) are given white robes, and of course eternal life, or there would be no point of white robes.

"And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Now note particularly that none of these under the altar were killed for the testimony to Jesus. They were not like Antipas who was slain for holding fast His Name. These are not born again ones, with eternal life as their possession. They come up in the resurrection and receive life because of their stand on the Word. And notice how these are crying out for vengeance. They cannot be bride material. The bride turns the cheek and cries, "Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do." These are Jews. They have to be because they are in the fifth seal, and it is in the fourth seal that the Gentile bride is gone in the rapture. So these Jews aren't born of His Spirit. They don't even believe that Jesus is the Messiah. But as they were blinded by God for the Gentile's sake, God gave them eternal life on the grounds that though they could not come to Him, yet they were truly faithful to all the Word they knew, and died for it as multitudes died under Hitler, Stalin, etc., and will yet die.

It is the second resurrection wherein the five foolish virgins come up. Notice that they were virgins. They did not have the Holy Spirit so they missed being in the bride, while the five wise who had oil became a part of that bride. But these people, being a separated, God-loving people, and trying to abide in the Word, according to what they knew of it, and being a help in the work of the Lord will come up at the end of time. They will miss the millennium, which you can begin to see by these truths is much more important and wonderful than we have ever thought or believed.

All these people had their names in the Book of Life and their names remained. But whose names did not remain? Those of the world system churches who fought the bride will be those whose names are removed. That is who will lose out. They will be cast into the lake of fire.

Now let us go another step, but before we do let us review our case thus far. First of all we know most assuredly that the purpose of God stands in election. It was purposed in Himself. It was God's purpose to bring forth a people like unto Himself that would be a Word Bride. She was chosen before the foundation of the world IN HIM. She was fore-known and beloved before she was ever brought forth during the ages upon the earth. She was redeemed by His blood and can NEVER come into condemnation. She can never be in the judgment because sin cannot be imputed unto her.

Romans 4:8,

"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

But indeed she shall be with Him in His throne of judgment, judging the world and even angels. Her name (each of her members) was written in a section of the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world. Secondly, there is another class. Their names are also in the Book of Life and they will come up in the second resurrection. Such are the foolish virgins and the righteous as are spoken of in Matthew 25. In this class also are those who do not worship the beast or become involved in the antichrist system but die for their faith even though they are not in the bride, not having been born again. But they will come up in the second resurrection and go into eternal life. Thirdly, there are the borderline Christians such as we saw in Israel coming out of Egypt. These had their names in the Book of Life and their works written in the books. These having failed to obey God and being void of the Spirit, though even the signs and wonders were amongst them, will have their names removed from the Book of Life. Amongst this group will be the ones like Judas who though entirely void of the Spirit, but are religious, will have manifestation in their lives, and though on the books were not the elected IN HIM. Such also as Balaam will be in that group. Fourth and finally are the ones whose names have never been or will ever be written on the books.

Such are found in Revelation 13:8 and Revelation 17:8,

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not: and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

Jesus said that a certain group would accept one who came in his own name. That one is the antichrist. And that is exactly what it says of them in Revelation 13:8, and 17:8. These were ordained of God but not unto election. And with this group is such that are as Pharaoh.

It says of him,

"Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up. Vessels of wrath fitted for destruction."

Romans 9:17 and 22.

None of these would be placed on the records of life. I am not saying that there is no record of them. No doubt there is some kind of a record of them, but NOT IN THE RECORDS OF LIFE. Their purpose of existence has been dealt with slightly in the rest of this book but we can add two more Scriptures.

Proverbs 16:4,

"The Lord hath made the wicked for the day of evil."

Job 21:30,

"The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction, they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath."

Since this portion of the Word is hard for the human mind to grasp, it must be accepted and believed by faith. Some will be offended by what I have set forth because they fail to understand the sovereignty of God which sets forth that GOD IS GOD, and because He is God one cannot defeat His counsels or thwart His will and purpose; but He, being omnipotent, is ruling in ALL affairs and is doing whatever He will with all His creation because all were created for His good pleasure. Therefore, as Paul says, "If God should take of one lump of clay and make of that same lump one vessel unto honor and another vessel unto dishonor, who can be offended and cry against Him?" That He has the right to do this on the grounds of creation alone, we cannot deny. Yet He went even further, for according to Romans 14:7-9, we have the irrefutable proof that Jesus paid the purchase price of the whole world, and therefore He can do as He wills with His own.

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

For to this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord BOTH OF THE DEAD AND LIVING."

(Ownership; NOT relationship is meant here.)

This is also set forth in John 17:2,

"As Thou hast given Him power OVER ALL FLESH, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him."

Now, if we impute omniscience to God, we must also accept that He is perfect in wisdom and righteousness. This plan of election and reprobation is the wisdom of God revealed in all ages even, as it says in Ephesians 1:3-11,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all Spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,

According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him. In love

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.

In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace;

Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all WISDOM and prudence,

Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself,

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him;

In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

Thus if God has so designed that there be those whose names are placed in a section of the Lamb's Book of Life and cannot be erased for they are the names of His bride, then we must accept that. If it also states that there are those whose names were placed in the record of the Book of Life but in the foreknowledge of God they were to fall and have their names removed we must accept that. And if there are those whose names were NEVER placed upon a record of life, we must accept that, also. And if there are those who will enter into life eternal after the White Throne judgment solely on the grounds of being good and kind and just to the elect of God who are His brethren, then we cannot but accept that. **FOR WHO KNOWETH THE MIND OF THE LORD THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM?** Rather let us be subject in faith to Him Who is our Father and live.

To understand this subject even more clearly it will now be wise to approach it from the standpoint of the church through the ages. Up until now we have been thinking in terms of the removal of the names of individuals. Now we want to consider, not the individuals, but the groups represented in the church. To do so we will liken the church through the ages to the wheat plant. A grain of wheat is planted to the end that a single grain of wheat will reproduce and multiply itself through a certain process during a certain period of time. That single seed will die, but in dying, the life that was in it will come up into a plant which in turn will be the bearer or carrier of that life which is to come back to originality in a multiplied form. Jesus the great Royal Seed died. That matchless One Who is the life of the church stands in the midst of the church for all seven church ages giving His life to the church (the carrier or bearer) to the end that His very life will be reproduced in bodies like unto His in the resurrection. It is at the resurrection that the Royal Seed will see many royal seeds like unto Himself, and they will be even as He is, for says John, "we shall be like Him." This is what John the Baptist was referring to when He said that Jesus would gather the wheat into the garner. That was the

resurrection where the redeemed who had been elected unto eternal life came in.

Now then, the record of this wheat plant whose end is to reproduce the original seed in multiplied form is THE BOOK OF LIFE. I repeat: the history or record of this wheat plant is the Book of Life of which a part of the Book of Life is the RECORD OF ETERNAL LIFE. (A section of the Book of Life). This is convincingly seen by examining the wheat plant. A bare seed is sown. Soon a blade is seen. But that is not the wheat yet. Then it grows into a stalk. This is not yet wheat. Life is there, but not the wheat. Then at the end of the stalk is a little spike that sends out a tassel. Still a wheat plant but no wheat yet. Then the plant is pollenized, and we see the chaff grow. This looks mighty like the wheat but it is not yet seed. Then forms the wheat in the husk. It is now back to what it was originally. Now the ripened wheat is harvested.

Jesus Christ died. He gave His life. That life was to come back upon the church and bring many sons like unto Himself unto glory in the resurrection. But as the wheat seed had to have a carrier to bring forth multiplied wheat seed, even so there had to be a church which would be the carrier of the life of Christ. As the blade, stalk, tassel, and husks were the carriers for the seed but NOT the seed itself, so the church corporate through the ages has been the carrier of the true SEED though not the Seed itself. That is why we can say that the Book of Life is the WHOLE WHEAT plant.

Let's go over that again. Here is that original seed that was planted. It produced a blade. That wasn't it. It produced a stalk. Not it either. Here come husks in which the wheat is to form. That isn't it. The tassel appears. THEN POLLEN FALLS ON THOSE PISTILS. PART OF THAT PLANT IS QUICKENED. SOMETHING OF THAT ORIGINAL SEED THAT CAME UP THROUGH THE REST OF THE PLANT TURNS INTO SEED. Why didn't the whole plant go into seed? Because it was created to that end. Just part of that plant can go back to being seed because just part of that WHEAT PLANT IS ETERNAL LIFE WHEAT.

You have a perfect type of that in Israel leaving Egypt. They came out about two million strong. ALL escaped through the sacrificial blood. ALL were baptized in the Red Sea; ALL came up out of the water enjoying Holy Spirit manifestation and blessings; ALL ate angel food; ALL drank of the rock that followed them. Yet except for a very few they were naught but carriers for the children who should follow them and go into Canaan land. All Israel is NOT Israel. And all but a tiny minority had their names blotted out of the Book of Life.

We have the same right today in the church. Names are going to be blotted out of the Book of Life. No names will be blotted out of the Book of Eternal Life for that is another record though contained in the Book of Life. THIS IS

THE RECORD: GOD HATH GIVEN US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON. HE THAT HATH THE SON HATH LIFE (ETERNAL) AND HE THAT HATH NOT THE SON HATH NOT LIFE (ETERNAL). And those who have that life were in HIM before the foundation of the world. THEY WERE CHOSEN IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. That GREAT ROYAL SEED, Jesus Christ, was planted (He died) and that life that was in Him came up through the wheat plant and is reproducing itself in multitudes of wheat seeds having the same life in them, and being like the Original because by Spirit they are original.

Now we can see why the redeemed (bought back by original owner) bride (she was in Him as Eve was in Adam) cannot ever have her 'member-names' taken off the record. She is part of Him. She is in the throne. She can never be judged. Every one in the bride is a member of Him and He loses none. But that is not so concerning "the all" in the Book of Life. For amongst them are even those like Judas etc. who have a part in the record but their names are removed. We can see those who come in the last days, and after having done wonderful works, Jesus will say that He never knew them. It is not that He was not aware of them. His omniscience precludes that; but they were not fore-known as in the bride; and neither were they fore-known as amongst the righteous of the second resurrection. They bore no fruit (because they were outside the Word--did not abide in it) and they, therefore, were sentenced to death. Then as we have previously shown there are those who stood for the bride and were an aid and comfort to her. Those had their names remaining on the Book of Life and go into life everlasting. Finally there are those such as Pharaoh who never had their names on the Book of Life and these are cast into the lake of fire also.

Thus the grain of wheat that became a plant for the harvest is the record of the church. And even as not all the wheat plant is wheat seed, and as not all the plant is used in the harvest, so with the church:--all the church is not the bride, and neither is it all given eternal life, but a PART of it is gathered into the garner, and a PART of it is kept that it might enter into eternal life in the second resurrection, and PART of it which is accounted chaff is burned in the lake of fire.

And this is exactly what John the Baptist and Jesus said, for John said that the wheat would be garnered and the chaff burned. Jesus said, "Bind the tares, and then gather the wheat." The ecumenical move will bind the tare churches together, for the tares must be bound FIRST, and though their end is burning, they are not burned at their binding but are reserved to a later date, which is at the end of the thousand years, or the second resurrection. But once the tares are bound the rapture can take place and does so at some time between the binding and the revelation of antichrist. Then will come the day when ALL stand together as seen in Daniel. The King will be there with His bride and in front

of them will be the multitudes who are to be judged. Yes. ALL are there. All the books are opened. A final disposition of ALL is made. The harvest is indeed over. The books once opened are closed.

In concluding this subject for this time, let me refer to a statement made at its beginning wherein I said that not one Scripture spoke of the Lord PRESENTLY compiling a record of names. That is indeed so. However there is a Scripture pointing a future compilation. It is in the eighty-seventh Psalm. This Psalm speaks of the Lord writing up the names of all those born in Zion. On no account can it be presumed that God has to wait until the end of ages or that period of time dealing with Zion in order to know who all might be born in Zion. Again, that would preclude omniscience. Surely He knows who all comprise that number. But what is it? Is it not simply the revised roll wherein God simply places in a new record those names which remained after the second resurrection and pertained to Zion? Surely, that is it.

"And I will confess his name before My Father and His angels."

Roll call in heaven! "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call and I will answer Thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thy hands." The Great Shepherd is calling His sheep by name. The creative voice of God is calling them forth from the dust or changing their atoms even though they had not fallen asleep. It is the rapture. It is the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb and His bride.

But the rapture is not the only roll call. There at the second resurrection, at the great White Throne judgment, will names be confessed before the Father and His angels. Now I have been told by those who know, that the sweetest sound to a human ear is the sound of that person's name. How people love to have their names before the public. How they love acclaim. But no earthly voice will ever sound your name as sweetly as will the voice of God if your name is in the Book of Life and remains there to be revealed before the holy angels. What a day that will be when we hear Jesus say, "Father, they confessed My Name before men in the days of their earthly pilgrimage. Now I will confess their names before Thee and all the heavenly angels."

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

Once more the Spirit hath spoken. Once again we have reviewed the record of what the Spirit said to another age. And we have found the record correct. Another age has gone by and it was fulfilled exactly as He said it would be. What a consolation that is to us who hope to be in the last day bride, for it causes our hearts to leap for joy that He is faithful and will perform His every promise. If He was faithful and true to those of the Sardisean Age, then He is just as true to this our age. If they by His grace and power will be received and

commended by Him, then so will we. Let us go therefore, to perfection and meet the Lord in the air, and be forever with Him.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PHILADELPHIAN CHURCH AGE

REVELATION 3:7-13

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He That is holy, He that is true, He That hath the key of David, He That openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth;

I know thy works: Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name.

Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My new Name.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia was seventy-five miles southeast of Sardis. It was the second largest city in Lydia. It was built upon several hills in a famous wine-growing district. Its coins bore the head of Bacchus and the figure of a Baccante (priestess of Bacchus). The population of the city included Jews, Christians of Jewish origin, and converts from heathenism. The city suffered frequent earthquakes, yet its duration was the longest of the seven cities of Revelation. In fact the city still exists under the Turkish name of Alasehir, or City of God.

The mintage of the coins suggests the deity of the city to be Bacchus. Now Bacchus is the same as Ninus or Nimrod. He is the 'lamented one', though most of us think of him in terms of revelry and drunkenness.

What illumination this brings to our minds. Here is a coin with the god on one side and the priestess or prophetess on the other. Now flip a coin. Does it matter which way it comes down? No sir, it is still the same coin. That is the Romish religion of Jesus and Mary.

But we are not thinking of Rome only. No, there is not only the great harlot. Certainly not; for she, by her fornications has become a mother. Her daughters now are coins of the same mintage. There on one side of the coin they have drawn up a worship of Jesus and on the other side they have their priestess or prophetess also and she writes her creeds and dogmas and tenets and sells them to the people for salvation insisting that she and she alone has the true light.

How remarkable is the fact that this age is characterized by the coin. For the mother and daughters are all buying their way to heaven. Money and not blood is the purchase price. Money and not Spirit is the power that moves them ahead. The god of this world (mammon) hath blinded their eyes.

But their dealings in death will end soon, for this is the age that the Spirit cries, "Behold I come quickly". Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!

THE AGE

The Philadelphia Church Age lasted from 1750 to about 1906. This age, due to the meaning of the name of the city, has been called The Age of Brotherly Love, as Philadelphia means, "love of brethren".

THE MESSENGER

The messenger to this age was without doubt John Wesley. John Wesley was born at Epworth, June 17, 1703 and was one of nineteen children born to Samuel and Susanna Wesley. His father was a chaplain in the Church of England; but it is more than likely that the religious turn of John's mind was based more upon his mother's exemplary life than upon his father's theology. John was a brilliant scholar. It was while he was at Orford that he and Charles became part of a group who were spiritually exercised to worship on the basis of experientially living the truth rather than making doctrine their standard. They drew up a spiritual guide of works, such as giving to the poor, visiting

the sick and the imprisoned. For this they were called Methodists, and other derisive titles. Now John was sufficiently imbued by his vision of the need of religion for the peoples of the world that he went to America (Georgia) as a missionary amongst the Indians. On his way there he found that many of the ship's passengers were Moravians. He was deeply impressed by their meekness, peace, and courage in all circumstances. His labors in Georgia in spite of self denials and hard work was a failure. He returned to England crying, "I went to America to convert the Indians but oh! who shall convert me?"

Back in London he again met the Moravians. It was Peter Bohler who showed him the way of salvation. He was truly born again much to the dismay and evident anger of his brother, Charles, who could not understand how such a spiritual man as John should say he was not formerly right with God. It was, however, not long after that Charles, too, was saved by grace.

Wesley now began to preach the Gospel in those pulpits in London to which he formerly had access; but soon they turned him out. It was at this time that his old friend, George Whitefield, stood him in good stead for he invited John to come and help him preach in the fields where thousands were listening to the Word. Wesley at first was incredulous that he should preach in the open instead of a building, but when he saw the throngs and saw the working of the Gospel in the power of the Spirit he turned wholeheartedly to such preaching.

The work soon took on such proportions that he began sending out numerous laymen to preach the Word. This seemed like a parallel to Pentecost where the Spirit raised up men with power to preach and teach the Word almost overnight.

There was violent opposition to his work but God was with him. The workings of the Spirit were mightily manifested and often such a spirit of conviction took hold of the people as to take away their strength and they would fall to the ground crying in great distress over their sins.

Wesley was a remarkably strong man. He says of himself that he could not remember to have felt lowness of spirits for even a quarter hour since he was born. He slept no more than six hours a day; arose in time to start preaching at five practically every day of his ministry; preached up to four times on a single day so that in a year he would average over 800 sermons.

He traveled multiple thousands of miles as did his circuit riders who carried the Gospel near and far. In fact Wesley traveled 4500 miles per year by horse.

He was a believer in the power of God and he prayed for the sick with great faith and wonderful results.

Many of his meetings saw the manifestation of Spiritual gifts.

Wesley was not in favor of organization. His associates did have a "United Society" who were, "a company of men having the form, and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the Word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation." The only condition of those entering was they should be of those, "who had a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." As time went on they worked out a strict set of rules to be used in self discipline for the good of their souls. Wesley recognized that after his death the movement could be organized and the Spirit of God leave them to dead form. He once remarked that he did not fear that the name of Methodist would leave the earth but that the Spirit might take His flight.

During his lifetime he could have acquired vast wealth; but he did not. His favorite saying on the subject of money was, "Get all you can, save all you can, and give all you can." How strange it would be for Wesley to come back and see the denomination that bears the name of Methodist today. They are rich--vastly rich. But the life and power of John Wesley is missing.

It should also be mentioned that Wesley never did desire to build a work upon a denominational or sectarian basis. Though he was an Arminian in his beliefs, he did not want to separate himself from brethren on the grounds of doctrine. He was a good candidate for James: He based his eternal life on faith and works, or the living of the life, rather than simply accepting a creed or a doctrinal statement.

John Wesley died at the age of 88 having served God as few men would dare to even think they might.

THE SALUTATION

Revelation 3:7,

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He That is holy, He That is true, He That hath the key of David, He That openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;"

Oh, how beautiful are those words. How majestic is even the sound of them. How thrilling to think that all those attributes can be applied to one person. Who would dare to say such things about himself but Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory? I believe the key to interpreting exactly what each of these wonderfully descriptive phrases means is found in verse 9,

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

I say this verse is the key because it deals with the Jews who have always called themselves the children of God to the exclusion of everyone else. They crucified and killed the Lord Jesus Christ. Their terrible deed brought their own blood upon their own heads for centuries. All because they refused Jesus as their Messiah, Which indeed He was. To them He was not the Coming One, or the Son of David; to them He was Beelzebub, or some unrighteous one fit only for destruction. But not so. He was indeed Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh. He is indeed, Messiah. Surely, He was exactly as He now sets Himself forth to be. There He is, THE SAME JESUS--Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever. That Holy One in the midst of the lampstands is the very same Jesus Who walked the shores of Galilee, Who healed the sick, Who raised the dead, and Who in spite of irrefutable proof was crucified and killed. But He arose again, and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The Jews did not call Him holy then. They do not call Him holy now. But He is the HOLY ONE.

Psalms 16:10;

"For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine HOLY ONE to see corruption."

They sought their righteousness after the law and failed miserably, for by the law can no flesh be justified. By the law can no man be made holy. Holiness is of the Lord.

I Corinthians 1:30,

"But of HIM are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

II Corinthians 5:21,b,

"That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

It was Christ or perish, and they perished for they refused Him.

And men of that age as even today were making the same mistake. As the Jews took refuge in the synagogue form of worship, so in the Philadelphia Age they were taking refuge in the church. It is not joining a church that counts. The life is not in the church. The life is in Christ. "This is the record that God hath given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." Man is made holy by the Spirit. It is the Spirit of Holiness that raised Jesus from the dead that indwells us and makes us holy with His holiness.

There He stands, the HOLY ONE. And we will stand with Him clothed in His righteousness, holy with His holiness.

Now this age is the sixth age. In the eyes of God, time is drawing to a close. He will soon be coming back. Soon the cry will go forth as He comes,

"And he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

Revelation 22:11b

Oh, I am so glad that my holiness is not of myself. I am glad that I am in Christ, with all His wonderful attributes of righteousness imputed, yea imparted unto me. Blessed be God forever!

"These things saith He That is true." Now this word, 'true', is a very wonderful word. It does not mean true in just the sense that it is opposite to false. It expresses the Perfect Realization of an idea as contrasted with its Partial Realization.

For example we recall that Jesus said in John 6:32,

"Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."

John 15:1,

"I am the true vine."

Hebrews 9:24,

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

I John 2:8,

"Because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."

Since this word, indeed, expresses Perfect Realization as against the idea of Partial Realization as illustrated in these verses, we can now understand as never before Antitype contrasted with type, and substance with shadow. Take the example now of manna from heaven. God sent down angel bread from heaven for Israel. But that bread did not satisfy. It was only good for a day. Those who ate it were hungry again the next day. If it was left around it became contaminated. But Jesus is the TRUE bread from heaven, whereof manna was just a type. And if any man eats of that BREAD that came from heaven he will never hunger again. He does not need to come back and eat again. The moment he partook, he had eternal life. Here indeed was REALITY. No need any longer for a shadow. No need for a partial salvation. Here is the WHOLE of it. Just like Jesus isn't a part of God; He IS God.

No one could deny that Israel had light. They were the only people who had light as a nation. It was as when Egypt was so dark that one could feel it.

But in the homes of the Israelites there was light. But now true light is come. The light of the world is Jesus. Moses and the prophets brought the light by means of the Scripture relative to the Messiah. Thus Israel had light. But now the Fulfillment of the light has come, and what was but glowing Word has now broken forth in the Brightness of God manifested amongst His people. As the pillar of fire gave light at night, and that was wonderful, now light and life were manifested in the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Israel used to take the red heifer and sacrifice her upon the altar for the remission of sins. For a year the sins of the guilty one was covered. But that covering could not take away the desire for sin. It was not a perfect offering. It was a shadow until the real came along. So each year the man would sacrifice and each year come back because he still had the same desire to sin. The life of the animal atoned for his sin, but being animal blood that was shed and animal life that was given it could not come back upon the man. If it had come back, it still would not have availed. But when Christ the perfect substitute was given, and His blood was shed, then the life that was in Christ came back upon the repentant sinner and that life being the perfect life of Christ, sinless and righteous, then the guilty one could go free for he had no desire to sin. The life of Jesus had come back upon him.

That is what is meant in Romans 8:2,

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

But the Jews back there in the time of Jesus did not want to accept that sacrifice. The blood of bulls and goats made nothing perfect. It was once God's ordained method. But now Christ having appeared in the flesh, and by the shedding of His own blood has put away sin and by that offering of Himself has made us perfect. The Jews would not take that. But what about that Philadelphian Age, and, yes, the other ages, too? Did they really accept this reality in Christ? No sir. Even though Luther brought the truth of justification, the Romish Church, and its eastern counterpart, the Orthodox Church, still clung to works.

Now works are fine, but they don't save you. They don't make you perfect. It is Christ or perish. And it is not even Christ AND works. It is Christ alone. This age began the years of Arminianism that does not believe in Christ as the REALITY. It does not sing of "Nothing but the Blood," for it sings of "Nothing but the blood AND my own conduct". Now I believe in good conduct. If you are saved you will do righteously. We have already gone over that. But let me tell you now, salvation is NOT Jesus PLUS. It is Jesus ALONE. SALVATION IS OF THE LORD. From start to finish it is all GOD. Let His life be in me. Let it be His blood that cleanses me. Let it be His Spirit that fills me. Let it be His Word in my heart and mouth. Let it be His stripes

that heal me. Let it be Jesus, and Jesus Alone. Not by works of righteousness which I have done. No sir. Christ is my life. Amen.

I feel I could just go on and on about these truths, but I will give you one more thought. It is about that wonderful hymn that A. B. Simpson wrote.

"Once it was the blessing,
Now it is the Lord.
Once it was the feeling,
Now it is His Word.
Once His Gift I wanted,
Now the Giver own.
Once I sought for healing,
Now Himself Alone.
All in All forever,
Jesus will I sing.
Everything in Jesus,
And Jesus everything."

There isn't anything in this life, satisfying as it may be, as good and as fine as it may be, but you will find the sum total of all perfection in Christ. Everything fades into insignificance beside Him.

"He That hath the key of David." This beautiful phrase follows and comes out of the preceding phrase, "He that is true".--Christ, the Perfect Realization, contrasted with Partial Realization. Here it is. Moses was a prophet of God, but Jesus (like unto Moses) was THE Prophet of God. David (a man after God's own heart) was king of Israel, but Jesus is the Greater David, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, God very God. Now David was born of the tribe of Judah out of whom no priests came, yet he ate of the shewbread reserved for priests. He was the great warrior overcoming the enemy, establishing the people; as king he sat on the throne. He was a prophet. He was a wonderful type of Christ.

Now it says in Isaiah 22:22,

"And the key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder; so He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open."

The Spirit uses this Old Testament reference concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and His ministry in the church. What the key of David signified at that time is mere shadow, which is now fulfilled in Jesus standing in the midst of the lampstands. It has to do with our Lord AFTER His resurrection and not His earthly pilgrimage. But what does this key signify? The answer lies in the POSITION of the key. It is NOT in His hand. It is not worn around His neck.

It is not placed in the hands of other men, or the verse could not be saying that HE ALONE HAS THE USE OF THAT KEY--FOR HE ALONE OPENS AND SHUTS, AND NO MAN has that right but Jesus Himself. Isn't that right? But where is the key? IT IS ON HIS SHOULDER. But what does SHOULDER have to do with it?

Read Isaiah 9:6,

"And the government shall be upon His shoulder."

But what does this mean? The answer is this. The phrase, "government upon His shoulder" comes from the wedding ceremony of the East. When the bride has been committed to the groom she takes off her veil and places it over the groom's shoulders, signifying that not only is she under his dominion--that she has transferred her rights to him--that he is the head--but also that he bears the responsibility and the care and that HE AND HE ALONE--NO ONE ELSE--NO OTHER MAN--NO OTHER POWER--HAS ANY RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY. And that, beloved, is the KEY of David. God being Sovereign, He foreknew by Divine decree exactly who would be in His bride. He chose her. She did not choose Him. He called her. She did not come on her own. He died for her. He washed her in His own blood. He paid the price for her. She belongs to Him and to Him alone. She is wholly committed to Him and He accepts the obligation. He is her head, for Christ is the head of His church. As Sarah called Abraham, Lord, even so the bride is happy that He is her Lord. He speaks and she obeys for that is her delight.

But have men heeded this truth? Have they esteemed His Person Who alone has the full sovereign authority over His church? I say, "NO". For in every age the church has been governed by a hierarchy--a priesthood--an apostolic succession--closing the door of mercy and grace to whom it will, and instead of assuming the love and responsibility of the church it has with mercenary lust preyed upon her and destroyed her. The clergy lived in luxury while the poor church fed on the husks of abuse. And not one age did any different. Each bound itself to organization and put the government upon men and committed the church to that government. Dare let the people rise up, and they were brutally suppressed or cast out. Every denomination has the same spirit. Every denomination swears that it has the key to the government of the church. Every denomination claims that it opens the door. But that is not true. It is Jesus and Jesus, alone. He sets the members in the Body. He endows them with their ministries. He puts the gifts at her disposal. He cares for her and guides her. She is His sole property and He has no other one but her.

What a far cry from reality is this church age in which we live. And one day soon these men that even now purport to speak for the church will be rising up in the ecumenical move to place a living antichrist at the head of their

organization which deposes the Lord and we will find Him (Christ) outside the church saying,

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

Revelation 3:20.

But let me say this. Our Lord is not defeated. Men claim to open the door to God and shut that door, but they are liars. All that the Father has given Him will come to Him, and he that cometh to Him in no wise will be cast out; He will lose NONE of them. John 6:37-39. And when that last elected member to the body of Christ comes in, then will our Lord appear.

The key of David. Was not David the king of Israel--all Israel? And is not Jesus the Son of David according to the fact that He will sit upon the throne of David in the millennium and reign and rule over His heritage? Surely. So the key of David signifies that it is Jesus Who will bring in the millennium. He Who has the keys to death and hell will raise up His own that they may share in His reign of righteousness upon the earth.

How wonderful that our Lord has all the answers. Truly in Him are all the promises of God fulfilled. Truly by being IN Him we are heirs to what He has purchased for us.

Yes, there He stands, the Lord of Glory. Once as the Father, He was surrounded by the angels, the archangels, the cherubims, and seraphims and the whole host of heaven, crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts". Such was His holiness that no man could approach unto Him. But now we see Him in the church, sharing His own holiness with us, until in Him we have become the very righteousness of God. Yes, and there He stands, "Jesus, Perfect Everything,"--Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star, the Fairest of Ten Thousand, Alpha and Omega, Root and Offspring of David, Father, Son and Holy Ghost--the All and in All.

Isaiah 9:6,

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

In Him is perfect fulfillment. Though once we esteemed Him not, now we love Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. In the midst of the church He stands, and we will sing His praise, for He the Mighty Conqueror is head over the church which is His bride. He bought that bride. He owns her. She is His and His alone and He cares for her. He is our king and we are His kingdom, His eternal possession.

Now you will recall that at the beginning of verse 7, I said that verse 9 would help us to understand it. I hope you saw what I meant. Jesus set Himself

forth as He That is holy, true, (or the only reality) the One with the key of David, the One Who opened and shut. And that is exactly true. Those phrases describe Him perfectly. But the Jews in His day refused Him and all He was. They rejected their Saviour and all He meant to them. And the nominal Christian has now done the same. They have done what the Jews did exactly. The Jews crucified Him and then turned on the true believer. The nominal Christian has crucified Him afresh and turned on the true church to destroy it. But God is true, and He Who is above all will yet return, and when He does He will show Who the only Potentate is. And as He proves Himself to the world, and all the world bows at His feet, at that time all the world will bow at the feet of the saints, proving that they were right in their stand with Him. Blessed be God forever!

THE AGE OF THE OPEN DOOR

Revelation 3:8,

"I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My Name."

The first phrase of this verse, "I know thy works," is analyzed in the rest of the verse, for their works had to do with 'the open door,' 'little strength,' 'the Word and the Name.'

In order to understand the wealth of meaning involved in "behold I set before you an open door, and no man can shut it," we must now recall what has been said about each age running over into another age. There is an overlapping, a melting or fading into, rather than an abrupt end and a clear cut start. This age particularly flows into the next age. And not only does this age overflow into the last age, but the last age is in many respects simply a carrying on of the sixth age. The seventh age (a very short age) gathers up into itself for one quick work, all the evil of every age, and yet all the reality of Pentecost. Once the Philadelphian Age has about run its course, the Laodicean Age quickly comes in, bringing both the tares and the wheat to harvest,

"First bind the tares to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

Matthew 13:30.

Remember, please, that the Sardisean Age started the reformation that must still go on until the grain that was planted at Pentecost goes through the full cycle of planting, watering, nourishing, etc., until it comes right back to original seed. While this is going on, the tares that were sown will have to go through their cycle and be harvested also. That is exactly what we see

happening. If you can just think of the seasons, you can get a very good picture of this. The plant that you see growing in full strength in summer suddenly appears to be going to seed. You can't tell exactly when summer became autumn--it just faded into it. That is how the ages are, and especially these last two.

It is to this age that Jesus says, 'I come QUICKLY' verse 11. That makes the last age a very short one. Laodicea is the age of the quick work. It is cut short.

Now we will specifically dwell on the OPEN DOOR that no man can shut. First of all I want to dwell on the open door as signifying the tremendous missionary effort of that age. Paul called a new missionary endeavor for the Lord an open door.

II Corinthians 2:12,

"Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's Gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord."

So we can see by the comparison of Scriptures that this open door signified the greatest spreading of the Gospel that the world has ever seen.

I want you to see something here. God works in threes, doesn't He? It was in the third or Pergamean Age that the church was married to the state. The deeds of the Nicolaitanes had become the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. That age was the OPEN DOOR for the false vine. Once it was backed up by the power of the state it became actually a world system even though it bore the name, Christian. Thus it spread like wildfire. But now, three ages later, after a long and hard struggle of faith, here comes the OPEN DOOR to the truth. The Word of the Lord now has its day. Of course the fifth age had set the stage for this mighty move, as that age gave us exploration, colonization, the printing of books, etc.

It would have been wonderful if this 'open door' had followed the Divine pattern of Pentecost which was set forth in Hebrews 2:1-4, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the Word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him: God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?" Now you know that this is the pattern for Jesus, Himself, said so.

Mark 16:15-20,

"And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following. Amen."

He never told them to go into all the world and establish Bible colleges; nor did He tell them to pass out literature. Now those things are fine, but what Jesus told them to do was to **PREACH THE GOSPEL**--stick with the **WORD**--and then the signs would follow. The very first introduction we have in the way the Kingdom of God was to be preached was when He sent out the twelve. In Matthew 10:1-8, He commissioned and instructed them on this wise,

"And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.

But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give."

This ministry that He gave them was actually the sharing of His own ministry with them, for it says in Matthew 9:35-38,

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

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

Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."

Now many people have the idea that just the apostles had this ministry given them by our Lord Jesus, and so when they died, the ministry was over. That is not so.

Here in Luke 10:1-9, we find that in the days of His earthly sojourn He had already started to give ministries of power to His own,

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, wither He Himself would come.

Therefore said He unto them. The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest.

Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

And if the Son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

Who would dare deny the mighty ministry of Philip? Who would dare to deny the mighty ministries of Irenaeus, Martin, Columba, Patrick and countless scores of others who have had God's anointing upon them?

Yes. The Bible way is the real way of the open door. And I want to add my testimony to that. The reason I have to do that is because I can only speak with assurance concerning what God has done in my own life. So if you'll excuse a personal note here I will tell you how I know for a surety that Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever and that the power of God is still available to those who will believe and receive.

During my missionary trip to South Africa, God so blessed that when I came to Durban the only place that could begin to accommodate the people was the huge race track which is the second largest in the world. The crowd was well over 100,000. In order to keep law and order they had to put up fences to separate the various tribes. They posted hundreds of policemen to

keep the throngs quieted down. Those hungry souls had come for many miles. A queen from Rhodesia had come with a train of 27 coaches loaded with African natives. They struggled in across the fields and mountains bearing on their backs for many and many a mile some loved one that needed help. The whole country was stirred by the mighty works that had been manifested by the Holy Spirit.

One afternoon as I began to minister, one of thousands of the Mohammedans came up on the platform. As she stood before me, a missionary to the Mohammedans began to softly implore the Lord, "Oh, for that precious soul. Oh, for that precious soul." He had been over there for years and years, and according to his own testimony, he had seen only ONE Mohammedan come to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour. They were originally the Medo-Persians whose laws change not. They are so hard to win. It seems that "once a Mohammedan always a Mohammedan" is a law amongst them.

Well, as she stood before me, I began to speak to her and to all those thousands through the interpreters. I said, "Is it not so that the missionaries have told you of a JESUS Who came to save you?" You should have seen the people look at each other when I said that. Then when they had answered that was correct I went on and said, "But did the missionaries read to you out of this Book (I held my Bible aloft for them to see) that this same Jesus was a mighty healer, and that He would live in His people down through the ages until He came again to receive them unto Himself? Did they tell you that because of that same Spirit in them that was in Jesus that they would be able to do mighty works even as Jesus did? Did they tell you that you can be healed, even as you can be saved? How many of you would like to see this same Jesus come down amongst us and do the same things that He did when He was here on earth long ago?" They all wanted that. That is one thing they surely agreed on.

I then went on, "If Jesus by His Spirit will do what He did when upon earth, will you believe His Word, then?" And here was that Mohammedan woman in front of me. The Spirit began to move through me.

I said to her, "Now, you know that I don't know you. I can't even speak your language." She admitted that. I said, "As for healing you, you know I cannot. But you heard the message this afternoon and understood me." Her Indian interpreter answered back for her that she understood, for she had read the New Testament.

Now the Mohammedans are descendants of Abraham. They believe in One God. But they reject Jesus as the Son of God and instead they take Mohammed as His prophet. They say that Jesus never died and rose again. They are taught that by their priests and they believe it.

I said, "But Jesus did die and rise again. He sent His Spirit back upon the church. That Spirit that was in Him is the very same Spirit in the church now and It can and will produce what Jesus produced.

He said in John 5:19,

"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."

Now then, if Jesus will come and reveal to me what your trouble is or what you are here for--if He can tell me what your past is, surely you can believe for the future?"

She said through her interpreter, "Yes, I can."

I said, "All right, may He do it."

Those Mohammedans were watching intently. They were all leaning forward to see what would happen.

Then the Holy Spirit spoke, "Your husband is a short, heavy-set man, with a black mustache. You have two children. You were at the doctors about three days ago and he gave you an examination. You have a cyst on the womb."

She bowed her head and said, "That is true."

I asked her, "How is it you came to me, a Christian? Why didn't you go to your Mohammedan prophet?"

She said, "I think you can help me."

I said, "I can't help you, but if you receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour, He Who is here now, and knows all about you, He'll help you."

She said, "I accept Jesus as my Saviour." That did it. She was healed and about ten thousand Mohammedans came to Christ that day because the Gospel was preached in both Word and power. God never told a man to labor thirty years and harvest nothing. He gave us the open door of Word and power and that is what we are supposed to use. That is what gave Paul his great and effective ministry. I Corinthians 2:4, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

Listen to me now. It was while on this same trip that as I was boarding a plane at New Salisbury, Rhodesia, that I saw a party of four with American passports. I went over to them and said, "Hello there, I see you have American passports. Are you traveling somewhere?"

The young man answered me, "No, we are all missionaries here."

"How nice," I replied. "Are you on your own or do you work with some organization?"

"We are Methodists. We come from Wilmore, Kentucky," he said.

"Well, that is almost in my back yard," I replied.

"You wouldn't be that Brother Branham that comes from up that way would you?"

I said, "Yes, that's right." That cured him. He wouldn't say another thing--and the way he and those three girls just looked back and forth at each other. So I said, "Just a minute son, I'd like to speak to all of you about some principles, seeing we are all Christians and here for a great purpose. Now you say you have all four been here two years. Can you say in the Name of Jesus that you can put your finger on one soul that you know you have won to the Lord?" They could not do it.

"I don't want to hurt your feelings, girls," I said, "but you all ought to be home helping your mothers with the dishes. You haven't any business out on the field unless you are filled with the Holy Ghost and preaching the true Gospel in the demonstration of the power of the Holy Ghost. If you are not seeing the results that Jesus said you would see, it's because you are not preaching the true Gospel."

Let me go a step further and show you just how things can be on the mission field. I don't say it is all this way, but I am afraid too much of it is. It was while I was on this same trip and touring around Durban with the mayor that I saw a native with a tag around his neck and he was packing an idol. I asked my friend what that tag was for and he said that when a native embraced Christianity they put a tag on him. That sure surprised me, for here was a man calling himself a Christian and carrying that idol, so I asked how that could be.

He said, "I can speak his language. Let us go over and talk to him."

So we went over and the mayor acted as my interpreter. I asked the native if he was a Christian. He affirmed that he surely was a Christian. I then asked why he carried the idol if he was a Christian. He answered that it was an idol his father had carried and he left it to him. When I told him that no Christian ought to carry idols he replied that this idol had been of great use to his father. I was curious to know how, and he said that one day his father was being stalked by a lion, so he built a fire and spoke to the idol the way he had been taught by the witch doctor. The lion left. I informed him that it was the fire that sent the lion off as fire scares all wild animals. I will never forget his reply. He said, "Well, it is this way, if Amoyah (the Spirit) fails, then this idol won't."

(A detailed account of the African campaign may be found in the book, "A Prophet Visits Africa.")

That is just about all the strength the Christian multitudes have because the Word was not brought to them by the original open door of Pentecost.

Now getting back to the open mission door of the Philadelphian Age. It did not have the open door of power it ought to have had. Notice in the same verse He mentions this open door. He says, "Thou hast little strength". That is right.

The POWER of the Spirit was missing in that age. The Word was well preached. It was well able to make souls wise unto salvation. But the great power of God that showed forth His mighty works, that made bare His arm in behalf of His own was missing except amongst the scattered groups. Yet, praise God, it was growing and had increased over what they had in the Reformation.

It was in this age that the man we often call the father of missions went out. William Carey, a village shoemaker, who pastored the Particular Baptist Church at Moulton, England, mightily aroused the people by preaching on, "whether the command given to the Apostles to teach all nations was not obligatory on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world, seeing that the accompanying promise was of equal extent." He was fought by the Calvinists who had gone to the extreme of the doctrine of election believing that all who will be saved WILL be saved and missionary work would be against the work of the Spirit. But Andrew Fuller helped Mr. Carey by his preaching and fund raising. Such was their effect that a society was formed to spread the Gospel to all nations, in 1792. This society sent out Carey who was signally blessed of God in winning souls in India. In 1795 an aroused Christianity formed the London Missionary Society which we well know raised millions of pounds, and sent thousands of missionaries over the years to accomplish the desires of the Lord. The Spirit of God was moving and "Other Sheep" might well have been the cry of the heart of those earnest believers.

"I have set before thee an open door." I want to look at these words again. This time, though I am not going to disassociate them from missions, I am going to bring you a thought which carries deep into the last age. As I have already stated, this age melts into the last age. It was in this age Jesus said, "I come quickly" (verse 11), and of the last age He was going "to finish the work and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." Romans 9:28. Notice how this verse of Revelation 3:8 goes-- "open door--little strength, Word, Name." That open door has to do with all three. Now what does the door signify?

In John 10:7, it says,

"Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP."

That is right: 'I AM' IS the door of the sheep. Now this is not just a quaint expression. This is actually so. Notice in John 10 when Jesus is giving this parable, He calls Himself the shepherd. Then He calls Himself the door. And that is what the shepherd is to the sheep. He is actually their door.

When I was over in the East I saw that at nighttime the shepherd would gather all his sheep together. He would put them into the fold. Then he would count them. When he was sure that they were all in, he would lie down in the

open door of the fold and literally become the door to the fold. No one could get in or out except by him. He was the door. The next day as I went riding with a friend in a jeep I noticed that a shepherd began to lead his flock into the city. Right away all traffic came to a stop so that the sheep could go through. Now the cities over in the East aren't like they are here. We keep all our merchandise inside; but there, it is like a big farmers' market with all the produce on the pavement for passers-by to see and buy. I thought, "Oh my, here is where the riot begins. Wait till those sheep see all that food out there." But as the shepherd went ahead, those sheep just followed right along exactly in each step. They would look at all those goodies, but not a sheep touched a thing. Oh, if I could only have known their language, I would have stopped traffic myself and preached them a sermon on what I had just seen.

When you are sheep that belong to the Great Shepherd, you follow right along in each of His steps, just as those sheep did. You won't be tempted to turn aside for some big flower of a church, or listen to the voice of some D.D. or Ph.D. or L.L.D., but you will stay with the Shepherd. The Bible says that the sheep know His voice and they follow HIM, but a stranger's voice will only cause them to flee and run after their true Shepherd. Praise God.

But that was not all I saw and learned over there. One day I got to thinking about having seen men out in the fields herding different kinds of animals. One fellow would be tending some pigs, another some goats, another some camels, another some mules, etc. So I asked a friend who lived there, what they called those men. "Oh," he replied, "they are shepherds."

I couldn't take that. I said, "You don't mean to say they are ALL shepherds. Shepherds only herd sheep, don't they?"

"No," he said, "a shepherd is a herder or grazer, so anyone who grazes animals is a shepherd."

Well, that did surprise me. But I noticed a difference between those herders and the ones that took care of the sheep. Come nighttime all the others but the shepherd of the sheep left his animals in the fields and went on home. The shepherd took his sheep with him, and put them into the fold and then lay down and became the door of the sheep. Oh, praise God, our Shepherd never leaves us or forsakes us. When nighttime comes I want to be in His fold. I want to be in his care.

Now then, we can see that JESUS IS THE DOOR. He is the door of the sheep. And notice that it speaks now of the DOOR OPENING. What is that but a revelation of Him? And that Revelation is opening up to bring us Strength, to illuminate the Word and glorify His Name. It was in the midst of the two last ages that the Revelation of the Deity of Jesus Christ blossomed out before us. Yes, we knew He was God. How else could He be our Saviour? But to know that He was ONLY GOD, OR GOD ALONE, that He was the Alpha

and the Omega, that this "Jesus was BOTH LORD AND CHRIST-- MAKING HIM LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE FATHER, THE SON AND HOLY GHOST, ALL ONE PERSON--that had been lost since the first church ages, but now we are seeing it again. The revelation of WHO HE WAS had come back. Indeed Godhead is not a three-person God with one personality, for it takes personality to make a person. If there is ONE personality, there is but one person. But they who believe in three persons have a three god Godhead and are guilty of breaking the first commandment.

But the revelation of Godhead is back. Now the true church can build in strength again. After all this time she finally knows Who her Lord is. Once again we are BAPTIZING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS just as they did at Pentecost.

Let me tell you of a God-given dream I had about triune baptism. This was not a vision, but a dream. You know, I am sure, that one of the blessings of the church ages was to receive dreams by the Holy Ghost, just the same as one can receive visions. It was about 3 a.m. on a Saturday morning. I had just gotten up to get Joseph a drink of water. When I lay down I fell asleep instantly and dreamed this dream. I saw a man that I supposed was my father. He was a great big burly man. I also saw a woman who was supposed to be my mother, but she didn't look like her, even as the man did not look like my father. This man was very mean to his wife. He had a large club with three corners on it. You know when you take a log and set it up on end and hit it with an axe, it makes a three cornered wedge-like piece of fire wood. It was like that. He would take this club and hit her with it, and knock her down. As she would lie there crying, he would walk around with his chest stuck out and on his face was such a proud, boastful look that he appeared to take great pride and satisfaction in beating up a poor little woman. Every time she tried to get up he would hit her. I did not like what he was doing, but as I considered stopping him, I thought, "I can't tackle that man--he is too big. Then he's supposed to be my father." But down inside I knew he wasn't my father, and I knew that no man had the right to treat a woman like that. I went over and grabbed him by the collar and turned him around and said, "You have no right to strike her." And when I said that my muscles grew and I looked like a giant. The man saw them and then he was scared of me. I said, "You strike her again and you'll deal with me." He hesitated to strike her again, and then the dream left me.

I awoke immediately after the dream. I thought, how strange that was. I wondered why I had dreamed about that woman, when suddenly there He came, and the presence of God became known to me and the interpretation of the dream came from Him. (Now you people know that not only have I interpreted your dreams exactly; but I have many, many times, told you what you dreamed so that you never had to tell me.) The woman represents the church of the world today. I was born right into this mess--the mess that she is

in. She was supposed to be a kind of mother (she is the mother of harlots). Her husband is the denominations that rule her. The three cornered block is false triune baptism unto a trinity. Every time she started to rise up (that means the congregations began to accept truth) he would drive her right down again with that false doctrine. He was so big that I was afraid of him at first, but when I came against him I found I had great and powerful muscles. They were FAITH MUSCLES. The outcome of the dream was that, "since God is with me, and can give me such strength, then let me stand up for her against the denominational power of the world and make him quit striking her."

Now I am not trying to build a doctrine upon a dream. Nor am I trying to vindicate any doctrine I stand for by a dream. Oneness of the Godhead is all the way from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21. But the people have been blinded by an unscriptural dogma of a trinity, and that dogma is so universally accepted that to try to see a "One God Person" is all but impossible. If people can't see the TRUTH of the Godhead, but fight it; they can't ever see the rest of the truth because the REVELATION IS JESUS CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH AND HIS WORKS IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH FOR THE SEVEN AGES. Did you get that? Now I am sure you understand.

"Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word and not denied My Name." Now we have already mentioned how the strength was returning. It was. The power of the inquisition had waned. People had left their home lands and demanded a freedom of worship. The yoke of the hierarchy was being broken. The governments were finding it wise not to champion one segment against another. In fact, well meaning but poorly led people were willing to wage war to defend their religious rights. Perhaps the greatest show of strength of religion in this age was the fact, that though France fell in revolution, the great Wesleyan revival kept the revolution away from Great Britain and saved her to be an instrument in the hand of God for many glorious years.

The preaching of the Word was never greater. As Satan raised up his hordes of free thinkers, as the originators of communism rose up, as liberal theologians spread their filthy wares, God raised up mighty warriors of faith, and the greatest works of Christian literature and teaching and preaching came from this era. Never has its preachers and teachers been matched and never will they be. The Spurgeons, Parkers, McClarens, the Edwards, Bunyans, Meullers, Brainards, Barnes, Bishops, all came from this era. They preached, taught and wrote the Word. They glorified His Name.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE FALSE JEW

Revelation 3:9.

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

Now we can note immediately that this problem of the false Jew or false believers was already in existence in the second age. These who falsely called themselves Jews appeared right after the first outpouring of the first age, and now they appear again in the second age after the reformation. This is hardly an accident. Indeed, it is not an accident. It is a principle of Satan. That principle is to organize and claim originality and therefore be entitled to special rights and privileges. Let me show you. Back there in the Smyrnaean Age these people lied and said they were actually Jews (or believers) when they definitely were not. They were of the synagogue of Satan. They were Satan's organized crowd, for it was in that age we saw the start of men in the ministry taking an unwarranted leadership over their ministering brethren. (Bishops set up in districts, over elders). The next thing we saw was that in the third age there was definitely a place called "Satan's seat". That age gave us church and state marriage. With the power of the state behind her the church was literally physically invincible.

But God broke that hold in spite of the power of the state and the reformation brought great light. But what happened? The Lutherans organized and joined with the state and again we see the synagogue of Satan manifested in this sixth age. Now of course this synagogue group wouldn't say they are of Satan. No sir. They say they are of God. But they lie. For he that is a true Jew (that is what they claimed to be) is one who is a Jew inwardly--in the Spirit. So then if they are false Jews it means that they are as Jude 19 says, "having NOT the Spirit". Children of God are born of the Spirit. These have not the Spirit and therefore they are NOT children of God no matter how fervently they protest and to what lengths they go to try to prove that they are. They are DEAD. They are children of organization, and the true fruits are missing. They are built upon their own creeds, dogmas and doctrines and the truth is not in them for they have taken their own counsels above the Word of God.

Let me show you what I have been trying to teach all along about the two vines which come from two different spirits. Take the example of Jesus and Judas this time. Jesus was the Son of God. Judas was the son of perdition. God entered into Jesus. Satan entered into Judas.

Jesus had a full Holy Ghost ministry for

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him."

Acts 10:38. It says

"For he (Judas) was numbered with us, and had obtained PART of this ministry,"

Acts 1:17. Matthew 10:1,

"And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease."

That spirit that was in Judas went right along through the ministry of Jesus. Then they both came to the cross. Jesus was hanged upon the cross, gladly giving His Life for sinners and commended His Spirit to God. His Spirit went to God and then was poured out into the church at Pentecost. But Judas hanged himself and his spirit went back to Satan, but after Pentecost that same spirit that was in Judas came back to the false vine that grows right along with the true vine. But notice, Judas' spirit never got to Pentecost. It never went up to receive the Holy Spirit. It could not. But what did that Judas spirit go for? It went for the bag of gold. How it loved money. It still loves money. If it goes about in the Name of Jesus doing mighty things and holding great meetings, it still makes more of money and buildings, and education and everything with a material concept. Just watch that spirit that is upon them and don't be fooled. Judas went about as one of the twelve and he did miracles, too. But he did NOT have the Spirit of God as his own. He did have a ministry. He never got to Pentecost as he was not true seed. He was not a true child of God. No sir. And it is that way right now in the synagogue of Satan. Don't be fooled. You won't be fooled if you are of the very elect. Jesus said you wouldn't be fooled.

Yes, these folks say they are Christians but they aren't.

"I will make them come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

I Corinthians 6:2,

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"

Not only will there be twelve apostles on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel but the saints, also, will judge the world. That is when these who claim to belong to God and claim that God loves them will find out exactly who is the child of God and who is loved of the Son. Yes, that day is coming when it will be made manifest. These who are now ruling the world in a measure, and who during the last age will build an image to the beast whereby they will actually rule the world, will one day be humbled when Jesus

comes with His saints to judge the world in righteousness. That is exactly what we saw in Matthew 25 when "All" the ones who missed the first resurrection will stand before the Judge and His bride.

THE EULOGY AND THE PROMISE

Revelation 3:10,

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

What does He mean by the "word of His patience?" Hebrews 6:13-15. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." You see the Spirit is speaking about the Word of God which is given to us. To wait for the fulfillment of that Word required patience even as it did in the case of Abraham. He endured as seeing Him Who is invisible. He was patient and then the Word finally was fulfilled. This is the way God teaches His people patience. Why, if He fulfilled His Word in physical manifestations the very instant you prayed, you would never learn patience, but would become even more impatient with life. Let me show you this truth even more fully set forth.

Hebrews 11:17,

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises (the Word of God) offered up his only begotten son."

There it is: Abraham was tried AFTER he received the Word of Promise. Most think that as soon as we pray in Jesus' Name over the good promises of God that there could not be a trial. But here it says that Abraham was tried after he received the promise.

That is exactly correct according to the Psalmist referring to Joseph, 105:19,

"Until the time that his word came: the Word of the Lord tried him."

God gives us exceeding great and precious promises. He has promised to fulfill them. He will. But from the time we pray until the time we get the answer we must learn to receive patience into our souls for only in patience do we possess life. May God help us to learn this lesson even as we know the people of this sixth age learned patience. We read the history of the lives of these great Christians; what a contrast we see between their lives and ours for

they were so patient and quiet, and today we are all but overcome in over-impatience and haste.

He goes on to say to them, "Because you have taken my Word and lived it and thereby become patient, I will keep you from the hour of temptation which shall come upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Now here again we see the overlapping of the two ages; for this promise has to do with the end of the Gentile period which culminates in the Great Tribulation.

"I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." This verse is not a declaration that the true church will go into and through the tribulation. If it meant that it would have said that. But it said, "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation." This temptation is exactly like the temptation in Eden. It will be a very inviting proposition held up in direct opposition to God's commanded Word, and yet from the standpoint of human reasoning it will be so very right, so enlightening and life-giving as to fool the world.

Only the very elect will not be fooled. The temptation will come as follows. The ecumenical move that has started on what seems such a beautiful and blessed principle (fulfilling Christ's prayer that we all might be one) becomes so strong politically that she bears pressure upon the government to cause all to join with her either directly or through adherence to principles enacted into law so that no people will be recognized as actual churches unless under direct or indirect domination of this council. Little groups will lose charters, privileges, etc., until they lose all property and spiritual rights with the people.

For example, right now unless the local ministerial association approves in many, if not most cities, one cannot rent a building for religious services. To become chaplains in the armed services, hospitals, etc., it is now almost mandatory to be recognized as acceptable to the trinitarian ecumenical groups. As this pressure increases, and it will, it will be harder to resist, for to resist is to lose privilege. And so many will be tempted to go along, for they will feel it is better to serve God publicly in the framework of this organization than not to serve God at all publicly. But they err. To believe the devil's lie is to serve Satan, even though you may want to call him Jehovah. But the elect will not be deceived.

Furthermore, the elect will not only be kept, but as this move becomes the "IMAGE ERECTED TO THE BEAST," the saints will be gone in the rapture. And this little delightful, winsome movement that started out in fellowship at Ephesus will become the monster of Satan that defiles and deceives the whole world. For the church system of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant in coming together will control the whole wealth of the world system and force the whole earth into its religious trap, or will kill them, by refusing them the

privilege of buying and selling whereby they would make a living. This will be accomplished simply, for the harlot's daughters are all but gone back to her. In the meantime, Rome has acquired nearly all the supplies of gold. The Jews have the bonds and all the paper. At the right time, the harlot will destroy the present day money system by calling in all the paper, and demanding gold. With no gold, the system falls. The Jews will be trapped and come into the alliance, and the harlot church will take over the whole world.

THE PROMISE TO HIS OWN

Revelation 3:11-12,

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: I will write upon him My new Name."

We don't need to comment on the thought that He is coming quickly. We know that He is because we are in the end of the last days, aren't we? But He goes on to say, "Hold fast what you have, that no man take your crown."

It is in the midst of a time of great trouble that Jesus comes. And with His coming there is a resurrection. Many are to come forth out of the dust and rise with those who are alive but waiting for His return. And these will be given crowns. Why? Because they are Sons of God. They are kings with Him. They are reigning with Him. That is what the crown signifies--reigning and ruling with the Great King, Himself. That is the promise to all those who suffer with Him here on earth--all those who endured patiently knowing that God, the Just Judge would reward them. They who gave up all for Him and committed all to Him will sit down in His throne and share in His glorious kingdom.

Oh, we have a word for us all at this time. It is hold fast--persevere. Don't give up. Put on the whole armour of God--use every weapon He has given us--use every gift at our disposal and look ahead with joy, because we are going to be crowned by Him Who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Now He is not only giving crowns but He says that these in the bride will be made pillars in the temple of God. But what is the temple of God? Jesus spoke of His body as being the temple. It was. It was the temple of God. But now that we are His body, the true church is the temple of God by the Holy Ghost within us. Now He is going to make the overcomer a pillar in that temple. But what is a pillar? A pillar is actually a part of the foundation for it

holds up the superstructure. Praise God, that puts the overcomer right in with the apostles and prophets, for it says in Ephesians 2:19-22,

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone;

In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Yes, that verse 22 says that we are builded together with them. Everything went through the DOOR (Jesus) and is a part of that body or temple. Now when God puts a man in the temple as a pillar and makes him a part of that foundation group what is He doing? He is giving him the revelation of the Word and of Himself, because that is exactly what the apostles and prophets had. Matthew 16:17. There he is in that Word. There he stands. No one can get him out.

Ponder that word, "overcometh". John asks the question, "Who is he that overcometh?" and the answer comes right back, "He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ." He doesn't say that the overcomer is one that believes in 'A' Jesus and in 'A' Christ, but believes that Jesus IS THE CHRIST--ONE person--not two. He is the one who is baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is talking about the bride here. Do you want to see another picture of her?

It is over in Revelation 7:4-17,

"And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God Which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

For the Lamb Which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Jesus has come. He has sealed the 144,000. He took 12,000 out of each tribe. But there is another group that doesn't belong in this 144,000 who are seen in verses 9-18. Who are they? These are in the bride taken from amongst the Gentiles. They are before His throne day and night. They serve Him in the temple. They are the special care of the Lord. They are His bride.

The bride goes wherever the Bridegroom is. She will never be left by Him. She will never leave His side. She will share the throne with Him. She will be crowned with His glory and honor.

And I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God. And what is the Name of God? Well, He was God with us, or Emmanuel, but that was not His given name. "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus." Jesus said, "I came in My Father's Name, and you received Me not." Therefore the Name of God is JESUS, for that is the Name He came in. He is LORD JESUS CHRIST. And what name does a woman take when she marries the man? She takes his name. It will be His Name that is given unto the bride when He takes her to Himself.

Revelation 21:1-4.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

How wonderful. All of God's wonderful promises fulfilled. It will be all over. The change will have been completed. The Lamb and His bride forever settled in all the perfections of God. Describe it? Who is able to do that? No one. Think about it? Dream about it? Read what the Word says about it? Yes we can do all of that, yet we can only know an infinitesimal part of it until it becomes reality in the first resurrection.

"And I will write my NEW Name upon him."

My New Name. When ALL becomes new, then He will take upon Him a new Name and that Name will be the Name of the bride also. What that Name is, none dare conjecture. It would have to be a revelation of the Spirit given so conclusively that none would dare deny it. But no doubt He will leave that revelation to the day when He desires to give that Name forth. Suffice it to know that it will be more wonderful than we could ever imagine.

THE FINAL ADMONITION TO THE AGE

Revelation 3:13,

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

Every age ends with this same warning. It is the constant plea that the churches listen to the voice of the Lord. In this age the plea is even more insistent than in former ages, for in this age the coming of the Lord truly draweth nigh. The question would perhaps arise, "If there is another age beyond this one, why the urgency?" The answer lies herein. The last age will be a short one--a quick work of consummation. And not only is this so, but one must always remember that in the eyes of God time is so very fleeting; yea, a thousand years are but a day. And if He is coming within a few hours as He

views time, then He surely must warn us with all urgency and His voice must continually sound in our hearts to be ready against that coming.

Oh, there are so many voices in the world--so many problems and needs crying for attention; but there will never be a voice so important and so worth attending as the voice of the Spirit. So, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

CHAPTER NINE

THE LAODICEAN CHURCH AGE

REVELATION 3:14-22

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write:

These things saith the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God;

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot.

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot I will spue thee out of My mouth.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

THE CITY OF LAODICEA

The name, Laodicea, which means, "people's rights" was very common and was given to several cities in honor of royal ladies so named. This city was one of the most politically important and financially flourishing cities in Asia Minor. Enormous amounts of property were bequeathed to the city by prominent citizens. It was the seat of a great medical school. Its people were distinguished in the arts and sciences. It was often called the 'metropolis' as it was the county seat for twenty-five other cities. The pagan god worshipped there was Zeus. In fact this city was once called Diopolis (City of Zeus) in

honor of their god. In the fourth century an important church council was held there. Frequent earthquakes finally caused its complete abandonment.

How fitting were the characteristics of this last age to represent the age in which we now live. For example, they worshipped one god, Zeus, who was the chief and father of the gods. This forecast the twentieth century 'one God, father-of-us-all' religious premise that sets forth the brotherhood of man, and is even now bringing together the Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Hindus, etc. with the intent that a mutual form of worship will increase our love, understanding, and care of each other. The Catholics and Protestants are even now striving for, and actually gaining ground in this union with the avowed intent that all others will follow. This very attitude was seen in the United Nations Organization when the world leaders refused to recognize any one individual concept of spiritual worship but recommended putting aside all those separate concepts with the hopes that all religions become leveled into one, for all desire the same goals, all have the same purposes and all are basically right.

Notice the name, Laodicea, 'the people's rights', or 'justice of the peoples.' Was there ever an age like the twentieth century church age that has seen ALL nations rising up and demanding equality, socially and financially? This is the age of the communists where all men are supposedly equal, though it is only so in theory. This is the age of political parties who call themselves Christian Democrats, and Christian Socialists, Christian Commonwealth Federation, etc. According to our liberal theologians Jesus was a socialist and the early church under the guidance of the Spirit practiced socialism, and thus we ought to do so today.

When the ancients called Laodicea the metropolis it was looking forward to the one-world government that we are now setting up. As we think of that city being the location of a great church council we see foreshadowed the ecumenical move taking place today, wherein very soon we will see all the 'so-called' Christians come together. Indeed, the church and state, religion and politics are coming together. The tares are being bound. The wheat will soon be ready for the garner.

It was a city of earthquakes, such earthquakes as finally destroyed it. This age will end in God shaking the whole world that has gone off to make love with the old harlot. Not only will world systems crumble, but the very earth will be shaken and then renovated for the millennial reign of Christ.

The city was rich, endowed by the wealthy. It was full of culture. Science abounded. How like today. The churches are rich. The worship is beautiful and formal, but cold and dead. Culture and education have taken the place of the Spirit-given Word, and faith has been superseded by science, so that man is a victim of materialism.

In every attribute ancient Laodicea is found reborn in the twentieth-century Laodicean Age. In the mercy of God, may those who have an ear to hear come out of her that they be not partakers of her sins and the consequent judgment.

THE LAODICEAN AGE

The Laodicean Age began around the turn of the Twentieth Century, perhaps 1906. How long will it last? As a servant of God who has had multitudes of visions, of which NONE has ever failed, let me predict (I did not say prophesy, but predict) that this age will end around 1977. If you will pardon a personal note here, I base this prediction on seven major continuous visions that came to me one Sunday morning in June, 1933. The Lord Jesus spoke to me and said that the coming of the Lord was drawing nigh, but that before He came, seven major events would transpire. I wrote them all down and that morning I gave forth the revelation of the Lord. The first vision was that Mussolini would invade Ethiopia and that nation would "fall at his steps". That vision surely did cause some repercussions, and some were very angry when I said it and would not believe it. But it happened that way. He just walked in there with his modern arms and took over. The natives didn't have a chance. But the vision also said that Mussolini would come to a horrible end with his own people turning on him. That came to pass just exactly as it was said.

The next vision foretold that an Austrian by the name of Adolph Hitler would rise up as dictator over Germany, and that he would draw the world into war. It showed the Siegfried line and how our troops would have a terrible time to overcome it. Then it showed that Hitler would come to a mysterious end.

The third vision was in the realm of world politics for it showed me that there would be three great ISMS, Facism, Nazism, Communism, but that the first two would be swallowed up into the third. The voice admonished, "WATCH RUSSIA, WATCH RUSSIA. Keep your eye on the King of the North."

The fourth vision showed the great advances in science that would come after the second world war. It was headed up in the vision of a plastic bubble-topped car that was running down beautiful highways under remote control so that people appeared seated in this car without a steering wheel and they were playing some sort of a game to amuse themselves.

The fifth vision had to do with the moral problem of our age, centering mostly around women. God showed me that women began to be out of their

place with the granting of the vote. Then they cut off their hair, which signified that they were no longer under the authority of a man but insisted on either equal rights, or in most cases, more than equal rights. She adopted men's clothing and went into a state of undress, until the last picture I saw was a woman naked except for a little fig leaf type apron. With this vision I saw the terrible perversion and moral plight of the whole world.

Then in the sixth vision there arose up in America a most beautiful, but cruel woman. She held the people in her complete power. I believed that this was the rise of the Roman Catholic Church, though I knew it could possibly be a vision of some woman rising in great power in America due to a popular vote by women.

The last and seventh vision was wherein I heard a most terrible explosion. As I turned to look I saw nothing but debris, craters, and smoke all over the land of America.

Based on these seven visions, along with the rapid changes which have swept the world in the last fifty years, I PREDICT (I do not prophesy) that these visions will have all come to pass by 1977. And though many may feel that this is an irresponsible statement in view of the fact that Jesus said that 'no man knoweth the day nor the hour.' I still maintain this prediction after thirty years because, Jesus did NOT say no man could know the year, month or week in which His coming was to be completed. So I repeat, I sincerely believe and maintain as a private student of the Word, along with Divine inspiration that 1977 ought to terminate the world systems and usher in the millennium.

Now let me say this. Can anyone prove any of those visions wrong? Were they not all fulfilled? Yes, each one has been fulfilled, or is in the process right now. Mussolini invaded Ethiopia successfully, then fell and lost it all. Hitler started a war he could not finish and died mysteriously. Communism took over both the other two ISMS. The plastic bubble car has been built and is awaiting only a better network of roads. Women are all but naked, and are even now wearing topless bathing suits. And just the other day I saw in a magazine the very dress that I saw in my vision (if you can call it a dress). It was a plastic transparent type of cloth with three darkened spots that covered both breasts in a small area, and then there was a dark place like a small apron below. The Catholic Church is on the rise. We have had one Catholic president and will no doubt have another.

What is left? Nothing except Hebrews 12:26. "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Once more God will shake the earth and with it shake everything loose that can be shaken. Then He will renovate it. Just last March, 1964, that Good Friday earthquake of Alaska shook the whole world though it did not unbalance it. But God was warning by a world tremor what He will

soon do on a greater scale. He is going to blast and rock this sin-cursed world, my brother, my sister, and there is only one place that can stand that shock, and that is in the fold of the Lord Jesus. And I would beseech you while God's mercy is still available to you, that you give your whole life, unreservedly to Jesus Christ, Who as the faithful Shepherd will save you and care for you and present you faultless in glory with exceeding great joy.

THE MESSENGER

I doubt very much if any age truly knew the messenger that God had sent unto it, except in the first age where Paul was the messenger. And even in that age many did not recognize him for what he was.

Now the age in which we are living is going to be a very short one. Events are going to transpire very rapidly. So the messenger to this Laodicean Age has to be here now, though perhaps we don't know him as yet. But there will surely have to be a time that he becomes known. Now I can prove that because we have Scripture that describes his ministry.

First of all, that messenger is going to be a prophet. He will have the office of a prophet. He will have the prophetic ministry. It will be based solidly on the Word because when he prophesies or has a vision, it will always be "Word oriented" and it will ALWAYS come to pass. He will be vindicated as a prophet because of his accuracy.

The proof that he is a prophet is found in Revelation 10:7

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh messenger when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished as He hath declared to His servants, the prophets."

Now this person, who in this verse is called an 'angel' in the King James version is NOT an heavenly being. The sixth trumpeting angel, who is an heavenly being, is in Revelation 9:13, and the seventh of like order is in Revelation 11:15. This one here in Revelation 10:7 is the seventh age messenger and it is a man, and he is to bring a message from God, and his message and ministry is going to finish the mystery of God as declared to His servants, the prophets. God is going to treat this last messenger as a prophet BECAUSE HE IS A PROPHET. That is what Paul was in the first age, and the last age has one, too.

Amos 3:6-7,

"Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants, the prophets."

It was in the end-time period that the seven thunders of Jesus came forth.

Revelation 10:3-4,

"And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."

What was in those thunders no one knows. But we need to know. And it will take a prophet to get the revelation because God has no other way of bringing out His Scriptural revelations except by a prophet. The Word always came by a prophet and always will. That this is the law of God is evident by even a casual search of Scripture. The unchanging God with unchanging ways invariably sent His prophet in every age where the people had strayed from Divine order. With both the theologians and the people having departed from the Word, God always sent His servant to these people (but apart from the theologians) in order to correct false teaching and lead the people back to God.

So we see a seventh age messenger coming, and he is a prophet.

Not only do we see this messenger coming here in Revelation 10:7, but we find that the Word speaks of Elijah coming before Jesus returns.

In Matthew 17:10,

"And His disciples asked Him saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" And Jesus said, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things."

Before the coming of our Lord, Elijah must come back for a work of restoration in the church.

This is what Malachi 4:5 says,

"Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

There is absolutely no doubt that Elijah must return before the coming of Jesus. He has a specific work to accomplish. That work is the part of Malachi 4:6 that says "he will turn the hearts of the children to their fathers". The reason that we know this is his specific work to do at that time is because he has already accomplished the part that says "he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," when the Elijah ministry was here in John the Baptist.

Luke 1:17,

"And he shall go before Him in the Spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the Just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

In the ministry of John the "hearts of the fathers were turned to the children". We know that because Jesus said so. But it does not say that the hearts of the children were turned to the fathers. That is yet to take place. The hearts of the last day children will be turned back to the Pentecostal fathers. John got the fathers ready for Jesus to welcome the children into the fold. Now this prophet upon whom the Spirit of Elijah falls will prepare the children to welcome back Jesus.

Jesus called John the Baptist, Elijah.

Matthew 17:12,

"But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him what they listed."

The reason that he called John Elijah, was because the same Spirit that was upon Elijah had come back upon John, even as that Spirit had come back upon Elisha after the reign of King Ahab. Now once again that Spirit will come back upon another man just before Jesus comes. He will be a prophet. He will be vindicated as such by God. Since Jesus, Himself, in the flesh won't be here to vindicate him, (as He did John) it will be done by the Holy Spirit so that this prophet's ministry will be attended by great and wonderful manifestation. As a prophet, every revelation will be vindicated, for every revelation will come to pass. Wonderful acts of power will be performed at his commands in faith. Then will be brought forth the message that God has given him in the Word to turn the people back to truth and the true power of God. Some will listen, but the majority will run true to form and reject him.

Since this prophet messenger of Revelation 10:7 will be the same as Malachi 4:5-6 he will be naturally like Elijah and John. Both were men set apart from the accepted religious schools of their day. Both were men of the wilderness. Both acted only when they had "Thus saith the Lord," straight from God by revelation. Both lashed out against the religious orders and leaders of their day. But not only was that so, they lashed out against all who were corrupt or would corrupt others. And notice, both prophesied much against immoral women and their ways. Elijah cried out against Jezebel, and John rebuked Herodias, Philip's wife.

Though he will not be popular, he will be vindicated by God. As Jesus authenticated John, and the Holy Ghost authenticated Jesus, we can well expect this man will be first of all authenticated by the Spirit working in his life in acts of power that are indisputable and found nowhere else; and Jesus Himself, in returning, will authenticate him, even as He authenticated John. John witnessed that Jesus was coming,--and so will this man, like John,

witness that Jesus is coming. And the very return of Christ will prove that this man indeed was the forerunner of His second coming. This is the final evidence that this indeed is the prophet of Malachi 4, for the end of the Gentile period will be Jesus, Himself, appearing. Then it will be too late for those who have rejected him.

In order to further clarify our presentation of this last day prophet, let us particularly note that the prophet of Matthew 11:12, was John the Baptist, who was the one foretold in Malachi 3:1,

"Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me; and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, Whom ye delight in; behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Matthew 11:1-12,

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding His twelve disciples, He departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

And said unto Him, Art thou He That should come, or do we look for another?

Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.

And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

For this is he, of whom it is written. Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee.

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

This has already taken place. This has happened. It is over. But note now in Malachi 4:1-6,

"For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.

Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

See, immediately after the coming of THIS Elijah, the earth will be cleansed by fire and the wicked burned to ashes. Of course, this did NOT happen at the time of John (the Elijah for his day.) The Spirit of God that prophesied the coming of the messenger in Malachi 3:1 (John) was but reiterating His previous prophetic statement of Isaiah 40:3 made at least three centuries previously.

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Now John, by the Holy Ghost, voiced both Isaiah and Malachi in Matthew 3:3,

"For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."

So we can well see from these Scriptures that the prophet in Malachi 3, who was John, was NOT the prophet of Malachi 4, though indeed, both John and this last-day prophet have upon them the same Spirit Which was upon Elijah.

Now this messenger of Malachi 4 and Revelation 10:7 is going to do two things. One: According to Malachi 4 he will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. Two: He will reveal the mysteries of the seven thunders in Revelation 10 which are the revelations contained in the seven seals. It will be these Divinely revealed 'mystery-truths' that literally turn the hearts of the children to the Pentecostal fathers. Exactly so.

But consider this also. This prophet-messenger will be in his nature and manners as were Elijah and John. The people of this prophet-messenger's day will be as they were in Ahab's day, and in John's. And since it is "ONLY THE

CHILDREN" whose hearts will be turned, it is only the children who will listen. In the days of Ahab only 7,000 true seed Israelites were found. In the days of John there were also very few. The masses in both ages were in the fornication of idolatry.

I want to make one more comparison between the Laodicean prophet-messenger and John, the prophet-messenger who preceded Jesus' first coming. The people in John's day mistook him for the Messiah.

John 1:19-20,

"And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ."

Now this last day prophet-messenger will have such power before the Lord that there will be those who mistake him for the Lord Jesus.

(There will be a spirit in the world at the end time that will seduce some and make them believe this.

Matthew 24:23-26,

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Behold, I have told you before.

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not.")

But don't you believe it. He is not Jesus Christ. He is not the Son of God. **HE IS ONE OF THE BRETHREN, A PROPHET, A MESSENGER, A SERVANT OF GOD.** He needs no greater honor bestowed upon him than that which John received when he was the voice that cried, "I am not He, **BUT HE IS COMING AFTER ME.**"

Before we close this section on the messenger of the Laodicean Age, we must seriously consider these two thoughts. First, this age will have **ONE** Prophet-Messenger. Revelation 10:7, says, "When he (singular) shall begin to sound." There has never been an age where God gave His people two major prophets at one time. He gave Enoch (alone); He gave Noah (alone); He gave Moses (he alone had the Word though others prophesied); John the Baptist came **ALONE**. Now in this last day there is to be a **PROPHET** (not a prophetess--though in this age there are more women purporting to give God's revelation than men), and the infallible Word says that he (the prophet) will reveal the mysteries to the end time people, and turn the hearts of the children back to the fathers.

There are those who say that God's people are going to come together through a collective revelation. I challenge that statement. It is a bald, invalid

assumption in the face of Revelation 10:7. Now I do not deny that people will prophesy in this last age and their ministries can and will be correct. I do not deny that there will be prophets even as in the days of Paul when there was "one Agabus a prophet who prophesied of a famine". I agree that is so. BUT I DENY UPON THE INFALLIBLE EVIDENCE OF THE WORD THAT THERE IS MORE THAN ONE MAJOR PROPHET-MESSENGER WHO WILL REVEAL THE MYSTERIES AS CONTAINED IN THE WORD, AND WHO HAS THE MINISTRY TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE CHILDREN TO THE FATHERS. "Thus saith the Lord" by His unfailing Word stands, and shall stand and be vindicated. There is one prophet-messenger to this age.

On the basis of human behavior alone, anyone knows that where there are many people there is even divided opinion on lesser points of a major doctrine which they all hold together. Who then will have the power of infallibility which is to be restored in this last age, for this last age is going to go back to manifesting the Pure Word Bride? That means we will have the Word once again as it was perfectly given, and perfectly understood in the days of Paul. I will tell you who will have it. It will be a prophet as thoroughly vindicated, or even more thoroughly vindicated than was any prophet in all the ages from Enoch to this day, because this man will of necessity have the capstone prophetic ministry, and God will shew him forth. He won't need to speak for himself, God will speak for him by the voice of the sign. Amen.

The second thought that must be impressed on our hearts is that the seven church ages started out with the antichrist spirit as well as the Holy Spirit Who is to be blessed forever.

I John 4:1,

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Did you notice it? The antichrist spirit is identified with false prophets. The ages came in with false prophets and they will go out with false prophets. Now of course there is going to be a REAL FALSE PROPHET in the grand sense of that man mentioned in the Revelation. But as of now before his revelation there are to appear many false prophets.

Matthew 24:23-26,

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Behold, I have told you before.

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not."

These false prophets are earmarked for us in various other Scriptures such as the following.

II Peter 2:1-2,

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord That bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

II Timothy 4:3-4,

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

I Timothy 4:1,

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

Now in every case you will notice that a false prophet is one who is outside the Word. Just as we showed you that 'antichrist' means 'anti-Word' so these false prophets come perverting the Word, giving it a meaning that fits their own devilish ends. Have you ever noticed how the people who lead others astray bind them closely to themselves by fear? They say that if the people don't do what they say, or if they leave, then destruction will follow. They are false prophets, for a true prophet will always lead one to the Word and bind the people to Jesus Christ and he won't tell the people to fear him or what he says, but to fear what the Word says. Notice how these people like Judas are out for money. They get you to sell all you have and give it to them and their schemes. They spend more time on offerings than the Word. Those who attempt to operate gifts will make use of a gift which has a margin of error in it and then ask for money, and neglect the Word and call it of God. And people will go to them, and bear with them, and support them, and believe them, not knowing it is the way of death.

Yes, the land is full of carnal impersonators. In that last day they will try to imitate that prophet-messenger. The seven sons of Sceva tried to imitate Paul. Simon the sorcerer tried to imitate Peter. Their impersonations will be carnal. They won't be able to produce what the true prophet produces. When he says the revival is over they will go around claiming a great revelation that what the people have is exactly right and God is going to do bigger and more wonderful

things amongst the people. And the people will fall for it. These same false prophets will claim that the messenger of the last day is not a theologian, so he ought not to be heard. They won't be able to produce what the messenger can; they won't be vindicated by God as that last day prophet is, but with their great swelling words and with the weight of their world-wide notoriety they will warn the people not to hear that man (messenger) and they will say he teaches wrong. They are running exactly true to their fathers, the Pharisees, who were of the devil, for they claimed that both John and Jesus taught error.

Now why do these false prophets come against the true prophet and discredit his teaching? Because they are running true to form as did their forefathers when in the days of Ahab they withstood Micaiah. There were four hundred of them and all of them were in agreement; and by them all saying the same thing, they fooled the people. But ONE prophet--just one--was right and all the rest wrong because God had committed the revelation to ONLY ONE.

Beware of false prophets, for they are ravening wolves.

If you are still in any doubt about this ask God by His Spirit to fill you and lead you, FOR THE VERY ELECT CAN'T BE FOOLED. Did you get that? There isn't any man can fool you. Paul could not fool any elect, had he been wrong. And in that first Ephesian Age the elect there could not be fooled for they tried the false apostles and prophets and found them to be liars and put them out. Hallelujah. HIS sheep hear His voice and they follow HIM. Amen. I believe it.

THE SALUTATION

Revelation 3:14,

"These things saith the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God."

My, isn't that the most wonderful description of the attributes of our lovely Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ? These words just make me want to shout. They bring such a spirit of reality into my heart. Just reading them without even waiting for a thorough revelation of the Spirit upon them thrills me.

Jesus is giving us this description of Himself in relation to the last age. The days of grace are winding up. He has looked from the first century right through to the twentieth, and told us all things concerning these ages. Before He reveals the characteristics of the last age to us, He gives us one final look at His own gracious and supreme Deity. This is the capstone revelation of Himself.

Thus saith the "AMEN". Jesus is the Amen of God. Jesus is the "So Let It Be" of God. Amen stands for finality. It stands for approval. It stands for prevailing promise. It stands for unchanging promise. It stands for the seal of God.

I want you to watch this carefully now and see something really sweet and beautiful. I said this is His end-time revelation of Himself. When the day of grace closes, then the millennium comes very shortly thereafter, doesn't it?

Well, read with me Isaiah 65:16-19.

"That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from Mine eyes.

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind.

But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying."

This is about New Jerusalem. This is the millennium. But as we go into the millennium, hear what He says about being a certain kind of God, Verse 16,

"That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth."

Yes, that is true, but the real translation is not "God of truth". It is "God of the AMEN". So we read it, "shall bless himself in the God of the AMEN, and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of the AMEN; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from My eyes. For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create, for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her; nor the voice of crying," Hallelujah. Here is Jehovah of the Old Testament, "the God of the Amen". Here is Jesus of the New Testament, "the God of the Amen". Hear, Oh Israel, the Lord thy God is ONE God. There it is again, the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New. "Hear, Oh, Israel the Lord thy God is ONE God." The New Testament does not reveal ANOTHER God, it is a further revelation of the ONE AND SAME GOD. Christ did not come down to make Himself known. He did not come to reveal the Son. He came to reveal and make known the Father. He never talked about two Gods; He talked about ONE God. And now in this last age, we have come back to the capstone revelation, the most important revelation of Godhead in the whole Bible, that is, JESUS IS GOD,

HE AND THE FATHER ARE ONE: THERE IS ONE GOD, AND HIS NAME IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

He is the God of the Amen. He never changes. What He does never changes. He says it, and it stands fast. He does it, and it is done forever. None can take from what He says or add to it. So let it be. Amen. So let it be. Aren't you glad that you serve that kind of a God? You can know exactly where you are with Him at any time and all the time. He is the AMEN God and won't change.

"These things saith the AMEN."

I like that. It means that whatever He said is final. It means that whatever He said to the first age and to the second and to all ages about His own true church and about the false vine is exactly right and it won't change. It means that what He started out with in Genesis, He will finish in Revelation. He has to for He is the Amen, SO LET IT BE. Now we can see again why the devil hates the Books of Genesis and Revelation. He hates the truth. He knows the truth will prevail. He knows what his end will be. How he fights that. But we are on the winning side. We (I mean the believers of His Word, only) are on the Amen side.

"These things saith the Faithful and True Witness." Now I want to show you what I find in the thought of "faithful". You know we often talk about a great unchanging God, Whose Word does not change. And when we speak of Him after that manner we often get a view of Him that makes Him seem very impersonal. It is as though God made the whole universe and all the laws that pertain to it and then stood back and became a great impersonal God. It is as though God made a way of salvation for lost mankind, that way being the cross, and then when the death of Christ has atoned for our sins, and His resurrection gave us an open door to Him, God just folded His arms and stood back. It is as if we majored in believing in a great Creator, Who having created, lost personal interest in His creation. Now I say that is how too many people are apt to think. But that is wrong thinking, for God is GOVERNING IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN RIGHT NOW. HE IS BOTH CREATOR AND SUSTAINER.

Colossians 1:16-17.

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him:

And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

He is a Sovereign God. By His own counsel He purposed the plan of the salvation of His own elect which He foreknew. The Son died upon the cross to establish the means of Salvation and the Holy Spirit carefully executes the will

of the Father. He is working all things at this moment according to the purpose of His own will. He is right in the midst of it all. He is in the midst of His church. This great Creator, Saviour-God is faithfully working amongst His own right now as the great Shepherd of the sheep. His very existence is for His own. He loves them and cares for them. His eye is ever upon them. When the Word says that "your lives are hid with Christ in God" it means exactly what it says. Oh, I am so glad that my God abides faithful. He is true to Himself, He won't lie. He is true to the Word, He will back it up. He is true to us, He will lose none of us, but raise us up in the last day. I am glad that I am resting in His faithfulness.

Philippians 1:6.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He Which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ."

"He is the True Witness."

Now this word, true, is the same word we saw back there in Revelation 3:7. You recall that it does not mean 'true' as in contrast with 'false.' It has a richer, deeper meaning by far. It expresses perfect realization in contrast to partial realization. Now back in the Philadelphian Age, the coming of the Lord was drawing nigh. What great love that age manifested for Him.

It reminds me of those beautiful words of I Peter 1:8,

"Whom having not seen ye love, in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

With them we rejoice also. We haven't seen Him, but we have felt Him. We know Him now as much as our limiting senses can let us. But one day it will be face to face. That is for this age. He is coming at the end of this age. Partial realization will be made PERFECT REALIZATION, COMPLETED REALIZATION. Hallelujah! We have been looking through a glass darkly, but soon it will be face to face. We have been going from glory to glory, but soon it will be right in the glory; and in HIS GLORY WE'LL SHINE. WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, WONDERFULLY LIKE HIM, JESUS OUR SAVIOUR DIVINE! Isn't that wonderful? We are complete in Him. That is true. He would not lie to us about that. But one day we will be changed in the atoms. We will put on immortality. We will be all swallowed up in life. Then we will REALIZE REALIZATION.

"He is the Faithful and True Witness."

Now we think of that word, 'witness.' Well, that word is the one we get the word 'martyr' from. The Bible speaks of Stephen and Antipas and others as martyrs. They were martyrs; they were also witnesses. Jesus was a faithful martyr. The Holy Ghost is the witness to that. The Spirit bears record of that. The world hated Jesus. It killed Him. But God loved Him and He went to the

Father. The proof that He went to the Father is that the Holy Ghost came. If Jesus had not been received of the Father, the Spirit would not have come.

Read it in John 16:7-11.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.

And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Of sin, because they believe not on Me:

Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more;

Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

The presence of the Holy Spirit in this world instead of Jesus being here, proves that Jesus was righteous and went to the Father.

But it also says in John 14:18.

"I will not leave you COMFORTLESS, I will come to you."

He sent the Comforter. He WAS THE COMFORTER. He came back in SPIRIT upon the true church. He is the faithful and true WITNESS in the midst of the church. But one day He is going to come back in flesh again. He will prove then Who is the only wise potentate,--it is He, Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory.

Faithful and True Witness, Creator and Sustainer, Perfect Realization, the Amen of God.

Oh, how I love Him, how I adore Him, Jesus the Son of God.

I want to close my thoughts on this part of the salutation with these words of

II Corinthians 1:18-22.

"But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who was preached among you by us, even by me and Sylvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea.

For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Now He Which establisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us, is God;

Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

"The Beginning Of The Creation Of God."

That is Who the Lord Jesus says He is. But those words don't mean exactly as they sound to us. Just taking them the way they sound has made some people (in fact multitudes of people) get the idea that Jesus was the first creation of God, making Him lower than Godhead. Then this first creation created all the rest of the universe and whatsoever it contains. But that is not right. You know that doesn't line up with the rest of the Bible. The words are, "He is the BEGINNER or AUTHOR of the creation of God." Now we know for a surety that Jesus is God, very God. He is the Creator.

John 1:3

"All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made."

He is the One of Whom it is said, Gen. 1:1

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth".

Also it says in Ex. 20:11,

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day."

See, there is no doubt that He is the Creator. He was the Creator of a FINISHED PHYSICAL CREATION.

Surely we can see what these words mean now. To have any other interpretation would mean that God created God. How could God be created when He, Himself, is the Creator?

But now He is standing in the midst of the Church. As He stands there revealing Who He is in this last age, He calls Himself the "Author of the creation of God". This is ANOTHER CREATION. This has to do with the church. This is a special designation of Himself. He is the CREATOR of that church. The heavenly Bridegroom created his own bride. As the Spirit of God, He came down and created in the virgin Mary the cells from which His body was born. I want to repeat that. He created the very cells in the womb of Mary for that body. It was not enough for the Holy Spirit to simply give life to a human ovum supplied by Mary. That would have been sinful mankind producing a body. That would not have produced the "Last Adam". Of Him it was said "Lo a body hast Thou (Father) prepared for Me." God (not Mary) provided that body. Mary was the human incubator and she carried that Holy Child and brought Him to birth. It was a God-man. He was the Son of God. He was of the NEW creation. Man and God met and joined; He was the first of this new race. He is the head of this new race.

Colossians 1:18,

"And He is the head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence."

II Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed away, behold all things are become new."

There you can see that though man was of the OLD ORDER or creation, now in UNION WITH CHRIST, he has become the NEW CREATION of God.

Ephesians 2:10,

"For we are His workmanship CREATED IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS unto good works."

Ephesians 4:24,

"And that ye put on the NEW MAN which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

This New Creation is not the old creation made over, or it could not be called a new creation. This is exactly what it says it is, "NEW CREATION". It is another creation, distinct from the old one. No longer is He dealing by ways of the flesh. That was how He dealt with Israel. He chose Abraham, and of Abraham's issue through the godly Isaac line. But now out of every kindred, tribe and nation He has purposed a new creation. He is the first of that creation. He was God created in the form of man. Now by His Spirit He is creating many Sons unto Himself. God the creator, creating Himself a part of His creation.

This is the true revelation of God. This was His purpose. This purpose took form through election. That is why He could look right down to the last age when all would be over and see Himself still in the midst of the church, as author of this New Creation of God. His Sovereign power brought it to pass. By His own decree He elected the members of this New Creation. He predestinated them to the adoption of children according to the good pleasure of His will. By His omniscience and omnipotence He brought it to pass. How else could He know that He would be standing in the midst of the church receiving glory from His brethren if He did not make sure? All things He knew, and all things He worked out according to what He knew in order that His purpose and good pleasure be brought to pass.

Ephesians 2:11

"In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

Hallelujah! Aren't you glad that you belong to Him!

THE MESSAGE TO THE LAODICEAN AGE

Revelation 3:15-19

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;

I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent."

As we have read this together I am sure that you have noticed that the Spirit has not said one kind thing about this age. He makes two indictments and pronounces His sentence upon them.

(1) Revelation 3:15,16

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot:

I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth."

We are going to look at this carefully. It says that this Laodicean church age group is lukewarm. This lukewarmness demands a penalty from God. The penalty is that they will be spued out of His mouth. Here is where we don't want to go astray as a lot of folks do. They very unwisely say that God can spue you out of His mouth and that proves that there is no such thing as any truth to the doctrine of the perseverance of the Saints. I want to correct your thinking right now. This verse is not given to an individual. It is given to the church. He is talking to the church. Furthermore, if you will just keep the Word in mind you will recall that nowhere does it say that we are in the MOUTH of God. We are engraved on His palms. We are carried in His bosom. Way back in the unknown ages before time we were in His mind. We are in His sheepfold, and in His pastures, but never in His mouth. But what is in the mouth of the Lord? The Word is in His mouth.

Matthew 4:4

"But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

The Word is supposed to be in our mouths, too. Now we know that the church is His body. It is here taking His place. What will be in the mouth of the church? The WORD.

I Peter 4:11

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles (Word) of God."

II Peter 1:21

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Then what is wrong with these people of the last day? THEY HAVE GOTTEN AWAY FROM THE WORD. THEY ARE NO LONGER FERVENT ABOUT IT. THEY ARE LUKEWARM ABOUT IT. I am going to prove that right now.

The Baptists have their creeds and dogmas based on the Word and you can't shake them. They say the apostolic days of miracles are over and there is no Baptism with the Holy Ghost, subsequent to believing. The Methodists say (based on the Word) there is no water baptism (sprinkling is not baptism) and that sanctification is the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. The Church of Christ majors in regenerational baptism and in all too many cases they go down dry sinners and come up wet ones. Yet they claim their doctrine is Word-based. Go right down the line and come to the Pentecostals. Do they have the Word? Give them the Word test and see. They will sell out the Word for a sensation just about every time. If you can produce a manifestation like oil and blood and tongues and other signs, whether in the Word or not, or whether properly interpreted from the Word, the majority will fall for it. But what has happened to the Word? The Word has been put aside, so God says, "I am going against you all. I will spue you out of My mouth. This is the end. For seven out of seven ages, I have seen nothing but men esteeming their own word above Mine. So at the end of this age I am spuing you out of My mouth. It is all over. I am going to speak all right. Yes, I am here in the midst of the Church. The Amen of God, faithful and true will reveal Himself and it will BE BY MY PROPHET." Oh yes, that is so.

Revelation 10:7

"And in the days of the voice of the seventh messenger, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished as He hath declared to His servants the prophets."

There it is. He is sending a vindicated prophet. He is sending a prophet after almost two thousand years. He is sending someone who is so far from organization, education, and the world of religion that as John the Baptist and Elijah of old, He will hear only from God and he will have "thus saith the Lord" and speak for God. He will be God's mouthpiece and HE, AS IT IS DECLARED IN MALACHI 4:6, WILL TURN THE HEARTS OF THE CHILDREN BACK TO THE FATHERS. He will bring back the elect of the last day and they will hear a vindicated prophet give the exact truth as it was with Paul. He will restore the truth as they had it. And those elect with him in

that day will be the ones who truly manifest the Lord and be His Body and be His voice and perform His works. Hallelujah! Do you see it?

A momentary consideration of church history will prove how accurate this thought is. In the Dark Ages the Word was almost entirely lost to the people. But God sent Luther with the WORD. The Lutherans spoke for God at that time. But they organized, and again the pure Word was lost for organization tends toward dogma and creeds, and not simple Word. They could no longer speak for God. Then God sent Wesley, and he was the voice with the Word in his day. The people who took his revelation from God became the living epistles read and known of all men for their generation. When the Methodists failed, God raised up others and so it has gone on through the years until in this last day there is again another people in the land, who under their messenger will be the final voice to the final age.

Yes sir. The church is no longer the "mouthpiece" of God. It is its own mouthpiece. So God is turning on her. He will confound her through the prophet and the bride, for the voice of God will be in her.

Yes it is, for it says in the last chapter of Revelation verse 17

"The Spirit and the bride say come".

Once more the world will hear direct from God as at Pentecost; but of course that Word Bride will be repudiated as in the first age.

Now He has cried out to this last age, "You have the Word. You have more Bibles than ever, but you are not doing anything about the Word except dividing and hacking it into pieces, taking what you want and leaving out what you don't want. You are not interested in LIVING it, but debating it. I would sooner you were cold or hot. If you were cold and rejected it, I could stand that. If you would get white hot to know its truth and live it, I would praise you for that. But when you simply take My Word and don't honor it, I in return must refuse to honor you. I will spue you out for you nauseate Me."

Now anybody knows that it is lukewarm water that makes you sick at the stomach. If you need an emetic, lukewarm water is about the best thing to drink. A lukewarm church has made God sick and He has declared He will spue it out. Reminds us how He felt just before the flood, doesn't it?

Oh, would to God the church were cold or hot. Best of all, she should be fervent (hot). But she is not. Sentence has been passed. She is no longer God's voice to the world. She will maintain that she is, but God says not.

Oh, God still has a voice for the people of the world, even as He has given a voice to the bride. That voice is in the bride as we have said and we will talk more about that later.

(2) Revelation 3:17-18,

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable and poor, and blind and naked;

I counsel thee to buy of Me, gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Now look at the first phrase of this verse, "because thou sayest". See, they were speaking. They were talking as the mouthpiece of God. This proves exactly what I said verses 16-17 meant. But though they say it, that does not make it right. The Catholic Church says she speaks for God, saying she is the assured voice of the Lord. How any people can be so spiritually wicked is more than I know, but they produce according to the seed which is in them, and we know where that seed came from, don't we?

The Laodicean church is saying, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." That was her self-estimate. She looked at herself and that is what she saw. She said, "I am rich," which means that she is wealthy in the things of this world.

She is boasting in the face of James 2:5-7,

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?

But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

Do not they blaspheme that worthy Name by the which ye are called?"

Now I do NOT suggest that a rich person cannot be Spiritual, but we all know that the Word says very few are. It is the poor that predominate in the body of the true church. Now then, if the church becomes full of wealth, we know only one thing; "Ichabod" has been written over her portals! You can't deny that, for that is the Word.

Talk about wealth in the church--why there never has been such a show of wealth. The beautiful sanctuaries are multiplied in number as never before. The various groups vie with each other to see who can build the biggest and the loveliest. And they build education centers worth unestimated millions, and those buildings are used only an hour or two a week. Now that would not be such a terrible thing, but they expect this little time spent by the children in the education plant to take the place of the hours of training supposed to be given in the home.

Money has poured into the church until different denominations own stocks and bonds, factories, oil wells, and insurance companies. They have poured

money into welfare and retirement funds. Now this sounds good, but it has become a snare to the ministers, for if they decide to leave their group for more light or the love of God, their pensions are lost to them. Most can't stand this and stay with their pressure groups.

Now don't forget that this is the last age. We know that this is the last age because Israel has gone back to Palestine. If we believe that He really is coming, then there must be something wrong with those who are building so vastly. It makes one think that these people plan on staying here forever, or that the coming of Jesus is hundreds of years off.

Do you know that religion today is known as big business? It is an absolute fact that they are placing business managers in the churches to take care of finances. Is this what God desires? Did not His Word teach us in the Book of Acts that seven men full of the Holy Ghost and faith served the Lord in business matters? You can surely see why God said, "YOU say you are wealthy; I never said so."

There are radio programs, television programs, and numerous church endeavors that are costing millions and millions of dollars. Wealth pours and pours into the church, the membership increases along with the money, yet the work is not being done as it was done when there was no money, but men rested solely on the ability given them by the Holy Ghost.

There are paid preachers, paid assistants, paid ministers of music and education, paid choirs, paid custodians, programs, and entertainment--all costing great sums, but for all that, the power is decreasing. Yes, the church is rich, but the power is not there. God moves by His Spirit, not by the amount of money or talent in the church.

Now I want to show you how diabolical this urge for money has become. The churches have gone all out to get a membership, especially of the wealthy. Everywhere there is the cry to make religion so attractive and appealing that the rich and cultured and all who have worldly prestige will come in and be active in the church. Can't they understand that if wealth is the criterion of spirituality, then the world already has God, has all of God, and the church has nothing?

"Thou sayest I am increased with goods."

This literally means 'I have Spiritual riches.' This sounds like the millennium with streets of gold and the presence of God. But I wonder if this is so. Is the church truly rich in the Spiritual things of God? Let us examine this Twentieth-Century Laodicean boast in the light of the Word.

If the church were truly Spiritually rich, its influence would be felt upon community life. But exactly what kind of lives are these so-called spiritual and influential men of the community living? Out in suburbia, out in the better

class districts, there abounds wife-swapping, prostitution, and bands of children crashing parties, exacting a terrible toll in property damage. Immorality has reached an all-time high in promiscuous sex acts, narcotic addiction, gambling, stealing, and all kinds of evil. And the church goes on claiming how fine is this generation, how full are the churches and how responsive are even the natives on the mission fields. The church has turned the people over to the doctors, especially the psychiatrists. How it can prate about being rich Spiritually is more than I know. It isn't true. They are bankrupt and don't know it.

Take a good look around you. Examine the people as they walk by. In the multitudes you see, can you pick out those that have the appearance of Christians? Watch how they dress, watch how they act, hear what they say, see where they go. Surely there ought to be some real evidence of the new birth amongst all those we see go by. But few there be. Yet today the fundamental churches are telling us they have millions saved and even Spirit-filled. Spirit-filled? Can you call women Spirit-filled who go around with frizzy bobbed hair, shorts and slacks, halters and briefs, all painted up like Jezebel? If these are adorned in modest apparel as becometh Christian women, I would hate to think what it would be like if I had to witness a display of immodesty.

Now I know that the women don't set the styles. Hollywood does that. But listen ladies, they still sell yard goods and sewing machines. You don't have to buy what's in the stores and then use that as an excuse. This is a deadly serious matter that I am going into. Have you not read in Scripture that when a man looks on a woman and lusts after her in his heart, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart? And suppose you dressed in such a way as to cause that? That makes you his partner in sin, even though you would be absolutely unaware of it, being a true virgin with no such desires. Yet God holds you accountable and you will be judged.

Now I know you ladies don't like this kind of preaching, but sister, you are dead wrong in what you are doing. The Bible forbids you to cut your hair. God gave it for a covering. He gave a command for you to wear it long. It is your glory. When you cut your hair you signified that you left the headship of your husband. Like Eve you walked out and went on your own. You got the vote. You took men's jobs. You left off being females. You ought to repent and come back to God. And if all this wasn't bad enough, a whole lot of you took the idea that you could invade the pulpits and the church offices that God reserved for men and for men only. Oh, I touched a sore spot then didn't I? Well, show me one place in the Bible that God ever ordained any woman to preach or take authority over a man, and I will apologize for what I have said. You can't find that I am wrong. I am right, for I stand with the Word and in the Word. If you were Spiritually rich you would know that is true. There is nothing true but the Word. Paul said, "I suffer not a woman to teach nor to

usurp authority over the man." You can't possibly take a place amongst the five-fold ministry of Ephesians 4 and not take authority over men. Sister, you had better listen to that Word. It was not the Spirit of God manifesting in a Spirit-filled life that told you to preach because the Spirit and the Word are ONE. They say the same thing. Somebody made a mistake. Somebody was fooled. Wake up before it is too late. Satan fooled Eve, your mother; he is fooling the daughters now. May God help you.

"I have need of nothing."

Now when anybody says, "I have need of nothing," he could very well be saying, "I have everything", or he could be saying, "I don't want any more as I am full now". You can express this any way you want, and it all adds up to the fact that the church is complacent. She is satisfied with what she has. She either figures she has it all or has enough. And that is exactly what we find today. What denomination is not claiming that IT has the revelation and the power and the truth? Listen to the Baptists, and they have it all. Listen to the Methodists, and they have it all. Listen to the Church of Christ and everyone is wrong but them. Hear what the Pentecostals say and they have the fulness of the fulness. Now they know I am telling the truth about them, for not one of their manuals say any different. They wrote it all out just so nice and put their names to it and finished it all up. God just doesn't have any more. And there are those who just don't want any more. They do not believe in healing and would not want it, although it is in the Word. There are those who would not take the Holy Spirit if God opened the heavens and showed them a sign.

Now they are all saying, and trying to prove that they have it all, or they have enough. Yet is that the truth? Compare this twentieth century church to the first century church. Go ahead. Do that. Where is the power? Where is the love? Where is the purified church that withstood sin and walked with faith toward Jesus? Where is the unity? You can't find it. If this church has all it needs, why were they crying out for more of God in the Book of Acts as though they didn't have it all, and yet they had far more than they have today?

GOD'S DIAGNOSIS

Now what God saw was entirely different from what they said they saw. They said that they were rich in goods and Spiritually wealthy. They had arrived. They had need of nothing. But God saw it otherwise. He said, "You don't know this, but you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked." Now when a people are that way, especially naked and DON'T KNOW IT, there has to be something awfully wrong. Surely something must be happening. Is it not

that God has blinded their eyes as He did to the Jews? Is the Gospel going back to the Jews? Is history repeating itself? I say it is.

God says this church of the Laodicean Age is "wretched". That word comes from two Greek words which mean 'endure' and 'trial.' And it has nothing to do with the trials that come to a true Christian for God describes a Christian in trial as "blessed" and his attitude one of joy whereas this description is phrased as "wretched and miserable". How strange. In this age of plenty, in this age of progress, in this age of abundance, how can there be trials? Well now, it is strange; but in this age of plenty and opportunity, when everyone has so much and there is so much more to be had, what with all the inventions to do our work and so many things to give us pleasure, **SUDDENLY**, we find mental illness taking such a toll as to alarm the nation. When everybody ought to be happy, with really nothing to be unhappy about, millions are taking sedatives at night, pep pills in the morning, rushing to doctors, entering institutions, and trying to drown out unknown fears by alcohol.

Yes, this age boasts of its tremendous stores of worldly goods, but the people are less happy than ever. This age boasts of its spiritual attainments, but the people are less sure of themselves than ever. This age boasts of better moral values and it is more corrupt than any age since the flood. It talks about its knowledge and science, but it is fighting a losing battle in all fields, for the human mind and soul and spirit cannot comprehend or keep abreast with all the changes that have come upon the earth. In one generation we have gone all the way from the horse and buggy age to the space age, and we are proud and boastful about it; but inside is a dark void cavern that is crying out in torment, and **WITHOUT A KNOWN REASON** men's hearts are failing for fear and the world is so darkened that this age could well be called the age of neurotics. It boasts, but it cannot back it up. It cries peace, and there is no peace. It cries that it has a great amplitude of all things, but it keeps burning with desire like an unsatisfied fire! "There is no peace," saith my God to the wicked.

"They are miserable." That means that they are objects to be pitied. Pitied? They scorn pity. They are full of pride. They vaunt what they have. But what they have will not stand the test of time. They have built upon quicksand rather than the rock of the revelation of God's Word. Soon cometh the earthquake. Soon there will come the storms of the wrath of God in judgment. Then comes sudden destruction, and in spite of all their carnal preparation they will still be unprepared for what comes upon the earth. They are those who in spite of all their worldly efforts are actually opposing themselves and don't know it. Objects of pity are they indeed. Pity the poor people who are in this last day ecumenical move, for they call it the move of God, when it is of Satan. Pity those who do not know the curse of organization. Pity those who have so many beautiful churches, such lovely parsonages, such grandly trained choirs, such a

show of wealth and such a sedate and reverent form of worship. Pity them, don't envy them. Back to the old store buildings, back to the dimly-lit rooms, back to the cellars, back to less of the world and more of God. Pity those who make their great claims, and talk about their gifts. Feel for them as objects of pity, for soon they will be objects of wrath.

"They are poor." Now of course that means Spiritually poor. The sign of this age as it closes, is bigger and better churches, with more and more people, with more and more manifestation of what is supposed to be demonstrations of the Holy Ghost. But the filled altars, the gifts of the Spirit in operation, the remarkable attendance is not the answer from God, for those who come to the altars very seldom stay to go on with God, and after the great campaigns are finished, where are all those who came down the aisles? They heard a man, they listened to an appeal, they came into the net, but they were not fish, and turtle-like they crawled back to their own waters.

Then there is all this talk about the glossalalia--it is supposed to be the evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and people are thinking that we are in the midst of a great revival. The revival is over. America had her last chance in 1957. Now the tongues are God's sign of impending disaster, even as they were when they appeared upon the wall at Belshazzar's feast. Don't you know that many are going to come in the last day and say, "Lord, Lord, have we not done many wonderful works in Thy Name, even to the casting out of devils?"

And He will say,

"Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. I never knew you."

Matthew 7:22-23.

Jesus said they were workers of iniquity. Yet, you get a man that can come and pray for the sick, get oil and blood appearing in the congregation, prophecy coming forth and all manner of the supernatural, and the people will gather round him, and swear that he is of the Lord, even though he is actually making a money racket of religion and living in sin. The only answer they have is the absolutely unbiblical answer of "well, he gets results, so he must be of God." How terrible. How actually poor this age is in the Spirit of God, and the poor poverty-stricken ones don't even know it.

"You are blind and naked." Now this is really desperate. How can anyone be blind and naked and not know it? Yet it says that they are blind and naked and can't perceive it. The answer is, they are spiritually blind, and spiritually naked. Do you remember when Elisha and Gehazi were surrounded by the army of the Syrians? You recall that Elisha smote them blind by the power of God. Yet their eyes were wide open and they could see where they were going. The blindness was peculiar in that they could see certain things, but other certain things such as Elisha and the servant and the camp of Israel they could not see. What this army could see did not avail for them. What they did not see

brought on their captivity. Now what does this mean to us? It means exactly what it meant back there in the earthly ministry of Jesus. He tried to teach them truth, but they would not listen.

John 9:40-41.

"And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also?

Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

The attitude of this age is exactly what it was then. People have it all. They know it all. They cannot be taught. If a point of truth from the Word comes up and a man tries to explain his view to one with an opposing view, the listener is not at all listening that he might learn, but is listening only to refute what is being said. Now I want to ask a fair question. Can Scripture fight Scripture? Does the Bible contradict the Bible? Can there be two doctrines of truth in the Word that say the opposite or oppose the other? NO. IT CANNOT BE SO. Yet how many of God's people have their eyes open to that truth? Not even one percent, as far as I know, have learned that ALL Scripture is given by God and ALL is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, etc. If all Scripture is thusly given, then every verse will dovetail if given a chance. But how many believe in predestination unto election and reprobation unto destruction? Those who don't, will they listen? No, they will not. Yet both are in the Word, and nothing will change it. But to learn about it and reconcile the truth of those doctrines with other truths that seem to oppose, they will not take the time. But they stop their ears, and gnash with their teeth, and they lose out. At the end of this age a prophet will come, but they will be blind to all that he is doing and saying. They are so sure they are right, and in their blindness they will lose it all.

Now God says they are naked as well as blind. I cannot imagine anything as tragic as a man who is blind and naked and does not know it. There is only one answer--he is out of his mind. He is already deep in oblivion. His faculties are gone, spiritual amnesia has set in. What else can it mean? Can it mean that the Holy Spirit has taken His leave of this last day church? Can it mean that men have put God out of their minds to such an extent that it is happening even as stated in Romans 1:28.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."

It surely appears that something like that has happened. Here is a people who say that they are of God and know God and have His Holy Spirit, and yet they are naked and blind and don't know it. They are **ALREADY DECEIVED. THEY HAVE THE WRONG SPIRIT. THE ELECT CANNOT BE DECEIVED, BUT IT IS EVIDENT THAT THESE OTHERS ARE.** These are they who have become blind because they refused the Word of God. These are

they who have stripped themselves naked by leaving God's care and protection and sought to build their own way of salvation, their own tower of Babel by organization.

Oh, how lovely and beautiful dressed they appear in their own eyes as they formed their general assemblies, and their councils, etc. But now God is stripping it all away and they are naked, for these organizations have but led them into the camp of antichrist, into the field of tares, right up to their binding and burning. Objects of pity indeed they are. Yes, pity them, warn them, beseech them, and still they go their way headlong to destruction, wrathfully turning away any and all attempts to save them as brands from the burning. Miserable indeed they are, yet they know it not. Calloused and beyond hope, they glory in what is actually their shame. Defiant against the Word, yet one day they shall be judged by it and pay the price of its awful indictments.

THE FINAL COUNSEL OF THE AGES

Revelation 3:18-19.

"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

The counsel of God is terse. It is to the point. He directs this last day church to one hope. That hope is HIMSELF. He says, "Come to Me and buy." It is evident from this phrase "buy of Me" that the Laodicean church is not at all dealing with Jesus for the Spiritual products of the Kingdom of God. Their transactions cannot be Spiritual. They may think that they are Spiritual, but how can they be? The works in their midst are definitely not as Paul would say, "God in you willing and doing of His own good pleasure." Philippians 2:13. Thus what about all these churches, schools, hospitals, missionary ventures, etc.? God is not in them as long as they are denominational seed and spirit, and not the Seed and Spirit of God.

"Buy of Me, gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich."

Now these people had plenty of gold, but it was the wrong kind. It was that gold that bought men's lives and destroyed them. It was the gold that warped and twisted human character, for its love was the root of all evil.

Revelation 18:1-14,

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory.

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

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.

How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine: and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God Who judgeth her.

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgment come.

And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all."

This is exactly the organized churches of the last day, for it says in verse 4, "Come out of her MY PEOPLE". The rapture has not yet taken place. The

bride is not yet gone when these terrible conditions in this rich, false church exist.

But, there is a gold of God. I Peter 1:7.

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth."

The gold of God is a Christ-like character produced in the fiery furnace of affliction. That is the right kind of gold.

But what kind of gold does the church have today? It has but the worldly gold that will perish. It is rich. It is complacent. It has made affluence the major criterion of spirituality. The evidence of God's blessing and the correctness of doctrine, etc. is now based upon how many rich folks are involved in it.

"You had better come before it is too late," saith the Lord, "and buy of Me gold tried in the fire and then you will be truly rich." Are we getting it? Listen to me, "Naked (physically) we came into the world, but naked (spiritually) we will NOT leave it." Oh no, we are going to take something with us. What that something is, is ALL we can take with us, nothing less and nothing more. So we had better be real careful now to see that we take something that will make us right before God. So, then, what will we take with us? We will take our CHARACTER, brother, that is what we will take with us. Now what kind of character will you take with you? Will it be like HIS Whose character was molded by suffering in the fiery furnace of affliction, or will it be the softness of this character-less Laodicean people? It is up to each one of us, for in that day every man will bear his own burden.

Now, I said that the city of Laodicea was a wealthy city. It minted gold coins with inscriptions on both sides. Gold coins characterized the age--a flourishing commerce existed because of it. Today, the two-headed gold coin is with us. We buy ourselves out and we buy ourselves in. In the church, we attempt to accomplish the same. We buy ourselves out of sin and buy ourselves into heaven--or so we say. But God does not say that.

The church owns such phenomenal wealth, that at any given time she can take over the entire world system of commerce, and indeed a leader in the World Council of Churches has openly prophesied that the church in the foreseeable future should, could, and will do just that. But their golden tower of Babel shall fall. Only the gold tried in the fire shall endure.

And that is what the church has constantly done through the ages. She has left the Word of God and taken her own creeds and dogmas; she has organized and joined herself to the world. Thus is she naked, and God is judging her lewdness. The only way she can get out of this dread situation is by obeying the Lord to come back to His Word.

Revelation 18:4,

"Come out of her My people."

II Corinthians 6:14-18.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you.

And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

There is a price to pay for those garments, and that is the price of separation.

"And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mightest see."

He does not say that you have to buy this eyesalve. Oh no. There is no price tag on the Holy Spirit.

"Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or the hearing of faith?"

Galatians 3:2.

Without the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, you can never have your eyes opened to a true Spiritual revelation of the Word. A man without the Spirit is blind to God and His truth.

When I think of this eyesalve opening people's eyes, I can't help but recall when I was a little boy in Kentucky. My brother and I slept in the attic on a straw pallet. The cracks in the house would let the drafts blow through. Sometimes in the winter it would get so cold we would wake up in the morning with such colds in our eyes that our eyes would be shut tight with inflammation. We would cry out to mother, and up she would come with some hot coon grease and rub our eyes until the hardened matter was gone, and then we could see.

You know there have been some awful cold drafts blowing on the church in this generation, and I'm afraid her eyes have sort of frozen shut and she is blind to what God has for her. She needs some hot oil of the Spirit of God to open her eyes. Unless she receives the Spirit of God she will go on substituting program for power and creed for Word. She counts numbers for success, rather than to look for fruit. The doctors of theology have shut the door to faith and

forbade all to enter. They neither go in, nor let anyone else go in. Their theology comes out of a text book on psychology written by some unbeliever. There is a text book on psychology, one we all need; it is the Bible. It is written by God and contains God's psychology. You don't need any doctor to explain it to you. Receive ye the Holy Spirit and let Him do the explaining. He wrote the Book and He can tell you what is in it and what it means.

I Corinthians 2:9-16

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned. But he that is Spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Now if all the things that the Spirit is crying out against are true of this age, we need someone to come on the scene as did John the Baptist and challenge the church as never before. And that is exactly what is coming to our age. Another John the Baptist is coming and he will cry out exactly as did the first forerunner. We know that he will because of what the next verse says.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent."

Revelation 3:19.

This is the same message that John had as he cried out in that religious wilderness of Pharisees, Sadducees, and heathen, "REPENT!" There was no other course then; there is no other course now. There was no other way to get back to God then, and there is no other way now. It is REPENT. Change your mind. Turn around. REPENT, for why will ye die?

Let us examine the first phrase, "as many as I love". In the Greek the emphasis is upon the personal pronoun "I". He does not say as many would

feel He should say, "as many as love ME". No sir. We must never try to make Jesus the OBJECT of human love in this verse. No! It is the MANY that are the LOVED ONES of God. It is HIS love, in question, NOT ours.

So once again we find ourselves glorying in His salvation, His purpose and His plan, and we are confirmed even more strongly in the truth of the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. Even as He said in Romans 9:13. "Jacob have I loved." Does it now obtain that since He loved ONLY the MANY, is He therefore in a state of complacency, awaiting the love of those who have not drawn nigh Him? By no means is this so, for He declared also in Romans 9:13, "Esau have I hated." And in verse 11 the Spirit boldly calls out, "For the children not being born, neither having done any good or evil, THAT THE PURPOSE OF GOD ACCORDING TO ELECTION MIGHT STAND, not of works, but of Him that calleth." This love is "Elective Love". It is His love for His elect. And His love for them is apart from HUMAN MERIT for it says that the purpose of God stands in election which is exactly opposite to works or anything man has in himself. Because "BEFORE THE CHILDREN WERE BORN" He had ALREADY said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

And now He says to His own, "As many as I love, I REBUKE AND CHASTEN." To rebuke is to reprove. To reprove is to 'expose with a view to correction.' Chasten does not mean to punish. It means to "discipline because the subject's amendment is in mind."

This is exactly what we find in Hebrews 12:5-11,

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children. My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him;

For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?

But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Herein is now set forth the love of God. He desired in love a family of His own, a family of sons--sons like Himself. There before Him lies all mankind as ONE lump of clay. Out of that same lump He will now make vessels unto honor and unto dishonor. The CHOOSING will be His own choosing. Then those chosen ones, born of His Spirit will be trained to conform to His image in their walk. He REPROVES with all long-suffering and gentleness and mercy. He CHASTENS with nail-scarred hands. Sometimes this Potter must take the vessel He is working on and thoroughly break it down in order that He may rebuild it exactly as He desires it. BUT IT IS LOVE. THAT IS HIS LOVE. ANOTHER WAY OF HIS LOVE THERE IS NOT. THERE CANNOT BE.

Oh, little flock, do not fear. This age is fast closing. As it does those tares will be bound together, and as a threefold cord is not easily broken, they will have a tremendous threefold strength of political, physical, and spiritual (Satanical) power, and they will seek to destroy the bride of Christ. She will suffer, but she will endure. Fear not those things that are coming upon the earth, for He "Who loved His own, loveth them unto the end." John 13:1.

"Be zealous and repent." Now this false church has zeal; make no mistake about that. Her zeal has literally been that of the Jews,

John 2:17,

"The zeal of thine house hath eaten Me up."

But it is a wrong zeal. It is for the house of their own building. It is for their own creeds, dogmas, organizations, their own righteousness. They have put the Word out for their own ideas. They deposed the Holy Ghost and made men into leaders. They have put aside Eternal Life as a Person, and make it good works, or even church conformity rather than good works.

But God is calling for another zeal. It is the zeal to cry "I AM WRONG". Now who is going to say that he is wrong? What is it that all these denominations are based upon?--the claim to originality, and that of God,--the claim that they are right. Now they ALL cannot be right. In fact NOT ONE of them is right. They are whited sepulchres, full of dead men's bones. They have no life. They have no vindication. God has never made Himself known in any organization. They say they are right because they are the ones that are saying it, but saying it does not make it so. They need the vindicated "Thus saith the Lord" of God, and they don't have it.

Now let me say this here. I don't believe that God is calling only to the false church to repent. In this verse He is talking to His elect. They have some repenting to do, too. Many of His children are still in those false churches. They are those of whom it speaks in Ephesians 5:14, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." To be asleep is not to be dead. These are sleeping amongst the dead. They are out

there in the dead denominations. They are floating along with them. God cries out, "WAKE UP! Repent of your folly." Here they are lending their influence, giving their time and their money, actually their very lives to these antichrist organizations, and all the while thinking it is all right. They need to repent. They must repent. They need to have a change of mind and turn toward truth.

Yes, this is the age that most needs to repent. But will it? Will it bring back the Word? Will it again enthrone the Holy Spirit in men's lives? Will it again revere Jesus as the **ONLY** Saviour? I say not, for the next verse reveals the astounding and shocking truth of the close of this age.

CHRIST OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

Revelation 3:20-22,

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Now there is a great deal of confusion over this verse because so many personal workers use it in personal evangelism as though Jesus were at the heart's door of every sinner knocking for admission. It would then be said that if the sinner opened the door, the Lord would come in. But this verse is not talking to individual sinners. This whole message has a summation as does every message in every age. In verse 22 it says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the **CHURCHES**." So this is the message to the church of the last age. This is the condition of the Laodicean church as its end nears. It is not a personal message to one person; it is the Spirit telling us where Jesus is. **CHRIST HAS LEFT THE CHURCH.**

Is this not the logical result or end if the Word is put aside for creed, the Holy Spirit deposed for popes, bishops, presidents, counselors, etc., and the Saviour set aside for a works program, or church joining, or some type of conformity to a church system? What more can be done against Him? This is the apostasy! This is the falling away! This is the open door to antichrist, for if One came in His Father's Name (Jesus) and was not received, but rejected, then there will come another with his own name (liar, a pretender) and him they will receive, John 5:43. The man of sin, that son of perdition will take over.

Matthew 24, mentions signs in the heavens concerning this last day just before Jesus comes. I wonder if you noticed such a sign recently fulfilled as to

portray the very truth we have been discussing. That truth is that Jesus has been steadily pushed aside until in the last age He is pushed outside the church. Recall that in the first age it was almost a full orb church of truth. Yet there was a little error called the deeds of the Nicolaitanes that kept the circle from being full. Then in the next age more darkness crept in until the ball of light glowed less, and darkness covered more of the circle. In the third age it was eclipsed still more, and in the fourth age which was the Dark Ages, the light had all but gone.

Now think on this. The church shines in the reflected light of Christ. He is the SUN. The church is the MOON. Thus this orb of light is the moon. It had decreased from almost a full moon in the first age, to a sliver in the fourth age. But in the fifth age it began to grow. In the sixth it took a great step of growth forward. In part of the seventh age it was still growing, when suddenly it stopped short, and waned to almost a nothingness, so that instead of light it was the blackness of apostasy, and at the end of the age it had ceased to shine for darkness had taken over. Christ was now outside the church.

Here is the sign in the sky. The last eclipse of the moon was a total eclipse. It waned to a total darkness in seven stages. In the seventh stage, the total darkness came as the Pope of Rome (Paul the Sixth) went to Palestine to make a holy tour of Jerusalem. He was the first pope to ever go to Jerusalem. The pope is named Paul the Sixth. Paul was the first messenger and this man goes by that name. Notice it is the sixth, or the number of man. This is more than a coincidence. And when he went to Jerusalem, the moon or the church went into total darkness. This is it. This is the end. This generation shall not pass away until all be fulfilled. Even so Lord Jesus, come quickly!

Now we can see why there were two vines, one true and one false. Now we can see why Abraham had two sons, one after the flesh (that persecuted Isaac) and one after promise. Now we can see how that out of the same parents two boys came forth as twins, one knowing and loving the things of God, and the other knowing much of the same truth, but not of the same Spirit, and hence persecuted the child that was elect. God did not reprobate for the sake of reprobation. He reprobated for the sake of the elect. ELECT CANNOT persecute elect. ELECT CANNOT harm elect. It is the reprobates that persecute and destroy the elect. Oh, those reprobates are religious. They are smart. They are of the Cain line, the serpent seed. They build their Babels, they build their cities, they build their empires, and all the while calling on God. They hate the true seed, and they will do all they can, (even in the Name of the Lord) to destroy God's elect ones. But they are needed. "What is the chaff to the wheat?" No chaff, no wheat. But at the end, what happens to the chaff? It is burned with fire unquenchable. And the wheat? Where is it? It is gathered in His garner. It is where He is.

Oh elect of God, beware. Study closely. Be careful. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Rely upon God and be strong in His might. Your adversary, the devil, is even now going about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Watch unto prayer and be steadfast. This is the end time. Both the true and false vine are coming into maturity, but before the wheat matures, those ripened tares must be bound for the burning. See, they are all joining the World Council Of Churches. That is the binding. Soon the garnering of the wheat will come. But right now the two spirits are at work in two vines. Come out from among the tares. Start to overcome that you may be considered praiseworthy for your Lord, and fit to reign and rule with Him.

THE OVERCOMER'S THRONE

Revelation 3:21,

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

Now what are we to overcome? That is the normal question to ask here. But that is not the actual thought of this verse for it is not so much **WHAT** we are to overcome but **HOW** we are to overcome. Now this is logical, for does it matter much **WHAT** we are to overcome as long as we know **HOW** we can overcome?

A quick look at those Scriptures which involve the Lord Jesus overcoming will bring out the truth of this proposition. In Matthew 4, wherein Jesus is tempted of the devil, He overcame the personal temptations of Satan by the Word, and by the Word only. In each of the three major trials that corresponded exactly to the temptation of the Garden of Eden, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, Jesus overcame by the Word. Eve fell to the personal temptation of Satan by failing to use the Word. Adam fell in direct disobedience to the Word. But Jesus overcame by the Word. And right now, let me say that this is the only way to be an overcomer, also it is the only way that you can know if you are overcoming, because that Word **CAN'T** fail.

Now notice again how Jesus overcame the world systems of religion. When He was repeatedly badgered by the theologians of His day, He constantly applied the Word. He spake only what the Father gave Him to speak. There was not a time when the world was not utterly confused by His wisdom for it was the wisdom of God.

In his own personal life, contending with Himself, He overcame by obedience to the Word of God.

In Hebrews 5:7 it says,

"Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him That was able to save Him from death and was heard in that He feared:

Though He were a Son, Yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered;

And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."

What was He obedient to? The Word of God.

Now then, there will not be one person who will sit in the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ unless he has been living that Word. Your prayers, your fastings, your repentances--no matter what you present to God--none of that will gain you the privilege of sitting in that throne. It will be granted only to the WORD Bride. As the throne of the king is shared with the queen because she is united to him, so only they who are of that Word even as He is of that Word will share that throne.

Remember we have shown clearly all through the ages that even as Adam and Eve fell because they left the Word, so the Ephesian Age fell by turning slightly from the Word, until with every age continuing to turn away, we have a final repudiation of the Word by the World Church system. This Laodicean Age ends in a blackout of the Word, thereby causing a departure of the Lord from the midst. He stands outside calling to His own who follow Him by obedience to the Word. After a short and powerful demonstration of the Spirit this little hunted and persecuted group will go to be with Jesus.

THE CONSUMMATION OF THE GENTILE AGES

This age is the last of the seven church ages. What began in the first or Ephesian Age must and will come to full fruition and harvest in the last or Laodicean Age. The two vines will yield their final fruit. The two spirits will terminate their manifestation in each of their final destinations. The sowing, the watering, the growing is all over. Summer is ended. The sickle is now thrust into the harvest.

In verses 15 to 18 which we have just studied lies the true picture of the ripened false vine, false spirit, false church people. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and

blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." No words ever spelled out a more bitter denunciation, and no proud and arrogant religious people ever deserved it more.

Yet in verse 21,

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne,"

we find the true vine, true Spirit, true Church people exalted to the very throne of God with the highest compliment ever paid to a humble, steadfast Spiritual group.

The words of John the Baptist who so accurately set forth the Christ in relationship to the true and false church now comes to pass.

Matthew 3:11-12,

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He That cometh after me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Christ, the Great Harvester, is now reaping the fruit of the earth. He gathers the wheat into the garner by coming for His own and receiving them forever unto Himself. Then He returns to destroy the wicked with fire unquenchable.

The mystery of the tares and wheat of Matthew 13:24-30, is now also fulfilled.

"Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?

He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into My barn."

The wheat and the tares, which from the first age until now have grown side by side, are harvested. What Nicaea set out to accomplish has finally come to pass. With all the might of organization the false church turns from any vestige of truth and with political might reinforces herself with state backing and sets out to eradicate forever the true believer. But just when she is about to accomplish her cowardly plot the wheat is gathered into the garner. No longer will the wheat and tares grow side by side. No longer will the tares receive of the blessing of God because of the presence of the wheat, for the wheat will be gone and the wrath of God will be poured out in the sixth seal which will end in the utter destruction of the wicked.

Now I said a moment ago that the false vine came into full fruition in this age. Her fruit would mature and ripen. That is correct. This evil-spirited church, full of iniquity, will be revealed as the mustard seed that grew into a tree wherein lodged the fowls of the air. At her head will be the antichrist, the mystery of iniquity. All this is true. And if this is true, then it must also be true that the Bride Church will mature, and her ripeness shall be an identification with her Lord by means of the Word, and her Head Who will come to her is the Mystery of Godliness, Which indeed is Christ. And as the false church with all cunning and diabolical power made up of political force, physical force and demons of darkness come against this true vine, the true vine with the fullness of the Spirit and the Word will do the very acts of power that Jesus did. Then as she nears her Headstone, becoming like Him through the Word, Jesus will come that the bride and Groom may be forever united as one.

Already the visible manifestations of what I have been telling you are seen all around us. The ecumenical move of the tares is factual. But also it is a fact that the prophet for the last age must be bringing forth a message from God that will forerun the second coming of the Lord, for by his message will the hearts of the children be turned back to the Pentecostal fathers, and with the restoration of the Word will come the restoration of the power.

What crucial times are these in which we live. How careful we must be that we remain true to this Word and not take from it or add to it, for he who would speak where God has not spoken makes Him a liar. What I have particularly in mind is this: About the turn of the century the hunger for God that was generated in the Philadelphian Age brought a cry for the Spirit of God. And when the cry was answered by God sending forth manifestation in tongues, interpretation and prophecy, a group immediately, and most contrary to the Word, drew up a doctrine that tongues was the evidence of being baptized with the Holy Ghost. Tongues were far from evidence. They were manifestation,

but not evidence. The falsity of the doctrine can not only be seen by a lack of Scripture to substantiate it, but those who subscribed to the doctrine immediately organized on the basis of the doctrine, proving that they were not in the truth as they would have people believe. Oh, it looked good. It looked like the return of Pentecost. But it proved it wasn't. It could not be, for it organized. That is death, not life. It looked so close to the real that multitudes were deceived.

Now if it wasn't the genuine, what was it? It was the husk, the chaff. In the green, soft sheath-form it looked like it was the real thing. But as one can go into the field and see what looks exactly like wheat and yet is only the husk, (for the wheat seed has not yet formed) so this was but the soft shell that looked like the real grain yet to come. The original wheat seed of Pentecost was to come back in the last age. It had been buried at Nicaea. It sent up a shoot at Sardis. It grew a tassel at Philadelphia, and it was to mature at Laodicea. But it could not be back to the original until the Word was restored. The prophet had not yet come upon the scene. But now according to the time wherein we stand in the Laodicean Age, the 'Prophet-messenger' of Revelation 10:7 must already be in the land. Once more "Thus saith the Lord" must be here, ready to be manifested with infallible vindication. Thus is the True Seed already maturing, and THEN THE HARVEST.

Harvest time. Yes, harvest time. The two vines that grew together and intertwined their branches are now to be separated. The fruits of those vines which were at such variance will be gathered into separate garner. The two spirits will go to their separate destinations. Now it is time to heed the final call that comes only to the Wheat Bride, 'Come out of her My people that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye (wheat) receive not her (tares) plagues (the great tribulation of the sixth seal and Matthew 24).

THE LAST WARNING OF THE SPIRIT

Revelation 3:22,

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

This is the LAST warning. There will not be another. The throne room has been set up. The twelve foundations have been laid. The streets of gold have been paved. The gates of gigantic pearls are raised and hinged. Like a pyramid she stands so fair and glorious. The heavenly beings who have prepared her watch breathlessly, for she glistens and shines with a glory that is unearthly. Every facet of her beauty tells a story of amazing grace and Jesus' love. She is a city prepared for a prepared people. She awaits only for her inhabitants, and

soon they will throng her streets with joy. Yes, it is the last call. The Spirit will not speak in another age. The ages are over.

But thank God, at this moment, this age is not over. He is yet crying. And His cry is not only in the spiritual ears of men by His Spirit, but once again a prophet is in the land. Once more God will reveal the truth as He did to Paul. In the days of the seventh messenger, in the days of the Laodicean Age, its messenger will reveal the mysteries of God as revealed to Paul. He will speak out, and those who receive that prophet in his own name will receive the beneficent effect of that prophet's ministry. And they that hear him will be blessed and become part of that bride of the last day who are mentioned in Revelation 22:17,

"The Spirit and the bride say come."

The corn of wheat (the Bride Wheat) that fell into the ground at Nicaea has come back to original Word Grain again. Praise God forever. Yes, listen to the authenticated prophet of God who appears in this last age. What he says from God, the bride will say. The Spirit and the prophet and the bride will be saying the same thing. And what they will say will have already been said in the Word. They are saying it now, "Come out from among her now and be ye separate." The cry has gone out. The cry is going out. How long will the voice cry? We do not know, but one thing we do know, it won't be long, for this is the last age.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. The Spirit has spoken. The setting sun is about to fade into eternity for the church ages. Then it will be all over. Then it will be too late to come. But if somewhere in this series God has dealt with you by His Spirit, may you even now turn to Him in repentance and give your life to Him that by His Spirit He may give you eternal life.

CHAPTER TEN

A RESUME OF THE AGES

Due to the fact that our studies have been a verse by verse exposition of those Scriptures that deal with the seven ages, we have not set forth a continuous historical pattern of the church as much as we ought to have done. It is, therefore, our purpose now to take this chapter, and beginning with the Ephesian Age trace through all ages the church and her history as given to John by the Spirit of God. We will not be adding new material as much as correlating what we already have.

From our studies we have already learned that much of the Revelation is totally misunderstood because we have not formerly known that the 'church' spoken of and spoken to in this book does not refer to the pure 'ekklesia' the 'elect', the 'body of Christ', the 'bride', but it speaks to the entire body of people who are called Christians, whether they be true or merely nominal. As all Israel is NOT Israel, so all Christians are NOT Christians. Thus we learned that the church is made up of two vines, the true and the false. The two vines are motivated by two kinds of spirits; one has the Holy Spirit while the other is endowed with the spirit of antichrist. Both claim to know and be known of God. Both purport to speak for God. Both believe certain very basic truths and differ on others. But since both bear the name of the Lord, being called Christ-ians, and by such name-bearing obviously claim a relationship to Him (God calls it marriage), God now holds them both responsible to Him and therefore speaks to each.

We further learned that these two vines would grow side by side until the end of the ages when both would come to maturity and both be harvested. The false vine would not overcome and destroy the true vine, but then, neither would the true vine be able to bring the false vine into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

We learned the most amazing truth that the Holy Spirit could and would fall upon the unregenerate false vine Christians and manifest powerfully in various signs and wonders, even as Judas had a definite ministry in the Holy Ghost though he, himself, was pronounced to be a devil.

With these principles in mind we start to trace the church through the various seven ages.

The birth of the church was at Pentecost. As the first Adam was given a bride fresh from the hand of God and was undefiled for a brief span, so was Christ, the last Adam, given a bride pure and fresh at Pentecost; and she remained separate and undefiled for some time.

"And of the rest durst no man join himself to them"

(Acts 5:13) and

"The Lord added daily such as should be saved."

Acts 2:47.

How long this continued we do not know, but one day even as Eve was tempted and seduced by Satan, so the church was contaminated by the entrance of an antichrist spirit.

"And this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come and even now already is it in the world."

1 John 4:3.

And Jesus said concerning His bride in that first age,

"I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent."

Revelation 2:4-5.

The church was in that first age already a 'fallen woman.' As Satan had gotten to Eve before Adam, even now had Satan seduced the church, the bride of Christ, before the 'marriage supper of the Lamb.' And what specifically was in her midst that caused the fall? What but Revelation 2:6, "THE DEEDS OF THE NICOLAITANES." Already that first age had turned from following the pure Word of God. They turned from God's demand of a church absolutely dependent upon Him (depending entirely upon God to fulfill His Word from start to finish apart from human government) to Nicolaitanism, which is organizing a human government within the church which as all governments do, legislate for the people. They did exactly what Israel did. They took the expediency of human government instead of the Word and the Spirit.

Death had entered. How do we know? Do we not hear the voice of the Spirit raised in that first age for all who will hear, as He is calling. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life in the paradise of God." The church had already imbibed too deeply of the tree of death (or the denominational false vine) whose end is the lake of fire. But there are no cherubim with flaming swords to guard the Tree of Life now. God does not now depart from the midst of the church as He departed from Eden. Oh, no, He will ever be in the midst of His church until the final age. And until that time He calls to all to come.

Now please let us be careful here. This message to the angel of the church which is at Ephesus is not a message to the actual local Ephesian church. It is a message to the AGE. And that age had in it the seed of truth and the seed of error exactly as set forth according to the parable of the wheat and the tares. The church ages is the field, and in it are wheat and tares. The false church

organized, humanized the government and the Word, and fought the true Christian.

Tares always flourish mightier than wheat or any other cultivated plant. The tare church grew rapidly in this first age. But the wheat church was flourishing also. By the end of the first age the deeds of the Nicolaitanes were flourishing in the local false vine churches with increasing attempts to spread their influence further than their own body. Its influence was felt upon the true church for men like the venerable Polycarp were calling themselves bishops with a reference to that title which was not inherent in it according to the Word. Also in that age, the true church had lost its first love. That love was typified as the love of bride and groom at their marriage and early years of wedded life. There was a cooling of that complete love and abandonment to God.

But notice. Revelation 2:1 describes the Lord Jesus as in the midst of His church and holding the messengers in His right hand. Because this bride has fallen, because the church corporate is now an admixture of true and false, He does not leave it. It is His.

And according to Romans 14:7-9 that is exactly right.

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

On the cross He bought the WHOLE world of people. They are His. He is the Lord of the living and dead. (As pertaining to ownership, NOT relationship.) And He walks in the midst of that body that has within it life and death.

What was planted in the first age will develop in the second age and in all other ages until it comes to maturity and harvest. Thus in the Smyrnaean Age we expect an enlargement and enlightenment of the church corporate's history through a revelation of the Spirit.

In this age the hatred of the false vine increases. See, they have (Verse 9) separated themselves from the company of the true. They went out from them. They were liars. They called themselves what they are not. But did God destroy them? No. "Let them alone and both will go to the harvest."

"But Lord they should be destroyed for they are destroying Thy people. They are killing them."

"No, let them alone. But to My bride I say, 'Be thou faithful unto death. Love Me even more.'"

We learn in no uncertain terms that this false vine is the vine of Satan. Their gathering is of him (Satan). They meet in the Name of God and lie that they are Christ's. They preach, they teach, they baptize, they worship, they partake of various rites given by Christ to the church, yet they are not of God. But since they say they are, God will hold them responsible and in each age He speaks of them and to them. They remind us exactly of Balaam. He had the prophetic office. He knew the proper approach unto God as demonstrated in the sacrifice of the clean beasts. Yet he was not a true WORD PROPHET for when God told him not to go to honor Balak with his presence he sought to go anyway for he was motivated by his lust for gold and prestige. So God let him go. The perfect will of God gave way to the permissive will of God because of the "heart desire" of Balaam. God actually said, "Go ahead." Did God change His mind? No sir. God had His way regardless of Balaam going. Balaam did not annul the will of God. God had His way regardless. It was Balaam who was the loser for he by-passed the Word.

And today we have that very same thing. Women preachers, organization, false doctrine, etc., and people worshipping God, manifesting in the Spirit and going right on as did Balaam, claiming that God has spoken to them even when the commission received is opposite to the revealed Word. And I will not deny that God spoke to them. But it was just like when He spoke to Balaam that second time. As He knew that Balaam wanted his own heart desire above the Word and He gave it to him, yet all the while in the end having HIS OWN way; even so today God tells folks to go ahead in their own hearts' desires for they have already rejected the Word. **BUT THE WILL OF GOD WILL BE DONE REGARDLESS.** Amen. I hope you see this. It will not only clear up much of what is seen in all ages but it will especially help in this last age which has so much manifestation and external blessings when the whole period is so against the 'Word-Revealed-Will' of God.

If ever an age received a message loud and clear, this age did. It was, and is, that Old Testament truth, "The son of the bondwoman will distress the son of the free woman until the son of the bondwoman be cast out." That lets us know that the hatred and blasphemy of Satan against the true Christian will be vented through a group who are nominal, false Christians, and this will increase until God uproots that false vine at the end of the Laodicean Age.

The third age revealed by the Spirit of prophecy that the worldly church would adopt Nicolaitanism as a doctrine. The separation of the clergy from the laity grew from the Biblical truth of the elders (shepherds of local flocks) ruling the flock by the Word, to the 'deeds of Nicolaitanes' wherein the clergy set themselves in ranks one over the other, which unscriptural formula then evolved into a priesthood that placed the clergy between man and God, giving the clergy certain rights all the while denying the laity their God-given rights. This was usurpation. In this age it became a doctrine. It was established in the

church as the assured word of God, which indeed it was not. But the clergy called it the Word of God and therefore the doctrine was antichrist.

Because human government is politics pure and simple, the church became involved in politics. This involvement was welcomed by a dictator-emperor who joined church politics with state politics and by force established the false church (Satan's false religion) as the true religion. And through various edicts by various emperors we find the false church with state power destroying the true vine even more avidly.

Sad to say the true vine was not exactly immune to this doctrine. By that I do not mean that the true vine ever did establish the Nicolaitane ideas as a doctrine. Far from it. But that little worm of death kept sucking at the true vine hoping that it might fall. Even within the true church, men whom God had called as overseers were holding that title to mean a little more than just a local responsibility. It was not the clear understanding of Paul that existed in the church at this time. For Paul had said, "And they glorified God in me." No matter what authority Paul had, he kept the people looking to God from Whom is all authority. But the clergy was always looking to Divine Leadership PLUS HUMAN, and thus in giving honor where honor was not due, we find that the true church was spotted with humanism. With Nicolaitanism established--apostolic succession--placed ministers--pastors voted in, etc., it was only one step for the false church to proceed to Balaamism. The second step to the 'depth of Satan' was now in full progress.

This second step was the doctrine of Balaam, (described in Revelation 2:14) wherein Balaam taught Balak to stumble the children of Israel by a 'united meeting.' There the guests would do two more things contrary to the Word of God. You will recall that Balak needed help to keep his kingdom. He called on the most dominant spiritual figure of his day, Balaam. Balaam gave the advice that trapped and destroyed Israel. It was, first of all, to suggest that they all get together and talk things over, and eat together and get things ironed out. After all, understanding each other goes a long way. Once you accomplish that you can go from there. The next step would be worshipping together, and of course, a little pressure from the host usually makes the guests go a lot further than they intended. Now that didn't only happen back there to God's church of the Old Testament but it happened to the church of the New Testament, for there was an emperor, who like Balak needed help to secure his kingdom.

So Constantine invited the nominal Christian, First Christian Church of Rome, to help him get the Christians behind him, as they were a very large body. The outcome was the Nicene Council of 325. There the Christians, both true and nominal, came together at the invitation of Constantine. The true Christians had no business even going up to the meeting. In spite of all

Constantine could do to unite them all, the real believers knew they were out of place and left. But to those who remained, Constantine gave of the state's treasury along with political and physical force. The people were introduced to idol worship and spiritism, for statues with names of saints were placed in the buildings and the people were taught to commune with the dead, or pray to saints which is nothing more nor less than spiritism. For the food that man truly needs, even the Word of God, they were given creeds, and dogmas and rituals which were also enforced by the state, and above all they were given three gods with the triple compound name of the One True God, and water baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ gave way to the pagan baptism of three titles.

The real believers ought not to have gone there. They had already lost much truth, and now they, too, would lose the understanding of Godhead and forfeit names for titles in water baptism.

Now watch this doctrine of Balaam most carefully. Notice above all, that it is the deliberate maneuver of a corrupt clergy to bind the people to them, by leading the people deliberately into the sin of unbelief. The Nicolaitane doctrine was the corruption of the clergy as they sought political power amongst themselves, while Balaamism is the subjection of the people to their system of creed and worship in order to hold them. Now watch this carefully. What was it that bound the people to the nominal church and thereby destroyed them? It was the creeds and dogmas formed into church tenets. It was the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. They were not given the true food, the Word. They were given the food that came from idol worship, Babylonian paganism wrapped up in Christian terminology.

And that very same spirit and doctrine is right amongst all Protestants and it is called DENOMINATION. Nicolaitanism is organization, humanizing the leadership of the church, and thereby deposing the Spirit. Balaamism is denominationalism which takes the church manual instead of the Bible. And right to this hour, many of God's people are caught in the snare of denominationalism and God is crying to them, "Come out of her My people, lest ye be partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues." You see they are ignorant. But if the rapture should take place at this moment, ignorance would be no court of appeal from the judgment of God for being in the wrong ranks.

For the clergy to organize themselves with one rank over another until they are finally headed up by a president is a manifestation of the antichrist spirit, regardless of how wonderful and necessary it may seem. It is nothing but human reasoning taking the place of the Word. And any person who is in the organized denominations is right in the midst of an antichrist system. Now let

me say this and make it very plain. I AM NOT AGAINST THE PEOPLE. I AM AGAINST THE SYSTEM.

With a state and church union the stage has been set for the Dark Ages. And indeed for about 1000 years the church went into the depth of blackness, knowing the depths of Satan. When any religious people embrace both Nicolaitanism and Balaamism, and have the political, financial and physical power to back it up there is only one direction they can go. That direction is right into the Jezebel doctrine.

Now why do we say this? Because as we pointed out in the study of the fourth age that Jezebel was a Sidonian, the daughter of Ethbaal who was king priest to Astarte. He was a murderer. This woman married Ahab (King of Israel) for political expediency. She then took over the religion of the people and murdered the Levites, and erected temples wherein she caused the people to worship Astarte (Venus) and Baal (Sun god). She formulated the teaching and made her priests teach it, and they in turn made the people accept it.

There you can see exactly what the nominal church was in the Dark Ages. They left the Word of God entirely except for names and titles of Godhead and a few Scriptural principles. They twisted what they did take out of the Bible by changing its meaning. Their college of bishops, etc., wrote vast treatises, their popes declared themselves infallible and said they received revelation from God and spoke as God to the people. All this was taught to the priests who through fear made the people believe it. To dissent was death or excommunication which might be worse than death. It was now the church with the assured voice that took over, and wild with power they drank the blood of the martyrs until the true Christians were all but exterminated and there was hardly any Word left, and little manifestation of the Holy Ghost. But the true vine struggled and survived. God was faithful to the little flock and in spite of what Rome might do to their bodies, Rome could not kill the Spirit within them, and the light of the Truth shone on, backed by the Holy Ghost and power.

This is a good place to make an illuminating observation. Look. The deeds and doctrines of the Nicolaitanes, the doctrine of Balaam, and the teaching of the false prophetess, Jezebel, do not constitute three spirits or make three spiritual principles. These three are but the various manifestations of the same spirit as it goes from depth to depth. What it all is, is the antichrist spirit of organization in its three various stages. Once the clergy separated themselves and organized themselves they oppressed the people by leading them into, and binding them to organization also. This organization was based upon the creeds and dogma which they taught the people instead of the pure Word of God.

Ritual and ceremony was given an increasing part in worship, and soon this whole system was a militant and diabolical power that did its best to control all through the persuasion of discourse or literal force. It received its energy from its own false prophecies and not the Word of God. It was now absolutely antichrist though it came in Christ's Name.

After what seemed an interminable time wherein Truth must surely die, men began to protest the vileness of the Roman Catholic Church, because by no stretch of the imagination could God be in such teaching and such conduct. These protests were either disregarded and died from failure to arouse attention, or were quashed by Rome. But then, God in His sovereign grace sent a messenger by the name of Martin Luther to start a reformation. He worked in a climate where the Roman Catholic Church had been given so much rope that she was about to hang herself. So when Luther preached justification by faith the true vine for the first time in many centuries began to grow in a bountiful manner.

As the nominal church had used state power to back it up, now state power began to flow against it. And this is where Luther made his mistake, and the true believers made their mistake. They allowed the state to subsidize them. So this age did not launch out very far on the Word. Thank God that it did go as far as it did, but because it leaned on political power to a great extent, this age ended in organization, and this very group that in Luther's generation had broken from the false vine, now turned back to become a daughter of the harlot for she went right into Nicolaitanism and Balaamism. This era had scores of factions within it, and to prove how far they were from true seed is to merely read history and see how they persecuted each other, even unto death in some cases. But there were a few names amongst them, even as there always are in every age.

We rejoice in this age for this one thing. Reformation had started. It was not a resurrection but a reformation. Neither was it a restoration. But the corn of wheat that had died at Nicaea and had rotted in the Dark Ages, now sent up a shoot of truth signifying that at some future date, at the end of the Laodicean Age, just before Jesus came, the church would go back to being a Wheat Seed Bride again while the tares would be harvested and burned in the lake of fire.

Since the fifth age had brought a great dissemination of the Word through printing, the sixth age was quick to take advantage of it. This age was the second stage of the restoration and as we have stated previously was the tassel age. Education abounded. This was the age of intellectual men who loved God and served Him. Missionaries abounded and the Word spread over the world. It was an age of brotherly love. It was an age of the open door. It was the last age of long duration, and after it the Laodicean Age would come which would be a short one.

The true vine flourished in this age as in no other when one thinks of numbers at home and abroad. This age brought holy men to the forefront. The true vine spread and the false vine receded. Everywhere the true vine went God gave light and life and happiness. The false vine was shown up for what it was: darkness, misery, poverty, illiteracy and death. And as the false vine in its day of power could not kill the true vine, neither could the true vine now bring back the false vine to Jesus Christ. But the false vine entrenched itself, waiting for the last part of the last age when it would win all back to itself except that small flock that were the elect, true vine of God.

But how sad does this age make us feel as we realize that every great move of God (and there were many) neglected to throw off the Nicolaitane doctrine for they all organized and died. Then they moved into denominations to hold the spiritually dead in foodless pastures. Little did they know it, but each group was tainted with that same error, and when the revival fire burned low, organization took over and people became denominations. They were only nominal Christians though each group claimed with the very same assurance as the Roman Catholic Church that they were right and all others wrong. The stage was truly set for the daughters to go back home in the last age, back to Rome, under the mother hen.

And so we come to the last age: the Laodicean Age. That is our age. We know it is the last age for the Jews are back in Palestine. No matter how they got there; they are there. And this is harvest time. But before there can be a harvest there has to be a ripening, a maturing of both the vines.

The Lutheran Age was the springtime. The Wesleyan Age was the summer of growth. The Laodicean Age is the harvest time of gathering the tares for binding and burning; and garnering the wheat for the Lord.

Harvest time. Have you noticed that in the harvest time, though there is a real acceleration in the ripening, there is consequently a slowing of growth until there is no growth? Is that not exactly what we are seeing now? The false vine is losing multitudes to the Communists and various other types of belief. Her numbers are not increasing as she would like us to think. Her hold on the people is not what it used to be, and in so many cases going to church is just a show. And the true vine? What about her? Is she growing? Where are those vast numbers that keep coming to revivals and answer altar calls? Are not most of them merely emotional in their approach, or desirous of something physical rather than desiring that which is truly Spiritual? Is this age not like the day in which Noah entered the ark, and the door was shut, but yet God tarried in judgment seven days? No one was literally turned to God in those silent days.

And yet it is the harvest time. There then must come upon the scene in this age those who will bring the wheat and tares to maturity. The tares are already maturing very fast under corrupt teachers who turn the people from the Word.

But the wheat also must mature. And to her, God is sending the Prophet-Messenger with the vindicated ministry that he might be accepted by the elect. They will hear him as the first church heard Paul, and she will mature in the Word until becoming a Word Bride the mighty works will be found in her that are always attendant upon the pure Word and faith.

The false church groups will come together in a world council of churches. This world council of churches is the IMAGE ERECTED TO THE BEAST.

Revelation 13:11-18,

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred three score and six."

Now remember, it was Imperial Pagan Rome that fell by the sword. But she was healed of her death stroke when she joined to the nominal Christian church of Rome and incorporated paganism and Christianity, and thereby became the Holy Roman Empire which was to endure until Jesus came and destroyed her. But Rome is not going it alone. Her daughters are right with her and she will take over absolute authority by the World Council of Churches.

This may seem far fetched to some but actually it is very plain for all to see because right now the churches are controlling politics and at the opportune time will manifest exactly how great is that control. This ecumenical move will end up with Rome at the head even though the people did not envision it that way. This is so because in Revelation 17:3-6 it states that the whore, Mystery

Babylon is seated on the beast. She is controlling the last, or fourth empire. This Roman Church is doing that. With the world church system under her Rome will be controlling, and this image (church system) will be obedient to Rome because Rome controls the gold of the world.

Thus all the people have to belong to the world church system or be at the mercy of the elements for they cannot buy or sell without the mark of the beast in the hand or head. This mark in the head means that they will have to take the doctrine of the world church system which is trinitarianism, etc., and the mark in the hand which means to do the will of the world church. With this great power the church systems will persecute the true bride. This image will try to keep the bride from preaching and teaching, etc. Her ministers will be forbidden to give comfort and truth to the people who need it. But before the antichrist (in person) takes over this complete world system of churches the true church will be taken away from this world to be with the Lord. God will catch away His bride for the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Now as this concluding chapter was given in order to trace the two churches and two spirits from Pentecost to their consummation, we will take this final time to show this in the Laodicean Age.

This age started just after the turn of the twentieth century. As it was to be the age in which the true church would return to being the bride she was at Pentecost, we know that there must of necessity be a return of dynamic power. The believers sensed this in their spirits and began crying to God for a new outpouring such as was in the first century.

What seemed to be the answer came as many began to speak in tongues and manifest gifts of the Spirit. It was then believed that this was indeed the long awaited RESTORATION. It was not, for the latter rain can come only after the former rain which is the spring or TEACHING rain. The latter rain, then, is the HARVEST rain. How could this be the real thing when the Teaching Rain had not come? The Prophet-Messenger who was to be sent to TEACH the people and turn the hearts of the children back to the Pentecostal fathers had not yet come. Thus what was thought to be the restoration and the final quickening unto the rapture had not come. In it was a mixture of the unrighteous partaking of Spiritual blessing and manifesting in the Holy Ghost as we have kept pointing out to you. In it also was devil power as men were under the control of devils, yet no one seemed to realize it. Then, to prove that it was not the REAL, these people (even before a second generation had appeared) organized, and wrote their unscriptural doctrines and built their own fences as every other group ahead of them did.

Remember, while Jesus was upon earth so was Judas. Each came from a different spirit, and upon death each went to his own place. The Spirit of Christ

later came back upon the true church, and the spirit of Judas came back upon the false church.

It is right there in Rev. 6:1-8,

"And I saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And Power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."

See how that Judas spirit came back as a rider on a white horse. It was white. So close to the real, just as Judas was so close to Jesus. A crown was given to him (white horse rider). How? That spirit was now in the leader of the Nicolaitane system and he was a triple crowned pope who sat as God in his temple, calling himself the vicar of Christ. If vicar of Christ means 'instead of Christ' or 'in place of' or 'on behalf of God' then the pope was calling himself the Holy Ghost, or deposing the Holy Ghost, acting for Him. That was the Judas spirit in him doing that. See how he conquered--going forth conquering and to conquer. Christ did not do that. The only ones that came to Him were already predestinated by the Father. And so on and on went that spirit and one day it will become truly incarnate in a man who will head up the World Council of Churches, just as we have been saying. And by his gold (remember Judas held the bag) he will control the whole world, and that antichrist system will own everything and try to control everybody. But Jesus will come back and destroy them all with the brightness of His coming. And their end will be the lake of fire.

But what about the true seed? It will happen just as we have said. The people of God are being made ready by the Word of Truth from the messenger

to this age. In her will be the fulness of Pentecost for the Spirit will bring the people right back to where they were at the beginning. That is "Thus saith the Lord."

It is "Thus saith the Lord" for that is what Joel 2:23-26 says,

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month.

And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.

And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, My great army which I sent among you.

And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the Name of the Lord your God, That hath dealt wondrously with you: and My people shall never be ashamed."

Now it says God is going to "restore". The Lutheran Age did not restore the church; it started a reformation. The Wesleyan Age did not restore. The Pentecostal Age did not restore. But God has to restore for He cannot deny His Word. This is not the resurrection of the Church; it is the "Restoration". God will take the Church right back to Pentecost of the beginning. Now notice in verse 25 it tells why we need restoration. The locust, cankerworm, caterpillar and palmerworm have eaten all but the root and a small bit of the stem. Now we are told that all these insects are all one and the same in different stages. That is right. They are the antichrist spirit manifested in organization, denomination and false doctrine through the ages. And that poor little root and stalk is going to be restored. God isn't going to plant a new Church, but is going to bring His original planting back to original seed. He is doing it as stated in verse 23, by the teaching, or "former" rain. Next will come the harvest rain or rapturing faith.

Thus at this very moment we are in the complete fulfillment of Matthew 24:24 "insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." And who is it that shall attempt to deceive the very elect? Why, the spirit of antichrist in the "false anointed ones" of this last day. These false ones have already come in "Jesus' Name" claiming that they have been anointed of God for the last day. They are the false Messiahs (anointed ones). They claim that they are prophets. But are they one with the Word? Never. They have added to it or taken from it. No one denies that the Spirit of God manifesting in gifts is upon them. But like Balaam they all have their programs, make their appeal for money, exercise gifts, but deny the Word or bypass it for fear that a controversy might diminish their chances for greater gain. Yet they preach salvation and deliverance through the power of God, just like Judas, with a

ministry imparted by Christ. But because they are wrong seed, consequently they have a wrong spirit motivating them.

Religious? Oh my! They outshine the elect in effort and zeal, but it is Laodicean, not of Christ, for it looks for big crowds, big programs and startling signs amongst them. They preach the second coming of Christ, but deny the advent of the prophet-messenger, though in power and signs and true revelation he eclipses them all. Ah yes, this false spirit that in the last day is so close to the real, can be distinguished only by its deviation from the Word, and whenever it is caught in being anti-Word, it falls back on the one argument we have already shown to be false: "We get results, don't we? We have to be of God."

Now before we close, I want to bring this thought. All along we have been talking about the Seed of Wheat being buried, then sending up two shoots, then the tassel, then the true ear. This might make some wonder if we said that the Lutherans didn't have the Holy Spirit just because they taught basically justification. It might make some wonder about the Methodists, etc. No sir, we are not saying that. We are not talking about the individuals or the people, but the AGE. Luther had the Spirit of God, but his age was not the age of full restoration by another outpouring like in the beginning. It was the same with Wesley, Booth, Knox, Whitefield, Brainard, Jonathan Edwards, Meuller, etc. Surely they were full of the Holy Ghost. Yes, they certainly were. But the age in which each lived was not the age of restoration, neither was any age but this last age, the age of complete black out in apostasy. This is the age of apostasy, and this is the age of restoration, it is the age of the finished cycle. With this, it is all over.

So we conclude the Seven Church Ages, saying only what the Spirit said to each age, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

I sincerely believe that the Spirit of God has been speaking to us, not only teaching us the truths of the ages, but He has been faithfully dealing with hearts that they may turn to Him. That is the reason for all preaching and teaching, for it is in the preaching and teaching of the Word that the sheep hear the voice of God and follow Him.

Not for one moment do I bring a message to the people that they may follow me, or join my church, or start some fellowship and organization. I have never done that and will not do that now. I have no interest in those things, but I do have an interest in the things of God and people, and if I can accomplish just one thing I will be satisfied. That one thing is to see established a true spiritual relationship between God and men, wherein men become new creations in Christ, filled with His Spirit and live according to His Word. I would invite, plead and warn all to hear His voice at this time, and

yield your lives completely to Him, even as I trust in my heart that I have given my all to Him. God bless you, and may His coming rejoice your heart.

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