ANCIENT PAGAN AND MODERN CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM

THOMAS INMAN

PLATE I

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EXPOSED AND EXPLAINED

BY

THOMAS INMAN, M.D. (LONDON)

CONSULTING PHYSICIAN TO THE ROYAL INFIRMARY, LIVERPOOL

LATE LECTURER SUCCESSIVELY ON BOTANY, MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE, MATERIA MEDICA AND THERAPEUTICS, AND THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE, ETC. IN THE LIVERPOOL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

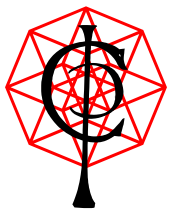
AUTHOR OF "FOUNDATION FOR A NEW THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE," A "TREATISE ON MYALGIA," "ON THE REAL NATURE OF INFLAMMATION," "ATHEROMA IN ARTERIES," "THE PRESERVATION OF HEALTH," "THE RESTORATION OF HEALTH," "ANCIENT FAITHS EMBODIED IN ANCIENT NAMES," ETC.;

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE LIVERPOOL LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

SECOND EDITION
REVISED AND ENLARGED.

WITH AN ESSAY ON BAAL WORSHIP, ON THE ASSYRIAN SACRED "GROVE," AND OTHER ALLIED SYMBOLS

BY JOHN NEWTON, M.R.C.S.E., ETC.



Celephaïs Press

Ulthar - Sarkomand - Inquanok – Leeds

2004

First published London, 1869
Expanded second edition, London: Trübner, 1874
This electronic edition prepared and issued
by Celephaïs Press, somewhere beyond
the Tanarian Hills, and manifested
in the waking world in Leeds,
Yorkshire, England
2004

Last updated 03.12.2005.

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

THE woodcuts in the present volume originally appeared in a large work, in two thick volumes, entitled *Ancient Faiths embodied in Ancient Names*. It has been suggested to me by many, that a collection of these Figures, and their explanation, are more likely to be generally examined than a very voluminous book. The one is, as it were, an alphabet; the other, an essay. The one opens the eyes; the other gives them opportunities to use their vision. The one teaches to read; the other affords means for practice. As the larger work endeavours to demonstrate the existence of a state of things almost unknown to the British public, so it is necessary to furnish overwhelming proof that the allegations and accusations made against certain nations of antiquity, and some doctrines of Christianity, are substantially true. Consequently, the number of witnesses is greater than is absolutely necessary to prove the point.

12, RODNEY STREET, LIVERPOOL.
July, 1869.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THE demand which has sprung up for this work has induced the Author to make it more complete than it was originally. But it could not be made more perfect without being expanded into a volume whose size would be incompatible with cheapness. When every Figure would supply a text for a long discourse, a close attention is required lest a description should be developed into a dissertation.

In this work, the Author is obliged to confine himself to the explanation of symbols, and cannnot launch out into ancient and modern faiths, except in so far as they are typified by the use of certain conventional signs.

A great many who peruse a book like this for the first time, and find how strange were the ideas which for some thousands of years permeated the religious opinions of the civilised world, might naturally consider that the Author is a mere visionary—one who is possessed of a hobby that he rides to death. Such a position is strengthened by finding that there is scarcely any subject treated of except the one which associates religion, a matter of the highest aim to man, with ideas of the most intensely earthly kind. But a thoughtful reader will readily discern that an essay on Symbolism must be confinded to visible emblems. By no fair means can an author who makes the crucifix his text

introduce the subject of the Confessional, the Eucharist, or Extreme Unction. Nor can one, who knows that the Buddha and Jesus alike inaugurated a faith which was unmarked by visible symbolism, bring into an interpretation of emblems a comparison between the preaching of two such distinguished men. In the like manner, the Author is obliged to pass over the difference between Judaism, Christianity as propounded by the son of Mary, and that which passes current for Christianity in Rome and most countries of Europe.

All these points, and many more, have been somewhat fully discussed in the Author's larger work, so often referred to in this, and to that he must refer the curious. The following pages are simply a chapter taken from a book, complete perhaps in itself, but only as a brick may be perfect, without giving to an individual any idea of the size, style, or architecture of the house from which it has been taken. If the readers will regard these pages as a beam in a building, the Author will be content.

8, VYVYAN TERRACE,
CLIFTON, BRISTOL.
August, 1874.

INTRODUCTION.

IT may, we think, be taken for granted, that nothing is, or has ever been, adopted into the service of Religion, without a definite purpose. If it be supoosed that a religion is build upon the foundation of a distinct revelation from the Almighty, as the Hebrew is said to be, there is a full belief that every emblem, rite, ceremony, dress, symbol, etc., has a special signification. Many earnest Christians, indeed, see in Judaic ordinaances a reference to Jesus of Nazareth. I have, for example, heard a pious man assert that "leprosy" was only another word for "sin"; but he was greatly staggered in this belief when I pointed out to him that if a person's whole body was affected he was no longer unclean (Lev. xiii. 13), which seemed on the proposed hypothesis to demonstrate that when a sinner was as black as hell he was the equal of a saint. According to such an interpreter, the paschal lamb is a type of Jesus, and consequently all whom his blood sprinkles are blocks of wood, lintels, and side-posts (Exod. xii. 22, 23). By the same style of metaphorical reasoning, Jesus was typified by the "scape-goat," and the proof is clear, for one was driven away into the wilderness, and the other voluntarily went there—one to be destroyed, the other to be tempted by the devil! Hence we infer that there is nothing repugnant to the minds of the pious in an examination respecting the use of symbols, and into that which is shadowed forth by them. What has been done for Judaism may be attempted for other forms of religion.

As the Hebrews and Christians believe their religion to be God-given, so other nations, having a different theology, regard their own peculiar tenets. Though we may, with that unreasoning prejudice and blind bigotry which are common to the Briton and the Spaniard, and pre-eminently so to the mass of Irish and Scotchmen amongst ourselves, and to the Carlists in the peninsula, disbelieve a heathen pretension to a divine revelation, we cannot doubt that the symbols, etc., of Paganism have a meaning, and that it is as lawful to scritinise the mysteries which they enfold as it is to speculate upon the Urim and Thummim of the Jews. Yet, even this freedom has, by some, been denied; for there are a few amongst us who adhere rigidly to the precept addressed to the followers of Moses, viz., "Take heed that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods?" (Deut. xii. 80.) The intention of the prohibition thus enunciated is well marked in the following words,* which indicate that the writer believed that the adoption of heathen gods would follow inquiry respecting them. It is not now-a-days feared that we may become Mahomedans if we read the Koran, or Buddhists if we study the Dhammapada; but there are priests whom fear than an inquiry into ecclesiastical matters may make their followers Papists, Protestants, Wesleyans, Baptists, Unitarians, or some other religion which the Presbytery object to. The dislike of inquiry ever attends those who profess a religion which is believed or known to be weak.

The philosopher of the present day, being freed from the shackles once rivited around him by a dominant hierarchy, may regard the precept in Deuteronomy in another light. Seeing that the same symbolism is common to many forms of religion, professed in countries widely apart both as regards time and space, he thinks that the danger of inquiry into

* "even so will I do likewise."

faiths is not the adoption of foreign, but the relinquishment of present methods of religious belief. When we see the same ideas promulgated as divine truth, on the ancient banks of the Ganges, and the modern shores of the Mediterranean, we are constrained to admit that they have something common in their source. They may be the result of celestial revelation, or they may all alike emanate from human ingenuity. As men invent new forms of religion now, there is a presumption that others may have done so formerly. As all men are essentially human, so we may believe that their inventions will be characterised by the virtues and the failings of humanity. Again, experience tells us that similarity in thought involves similarity in action. Two sportsmen, seeing a hare run off from between them, will fire at it so simultaneously that each is unaware that the other shot. So a resemblance in religious belief will eventuate in the selection of analogous symbolism.

We search into emblems with an intention different from that with which we inquire into ordinary language. The last tells us of the relationship of nations upon Earth, the first of the probable connections of mankind with Heaven. The devout Christian believes that all who venerate the Cross may hope for a happy eternity, without ever dreaming that the sign of his faith is as ancient as Homeric Troy, and was used by the Phœnicians probably before the Jews had any existence as a people; whilst an equally pious Mahometan regards the Crescent as the passport to the realms of bliss, without a thought that the symbol was in use long before the Prophet of Allah was born, and amongst those nations which it was the Prophet's mission to convert or to destroy. Letters and words mark the ordinary current of man's thought, whilst religious symbols show the nature of his aspirations. But all have this in common, viz., that they may be mistunderstood. Many a Brahmin has uttered

prayers in a language to him unintelligible; and many I a Christian uses words in his devotions of which he never seeks to know the meaning. "*Om manee pani*," "*Om manee padme houm*," "*Amen*," and "*Ave Maria purissima*" may fairly be placed in the same category. In like manner, the signification of an emblem may be unknown. The antiquary finds in Lycian coins, and in Aztec ruins, figures for which he can frame no meaning; whilst the ordinary church-goer also sees, in his place of worship, designs of which none ean give him a rational explanation. Again, we find that a language may find professed interpreters, whose system of exposition is wholly wrong; and the same may be said of symbols. I have seen, for example, three distinctly different interpretations given to one Assyrian inscription, and have heard as many opposite explanations of a particular figure, all of which have been incorrect.

In the interpretation of unkown languages and symbols, the observer gladly allows that much may be wrong; but this does not prevent him believing that some may be right. In giving his judgment, he will examine as closely as he can into the system adopted by each inquirer, the amount of materials at his disposal, and generally, the acumen which has been brought to the task. Perhaps, in an investigation such as we describe, the most important ingredient is care in collation and comparison. But a scholar can only collate satisfactorily when he has sufficient means, and these demand much time and research. The labour requires more time than ordinary working folk can command, and more patience than those who have leisure are generally disposed to give. Unquestionably, we have as yet had few attempts in England to classify and explain ancient and modern symbols. It is perhaps not strictly true that there has been so much a laxity in the research, of which we here speak, as a dread of making public the results of inquiry. Investigators, as a

rule, have a respect for their own prejudices, and dislike to make known to others a knowledge which has brought pain to their own minds. Like the Brahmin of the story, they will destroy a fine microscope rather than permit their co-religionists to know that they drink living creatures in their water, or eat mites in their fruit. The motto of such people is, "If truth is disagreeable, cling to error."

The following attempts to explain much of ancient and modern symbolism can only be regarded as tentative. The various devices contained herein seem to me to support the views which I have been led to form from other sources, by a careful inquiry into the signification of ancient names, and the examination of ancient faiths. The figures were originally intended as corroborative of evidenc:e drawn from numerous ancient and modern writings; and the idea of collecting them, and, as it were, making them speak for themselves, has been an after-thought. In the following pages I have simply reprinted the figures, etc., which appear in *Ancient Faiths embodied in Ancient Names* (second edition). I make no attempt to exhaust the subject. There are hundreds of emblems which find herein no place; and there are explanations of symbols current to which I make no reference, for they are simply *exoteric*.

For the benefit of many of my readers, I must explain the meanmg of the last word italicised. In most, if not in all, forms of religion, there are tenets not generally imparted to the vulgar, and only given to a select few under the seal of secrecy. A similar reticence exists in common life. There are secrets kept from children, for example, that are commonly known to all parents; there are *arcana*, familiar to doctors, of which patients have no idea. For example, when a lad innocently asks the family surgeon, or his parent, where the last new baby came from, he is put off with a reply, wide of the mark, yet sufficient for him. When I

put such a question to the maids in the kitchen, to which place for a time I was relegated, the first answer was that the baby came from the parsley bed. On hearing this, I went into the garden, and, finding the bed had been unmoved, came back and reproached my informant for falsehood. Another then took up the word, and said it was the carrot bed which the baby came from. As a roar of laughter followed this remark, I felt that I was being cheated, and asked no more questions. Then I could not, now I can, understand the *esoteric* sense of the sayings. They had to the servants two distinct signiftcations. The only one which I could then comprehend was *exoteric*, that which was known to my elders was the *esoteric* meaning. In what is called "religion" there has been a similar distinction. We see this, not only in the "mysteries," of Greece and Rome, but amongst the Jews; Esdras stating the following as a command from God, "Some things shalt thou publish, and somethings shalt thou show secretly to the wise." (2 Esdras xv, 26).

When there exist two distinct explanations, or statements, about the signification. of an emblem, the one "esoteric," true, and known only to the few, the other "exoteric," incorrect, and known to the many, it is clear that a time may come when the first may be lost, and the last alone remain. As an illustration, we can point to the original and correct pronunciation of the word hwhy, commonly pronounced Jehovah. Known only to a select few, it became lost when these died without imparting it; yet what is considered to be the incorrect method of pronouncing the word survives until to-day.*

* It is supposed by some that *Jahveh* is the proper pronunciation of this word, but as the first letter may represent *i*, *ja*, *ya*, or *e*, and the third *u*, *v* or *o*, while the second and fourth are the solf *h*, one may read the word *Jhuh*, analogous to the *Ju* in Jupiter; *Jehu*, the name of a King of Israel; *Yahu* as it is read on Assyrian inscriptions; *Jeho*, as in Jehosophat; *Ehoh*, analogous to

We may fairly assume that, when two such meanings exist, they are not identical, and that the one must commonly received is not the correct one. But when one alone is known to exist, it becomes a question whether another should, be sought. If, it may be asked, the common people are contented with a fable, believing it true, why seek to enlighten them upon its hidden meaning? To show the bearing of this subject, let us notice what has always struck me as remarkable. The second commandment declares to the Jews, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them," etc. (Exod. xx. 4). Yet we find, in Numbers xxi., that Jehovah ordered Moses to frame a brazen serpent, whose power was so miraculous that those who only looked at it were cured of the evils inflicted by thanatoid snakes.

Then again, in the temple of the God who is reported to have thus spoken, and who is also said to have declared that He would dwell in the house that Solomon made for Him, an ark, or box, was worshipped, and over it Cherubim were seen. These were likenesses: of something, and the first was worshipped. We find it described as being so sacred that death once followed a profane touching of it (2 Sam. vi. 6, 7), and no fewer than 50,070 people were done to death at Bethshemesh because somebody had ventured to look inside the box, and had tried to search into the mystery contained therein (1 Sam. vi. 19). It is curious

the *Evoe* or *Euoe* associated with Bacchus; and *Jaho*, analogous to the J. A. O. of the Gnostics. The Greek "Fathers" give the word as if equivalent to *yave*, *yaoh*, *yeho*, and *iao*.

But the question is not how the word may be pronounced, but how it was expressed in sound when used in religion by the Hebrew and other Semitic nations, amongst whom it was a sacred sound, or ineffable name, not lightly to be "taken in vain."

that the Philistines, who much have touched the box to put their strange offerings beside it (see 1 Sam. vi. 8), were not particularly bothered. They were "profane"; and priests only invent stories, which are applicable to the arcana which they use in worship, to blind the eyes of and give a holy horror to the people whom they govern. How David worshipped the ark as being the representative of God we see in 2 Sam. vi., 14, 16, 17, 21.

The ark of the covenant was indeed regarded. by the Jews much as a saint's toe, a crucifix, an image of the Virgin, a bit of wood, or a rusty old nail is by the Roman Catholics. So flagrant an apparent breach of the second commandment was covered for the common Hebrews by the asssertion that the mysterious box was a token of God's covenant with His People; but that this statement was "exoteric," we feel sure, when we find a similar ark existing and used in "the mysteries" of Egypt and Greece, amongst people who probably never heard of Jews and could by no chance know what passed in the Hebrew temple.

When become dissatisfied with a statement which is evidently intended to be a blind, some individuals naturally endeavour to ascertain what is behind the curtain. In this they resemble the brave boy, who rushes upon a sheet and turnip lantern, which has imposed upon his companions and passed for a ghost. What is a bugbear to the many is often a contemptible reptile to the few. Yet there are a great number who would rather run from a phantom night after night than grapple with it once, and would dissuade others from being bold enough to encounter it. Nevertheless, even the former rejoice when the cheat is exposed.

As when, by some courageous hand, that which has been mistaken by hundreds for a spectre has been demonstrated to be a crafty man, no one would endeavour to demonstrate the reality of ghosts by referring to the many scores of men

of all ranks who had been duped by the apparition thus detected; so, in like manner, when the falsehood of an exoteric story is exhibited, it is no argument in its favour that the vulgar in thousands and many a wise man have believed it. Speaking metaphorically, we have many such ghosts amongst ourselves; phantoms, which pass for powerful giants, but are in reality perfect shams. Such we may describe by comparing them to the apocryphal vampires. It is to me a melancholy thing to contemplate the manner in which mankind have, in every age and nation made for themselves bugbears, and then have felt fear at them. We deride the African, who manufactures a Fetish, and then trembles at its power, but the learned know perfectly well that man made the devil, whom the pious fear, just as a negro dreads Mumbo Jumbo.

In the fictitious narratives which passed truth in the dark ages of Christianity, there were accounts of individuals who died and were buried, and who, after a brief repose in the tomb, rose again. Some imagined that the resuscitated being was the identical one who had been interred. Others believed that some evil spirit had appropriated the body, and restored to it apparent vitality. Whatever the fiction was, the statement remained unchallenged, that some dead folk returned to earth, having the same guise as when they quitted it. We believe that a similar occurrence has taken place in religion. Heathendom died, and was buried; yet, after a brief interval, it rose again from its tomb. But, unlike the vampire, its garb was changed, and it was not recognised. It moved through Christendom in a seductive dress. If it were a devil, yet its clothing was that of a sheep; if a wolf, it wore breadcloth. If it ravened, the victims were not pitied. Heathenism, by which I mean the manners, morals and rites prevalent in pagan times or countries, like a resuscitated vampire, once bore rule through-

out Christendom, in which term is included all those parts where Christian baptism is used by all the people, or the vast majority. In most parts it still reigns supreme.

When vampires were discovered by the acumen of any observer, they were, we are told, ignominiously killed, by a stake being driven through the body; but experience showed them to have such tenacity of life that they rose again, and again, notwithstanding renewed impalement, and were not ultimately laid to rest till wholly burnt. In like manner, the regenerated Heathendom, which dominates over the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, has risen again and again, after being transfixed. Still cherished by the many, it is denounced by the few. Amongst other accusers, I raise my voice against the Paganism which exists so extensively in ecclesiastical Christianity, and will do my utmost to expose the imposture.

In a vampire story, told in *Thalaba*, by Southey, the resuscitated being takes the form of a dearly beloved maiden, and the hero is obliged to kill her with his own hand. He does so; but, whilst he strikes the form of the loved one, he feels sure that he slays only a demon. In like manner, when I endeavour to destroy the current Heathenism, which has assumed the garb of Christianity, I do not attack real religion. Few would accuse a workman of malignancy who cleanses from filth the surface or a noble statue. There may be some who are too nice to touch a nasty subject; yet even they will rejoice when some one else removes the dirt. Such a scavenger is much wanted.

If I were to assert, as a general proposition that religion does not require any symbolism, I should probably win assent from every true Scotch Presbyterian, every Wesleyan, and every Independent. Yet I should be opposed by every Papist, and by most Anglican Churchmen. But why? Is it not because their ecclesiastics have adopted symbolism into

their churches and into their ritual? They have broken the second commandment of Jehovah, and refuse to see anything wrong in their practice, or gross in their imagery. But they adopt Jehovah rather than Elohim, and break the commandment, said to be given upon Sinai, in good company.

The reader of the following pages will probably feel more interest therein if he has some clue whereby he may guide himself through their labyrinth.

From the earliest known times, there seems to have been, in every civilised, nation the idea of an unseen power. In the speculations of thoughtful minds a necessity is recognised for the existence of a Being who made all things—who is at times beneficent, sending rain and warmth, and who at others sends storm, plague, famine, and war. After the crude idea has taken possession of the thoughts, there has been a desire to know something more of this Creator, and an examination into the works of Nature has been made with the view to ascertain the will and designs of the Supreme. In every country this great ONE has been supposed to inhabit the heaven above us, and consequently all celestial phenomena have been noticed carefully. But the mind soon got weary of contemplating about an essence, and, contenting itself with the beliel that there was a POWER, began to investigate the nature of His ministers. These, amongst the Aryans, were the sun, fire, storm, wind, the sky, the day, night, etc. An intoxicating drink, too, was regarded as an emanation from the Supreme. With this form of belief men lived as they had done ere it existed, and in their relations with each other may be compared to such high class animals as elephants. Men can live peacably together without religion, just as do the bisons, buffaloes, antelopes, and even wolves. The assumption that some form of faith is absolutely a necessity for man is only

founded on the fancies of some religious fanatics who know little of the world.*

But as there is variety in the workings of the human mind, so there were differences in the way wherein the religious idea was carried out. Some regarded the sun and

* Whilst these sheets were passing through the press, there appeared a work, published anonymously, but reported to be by one of the most eminent theologians who ever sat upon an episcopal bench. It is entitled *Supernatural Religion*. London: Longmans, 1874. From it we quote the following, vol. ii. p. 489:—

"We gain infinitely more than we lose in abandoning belief in the reality of Divine Revelation. Whilst we retain pure and unimpaired the treasure of Christian Morality, we relinquish nothing but the debasing elements added to it by human superstition. We are no longer bound to believe a theology which outrages reason and moral sense. We are freesd from base anthropomorphic views of God and His government of the universe; and from Jewish Mythology we rise to higher conceptions of an infinitely wise and beneficent Being, hidden from our finite minds, it is true, in the impenetrable glory of Divinity, but whose Laws of wondrous comprehensiveness and perfection we ever perceive in operation around us. We are no longer disturbed by visions of fitful interference with the order of Nature, but we recognise that the Being who regulate the universe is without variableness or shadow of turning. It is singular how little there is in the supposed Revelation of alleged information, however incredible, regarding that which is beyond the limits of human thought, but that little is of a character which reason declares to be the wildest delusion. Let no man whose belief in the reality of a Divine Revelation may be destroyed by such an inquity complain that he has lost a precious possession, and that nothing is left but a blank. The Revelation not being a reality, that which he has lost was but an illusion, and that which is left is the Truth. If he be content with illusions, he will equally be consoled; if he be a lover only of truth, instead of a blank, he will recognise that the reality before him is full of great peace.

"If we know less than we have supposed of man's destiny, we may at least rejoice that we are no longer compelled to believe that which is unworthy. The limits of thought once attained, we may well be unmoved in the assurance that all that we do know of the regulation of the universe being so perfect and wise, all that we do not know must be equally so. Here enters the true and noble Faith—which is the child of reason. If we have believed a system, the details of which must at one time or another have shocked the mind of every intelligent man, and believed it simply because it was supposed to be revealed, we may equally believe in the wisdom and goodness of what is not revealed. The mere act of communication to us is nothing: Faith in the perfect ordering of all things is independent of Revelation.

"The argument so often employed by Theologians that Divine Revelation is necessary for man, and that certain views contained in that Revelation are required by our moral consciousness, is purely imaginary, and derived from the Revelation which it seeks to maintain. The only thing absolutely necessary for man is Truth, and to that, and that alone, must our moral consciousness adapt itself."

moon, the constellations and the planets, as ministers of the unseen ONE, and, reasoning from what was known to what was unknown, argued thus: "Throughout nature there seems to be a dualism. In the sky there are a sun and moon; there are also sun and earth, earth and sea. In every set of animals there are males and females." An inquiry into the influence of the sun brought out the facts that by themselves its beams were destructive; they were only beneficent when the earth was moist with rain. As the rain from heaven, then, caused things on earth to grow, it was natural that the main source of light and heat should be regarded as a male, and the earth as a female. As a male, the sun was supposed to have the emblems of virllity, and a spouse whom he impregnated, and who thereby became fertile.

In examining ancient Jewish, Phœnician, and other Shemitic cognomens, I found that they consisted of a divine name and some attribute of the deity, and that the last was generally referrible, equally to THE SUPREME, to the Sun, as a god, and to the masculine emblem. If the deity was a female, the name of her votary contained a reference to the moon and the beauties or functions of women. The higher ideas of the Creator were held only by a few, the many adopted a lower and more debased view. In this manner the sun became a chief god and the moon his partner, and the former being supposed to be male and the latter female, both became associated with the ideas which all have of terrestrial animals. Consequently the solar deity was associated in symbolism with masculine and the moon with feminine emblems.

An inquiry into antiquity, as represented by Babylonians; Assyrians, Egyptians, Phœnicians, Hebrews, Greeks, Etruscans, Romans, and others, and into modern faiths still current, as represented in the peninsula of India, in the Lebanon, and elsewhere, shows that ideas of sex have been

very generally associated with that of creation. God has been described as a king, or as a queen, or as both united. As monarch, he is supposed to be man, or woman, or both. As man differs from woman in certain peculiarities, these very means of distinction have been incorporated into the worship of god and goddess. Rival sects have been ranged in ancient times under the symbol of the T and the O, as in later times they are under the cross and the crescent. The worship of God the Father has repeatedly clashed with that of God the Mother, and the votaries of each respectively have worn badges characteristic of the sex of their deity. An illustration of this is to be seen amongst ourselves; one sect of Christian adoring chiefly the Trinity, another reverencing the Virgin. There is a well-known picture, indeed, of Mary worshipping her infant; and to the former is given the title *Mater Creatoris*, "the mother of the Creator." Our sexual sections are as well marked as those in ancient Jerusalem, which swore by Jehovah and Ashtoreth respectively.

The idea of sexuality in religion is quite compatible with a ritual and practice of an elaborate character, and a depth of piety which prefers starvation to impurity, or, as the Bible has it, to uncleanness. To eat "with the blood" was amongst the Hebrews a crime worthy of death; to eat with unwashed hands was a dreadful offence in the eyes of the Pharisees of Jerusalem; and in the recent famine in Bengal, we have seen that individuals would rather die of absolute hunger, and allow their children to perish too, than eat bread or rice which may have been touched by profane hands, or drink milk that had been expressed by British. milkmaids from cows' udders. Yet these same Hindoos, the very particular sect of the Brahmins, have amongst themselves a form of worship which to our ideas is incompatible with real religion. The folks referred to adore the Creator, and respect their ceremonial law even more deeply, than did

the Hebrews after the time of the Babylonish captivity; but they have a secret cult in which—and in the most matter-of-fact way—they pay a very practical homage to one or other of the parts which is thought by the worshipper to be a mundane emblem of the creator.

The curious will find in *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*, by H. H. Wilson, in the *Dabistan*, translated by Shea and Troyer (Allen and Co., London), 3 vols., 8vo., and in *Memoires of the Anthropological Society of London* (Trübner and Co.), vols. 1 and 2, much information on the method of conducting the worship referred to. The first named author thinks it advisible to leave the Brahinic "rubric" for the "Sakti Sodhana," for the most part under the veil of the original Sanscrit, and I am not disposed wholly to withdraw it.

But Christians are not pure; some of my readers may have seen a work written by an Italian lady of high birth, who was in early life forced into a nunnery, and who left it as soon as she had a chance. In her account she tells us how the women in the monastery were seduced by reverend Fathers, who were at one time, the instruments of vice, at another the guides to penitence. Their practice was to instruct their victims that whatever .was said or done must be accompanied by a pious sentence. Thus, "I love you dearly" was a profane expression; but "I desire your company in the name of Jesus," and "I embrace in you the Holy Virgin," were orthodox. In like manner, the Hindus have prayers prescribed for their use, when the parts are to be purified before proceeding to extremities, when they are introduced to each other, in the agitation which follows, and when the ceremony is completed. Everything is done, as Ritualists would say, decently and in order; and a pious orgie, sanctified by prayers, cannot be worse than the penance ordained by some "confessors" to those faithful

damsels whose minds are plastic enough to believe that a priest is an embodiment of the Holy Ghost, and that they become assimilated to the Blessed Virgin when they are overshadowed by the power of the Highest (Luke i. 35).

There being, then, in "religion" a strong sensual element, ingenuity has been exercised to a wonderful extent in the contrivance of designs, nearly or remotely significant of this idea, or rather union of the conceptions to which we have referred. Jupiter is a Proteus in form; now a man, now a bull, now a swan, now an androgyne. Juno, or her equivalent, is sometimes a woman, occasionally a lioness, and at times a cow. All conceivable attributes of man and woman were symbolised; and gods were called by the names of power, love, anger, desire, revenge, fortune, etc. Everything in creation that resembled in any way the presumed Creator, whether in name, in character, or in shape, was supposed to represent the deity. Hence a palm tree was a religious emblem, because it is long, erect, and round; an oak, for it is hard and firm; a fig-tree,. because its leaves resemble the male triad. The ivy was sacred from a similar cause. A myrtle was also a type, but of the female, because its leaf is a close representation of the *vesica piscis*. Everything, indeed, which in any way resembles the characteristic organs of man and woman, became symbolic of the one or the other deity, Jupiter or Juno, Jehovah of Astarte, the Father or the Virgin. Sometimes, but very rarely, the parts in question were depicted *au naturel*, and the means by which creation is effected became the mundane emblem of the Almighty; and two huge phalli were seen before a temple, as we now see towers or spires before our churches, and minarets before mosques. (Lucian, *Dea Syria*.)

Generally, however, it was considered the most correct plan to represent the organs by some conventional form, understood

by the initiated, but not by the unlearned. Whatever was upright, and longer than broad, became symbolic of the father; whilst that which was hollow, cavernous, oval, or circular, symbolised the mother. A sword, spear, arrow, dart, battering ram, spade, ship's prow, anything indeed intended to pierce into something else was emblematic of the male; whilt the female was symbolised as a door, a hole, a sheath, a target, a shield, a field, anything indeed which was to be entered. The Hebrew names sufficiently indicate the plan upon which the sexes were distinguished; the one is a זכר, *zachar*, a perforator or digger, and the other נקבה, *nekebah*, a hole or trench, *i.e.* male and female.

These symbols were: not necessarily those of religious belief. They might indicate, war, heroism, prowess, royalty, command, etc., or be nothing more than they really were. They only symbolised the Creator when they were adopted into religion. Again, there was a still further refinement; and advantage was taken of the fact that one symbol was tripliform, the other single; one of one shape, and the other different. Consequently, a triangle, or three things, arranged so that one should stand above the two, became emblematic of the Father, whilst an unit symbolised the Mother.

These last three sentences deserve close attention, for some individuals have, in somewhat of a senseless fashion, objected, that a person who can see in a tortoise an emblem of the male, and in a horse-shoe an effigy of the female organ, must be quite too fantastical to deserve notice. But to me, as to other "inquirers" these things are simply what they appear to be when they are seen in common life. Yet when the former creature occupies a large space in mythology; when the Hindoo places it as the being upon which the world stands, and the Greeks represent one Venus as resting upon a tortoise and another on a goat; and when one know that in days gone by, in which people were less refined, the

κτεὶς was displayed where the horse-shoe is now, and that some curiously mysterious attributes were assigned to the part in question; we cannot refuse to see the thing signified in the sign.

Again, inasmuch as what we may call the most prominent part of the tripliform organ was naturally changeable in character, being at one time soft, small, and pendent, and at another hard, large, and upright, those animals. that resembled it in these respects became symbolical. Two serpents, therefore, one Indian, and the other Egyptian, both of which are able to distend their heads and necks, and to raise them up erect, were emblematic, and each in its respective country typified the father, the great Creator. In like manner, another portion of the triad was regarded as similar in shape and size to the common hen's egg. As the celebrated physiologist, Haller, remarked, "*Omne vivum ex ovo*," every living thing comes from an egg; so more ancient biologists recognised that the dual part of the tripliform organ was as essential to the creation of a new being, as the central pillar. Hence an egg and a serpent became a characteristic of "the Father," El, Ab, Ach, Baal, Asher, Melech, Adonai, Jahu, etc. When to this was added a half moon, as in certain Tyrian coins, the trinity and unity were symbolised, and a faith expressed like the one held in modem Rome, that the mother of creation is co-equal with the father; the one seduces by her charms, and the other makes them fructify.

To the Englishman, who, as a rule, avoids talking upon the subject which forms the basis of many an ancient religion, it seems incredible that any individual, or set of writers, could have exercised their ingenuity in finding circumlocutory euphemisms for things which, though natural, are rarely named. Yet the wonder ceases when we find, in the writings of our lively neighbours, the French, a host of words intended to describe the parts referred to,

which correspond wholly with the pictorial emblems adopted by the Greeks and others.

As English writers have, as a rule, systematically avoided making any distinct reference to the sexual ideas embodied in ancient Paganism, so they have, by their silence, encouraged the formation of a school of theology which has no solid foundation, except a very animal one. As each individual finds out this for himself, it becomes a question with him how far the information shall be imparted to others. So rarely has the determination to accuse the vampire been taken, that we can point to very few English books to which to refer our readers. We do not know one such that is easily assessible; R. Payne Knight's work, and the addition thereto, having been privately printed, is not often to be found in the market. To give a list of the foreign works which the author has consulted, prior to and during the composition of his book on Ancient Faiths, would be almost equivalent to giving a catalogue of part of his library. He may, however, indicate the name of one work which is unusually valuable for reference, viz., *Histoire abrégée des Differens Cultes*, par J. A. Dulaure, 2 vols., small 8vo., Paris, 1825. Though out of print, copies can generally be procured through second-hand booksellers. Another work, *Récherches sur les Mystères de Paganisme*, by St. Croix, is equally valuable, but it is very difficult to procure a copy.

The ancient Jews formed no exception to the general law of reverence for the male emblem of the Creator; and though we would, from their pretensions to be the chosen people of God, gladly find them exempt from what we consider to be impurities, we are constrained to believe that, even in the worship of Jehovah, more respect was given to the symbol than we, living in modern times, think that it deserves. In their Scriptures we read of Noah, whose infirm temper seems to have bee on a par with his weakness for

wine, cursing one of his three sons because, whilst drunk, he had negligently exposed his person, and the young man had thought the sight an amusing one. Ham had no reverence for the symbol of the Creator, but Shem and Japhet had, and covered it with a veil as respectfully as if it had been the ineffable framer of the world (Gen. ix. 21-27). As our feelings of propriety induce us to think that the father was a far greater sinner than the son, we rejoice to know that the causeless curse never fell, and that Ham, in the lands of Canaan, Assyria, and Babylonia, and subsequently in Carthaginian Spain, were the masters of those Hebrews, whose main force, in old times, lay in impotent scoldings, such as Shakespeare puts in the mouth of Caliban.

One of the best proots of the strong sexual element which existed in the religion of the Jews is the fact that Elohim, one of the names of the Creator amongst the Hebrews, is represented, Gen. xvii. 10-14, as making circumcision a sign of his covenant with the seed of Ahraham; and in order to ascertain whether a man was to be regarded as being in the covenant, God is supposed to have looked at the state of the virile organ, or—as the Scripture has it—of the hill of the foreskin. We find, indeed, that Jehovah was quite as particular, and examined a male quite as closely as Elohim: for when Moses and Zipporah were on their way from Midian to Egypt, Exod. iv. 24, Jehovah, having looked at the "trinity" of Moses' son, and having found it as perfect as when the lad was born, sought to slay him, and would have done so unless the mother had mutilated the organ according to the sacred pattern. Again, we find in Josh. v. 2, and in the following verses, that Jehovah insisted upon all the Hebrew males having their virile member in the covenant condition ere they went to attack the Canaanites. We cannot suppose that any scribe could dwell so much as almost every scriptural writer does upon the subject of circumcision, had

not the masculine emblem been held in religious veneration amongst the Jewish nation.

But the David who leaped and danced, obscenely as we should say, before the ark—an emblem of the female creator—who purchased his wife from her royal father by mutilating a hundred Philistines, and presenting the foreskins which he had cut off therefrom "in full tale" to the king (1 Sam. xviii. 27, 2 Sam. iii, 14), who was once the captain of a monarch who thought it a shame beyond endurance to be abused, tortured, or slain by men whose. persons were in a natural condition (1 Sam. xxxi. 4), and who imagined that he, although a stripling, could conquer a giant, because the one had a sanctified and the other a natural member—is the man whom we know as the author of Psalms with which Christians still refresh their minds and comfort their souls. The king who, even in his old age, was supposed to think so much of women that his courtiers sought a lovely damsel as a comfort for his dying bed, is believed to have been the author of the noble nineteenth Psalm, and a number of others full of holy aspirations. It is clear, then, that sexual ideas on religion are not incompatible with a desire to be holy. The two were co-existent in Palestine; they are equally so in Bengal.

We next find that Abraham, the cherished man of God, the honoured patriarch of the Jews, makes his servant lay his hand upon the master's member, whilst he takes an oath to do his bidding, precisely like a more modern Palestinian might do; and Jacob does the same with Joseph. See Gen. xxiv. 8, and xlvii. 29.

As it is not generally known that the expression, "under my thigh," is a euphemism for the words, "upon the symbol of the Creator," I may point to two or three other passages in which the *thigh* (translated in the authorised version *loins*) is used periphrastically: Genesis xxxv. 2, xlvi. 26;

Exod. i. 5. See Ginsburg, in Kitto's *Biblical Cyclopedia*, vol. 3, p. 348, *s.v.* OATH.

I have on two occasions read, although I failed to make a note of it, that an Arab, during the Franco-Egyptian war, when accused by General Kleber of treachery, not only vehemently denied it, but when he saw himself still distrusted, he uncovered himself before the whole military staff, and swore upon his trinity that he was guiltless. In the Lebanon, once in each year, every female considers it her duty to salute with her lips the reverenced organ of the Old Sheik.

Again we learn from Deut. xxiii. 1, that any unsanctified mutilation of this part positively entailed expulsion from the congregation of the Lord. Even a priest of the house of Aaron could not minister, as such, if his masculinity had been in any way impaired (Lev. xxi. 20); and report says that, in our Christian times, Popes have to be privately perfect; see also Deut. xxv. 11, 12. Moreover, the inquirer finds that the Jewish Scriptures teem with promises of abundant offspring to those who were favourites of Jehovah; and Solomon; the most glorious: of their monarchs, is described as if he were a Hercules amongst the daughters of Thespius. Nothing can indicate the licentiousness of the inhabitants of Jerusalem more clearly than the writings of Ezekiel.* If, then, in Hebrew law and practice, we find such a strong infusion of the sexual element, we cannot be surprised if it should be found elsewhere, and gradually influence Christianity.

We must next notice the fact, that what we call impurity in religious tenets does not necessarily involve indecency in practice. The ancient Romans, in the time of the early kings, seem to bave been as proper as early Christian maidens. It is true that, in the declining days of the empire

* See Ezekiel xxii. 1-30, and compare Jerem. v. 7, 8

city, exhibitions that called forth the fierce denunciations of the fathers of Church took place; but we find very similar occurrences in modern Christian capitals. In Spartan days, chastity and honesty were not virtues, but drunkenness was a vice. In Christian England, drunkenness is general, and we cannot pride ourselves upon universal honesty and chastity. It is not the national belief, but the national practice, which evidences a people's worth. Spain and Ireland, called respectively "Catholic" and "the land of saints," cannot boast of equality with "infidel" France and "free-thinking" Prussia. England will be as earnest, as upright, and as civilised, when she has abandoned the heathen elements in her religion, as when she hugs them as if necessary to her spiritual welfare. Attachment to the good parts of religion is wholly distinct from a close embrace of the bad ones; and we believe he deserves best of his country who endeavours to remove every possible source of discord. None can doubt the value of the order, "Do to others as you would wish others to do to you." If all unite to carry this out, small differences of opinion may at once be sunk. How worthless are many of the dogmas that people now fight about, the following pages will show.

In our larger work we have endeavoured to show that there may be a deep sense of religion, a feeling of personal responsibility, so keen as to influence every act of life, without there being a single symbol used. The earnest Sakya Muni, or Buddha, never used anything as a sacred emblem; nor did Jesus, who followed him, and perhaps unconsciously propagated the Indian's doctrine. When the Apostles were sent out to teach and preach, they were not told to carry out any form of ark of crucifix. To them the doctrine of the Trinity was unknown, and not one of them had any parti-

cular reverence for her whom we call the Virgin Mary, who, if she was '*virgo intacta* ' when Jesus was born, was certainly different when she bore his brothers. Paul and Peter, though said to be the fathers of the Roman Church, never used or recommended the faithful to procure for themselves "a cross" as an aid to memory. The early Christians recognised each other by their deeds, and never had, like the Jews, to prove that they were in covenant with God, by putting a mutilated part of their body into full view. We, with the Society of Friends, prefer primitive to modern Christianity.

In the following pages the author has felt himself obliged to make use of words which are probably only known to those who are more or less "scholars." He has to treat of parts of the human body, and acts which occur habitually in the world, which in modern times are never referred to in polite society, but which in the period when the Old Testament was written, were spoken of as freely as we now talk of our hands and feet. In those days, everything which was common was spoken of without shame, and that which occurred throughout creation, and was seen by every one, was as much the subject of conversation as eating and drinking is now. The Hebrew writers were extremely coarse in their diction, and althongh this has been softened down by subsequent redactors, much which is in our modern judgment improper still remains. For example, where we simply indicate the sex, the Jewish historians used the word which was given to the symbol by which male and female are known; for example, in Gen. i. 27, and. v. 2, and in a host of other places, the masculine and feminine are spoken of as *zachar* and *nekebah*, which is best translated as "borers" and "bored." Another equally vulgar way of describing men is to be found in 1 Kings xiv. 10. But

these observations would not serve us much in symbolism did we not know that they were associated with certain euphemisms by which when one thing is said another is intended; for an illustration let us take Isaiah vii. 20, and ask what is meant by the phrase, "the hair of the feet" ? It is certain that the feet are never hairy, and consequently can never be shaved. Again, when we find in Gen. xlix. 10, "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet," and compare this with Deut. xxviii. 57, and 2 Kings xviii. 27, where the words are, in the original, "the water of their feet," it is clear that symbolic language is used to express something which, if put into the vernacular, would be objectionable to ears polite. Again, in Genesis xxiv. 2 and xlvii. 29, and in Heb. xi. 21, it is well known to scholars that the word "thigh" and "staff" are euphemisms to express that part which represents the male. In Deut. xxiii. 1, we have evidence, as in the last three verses quoted, of the sanctity of the part referred to, but the language is less refined. Now-a-days our ears are not attuned to the rough music which pleased our ancestors, and we have to use veiled Ianguage to express certain matters. In the folIowing pages, the words which I select are drawn from the Latin, Greek, Sanscrit, Shemitic, or Egyptian. Hea, Anu, and Asher replace the parts referred to in Deut. xxiii. 1; Osiris, Asher, Linga, Mahadeva, Siva, Priapus, Phallus, etc., represent the Hebrew *zachar*; whilst Isis, Parvati, Yoni, Sacti, Astarte, Ishtar, etc., replace the Jewish *nekebah*. The junction. of these parts is spoken of as Ashtoreth, Baalim, Elohim, the trinity and unity, the androgyne deity, the arba, or mystic four, and the like.

I will only add, that what I refer to has long been known to almost every scholar except English ones. Of these a few are learned; but for a long period they have systematically refrained from speaking plainly, and have written in such a

manner as to be guilty not only of *suppressio veri* but of *suggestio falsi*.

After reading thus far, I can imagine many a person saying with astonishment, "Are these things so?" and following up his thoughts by wondering what style of persons they were, or are, who could introduce into religion such matters as those of which we have treated.

In replay, I can only say that I have nothing extenuated, and set down nought in malice. But the first clause of the assertion requires modification, for in this volume there are many things omitted which I have referred to at length in my larger work. In that I have shown, not only that religious fornication existed in ancient Babylon, but that there is reason to believe that it existed also in Palestine. The word קדש, *Kadesh*, which signifies "pure, bright, young, to be holy, or to be consecrated," is also the root from which are formed the words *Kadeshah* and *Kadeshim*, which are used in the Hebrew writings, and are translated in our authorised version "whore" and "sodomite." See Deut. xxiii. 17.

Athanasius tells us something of this as regards the Phœnicians, for he says, (*Oratio Contr. Gent.*, part i., p. 24.) "Formerly, it is certain that Phœnician women prostituted themselves before their idols, offering their bodies to their gods in the place of first fruits, being persuaded that they pleased the goddess by that means, and made her protitious to them."

Strabo mentions a similar occurrence at Comana, in Pontus, book xiii., c. iii. p. 8—and notices that an enormous number of women were consecrated to the use of worshippers in the temple of Venus at Corinth.

Such women exist in India, and the priests of certain temples do everything in their power to select the loveliest of the sex, and to educate them so highly as to be attractive.

The customs which existed in other places seem to have been known in Jerusalem, as we find in 1 Kings xiv. 24., xv. 12, that *Kadeshim* were common in Judea, and in 2 Kings xxiii. 7, we discover that "consecrated ones" were located "by the temple," and were associated with women whose business was "to make hangings for the grove." What these tissues were and what use was made of them will be seen in Ezekiel xvi. 16.

Even David, when dancing before the ark, shamelessly exposed himself. Solomon erected two pillars in the porch of his temple, and called them Jachin and Boaz, and added pomegranete ornaments. We have seen how Abraham and Jacob ordered their inferiors to swear by putting the hand upon "the thigh"; and we have read of the atrocities which occurred in Jerusalem in the time of Ezekiel. Yet the Jews are still spoken of as God's chosen people, and the Psalmist as a man after God's own heart.

But without going so far back, let us inquire into the conduct of the sensual Turks, and of the general run of the inhabitants of Hindostan. From everything that I can learn—and I have repeatedly conversed with those who have known the Turks and Hindoos familiarly—these are in every position in life as morally good as common Christians are.

My readers must not now assert that I am either a partisan or a special pleader when I say this; they must consider that I am making the comparison as man by man. I do not, as missionaries do, compare the most vicious Mahomedan and Brahmin with the most exemplary Christian; nor do I, on the other hand, compare the best Ottoman and Indian with Christian criminals; but I take the whole in a mass, and assert that there is as large a per centage of good folks in India and Turkey as there is in Spain and France, England or America.

The grossest form of worship is compatible with general

purity of morals. The story of Lucretia is told of a Pagan woman, whilst those of Er and Onan, Tamar and Judah relate to Hebrews. David, who seduced Bathsheba, and killed her husband, was not execrated by "God's people," nor was he consequently driven from his throne as Tarquin was by the Romans.

In prowess and learning, the Babylonians, with their religious prostitution, were superior to the "chosen people." Of the wealth and enterprise. of the Phœnicians, Ancient. History tells us abundance.

There are probably no three cities in ancient or modern times which contain so many vicious .individuals as London, Paris, and New York. Yet there are none which history tells us of that were more powerful. No Babylonian army equalled in might or numbers, the army of the Northern United States. Nineveh never wielded armies equal to those of the French Napoleon and the German William, and Rome never had an empire equal to that which is headed by London.

The existence of personal vice does not ruin a nation in its collective capacity. Nor does the most sensual form of religion stunt the prosperity of a people, so long as the latter do not bow their necks to a priesthood.

The greatest curse to a nation is not a bad religion, but a form of faith which prevents manly inquiry. I know of no nation of old that was priest-ridden which did not fall under the swords of those who did not care for hierarchs.

The greatest danger is to be feared from those ecclesiastics who wink at viee, and encourage it as a means whereby they can gain power over their votaries. So long as every man does to other men as he would that they should do to him, and allows no one to interfere between him and his Maker, all will go well with the world.

WHILST the following sheets were going through the press, my friend Mr. Newton, who has not only assisted me in a variety of ways, but who has taken a great deal of interest in the subject of symbolism, gave me to understand that there were some matters in which he differed very strongly from me in opinion. One of these was as to the correct interpretation of the so-called Assyrian grove; another was the signification of one of Lajard's gems, Plate iv., Fig. 3; and the most conspicuous of our divergences was respecting the fundamental, or basic idea, which prompted the use in religion of those organs of reproduction which have, from time immemorial been venerated in Hindostan, and, as far as we can learn, in Ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Tyre, Sidon, Carthage, Jerusalem, Etruria, Greece, and Rome, as well as in countries called uncivilised. I feel quite disposed to acquiesce in the opinions which my old friend has formed respect the Assyrian grove, but I am not equally ready to assent to his other opinions.

Where two individuals are working earnestly for the elucidation of truth, there ought, in my opinion, to be not only a tolerance of disagreement, but an honest effort to submit the subject to a jury of thoughtful readers.

As I should not feel satisfied to allow any other person to express my opinions in his words, it seemed to me only fair to Mr. Newton to give him the facility of enunciating his views in his own language. It was intended, originally, that my friend's observations upon the "grove" should be followed by a dissertation upon other relics of antiquity—notably upon that known as Stonehenge—but circumstances have prevented this design being carried into execution.

When two individuals who have much in common go over

the same ground, it is natural, indeed almost necessary, that they should dwell upon identical topics. Hence it will be found that there are points which are referred to by us both, although possibly in differing relationship.

As my own part of the following remarks were printed long before I saw Mr. Newton's manuscript, I hope to be pardoned for allowing them to stand. The bulk of the volume will not be increased to the extent of a full page.

If I were to be asked the reason why I differ from Mr. Newton in his exalted idea about the adoption of certain bodily organs as types, tokens, or emblems of an unseen and an inscrutable Creator, my answer wonld be drawn from the observations made upon every known order of priesthood, from the most remote antiquity to the present time. No matter what the creed, whether Ancient or Modern, the main object of its exponents and supporters is to gain over the minds of the populace. This has never yet been done, and probably never will be attempted, by educating the mind of the multitude to .think: .

In Great Britain we find three sets of hierarchs opposed to each other, and all equally, by every means in their power, prohibit independent inquiry.

A young Romanist convert, as we have reeently seen, is discouraged from persevering in the study of history and logic; a Presbyterian is persecuted, as far as the law of the land permits, if he should engage in an honest study of the Bible, of the God which it Presents for our worsbip, and of the laws that it enforces. A bishop. of the Church of England is visited by the puny and spiteful efforts of some of his nominal equals if he ventures. to treat Jewish writings as other critics study the tomes of Livy or of Herodotus.

One set of men have banded together to elect a god on earth, and endeavour to coerce their fellow-mortals to believe

that a selection by a few old cardinals can make the one whom they choose to honour "infallible."

Another set of men, who profess to eschew the idea od infallibility in a Pope, assume that they possess the quality themselves, and endeavour to blot out from the communion of the faithful those who differ from them "on points which God hath left at large."

Surely, when with all our modern learning, thought, and scientific enquiry, hierarchs still set their faces against an advance in knowledge, and quell, if possible, every endeavour to search after truth, we are not far wrong when we assert, that the first priests of barbarism had no exalted views of such an abstract subject as life, in the higher and highest senses, if indeed in any sense of the word.

Another small point of difference between my friend and me is, whether there bas been at any time a figured representation of a *kakodæmon*—except since the beginning of Christianity—and if, by way of stretching a point, we call Typhon—Satan or the Devil—by this name, as being opposed to the *Agathodæmon*, whether we are justified. in providing this evil genius with wings. As far as I can judge from Chaldean and Assyrian sculptures, wings were given to the lesser deities as our artists assign them to modern angels. The Babylonian Apollyon, by whatever name he went, was winged—but so were all the good gods. The Egyptians seem to have assigned wings only to the favourable divinities. The Jews had in their mythology a set of fiery flying serpents, but we must notice that their cherubim and seraphim were all winged, some with no less than three pairs—much as Hindoo gods have four heads and six, or any other number of arms.

Mr. Newton assumes that the dragon mentioned in Rev. xii. was a winged creature, but it is clear from the context, especially from verses 14 and 15, that he had no pinions, for

he was unable to follow the woman to whome two aerial oars had been given.

The dragon, as we know it, is, I believe, a mediæval creation; such a creature is only spoken of in the Bible in the Book of Revelation, and the author of that strange production drew his inspiration on this point from the lliad, where a dragon is described as of huge size, coiled like a snake, of blood-red colour, shot with changeful hues, and having three heads. Homer, Liddell, and Scott add—used δράκων and ὄφις indifferently for a serpent. So does the author of Rev., in ch. xx. 2. I have I been unable to discover any gnostic gem with anything like a modern dragon on it.

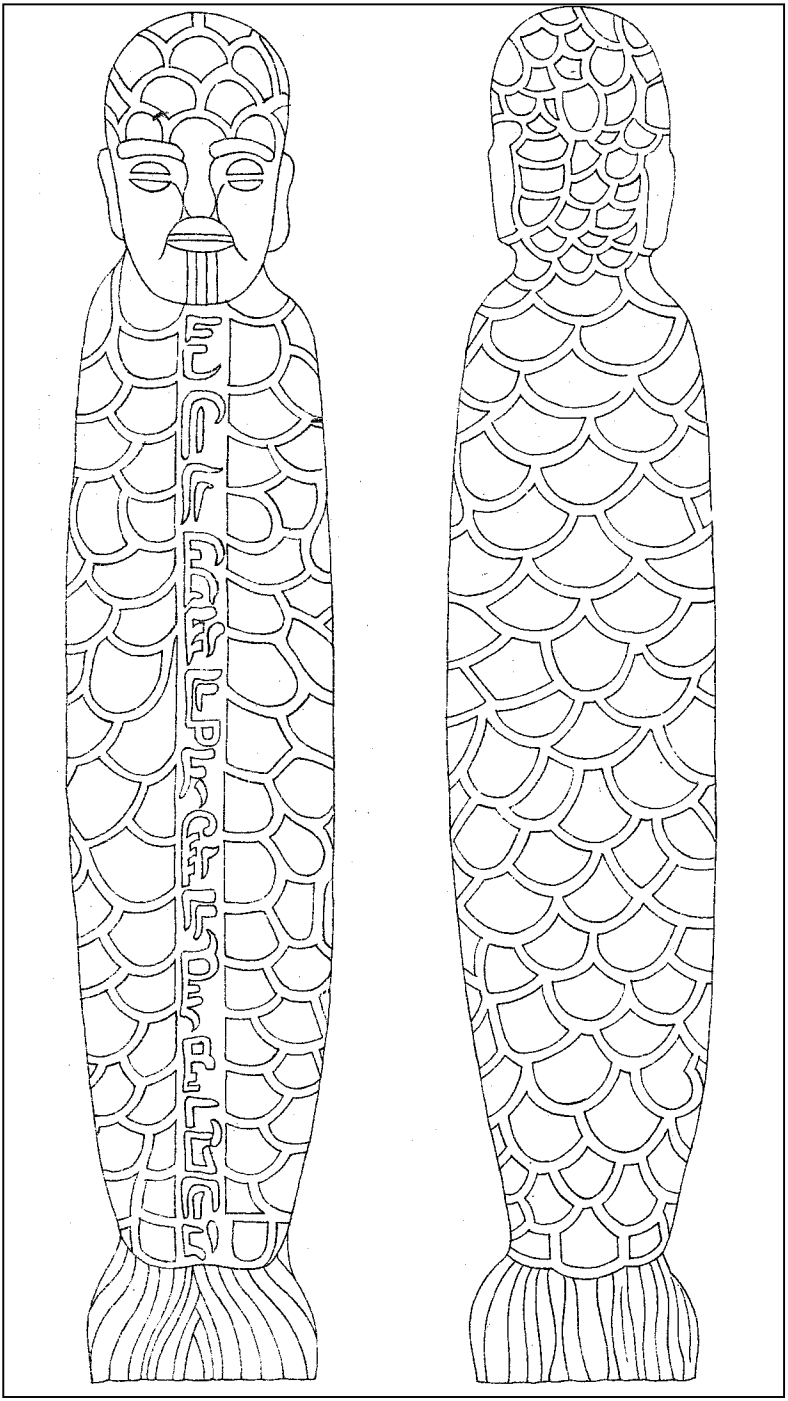
Holding these views, I cannot entertain the proposition that the winged creatures in the very remarkable gem already referred to are evil genii.

In a question of this kind the mind is perhaps unconsciously biassed by comparing one antiquarian idea with another. A searcher amongst Etruscan vases will see not only that the angel of death is winged, but that Cupid, Eros, or by whatever other name "desire" or love goes, frequently hovers over the bridal or otherwise voluptuous couch, and attends beauty at her toilet. The Greeks also gave to Eros a pair of wings, intended, it is fancied, to represent the flutterings of the heart, produced when lovers meet or even think of each other. Such a subordinate deity would be in place amongst so many sexual emblems as Plate iv. Fig. 3 contains, whilst a *kakodæmon* would be a "spoil sport," and would make the erected serpents drop rather than remain in their glory.

These matters are apparently of small importance, but, when one is studying the signification of symbolical language, he has to pay as close an attention, and extend the net of observation over as wide a sea as a scholar does when endeavouring to decipher some language written in long-

forgotten characters, and some divergence of opinion between independent observers sharpens the intellect more than it tries the temper.

PLATE II.



PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM.

PLATE I.

This is taken from a photograph of a small bronze image in the Meyer collection of the Free Museum, in Liverpool. The figure stands about nine inches high, and represents Isis, Horus, and the fish. It is an apt illustration of an ancient custom, still prevalent among certain Christians, of reverencing a women, said to be a virgin, giving suck to her child, and the association of Isis, Venus, and Mary with the fish. Friday, for example, is, with the Romaists, both "fish day," and "dies Veneris." Fish are known to be extraordinarily prolific. There was a belief that animals, noted for any peculiarity, imparted their virtues to those who ate them; consequently, tigers' flesh was supposed to give courage, and snails to give sexual power. The use of fish in connubial feasts is still common. Those who consider it pious or proper to eat fish on Venus' day, or Friday, proclaim themselves, unconsiously, adherents to those heathen ideas which deified parts about which no one now likes to talk. The fish has in one respect affinity with the mandrake.

Since the first publication of this work, a friend has suggested to me another reason, besides its fertility, for the fish being emblematic of woman. From his extensive experience as a surgeon, and especially among the lower order of courtesans, he has repeatedly noticed during the hot months of the year that the parts which he had to examine have a very strong odour of fish. My own observations in the same department lead me to endorse his assertion. Consequently, I think that in warm climates, where the utmost cleanliness can

scarely keep a female free from odour, scent, as well as other attributes, has had to do with the selection of the fish as an emblem of woman.

Still further, I have been informed by another friend that in Yorkshire, and I understand in other counties of England, the *double entente* connected with the fish is so marked that it is somewhat difficult to render into decent phraseology. It will suffice to say that in the county mentioned, Lais or Phryne would be spoken of as "a choice bit of fish," and that a man who bore on his features the stamp which is imprinted by excessive indulgence, would be said to have indulged too much in "a fish diet." I do not suppose that in the Yorkshire Ridings the folks are unusually well acquainted with mythology, yet it is curious to find amongst their inhabitants a connection between Venus and the Fish, precisely similar to that which has obtained in the most remote ages and in far distant climes.

It is clear from all these facts that the fish is a symbol not only of woman, but of the yoni.

PLATE II.

Is supposed to represent Oannes, Dagon, or some other fish god. It is copied from Lajard, *Sur le Culte de Venus*, pl. xxii., 1, 1a, and is thus described, "Statuette inédite, de grès houiller ou micacé, d'un brun verdatre. Elle porte par devant, sur une bande perpendiculaire, un légende en caractères Syriaques tres anciens (*Cabinet de M. Lambert,* à Lyon)." I can find no clue to the signification of the inscription. It would seem paradoxical to say that there is something in common between the bull-headed deity and Oannes. It is so, nevertheless. One indicates, *par excellence*, physical, and the other sexual, power. That Oannes may, for the Assyrians, represent a man who played a part with them similar to that of Penn among the Indians of Pennsylvania, I do not deny; but, when we find a similar fish-god in Philistia and Hindostan, and know that Crishna

PLATE III.

FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.

FIG. 3.

FIG. 4.

FIG. 5.

PLATE IV.

FIG. 1.

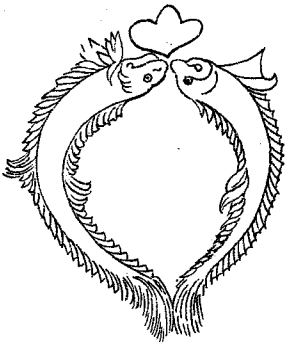


FIG. 2.

FIG. 3.

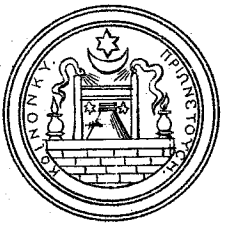


FIG. 4.

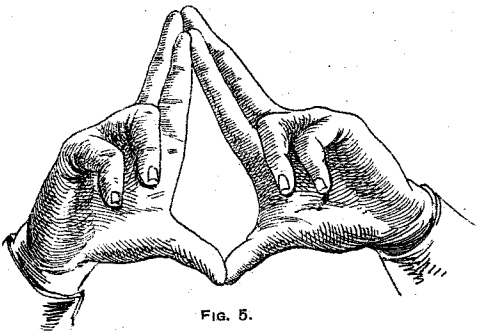


FIG. 5.

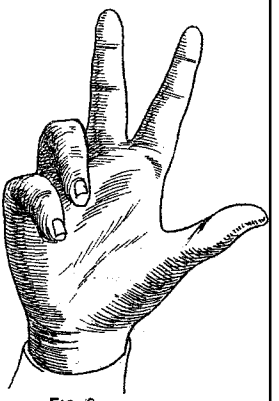


FIG. 6.

once appeared as a fish, the explanation does not suffice. It is curious that Jesus of Nazareth should be called ἰχθυς, or "a fish"; but this only proves that the religion of Christ has been adulterated by Paganism.

PLATE III.

Figs. 1 and 4 are illustrations of the antelope as a religious emblem amongst the Assyrians. The first is from Layard's *Nineveh*, and in it we see carried in one hand a triply branched lotus; the second, showing the regard for the spotted antelope, and for "the branch," is from Bonomi's *Nineveh and its Palaces*.

Fig. 2 illustrates Bacchus, with a mystic branch in one hand, and a cup in the other; his robe is covered with stops, arranged in threes. The branch is emblematic of the *arbor vitæ;* or tree of life, and its powers of sprouting. Such a symbol is, by outsiders, figured on the houses of newly married couples amongst the Jews of Morocco, and se'ms to indicate the desire of friends that the man will show that he is vigorous, and able to have many sprouts from the tree of life. It will be noticed that on the fillet round the god's head are arranged many crosses. From Hislop's *Two Babylons*, and Smith's *Dictionary*, p. 208.

Figs. 3 and 5 are intended to show the prevalence of the use of spots on priestly dresses; they are copied from Hislop's *Two Babylons*, and Wilkinson, vol. vi., pl. 83, and vol. iv., pp. 314, 358. For an explanation of the signification of spots, see Plate iv., Fig. 6, *infra*.

PLATE IV.

Fig. 1 represents an Assyrian priest worshipping by presentation of the thumb, which had a peculiar signification. Sometimes the forefinger is pointed instead, and in both cases the male is symbolised. It is taken from a plate illustrating a paper by E. C. Ravenshaw, Esq., in *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. xvi., p. 114. Amongst the

Hebrews, and probably all the Shemitic tribes, *bohen*, the thumb, and *ezba*, the finger, were euphemisms. They are so in some parts of Europe to the present day.* The hand thus presented to the grove resembles a part of the Buddhist cross, and the shank of a key, whose signification is described in a subsequent page.

Fig. 2 is a Buddhist emblem; the two fishes forming the circle represent the mystic yoni, the sacti of Mahadeva, while the triad above them represents the mystie trinity, the triune father, Siva, Bel, or Asher, united with Anu and Hea. From *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. xviii., p. 392, plate ii.

Fig. 3 is a very remarkable production. It originally belonged to Mons. Lajard, and is described by him in his second *Memoire*, entitled *Recherches sur le Culte, les Symboles, les Attributs, et us Monumens Figurés de Vénus* (Paris, 1837), in pages 82, *et seq*., and figured in plate i., fig. 1. The real age of the gem and its origin are not known, but the subject leads that author to believe it to be of late Babylonian workmanship. The stone is a white agate, shaped like a cone, and the cutting is on its lower face. The shape of this gem indicates its dedication to Venus. The central figures represent the androgyne deity, Baalim, Astaroth, Elohim, Jupiter genetrix, or the bearded Venus Mylitta. On the left side ot the cuttiug we notice an erect serpent, whose rayed head makes us recognise the solar emblem, and its mundane representative, *mentula arrecta*; on a spot opposite to the centre of the male's body we find a lozenge, symbolic of the yoni, whilst opposite to his feet, is the amphora, whose mystic signification may

* A friend has informed me, for example, that he happened, whilst at Perth, to look at a gorgeously dressed and handsome young woman. To his astonishment she pointed her thumb precisely in the manner adopted by the Assyrian priests; this surprised the young man still farther, and being, as it were, fascinated, he continued to gaze. The damsel then grasped the thumb by the other hand; thus indicating her profession. My friend, who was wholly inexperienced in the ways of the world, only understood what was meant when he saw my explanation of Fig. I.

readily be recognised; it is meant for Ouranos, or the Sun fructifying Terra, or the earth, by pouring from himself into her. The three stars over the head of the figure, and the inverted triangle on its head, are representatives of the mythological four, equivalent to the Egyptian symbol of life (figs. 31, 32). Opposite to the female are the moon, and another serpent, which may be recognised by physiologists as symbolic of *tensio clitoridis*. In a part corresponding to the diamond, on the left side, is a six-rayed wheel, emblematic, apparently, of the sun. At the female's feet is placed a cup, which is intended to represent the passive element in creation. As such it is analogous to the cresent moon, and is associated in the Roman church with the round wafer, the symbol of the sun; the wafer and cup thus being synonymous with the sun and moon in conjunction. It will be observed that each serpent in the plate is apparently attacked by what we suppose is a dragon. There is some difficulty in understanding the exact idea intended to be conveyed by these; my own opinion is that they symbolise Satan, the old serpent that tempted Eve, viz., fierce lust, Eros, Cupid, or desire, which, both in the male and female, brings about the arrectation which the serpents figure. It is not to be passed by without notice, that the snake which represents the male has the tale curved as to suggest the idea of the second and third elements of the trinity. Monsieur Lajard takes the dragons to indicate the bad principle in nature, *i.e.*, darkness, night, Ahriman, etc. On the pyramidal portion of the gem the four sides are ornamented by figures—three represent animals remarkable for their salacity, and the fourth represents Bel and Ishtar in conjunction, in a fashion which can be more easily imagined than described in the mother tongue. The learned will find the position assumed in Lucretius, *Dê Rerum Naturâ*, book iv., lines 1256, *seq*.

Fig 4. is also copied from Lajard, plate i., fig. 10. It is the reverse of a bronze coin of Vespasian, struck in the

island of Cyprus, and represents the conical stone, under whose form Venus was worshipped at Paphos, of which Tacitus remarks, *Hist.* ii., c. 3, "the statue bears no resemblance to the human form, but is round, broad at one end and gradually tapering at the other, like a goal. The reason of this is not ascertained." It is remarkable that a male emblem should be said to represent Venus, but the stone was an aërolite, like that which fell at Ephesus, and was said to represent Diana. It is clear that when a meteoric stone falls, the chief priests of the district can say that it is to be taken as a representative of their divinity.

My very ingenions friend, Mr. Newton, suggests that the Venus in question was androgyne; that the cone is a male emblem, within a door, gateway, or delta, thus resembling the Assyrian grove. It is certain that the serpents, the two stars, and the two candelabra, or altars with flame, favour his idea.

Fig. 5 represents the position of the hands assumed by Jewish priests wben they give the benediction to their flock. It will be recognised that each hand separately indicates the trinity, wbilst the junction of the two indicates the unit. The whole is symbolic of the mystic Arba—the four, *i.e.*, the trinity and unity. One of my informants told me that, being a "cohen" or priest, he had often administered the blessing, and, whilst showing to me this method of bendiction. place his joined hands so that his nose entered the central aperture. On his doing so, I remarked "*bene nasatus*," and the expression did more to convince him of the probability of my views than anything else.

Fig. 6., modified in one form or another, is the position assumed by the hand and fingers, when Roman and Anglican bishops or other hierarchs give benediction to their people. A similar disposition is to be met with in Indian mythology, when the Creator doubles himself into male and female, so as to be in a position to originate new beings. Whilst the right hand in Plate VII. symbolises the male,

the left hand represents the mystic feminine circle. In another plate, which is to be found in Moor's *Hindu Pantheon,* there is a similar figure, but draped fully, and in that the dress worn by the celestial spouse is covered with groups of spots arranged in triads and groups of four. With regard to the signification of spots, we may notice that they indicated, either by their shape or by their name, the emblem of womankind. A story of Indra, the Hindoo god of the sky, confirms this. He is usually represented as bearing a robe covered with eyes; but the legend runs that, live David, he became enamoured of the wife of another man, who was very beautiful and seen by chance, but her spouse was one whose austere piety made him almost equal to Brahma. The evil design of Indra was both frustrated and punished. The woman escaped, but the god became covered with marks that recalled his offence to mind for they were pictures of the yoni. These, by the strong intercession of Brahma with the *Rishi*, were changed by the latter into eyes. This story enables us to recognise clearly the hidden symbolism of the Hindoo and Egyptian eye, the oval representing the female, and the circle the male lodged therein—*i.e.*, the androgyne creator.

PLATE V.

Is a copy of a mediæval Virgin and Child, as painted in Della Robbia ware in the South Kensington Museum, a copy of which was given to me by my friend, Mr. Newton, to whose kindness I am indehted for many illustrations of ancient Christian art. It represents the Virgin and Child precisely as she used to be represented in Egypt, in India, in Assyria, Babylonia, Phenicia, and Etruria; the accident of dress being of no mythological consequence. In the framework around the group, we recognise the triformed leaf, emblematic of Asher; the grapes, typical of Dionysus; the wheat ears, symbolic of Ceres, *l'abricot fendu*, the mark of womankind, and the pomegranate *rimmon*, which charac-

terises the teeming mother. The living group, moreover, are placed in an archway, *delta*, or door, which is symbolic of the female, like the *vesica piscis*, the oval, or the circle. This door is, moreover, surmounted by what appear to be snails, whose supposed virtue we have spoken of under Plate i. This identification of Mary with the Sacti is strong; by-and-by we shall see that it is as compelte as it is possible to be made.

PLATE VI.

Is a copy of figures given in Bryant's *Ancient Mythology*, plates xiii., xxviii., third edition, 1807. The first two illustrate the story of Palemon and Cetus, introducing the dolphin. The fish is symbolic of the female, in consequence of the assonance in Greek between its name and that of the womb, *delphis* and *delphus*. The tree symbolises the *arbor vitæ*, the life-giving sprout; and the ark is a symbol of the womb. The third figure, where a man rests upon a rock and dolphin, and toys with a mother and child, is equally suggestive. The male is repeatedly characterised as a rock, hermes, menhir, tolmen, or upright stone, the female by the dolphin or fish. The result of the junction of these elements appears in the child, whom both parents welcome. The fourth figure represents two emblems of the male creator, a man and trident, and two of the female, a dolphin and ship. The two last figures represent a coin of Apames, representing Noah and the ark, called *Cibotus*. Bryant labours to prove that the group commemorates the story told in the Bible, respecting the flood, but there is strong doubt whether the story was not of Babylonian origin. The city referred to was in Phrygia, and the coin appears to have been struck by Philip of Macedon. The inscription round the head is ΑΥΓ. Κ. ΙΟΥΛ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟC. ΛΥΓ.; on the reverse, ΕΠΙΜΑ. VP. ΑΛ. ΕΞΑΝΔΡ. ΟΥΒ. ΑΡΧΙ ΑΠΑΜΕΩΝ. See *Ancient Faiths*, second edition, Vol. II., pp. 123, and 385-392.

PLATE V.

PLATE VI.

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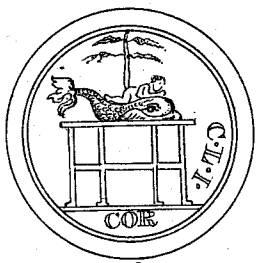

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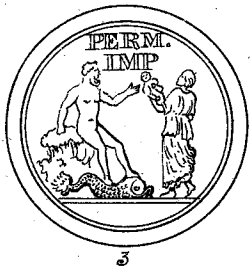

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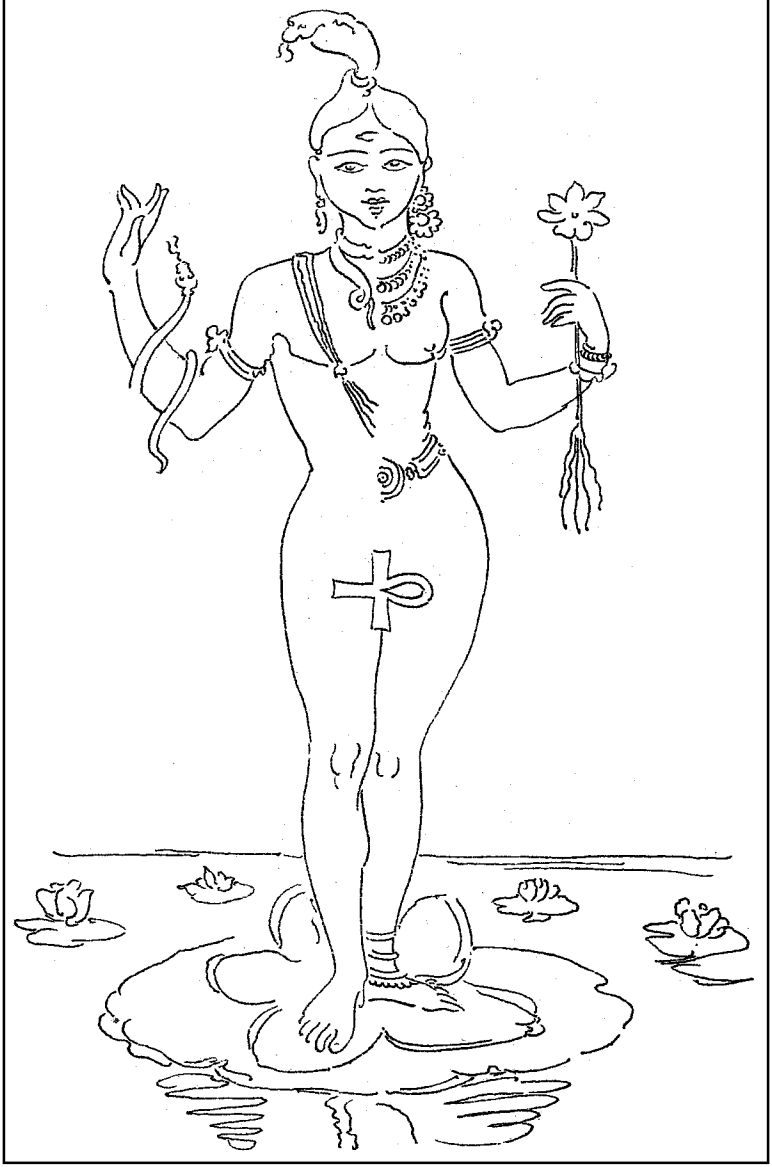
PLATE VII.

"The Supreme Spirit in the act of creation became, by Voga, two-fold, The right side was male, the left was Prakriti. She is of one form with Bramah, She is Maya, eternal and imperishable, such as the Spirit, such is the inherent energy (The Sacti) as the faculty of burning is inherent in fire."

(Bramah Vaivartta Puranu, Professor Wilson.)



ARDANARI-ISWARA

From an original drawing by Chrisna Swami, Pundit.

PLATE VIII.

PLATE VII.

Is a copy of an original drawing. made by a learned Hindoo pundit for Wm. Simpson, Esq., of London: whilst he was in India studying its mythology. It represents Brahma supreme, who in the act of creation made himself double, *i.e.*, male and female. In the original the central part of the figure is occupied by the triad and the unit, but far too grossly shown for reproduction here. They are replaced by the *crux ansata*. The reader will notice the triad and the serpent in the male hand, whilst in the female is to be seen a germinating seed, indicative ot the relative duties of father and mother. The whole stands upon a lotus, the symbol of androgyneity. The technical word for this incarnation is "Arddha Nari."

PLATE VIII.

Is Devi, the same as Parvati, or Bhavani. It is copied from Moor's *Pantheon*, plate xxx. The goddess represents the feminine element in the universe. Her forehead is marked by one of the symbols of the four creators, the triad and the unit. Her dress is covered with symbolic spots, and one foot peculiarly placed, is marked by a circle having a dot in the interior. The two bear the same signification as the Egyptian eye. I am not able to determine the symbolic import of the articles held in the lower hands. Moor considers that they represent scrolls of paper, but this I doubt. The raised hands bear the unopened lotus flower, and the goddess sits upon another.

PLATE IX.

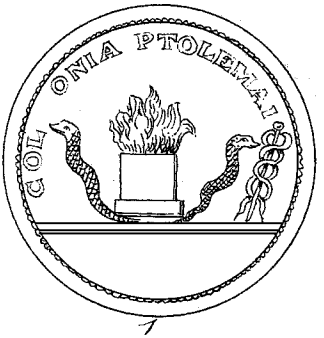
Consists of six figures, copied from Maurice's *Indian Antiquities*, vol. vi., p. 273, and two from Bryant's *Mythology*, vol. ii., third edition, pp. 203 and 409. All are symbolic of the idea of the male triad: a central figure, erect, and rising above the other two. In one an altar and fire indicate, mystically, the linga; in another, the same is pourtrayed as

a man, as Mahadeva always is; in another, there is a tree stump and serpent, to indicate the same idea. The two appendages of the linga are variously described; in two instances as serpents, in other two as tree and *concha*, and snake and shell. The two last seem to embody the idea that the right "egg" of the male germinates boys, whilst the left produces girls; a theory common amongst ancient physiologists. The figure of the tree encircled by the serpent, and supported by two stones resembling "tolmen," is very significant. The whole of these figures seem to point unmistakably to the origin of the very common belief that the male Creator is triune. In Assyrian theology the central figure is Bel, Baal, or Asher; the one on the right Anu, that on the left Hea. See *Ancient Faiths*, second edition, Vol. I., pp. 83-85.*

There are some authors who have treated of tree and serpent worship, and of its prevalence in ancient times, without having, so far as I can see, any idea of that which the two things typify. The tree of knowledge, the tree of life, the serpent that tempted Eve, and still tempts man by his subtlety, are so many figures of speech which the wise understand, but which to the vulgar are simply trees and snakes. In a fine old bas-relief over the door of the Cathedral at Berne, we see an ancient representation of the last judgement. An angel is dividing the sheep from the goats, and devils are drawing men and women to perdition, by fixing hooks or pincers on the portions of the body whence their

* For those who have not an opportunity of consulting the work referred to, I may observe that the Assyrian godhead consisted of four persons, three being male and one female. The pricipal god was *Asher*, the upright one, the equivalent of the Hindoo Mahadeva, the great holy one, and of the more modern Priapus. He was associated with *Anu*, lord of solids and the lower world, equivalent to the "testis," or egg right side. *Hea* was lord of waters, and represented the left "stone." The three formed the trinity or triad. The female was named Ishtar or Astarte, and was equivalent to the female organ, the yoni or vulva—the κτείς of the Greeks. The male god in Egypt was Osiris, the female Isis, and these names are frequently used [*i.e.* by Inman] as being euphemistic, and preferable to the names which are in vulgar use to describe the male and female parts.

PLATE IX.



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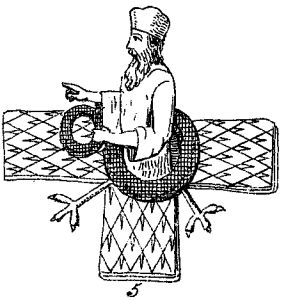
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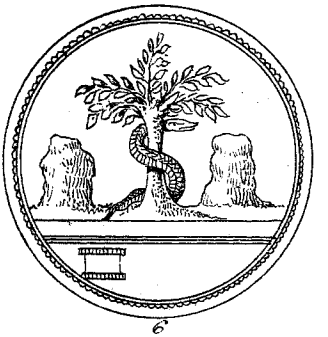
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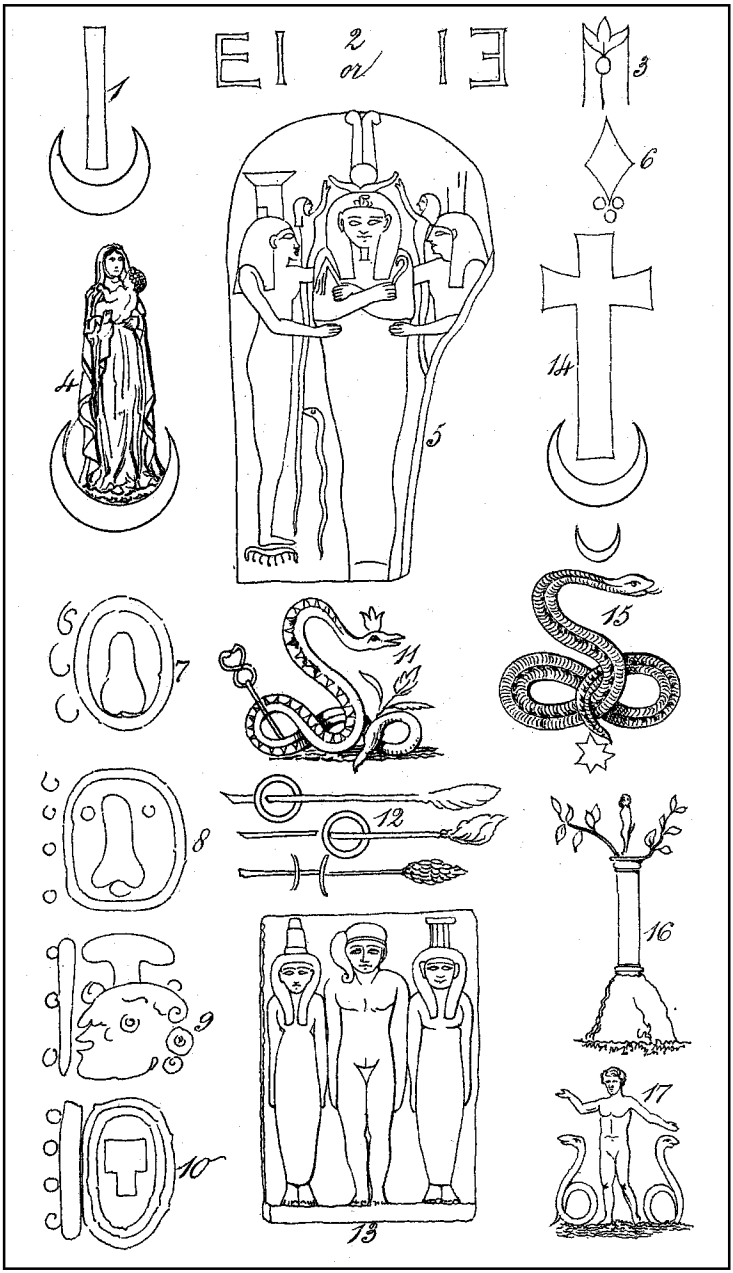
PLATE X.



sins sprung. One fat priest, nude as our risen bodies must be, is being savagely pulled to hell by the part symbolised by tree and serpent, whilst shee whom he has adored and vainly sought to disgrace, is rising to take her place amongst the blest. It is not those of the sex of Eve alone that are inveigled to destruction by the serpent.

PLATE X.

Contains pagan symbols of the trinity or linga, with or without the unity or yoni.

Fig. 1 represents a symbol frequently met with in ancient architecture, etc. It represents the male and female elements, the pillar and the half moon.

Fig. 2 represents the mystic letters said to have been placed on the portaI of the oracle of Delphi. By some it is proposed to read the two letters as signifying "he or she is;" by others the letters are taken to be symbolic of the triad and the unit. If they be, the pillar is very unusual form for the yoni. An ingeniouos friend of mine regards the upright portion as a "slit," but I cannot wholly agree with him. for in Fig. 1 the pillar cannot be looked upon as an aparture.

Fig. 3 is a Hindoo sectarial mark, copied from. Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*, and is one out of many. indicating the union of the male and female.

Fig. 4 is emblematic of the virgin and child. It identifies the two with the crescent. It is singular that some designers should unite the moon with the solar symbol, and others with the virgin. We believe that the first indicate ideas like that associated with Baalim, and Ashtaroth in the plural, the second that of Astarte or Venus in the singular. Or, as we may otherwise express it, the married and the immaculate virgin.

Fig. 5 is copied from Sharpe's *Egyptian Mythology*, p. 15. It represents one of the Egyptian trinities, and is highly symbolic, not only indicating the triad, here

Osiris, Isis, and Nephthys, but its union with the female element. The central god Osiris is himself triune, as he bears the horns symbolic of the goddess Athor and the feathers of the god Ra.

Fig. 6 is a Hindoo sectarial mark, from Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*. The lozenge indicates the yoni. For this assertion we not only have evidence in Babylonian gems, copied by Lajard, but in Indian and Etruscan designs. We find, for example, in vol. v., plate xlv., of *Antiquités Etrusques*, etc., par. F. A. David (Paris, 1785), draped female, wearing on her breast a half moon and mural crown, holding her hands over the middle spot of the body, so as to form a "lozenge" with the forefingers and thumbs. The triad in this figure is very distinct; and we may add that a trinity expressed by three balls or three circles is to be met with in the remotest times and in most distant countries.

Figs. 7, 8, 9 and 10 are copied from Cabrera's account of an ancient city discovered near Palernue, in Guatemala, Spanish America (London, 1822). Although they appear to have a sexual design, yet I doubt whether the similarity is not accidental. After a close examination of the plates given by Cabrera, I am inclined to think that nothing of the ling-yoni element prevailed in the mind of ancient American sculptors. All the males are carefully draped in appropriate girdles, although in some a grotesque or other ornament, such as a human or bestial head, a flower, etc., is attached to the apron or "fall" of the girdle, resembling the sporran of the Highlander and the codpiece of mediæval knights and others. I may, however, mention some very remarkable sculptures copied; one is a tree, whose trunk is surrounded by a serpent, and whose fruit is shaped like the *vesica piscis;* in another is seen a youth wholly unclothed, save by a cap and gaiters, who kneels before a similar tree, being threatened before and behind by some fierce animal. This figure is peculiar, differing from all the rest in having a European rather than an American head

and face. Indeed, the features, etc., remind me of the late Mr. Cobden, and the cap is such as yachting sailors usually wear. There is also another remarkable group, consisting apparently of a man and woman standing before a cross, proportioned like the conventional one in use amongst Christians. Everything indicates American ideas, and there are ornaments or designs wholly unlike any that I have seen elsewhere. The man appears to offer to the cross a grotesque human figure, with a head not much unlike Punch, with a turned-up nose, and a short pipe shaped like a fig in his mouth. The body is well formed, but the arms and thighs are rounded off like "flippers" or "fins." Resting at the top of the cross is a bird, like a game cock, ornamented by a necklace. The male in this and the other sculptures is beardless, and that women are depicted, can only be guessed at by the inferior size of some of the figures. It would be unprofitable to carry the description further.

Figs. 11, 12 are from vol. i., plates xix. and xxiii. of a remarkably interesting work, *Récherches sur l'origine, l'esprit, et les progès des Arts de la Grèce*, said to be written by D'Harcanville, published at London, 1785. The first represents a serpent. coiled so as to symbolise the male triad, and the crescent, the emblem of the yoni.

Fig. 12 accompanies the bull on certain coins, and symbolises the sexual elements, *le baton et l'anneau*. They were used, as the horse-shoe is now, as a charm against bad luck, or vicious demons or fairies.

Fig. 13 is, like figure 5, from Sharpe's *Egyptian Mythology*, p. 14, and is said to represent Isis, Nepthys, and Osiris; it is one of the many Mizraite triads. The Christian trinity is of Egyptian origin, and is as surely a pagan doctrine as the belief in heaven and hell, the existence of a devil, of archangels, angels, spirits and saints, martyrs sud virgins, intercessors in heaven, gods and demigods, and other forms of faith which deface the greater part of modem religions.

Figure 14 is a symbol frequently seen in Greek churches, but appears to be of pre-christian origin.* The cross we have elsewhere described as being a compound male emblem, whilst the crescent symbolises the female element in creation.

Figure 15 is from D'Harcanville, *op. cit.*, vol. i., plate xxiii. It resembles Figure 11, *supra*, and enables us by the introduction, of the sun and moon to verify the deduction drawn from the arrangement of the serpent's coils. If the snake's body, instead of being curved above the 8 like tail, were straight, it would simply indicate the linga and the sun; the bend in its neck, however, indicates the yoni and the moon.

Figure 16 is copied from plate xvi., fig. 2, of *Recueil des Pierres Antiques Gravés*, folio, by J. M. Raponi (Rome, 1786). The gem represants a sacrifice to Priapus, indicated by the rock, pillar, figure, and branches given in our plate. A nude male sacrifices a goat; a draped female holds a kid ready for immolation; a second man, nude, plays the double pipe, and a second woman, draped, bears a vessel on her head, probably containing wine for a libation.

Figure 17 is from vol. i. *Récherches*, etc., plate xxii. In this medal the triad is formed by a man and two coiled serpents on the one side of the medal, whilst on the reverse are seen a tree, surronnded by a snake, situated between two rounded stones, with a dog and a conch shell below, See *supra*, Plate ix., Fig. 6.

PLATE XI.

—With two exceptions, Figs. 4 and 9,—exhibits Christan emblems of the trinity or linga, and the unity or yoni, alone or combined; the whole being copied from Pugin's *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament* (London, 1869).

Fig. 1 is copied from Pugin, plate xvii., and indicates a

* There is an able essay on this subject in No. 267 of the *Edinburgh Review*—which almost exhausts the subject—but is too long for quotation here.

double union of the trinity with the unity, here represented as a ring, *l'anneau*.

Figs. 2, 3, are from Pugin, plate xiv. In figure 2, the two covered balls at the base of each limb of the cross are extremely significant, and if the artist had not mystified the free end, the most obtuse worshipper must have recognised the symbol. We may add here that in the two forms of the Maltese cross, the position of the lingam is reversed, and the egg-shaped bodies, with their cover, are at the free end of each limb, whilst the natural end of the organ is left unchanged. See figs. 35 and 36. This form of cross is Etruscan. Fig. 3 is essentially the same as the preceding, and both may be compared with Fig. 4. The balls in this cross are uncovered, and the free end of each limb of the cross is but slightly modified.

Fig. 4 is copied in a conventional form from plate xxxv., fig. 4. of *Two Essays on the Worship of Priapus* (London, 1865). It is thus described (page 147): "The object was found at St. Agnti di Goti, near Naples. …… It is a *curx ansata* formed by four phalli, with a circle of female organs round the centre; and appears by the look to have been intended for suspension. As this cross is of gold, it had no doubt been made for some personage of rank, possibly an ecclesiastic." We see here very distinctly the design of the egg and sistrum-shaped bodies. When we have such an unmistakable bi-sexual cross before our eyes, it is impossible to ignore the signification of Figs. 2 and 3, and Plate xii., Figs. 4 and 7.

Figs. 5, 6 are from Pugin, plates xiv. and xv., and represent the trinity with the unity, the triune god and the virgin united in one.

Fig. 7 represents the central lozenge and one limb of a cross, figured plate xiv. of Pugin. In this instance the Maltese cross is united with the symbol of the Virgin; being essentially the same as Fig. 9, *infra*. It is a modified form of the *crux ansata*.

Fig. 8 is a compound trinity, being the finial of each limb of an ornamental cross. Pugin, plate xv.

Fig. 9 is a well-known Egyptian symbol, borne in the hand of almost every divinity. It is a cross, with one limb made to represent the female element in creation. The name that it technically bears is *crux ansata*, or "the cross with a handle." A reference to Fig. 4 serves to verify the idea which it involves.

Fig. 10 is from Pugin, plate xxxv. In this figure the cross is made by the intersection of two ovals, each a *vesica piscis*, an emblem of the yoni. Within each limb a symbol of the trinity is seen, each of which is associated with the central ring.

Fig. 11 is from Pugin, plate xix., and represents the *arbor vitæ*, the *branch*, or tree of life, as a triad, with which the ring is united.

It has been said by some critics that the figures above referred to are mere architectural fancies, which never had pretensions to embody a mystery; and that any designer would pitch upon such a style of ornamentation although profoundly ignorant of the doctrine of the trinity and unity. But this assumption is not borne out by fact; the ornaments on Buddhist topes have nothing in common with those of Christian churches; whilst in the ruined temple of the sun at Marttand, India, the trefoil emblem of the trinity is common. Grecian temples were profusely ornamented therewith, and so are innumerable Etruscan sculptures, but they do not represent the trinity *and* unity. It has been reserved for Christian art to crowd our churches with the emblems of Bel and Astarte, Baalim and Ashtoreth, linga and yoni, and to elevate the phallus to the position of the supreme deity, and assign to him a virgin as a companion, who can cajole him by her blandishment, weary him by wailing, or induce him to change his mind by her intercessions. Christianity certainly requires to be purged of its heathenisms.

PLATE XI.

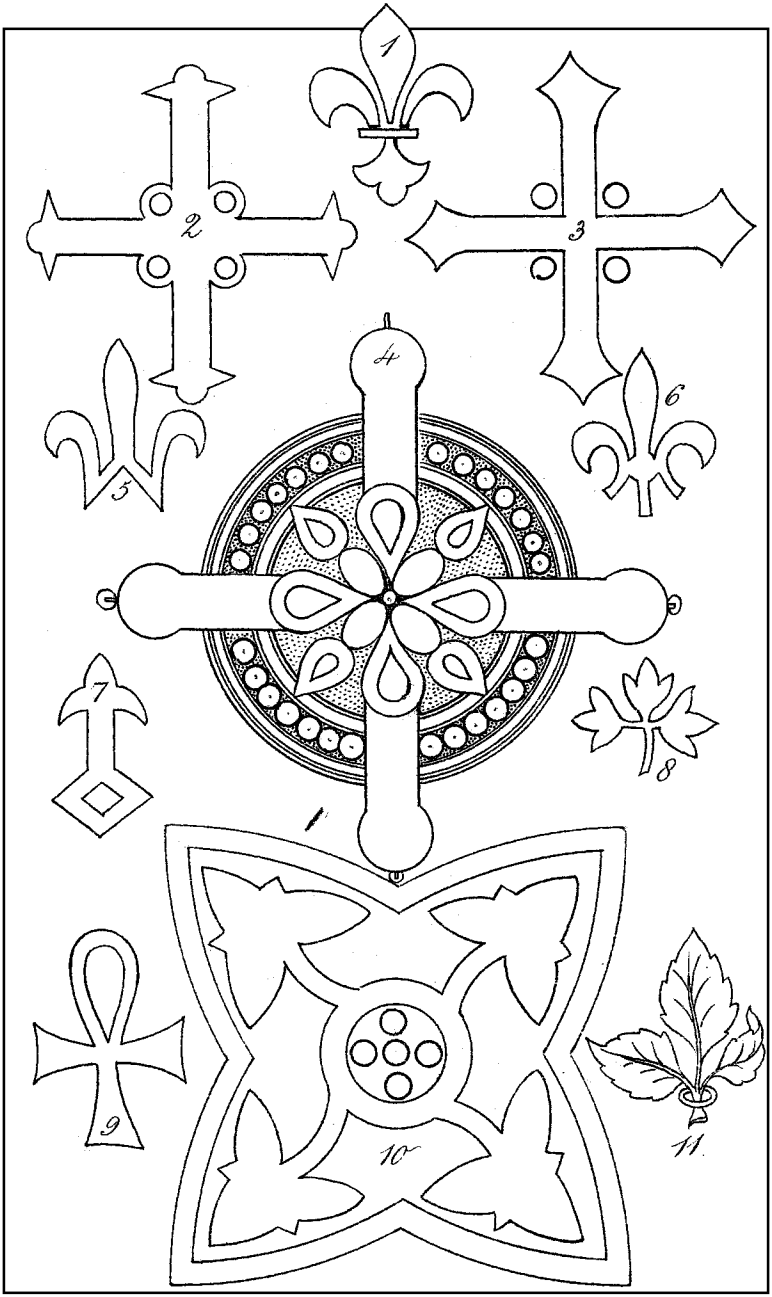


PLATE XII.

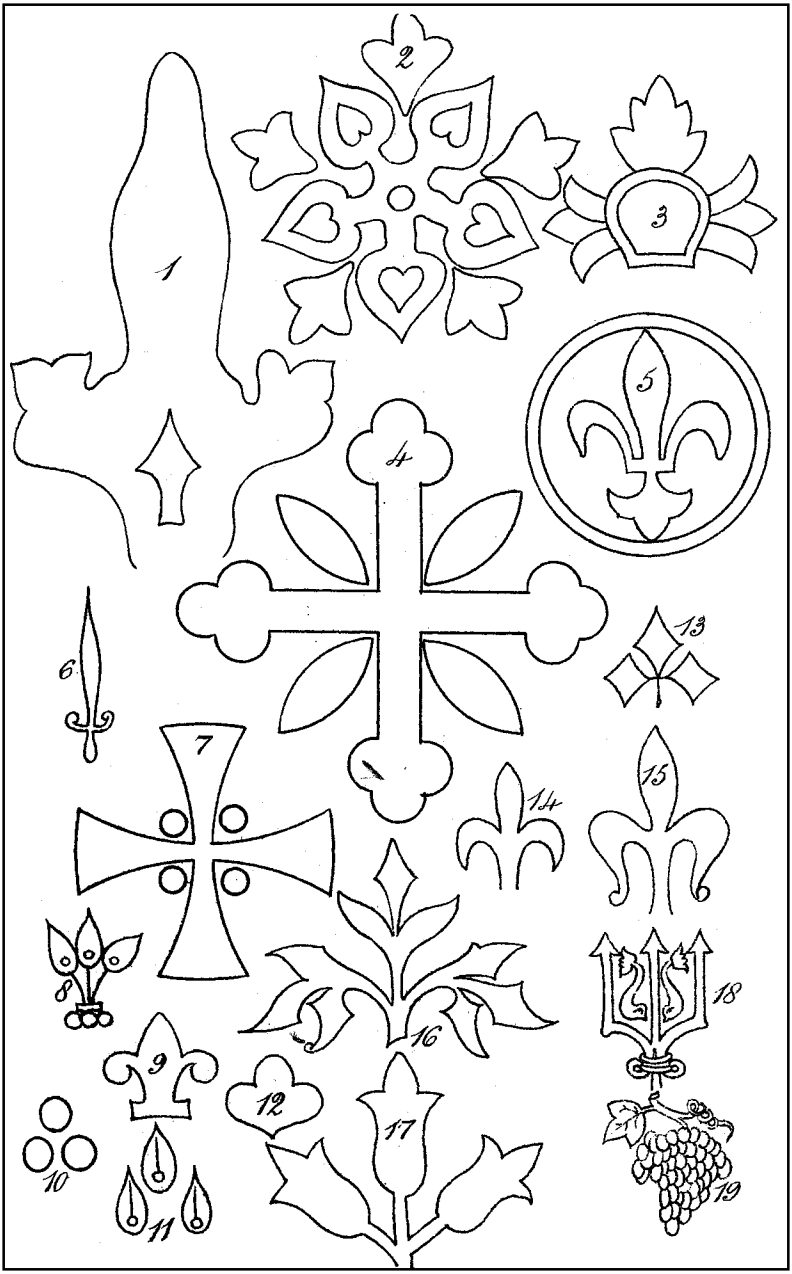


PLATE XII.

Contains both pagan and Christian emblems.

Fig. 1 is from Pugin, plate xviii., and is a very common finial representing the trinity. Its shape is too significant to require an explanation; yet with such emblems our Christian churches abound, that the Trinity may never be absent from the minds of man or woman!

Fig. 2 is from Pugin, plate xxi. It is a combination of ideas concealing the union patent in Fig. 4, Plate xi., *supra*.

Fig. 3 is from Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*. It is an ornament borne by Devi, and symbolises the union of the triad with the unit.

Fig. 4 is from Pugin, plate xxxii. It is a double cross made up of the male and female emblems. It is a conventionalised form of Fig. 4, Plate xi., *supra*. Such eight-rayed figures, made like stars, seem to have been very ancient, and to havc been designed to indicate the junction of male and female.

Fig. 5 is from Pugin, plate xvii., and represents the trinity and the unity.

Fig. 6 is a Buddhist emblem from Birmah, *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. xviii., p. 392, plate i., fig. 52. It represents the short sword. *le bracquemard*, a male symbol.

Fig. 7 is from Pugin, plate xvii. See Plate xi., Fig. 3, *supra*.

Figs. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 are Buddhist (see Fig. 6, *supra*), and symbolise the triad.

Figs. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 are from Pugin, and simply represent the trinity.

Figs. 18 and 19 are common Grecian emblems. The first is associated with Neptune and water, the second with Bacchus. With the one we see dolphins, emblems of the womb, the name of the two being assonant in Greek; with the other, the saying *sine Baccho et Cerere friget Venus*, must be coupled.

PLATE XIII.

Consists of various emblems of the triad and the unit, drawn almost exclusively from Grecian, Etruscan, Roman, and Indian gems, figures, coins, or sculptures, Maffei's *Gemme Antiche Figurate*, Raponi's *Recueil*, and Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*, being the chief authorities.

PLATE XIV.

Is a copy of a small Hindoo statuette in the Mayer Collection in the Free Museum, Liverpool. It probably represents, Parvati, the Hindoo virgin, and her child. The right hand of the figure makes the symbol of the yoni with the forefinger and thumb, the rest of the fingers typifying the triad. In the palm and on the navel is a lozenge, emblematic of woman. The child, perhaps Crishna, equivalent to the Egyptian Horus and the Christian Jesus, bears in its hand one of the many emblems of the linga, and stands upon a lotus. The monkey introduced into the group plays the same part as the cat, cow, lioness, and ape in the Egyptian mythology, being emblematic of that desire which eventuates in the production of offspring.

PLATE XV.

Fig. 1, the cupola, is well known in modern Europe; it is equally so in Hindostan, where it is sometimes accompanied, by pillars of a peculiar shape. In one such compound the design is that of a cupola, supported by closesly placed pillars, each of which has a "capital," resembling the "glans" of physiologists; in the centre there is a door, wherein a nude female stands, resembling in all respects Figure 61, except in dress and the presence: of the child. This was copied by the late Mr. Sellon, from a Buddhist Dagopa in the Jumnar Cave, Bombay Presidency, a tracing of his sketch having beeen given to me by William Simpson, Esq., London.

The same emblem may be found amongst the ancient Italians. Whilst I was staying in Malta during the carnival

PLATE XIII.

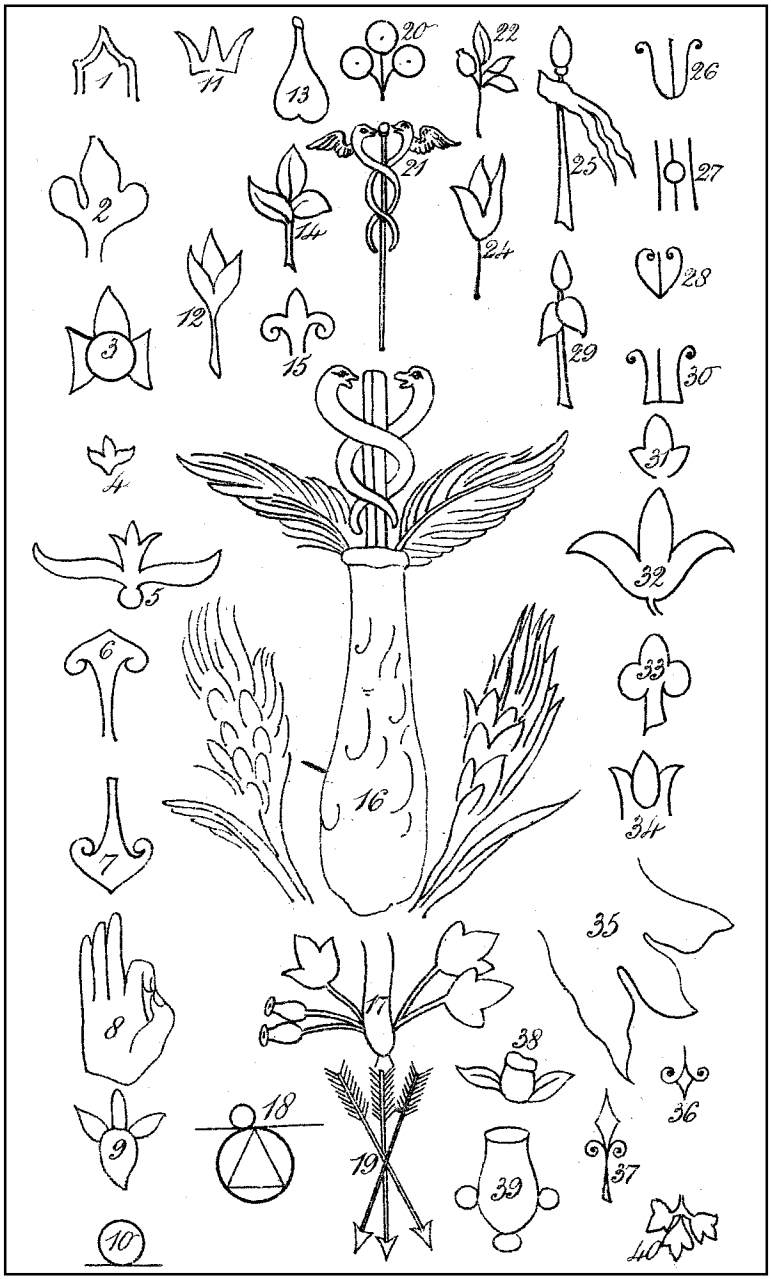

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PLATE XIV.

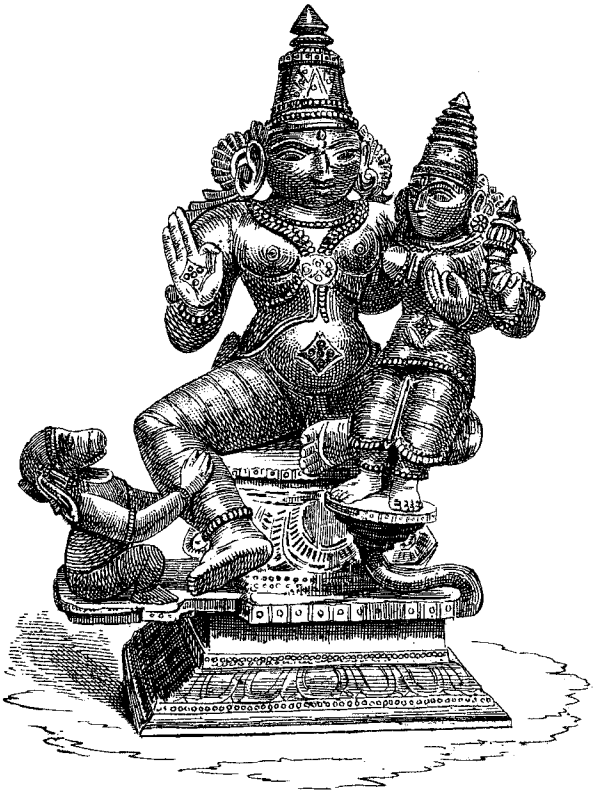


PLATE XV.

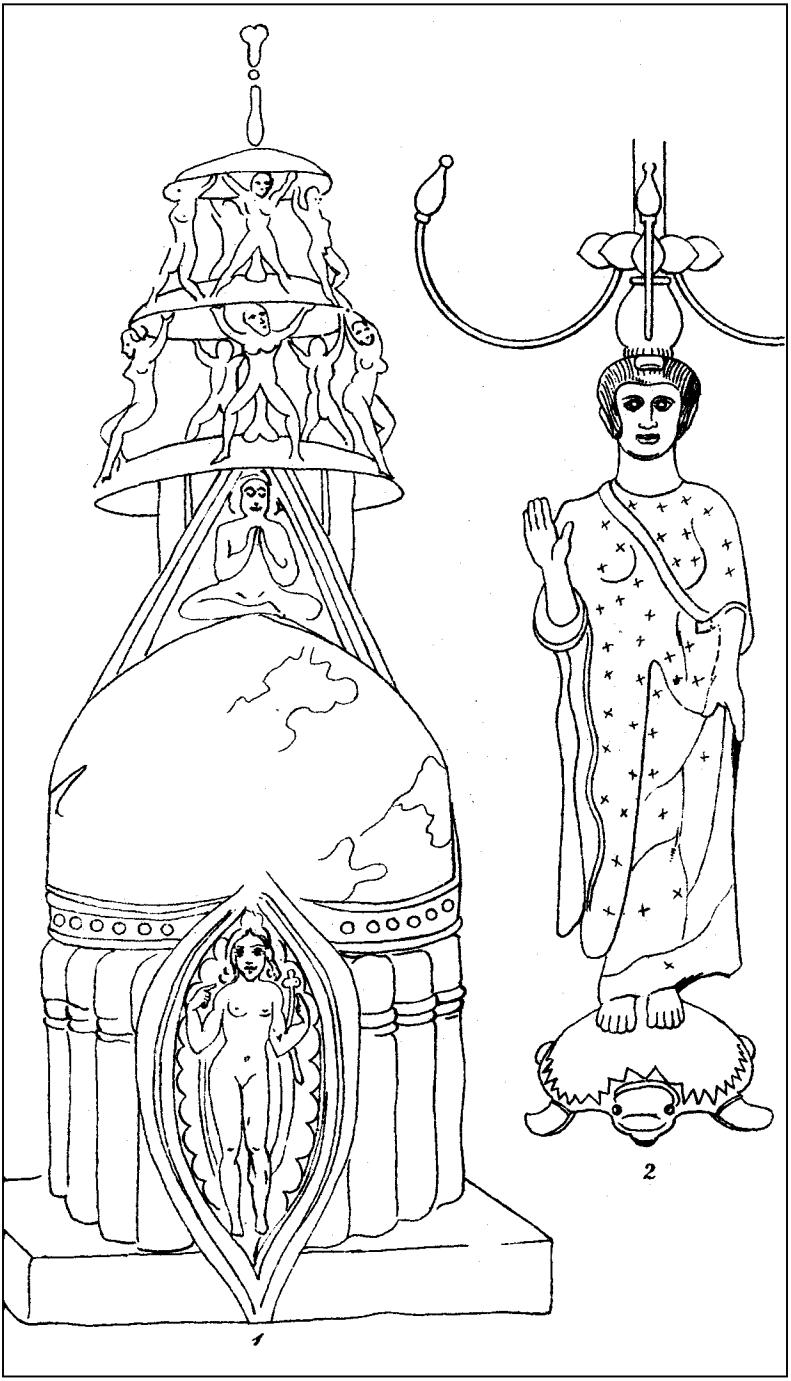
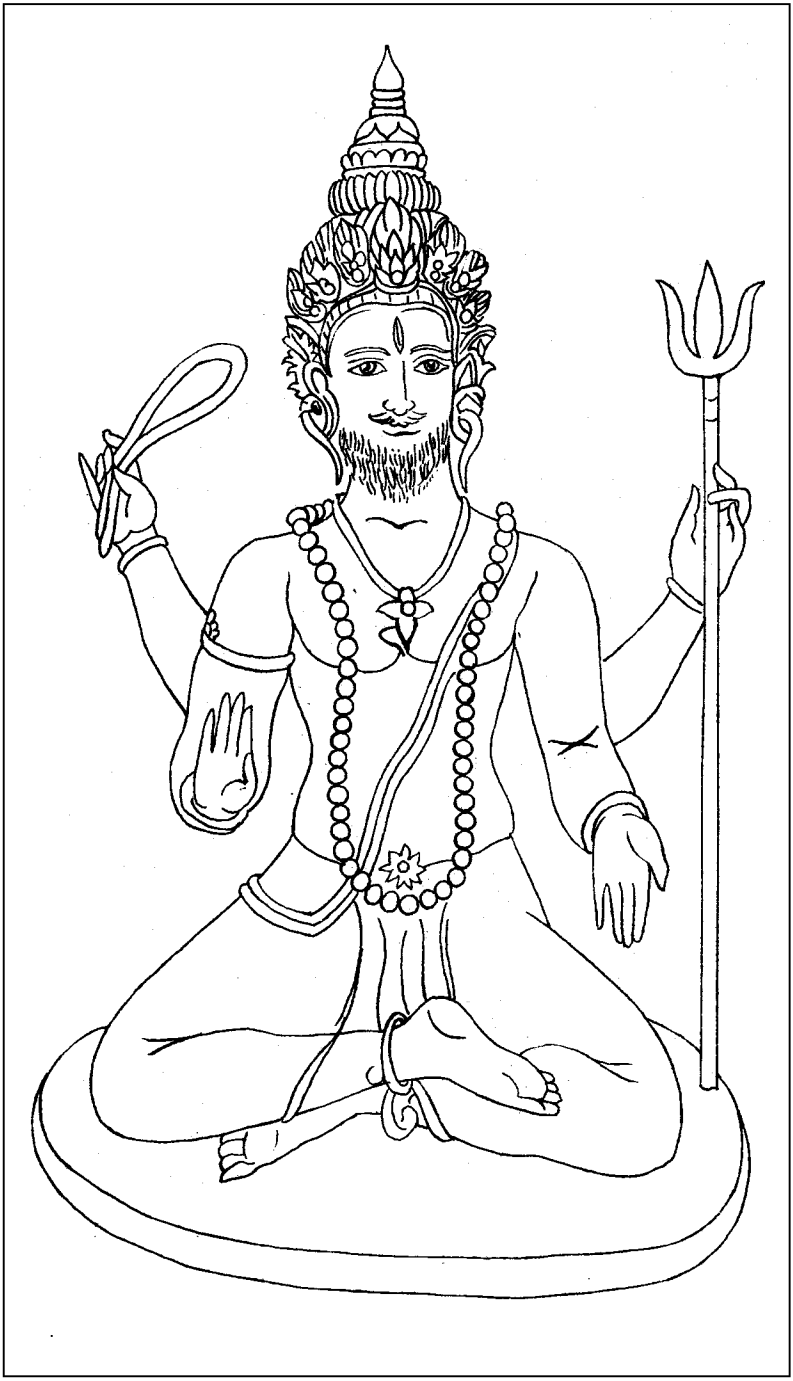


PLATE XVI.



time in 1872, I saw in all directions men and women selling cakes shaped like the yoni shown in Fig. 1. These sweetmeats had no special name, but they came in and went out with the carnival.

Fig. 2 represents Venus standing on a tortoise, whose symbolic import will be seen by referring to Fig. 74, infra. It is copied from Lajard, *Sur le Culte de Venus*, plate iiia, fig. 5, and is stated by him to be a drawing of an Etruscan candelabrum, existing in the Royal Museum at Berlin. In his account of Greece, Pausanias mentions that he saw one figure of Venus standing on a tortoise, and another upon a ram, but he declines to give the reason of the conjunction.

PLATE XVI.

Is a representation of Siva, taken from Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*, plate xiii. Siva is supposed to be the oldest of the Indian deities, and to have been worshipped by the aborigines of Hindostan, before the Aryans invaded that country. It is thought that the Vedic religion opposed this degrading conception at the first, but was powerless to eradicate it. Though he is yet the most popular of all the gods, Siva is venerated, I understand, chiefly by the vulgar. Though he personifies the male principle, there is not anything indecent in pictorial representations of him. In one of his hands is seen the trident, one of the emblems of the masculine triad; whilst in another is to be seen an oval sistrum-shaped loop, a symbol of the feminine unit. On his forehead he bears an eye, symbolic of the Omniscient, the sun, and the union of the sexes.

As it has been doubted by some readers, whether I am justified in regarding the sistrum as a female emblem, I append here a quotation from Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History*, Bohn's translation, p. 281, *seq*. In Rome, in the early time of Theodosius, "when a woman was detected in adultery . . . they shut her up in a narrow brothel, and obliged her to prostitute herself in a most disgusting manner;

causing little bells to be rang at the time . . . As soon as the emperor was apprised of this indecent usage, he would by no means tolerate it; but having ordered the *Sistra* (for so these places of penal prostitution were denominated) to be pulled down," &c. One can as easily see why a female emblem should mark a brothel in Rome as a male symbol did at Pompeii.

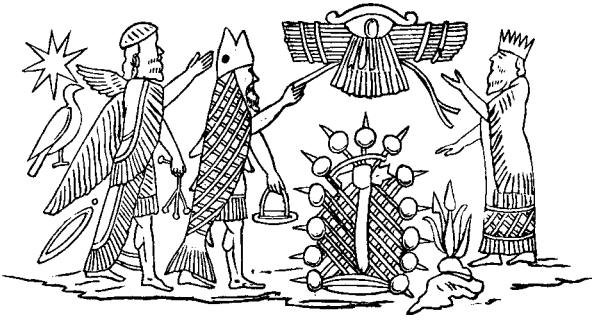


Figure 1.

This Figure represents Asyrian priests offering in the presence of what is supposed to Baal—or the representative of the sun god and of the grove. The first is typified by the eye, with wings and a tail, which make it symbolic of the male triad and the female unit. The eye, with the central pupil, is in itself emblematic of the same. The grove represents mystically *le verger de Cypris*. On the right stands the king; on the left are two priests, the foremost clothed with a fish's skin, the head forming the mitre, thus showing the origin of modern Christian bishops' peculiar head-dress. Arranged about the firure are, the sun; a bird, perhaps the sacred dove, whose note, *coa* or *coo*, has, in the Shemitic, some resemblance to an invitation to amorous gratification; in Latin, *coi*, *coite*; the oval, symbol of the yoni; the basket, or bag, emblematic of the scrotum, and apparently the lotus. The trinity and unity are carried by the second priest.

Figure 2 is copied from an ancient copper vase, covered with Egyptian hieroglyphic characters, found at Cairo, and

figured in a book entitled *Explication des divers monumens signuliers, qui ont rapport à la religion des plus anciens*

Figure 2.

peuples, par le R. P. Dom. …… á Paris, 1789. The group of figures represents Isis and Horus in an unusual attitude. They are enclosed in a framework of the flowers of the Egyptian bean, or of the lotus. This framework may be compared to the Assyrian "grove," and another in which the Virgin Mary stands. The bell was of old a symbol of virginity, for Eastern maidens wore them unitl marriage (see Isa. iii. 16). The origin of this custom was the desire that every maiden should have at her marriage, or sale, that which is spoken of in the Pentateuch as "the token of virginity." It was supposed that this membrane, technically called "the *hymen*," might be broken by too long a stride in walking or running, or by clambering over a stile or wall. To prevent such a catastrophe, a light chain or cord was worn, under or over the dress, at the level of the knees of just above. Its length only permitted a short step and a mincing gait. Slight bells were used as a sort of ornament, and when the bearer was walking their tinkling was a sort of proclamation that the lady who bore them was in the market as a virgin. After "the flower" had been plucked, the bells

were no longer of use. They were analogous to the virgin snood worn on the head of Scotch maidens. Isis bears the horns of a cow, because that animal is equally noted for its propensity to seek the male and its care to preserve the offspring. As the bull with a human head, so a human being with cow's horns, was made to represent a deity. The solar orb between the horns, and the serpent round the body, indicate the union with the male; an incongruous conjunction with the emblem of the sacred Virgin, nevertheless a very common one. In some of the coins pictures by R. P. Knight, in *Worship of Priapus*, etc., a cow caressing her sucking calf replaces Isis and Horus, just as a bull on other coins replaces Dionysus. The group is described in full in *Ancient Faiths*, second edition, Vol. I., p.p. 53, 54.

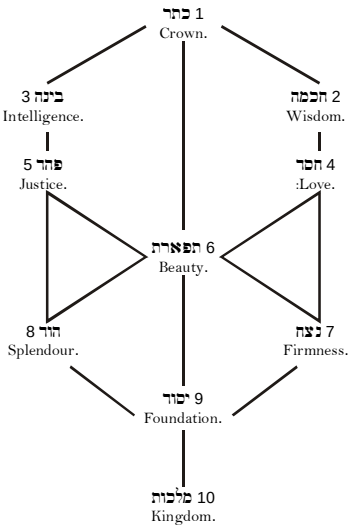


Figure 3.

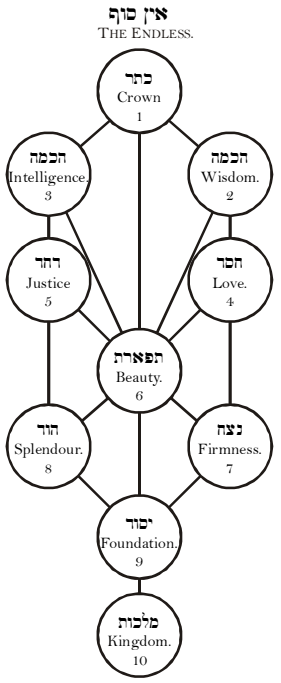


Figure 4.

Figures 3, 4, are taken from Ginsburg's *Kabbalah*, and illustrates that in the arrangement of "potencies" two unite, like parents, to form a third. Sometimes we see also how three such male attributes as splendour, firmness, and solidity join with beauty to form the mystic *arba*, the trinity and unity.

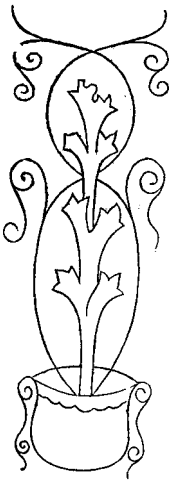


Figure 5.

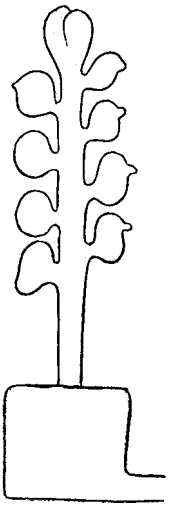


Figure 6.

Figures 5, 6, are copies from figures found in Carthage and in Scotland, from Forbes Leslie's *Early Races of Scotland*, vol. i., plate vi., p. 46 (London, 1866). This book is one to which the reader's attention should be directed. The amount of valuable information which it contains is very large, and it is classified in a philosophical, and, we may add, attractive manner. The figures represent the *arbor vitæ*.

Figure 7 in from Bonomi, page 292, *Nineveh and its Palaces* (London, 1865). It apparently represents the mystic yoni, door, or delta; and it may be regarded as an earlier form of the framework in Plate iv. It will be

remarked, by those learned in symbols, that the outline of the hands of the priests who are nearest to the figure

Figure 7.

is a suggestive one, being analogous to the figure of a key and its shank, whilst those who stand behind these officers present the pine cones and bag, symbolic of Anu, Hea, and their residence. It is to be noticed, and once for all let us assert our belief, that every detail in a sculpture relating to religion has a signification; that the first right hand figure carries a peculiarly shaped staff; and that the winged symbol above the yoni consists of a male archer in a winged circle, analogous to the symbolic bow, arrow, and target. The bow was an emblem amongst the Romans, and *arcum tendere* was equivalent to *arrigere*. In the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius we find the metaphor used in his account of his dealings with amorous frolicsome Fotis, "Ubi primam sagittam sævi cupidinis in ima prœcordia mea delapsam excepi, *arcum* meum et ipse vigore *tetendi.*"

Again, we find in Petronius—

> Astra igitur mea mens *arcum* dum *tendit* in illa.
> Ex imo ad summum viva sagitta volat.

Figures 8 to 14 are representatives of the goddess mother, the virgin and child, Ishtar or Astarte, Mylitta, Ceres, Rhea, Venus, Sacti, Mary, Yoni, Juno, Mama Ocello,

etc. Fig 8 is a copy of the deified woman or celestial mother, from Idalium, in Cyprus. Fig. 9 is from Egypt,

Figure 8.

Figure 9.

and is remarkable for the cow's horns (for whose signification see Vol. I., p. 54, *Ancient Faiths*, second edition), which here replaces the lunar cresent, in conjunction with the sun, the two being symbolic of hermaphroditism, whilst above is a seat or throne, emblematic of royalty. The two figures are copied from Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, vol. ii., p. 447, in an essay by Sir Gardiner Wilkinson, wherein other illustrations of the celestial virgin are given. Fig. 10 is a copy of plate 59, Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*, wherein it is entitled, "Crishna nursed by Devaki, from a highly finished picture." In the account of Crishna's birth and early history, as given by Moor (*Op. Cit.*, pp. 197, *et seq.*), there is as strong a resemblance to the story of Christ as the picture here described has to papal paintings of Mary and Jesus. Fig. 11 is an enlarged representation of Devaki. Fig. 12 is copied from Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. iii.,

p. 399. Fig. 13 is a figure of the mother and chield found in ancient Etruria at Volaterræ; it is depicted in Fabretti's

Figure 10.

Italian Glossary, plate xxvi., figure 849. It is described as a marble statue, now in the Guarnacci Museum. The letters, which are Etruscan, and read from right to left, may be thus rendered into the ordinary Latin characters from left to right, MI: GANA: LARTHIAS ZANL: VELKINEI: ME - SE.; the translation I take to be, "the votive offering of Larthias (a female) of Zenal, (= Zancle = Messana in Sicily), (wife) of Velcinius, in the sixth month." It is uncertain whether we are to regard the statue as an effigy of the celestial mother and child, or as the representation of some devout lady who has been spared during her pregnancy, her parturition, of from some disease affecting herself

and child. Analogy would lead us to infer that the Queen of Heaven is intended. Figure 14 is copied from Hislop's *Two Babylons;* it represents Indranee, the wife of Indra or Indur, as is to be found in Indur Subba, the south front of the Caves of Ellora, *Asiastic Researches*, vol. vi., p. 393.

Figure 11.

Figure 12.

Indra is equivalent to Jupiter Tonans, and is represented as seated on an elephant; "the waterspout is the trunk of this elephant, and the iris is his bow, which it is not auspicious to point out," Moor's *Pantheon*, p. 260. He is represented very much as if he were a satyr, Moor's *Pantheon*, p. 264; but his wife is always spoken of as personified chastity and propriety. Indranee is seated on a lioness, which replaces the cow of Isis, the former resembling the latter in her feminine and maternal instincts.

Figures 15, 16, are copies of Diana of the Ephesians; the first is from Hislop, who quotes Kitto's *Illustrated*

Commentary, vol. v., p. 250; the second from Higgins' *Anacalypsis*, who quotes Montfauçon, plate 47. I remember to have seen a figure similar to these in the Royal Museum

Figure 13.

Figure 14.

at Naples. The tower upon the head represents virginity (see *Ancient Faiths*, second edition, Vol. I., p. 144); the position of the hands forms a cross with the body; the numerous breasts indicate abundance; the black colour of Figure 16 indicates the ordinary tint of the feminine *lanugo*, the almost universal colour of the hair of the Orientals being black about the yoni as well as on the head; or, as some mythologists imagine, "Night," who is said to be one of the mothers of creation. (See *Ancient Faiths*, second edition, Vol. II., p. 382.) The emblems upon the

body indicate the attributes or symbols of the male and female creators.

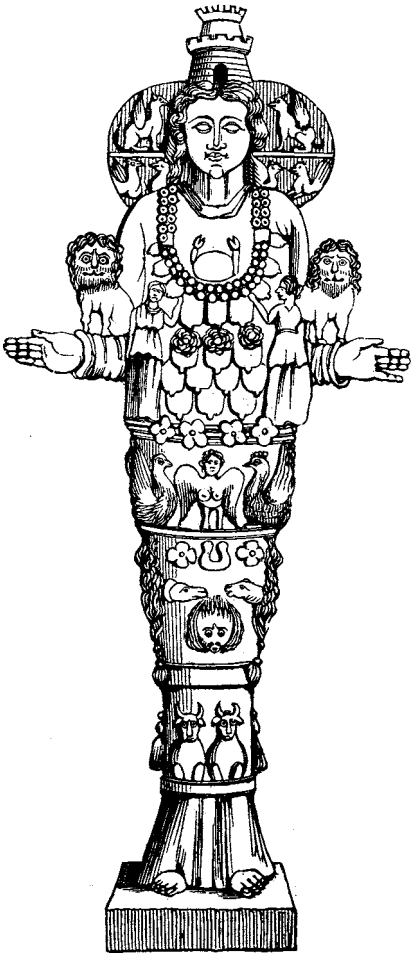


Figure 15.

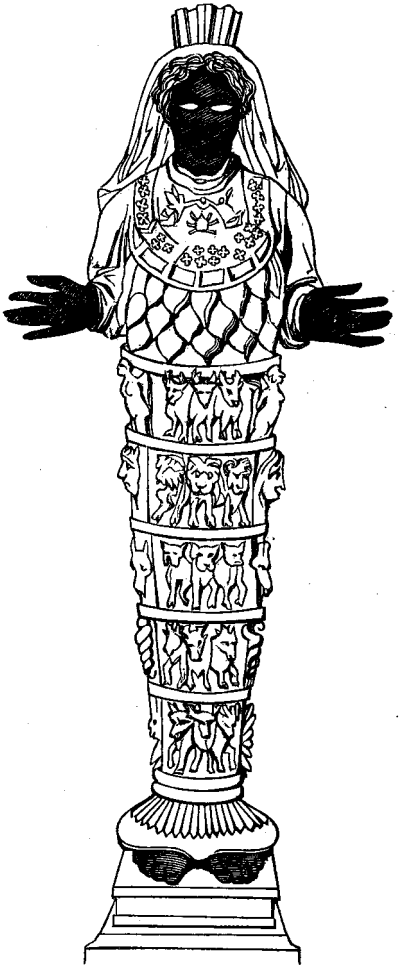


Figure 16.

Figure 17 is a complicated sign of the yoni, delta, or door of life. It is copied from Bonomi's *Palaces of Nineveh*, p. 309.

Figure 17.

Figure 18 significes the same thing; the priests adoring it present the pine cone and basket, symbolic of Anu, Hea,

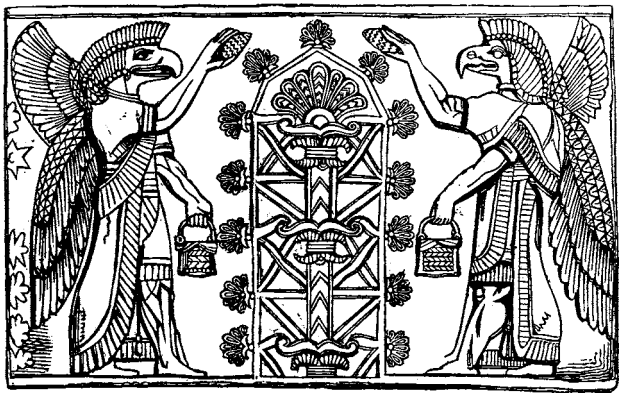


Figure 18.

and their residence. Compare the object of the Assyrian priest's adoration with that adored by a Christian divine, in a subsequent figure. (See *Ancient Faiths*, second edition, Vol. I., p. 83, *et seq*., and Vol. II., p. 648.)

Figure 19 is copied from Lajard (*op. cit.*), plate xxii., fig. 5. It is the impression of an ancient gem, and represents a man clothed with a fish, the head being the mitre; priests thus clothed, often bearing in their hand the mystic

bag, are common in Mesopotamian sculptures; two such are figured on Figs. 63, 64, *infra*. In almost every instance it

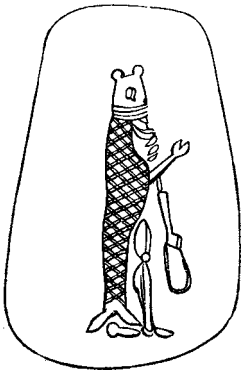


Figure 19.

will be recognised that the fish's head is represented as of the same form as the modern bishop's mitre.

Figure 20 represents two equilateral triangles, infolded so

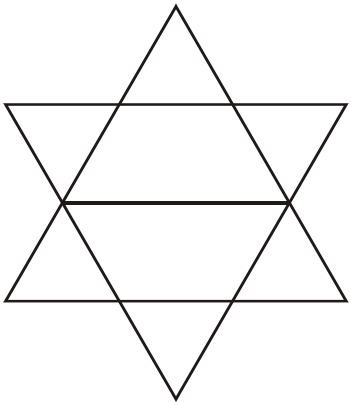


Figure 20.

as to make a six-rayed star, the idea embodied being the androgyne nature of the deity, the pyramid with its apex

upward signifying the male, that with the apex downwards the female. The line at the central junction is not always seen, but the shape of the three parallel bars reappears in Hindoo frontlet signs in conjunction with a delta or door, shaped like the "grove" in Fig. 17; thus showing that the lines serve also to indicate the masculine triad. The two triangles are also understood as representing fire, which mounts upwards, and water, which flows downwards. Fire again is an emblem of the sun, and water of the passive or yielding element in nature. Fire also typifies Eros or Cupid. Hymen is always represented carrying a torch. It is also symbolic of love; *e.g.*, Southey writes—

> "But love is indestructible,
> Its holy flame for ever burneth;
> From heaven it came,
> To heaven returneth."

And again, Scott writes—

> "It is not phantasy's hot fire
> Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly," &c.

Figures 21, 22, are other indications of the same fundamental idea. The first represents Nebo, the Nahbi, or the

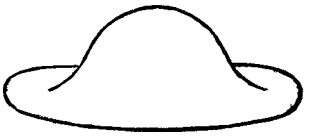


Figure 21.

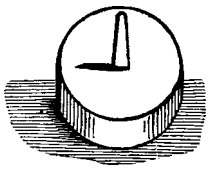


Figure 22.

navel, characterised by a ring with a central mound. The second represents the circular and upright stone so common in Oriental villages. The two indicate the male and female; and a medical friend resident in India has told me, that he has seen women mount upon the lower stone and seat themselves reverently upon the upright one, having first adjusted their dress so as to prevent it interfering with their perfect

contact with the miniature obelisc. During the sitting, a short prayer seemed flitting over the worshippers' lips, but the whole affair was soon over.

Whilst upon this subject, it is right to call attention to the fact that animate as well as inorganic representatives of the Creator have been used by women with the same definite purpose. The dominant idea is that contact with the emblem, a mundane representative of the deity, of itself gives a blessing. Just as many Hindoo females seek a benefaction by placing their own yoni upon the consecrated linga, so a few regard intercourse with certain high priests of the Maharajah sect as incarnations of Vishnu, and pay for the privilege of being spouses of the god. In Egypt, where the goat was a sacred animal, there were some religious women who sought good luck by uniting themselves therewith. We have heard of British professors of religion endeavouring to persuade their penitents to procure purity by what others would call defilement and disgrace. And the "cord of St. Francis" replaces the stone "linga." Sometimes with this "cord" the rod is associated; and those who have read the trial of Father Gerard, for his seduction of Miss Cadiere under a saintly guise, will know that Christianity does not always go hand in hand with propriety.

With the Hindoo custom compare that which was done by Liber on the grave of Prosumnus (*Arnobius adversus Gentes*, translated by Bryce and Campbell, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, pp. 252, 253), which is far too gross to be described here; and as regards the sanctity of a stone whose top had been anointed with oil, see first sentence of paragraph 39, *ibid*., page 31. The whole book will well repay perusal.

Figures 23, 24, are discs, circles, aureoles, and wheels, to represent the sun. Sometimes the emblem of this luminary is associated with rays, as in Plate iii., Fig. 8, and in another Figure elsewhere. Occasionally, as in some of the ancient temples in Egypt, discovered in 1854, the sun's rays

are represented by lines terminating in hands. Sometimes one or more of these contain objects as if they were gifts sent by the god; amongst othert objects, the *crux ansata* is shown conspicuously. In a remarkable plate in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature* (second series, vol. i., p. 140), the sun is identified with the serpent; its rays terminate in hands, some holding the handled cross or *tau*, and before it a queen, apparently, worships. She is offering what seems to be a lighted tobacco pipe, the bowl being of the same shape as that commonly used in Turkey; from this a wavy pyramid of flame rises. Behind her, two female slaves elevate the sistrum; whilst before her, and apparently between herself and her husband, are two altars

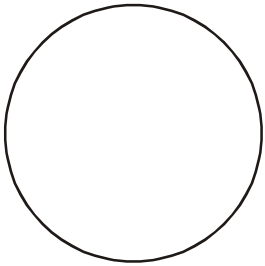


Figure 23.

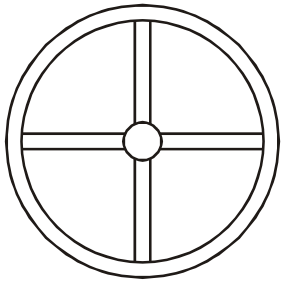


Figure 24.

occupied by round cakes and one crescent-shaped emblem. The aureole was used in ancient days by Babylonian artists or sculptors, when they wished to represent a being, apparently human, as a god. The same plan has been adopted by the moderns, who have varied the symbol by representing it now as a golden disc, now as a terrestrial orb, again as a rayed sphere. A writer, when describing a god as a man, can say that the object he sketches is divine; but a painter thinks too much of his art to put on any of his designs, “this woman is a goddess,” or “this creature is a god”; he therefore adds an aureole round the head of his subject, and thus converts a very ordinary man, woman, or child into a

deity to be reverenced; modern artists thus proving themselves to be far more skilful in depicting the Almighty than the carpenters and goldsmiths of the time of Isaiah (xl. 18, 19, xli. 6, 7, xliv. 9–19), who used no such contrivance.

Figure 24 is another representation of the solar disc, in which it is marked with a cross. This probably orginated in the wheel of a chariot having four spokes, and the sun being likened to a charioteer. The chariots of the sun are referred to in 2 Kings xxiii. 11 as idolatrous emblems. Of these the wheel was symbolic. The identification of this emblem with the sun was easy, for it has repeatedly been found in Mesopotamian gems in conjunction with the moon. In a very remarkable one figured in Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii., p. 249, the cross is contrived as five circles. It is remarkable that in many papal pictures the wafer and the cup are depicted precisely as the sun and moon in conjunction. See Pugin's *Architectural Glossary*, plate iv., fig. 5.

Figures 25, 26, 27, are simply varieties of the solar

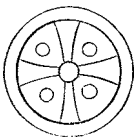


Figure 25.

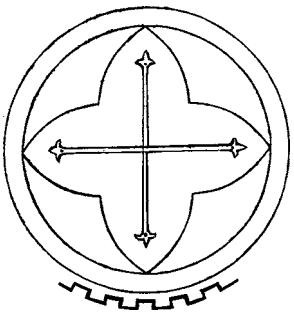


Figure 26.

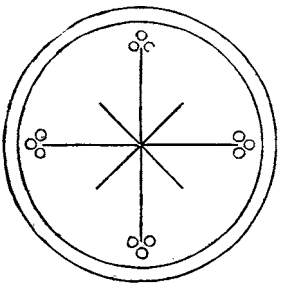


Figure 27.

wheel, intended to represent the idea of the sun and moon, the mystic triad and unit, the "arba," or four. In Figure

26, the mural ornament is introduced, that being symbolic of feminine virginity. For explanation of Figure 27, see Figures 35, 36.

Figure 28 is copied from Lajard, *Op. Cit.*, plate xiv. F. That author states that he has taken it from a drawing of an Egyptian stèle, made by M. E. Prisse (*Monum. Egypt.*, plate xxxvii.), and that the original is in the British

Figure 28.

Museum. There is an imperfect copy of it in Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, vol. ii. The original is too indelicate to be represented fully. Isis, the central figure, is wholly nude, with the exception of her head-dress, and neck and breast ornaments. In one hand she holds two blades of corn apparently, whilst in the other she has three lotus flowers, two being egg-shaped, but the central one fully expanded; with these, which evidently symbolise the mystic triad, is associated a circle emblematic of the yoni, thus indicated the fourfold creator. Isis stands upon a lioness; on one side of her stands a clothed male figure, holding in one hand the *curx ansata*, and in the other an upright spear. On the opposite side is a male figure wholly nude, like the goddess, save his head-dress and collar, the ends of which are arranged so as to form a cross. His hand points to a flagellum; behind him is a covert reference to the triad,

whilst in front Osiris offers undisguised homage to Isis. The head-dress of the goddess appears to be a modified form of

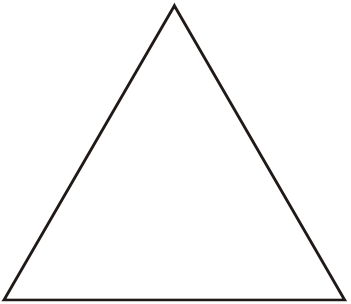


Figure 29.

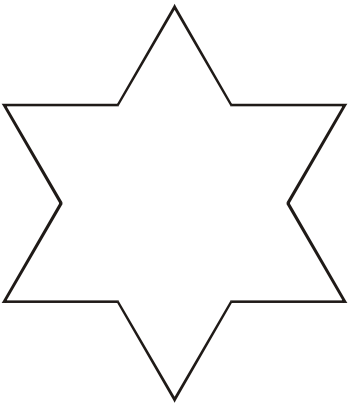


Figure 30.

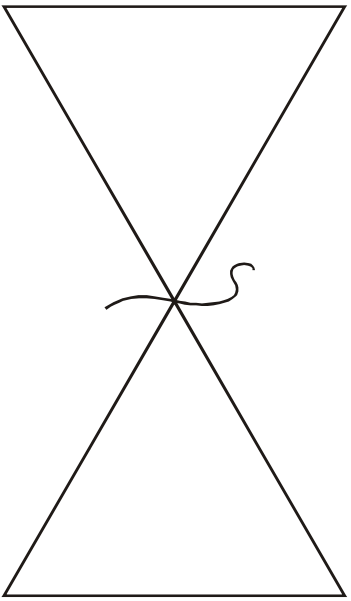


Figure 31.

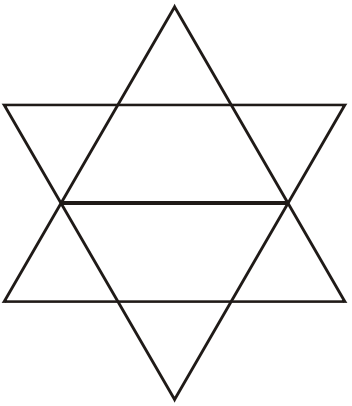


Figure 32.

the crescent moon inverted. It is not exclusively Egyptian,

as it has been found in conjunction with other emblems on an Assyrian obelisc of Phallic form.

Figures 29, 30, 31, 32, represent the various triangles and their union, which have been adopted in worship. Figure 29 is said to represent fire, which amongst the ancient Persians was depicted as a cone, whilst the figure inverted represents water.

Figure 33 is an ancient Hindoo emblem, called *Sri*

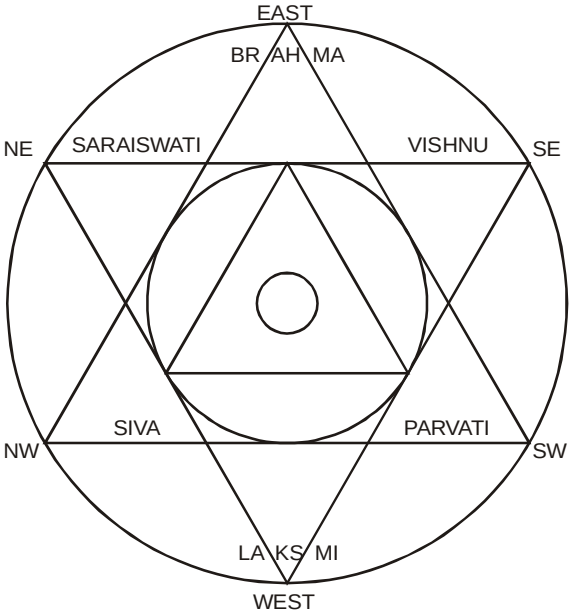


Figure 33.

Yantra. The circle represents the world, in which the living exist; the triangle pointing upwards shows the male creator; and the triangle with the apex downwards the female; distinct, yet united. These have a world within themselves, in which the male is uppermost. In the central circle the image to be worshipped is placed. When used, the figure is placed on the ground, with Brahma to the east, and Laksmi to the

west. Then a relic of any saint, or image of Buddha, like a modern papal crucifix, is added, and the shrine for worship is complete. It has now been adopted in Christian churches and Freemasons' lodges.

It will be noticed that the male emblem points to the rising sun, and the female triangle points to the setting sun, when the earth seems to receive the god into her couch.

Figure 34 is a very ancient Hindoo emblem, whose real signification I am unable to divine. It is used in calculation; it forms the basis of some game, and it is a sign of vast import in sacti worship. A coin, bearing this figure upon it, and having a central cavity with the Etruscan letters SUPEN placed one between each two of the angles, was found in a fictile urn, at Volaterræ, and is depicted in Fabretti's *Italian Glossary*, plate xxvi., fig. 358, *bis a*. As the coin is round, the reader will see that these letters may be read as Supen, Upens, Pensu, Ensup, or Nsupe. A search through Fabretti's *Lexicon* affords no clue to any meaning except for the third. There seems, indeed, strong reason to believe that *pensu* was the Etruscan form of the Pali *panca*, the Sanscrit *pánch*, the Bengali *pánch*, and the Greek *penta*, *i.e.*, five. Five, certainl, would be an appropriate word for the pentangle. It is almost impossible to avoid speculating upon the value of this fragment of archeological evidence in support of the idea that the Greeks, Aryans, and Etruscans had something in common; but into the question it would be unprofitable to enter here.

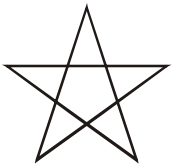


Figure 34.

But, although declining to enter upon this wide field of inquiry, I would notice that whilst searching Fabretti's *Glossary* my eye fell upon the figure of an equilateral triangle with the apex upwards, depicted plate xliii., fig. 2440 *ter*. The triangle is of brass, and was found in the territory of the Falisci. It bears a rude representation of the outlines of the soles of two human feet, in this respect

resembling a Buddhist emblem; and there is on its edge an inscription which may be rendered thus in Roman letters, KEVI: TERTINEI. POSTIKNU, which probably signifies "Gavia, the wife of Tertius, offered it." The occurrence of two Hindoo symbols in ancient Italy is very remarkable. It must, however, be noticed that similar symbols have been found on ancient scultpured stones in Ireland and Scotland. There may be no emblematic idea whatever conveyed by the design; but when the marks appear on Gnostic gems, they are supposed to indicate death, *i.e.* the impressions left by the feet of the individual as he springs from earth to heaven.

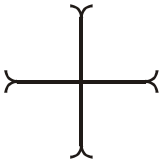


Figure 35.

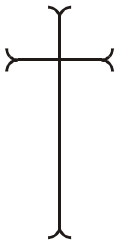


Figure 36.

Figures 35, 36, are Maltese crosses. In a large book of Etrurian antiquities, which came casually under my notice about twenty years ago, when I was endeavouring to master the language, theology, etc., of the Etruscans, but whose name, and other particulars of which, I cannot now remember, I found depicted two crosses, made up of four masculine triads, each *asher* being erect, and united to its fellows by the gland, forming a central diamond, emblem of the yoni. In one instance, the limbs of the cross were of equal length; in the other, one *asher* was three times as long as the others. A somewhat similar cross, but one united with the circle, was found some time ago near Naples. It is made of gold, and has apparently been used as an amulet and suspended to the neck. It is figured in plate 35 of *An Essay on the Worship of the Generative Powers*

during the Middle Ages (London, privately printed, 1865). It may be thus described: the centre of the circle is occupied by four oblate spheres arranged like a square; from the salient curves of each of these springs a yoni (shaped as in Figure 59), with the point outwards, thus forming a cross, each ray of which is an egg and fig. At each junction of the ovoids a yoni is inserted with the apex inwards, whilst from the broad end arise four ashers, which project beyond the shield, each terminating in a few golden bead-like drops. The whole is a graphic natural representation of the intimate union of the male and female, sun and moon, cross and circle, Ouranos and Ge. The same idea is embodied in Figure 27, p. 36, but in that the mystery is deeply veiled, in that the long arms of the cross represent the sun, or male, indicated by the triad; the short ones, the moon, or the female (see Plate xi. Fig. 4).

The Maltese cross, a Phœnician emblem, was discovered cut on a rock in the island from which it takes its name. Though cruciform, it had nothing Christian about it; for, like the Etruscan ones referred to above, it consisted of four lingas united together by the heads, the "eggs" being at the outside. It was an easy thing for an unscrupulous priesthood to represent this "invention" of the cross as a miracle, and to make it presentable to the eyes of the faithful by leaving the outlines of Anu and Hea incomplete. Sometimes this cross is figured as four triangles meeting at the points, which has the same meaning. Generally, however, the Church (as may be seen by a reference to Pugin's *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament*) adopts the use of crosses where the inferior members of the trinity are more or less central, as in our Plate xi., Figs. 2, 3, and as in the Figures 40, 41, 42, *infra*. When once a person knows the true origin of the doctrine of the Trinity—one which is far too improper to have been adopted by the writers of the New Testament—it is impossible not to recognise in the signs which are symbolic of it the thing which is signified.

It may readily be supposed that those who have knowledge of the heathenish origin of many of the cherished doctrines of the so-called Christian church, cannot remain enthusiastic members of her communion; and it is equally easy for the enlightened philosopher to understand why such persons are detested and abused by the ignorant, and charged with being freethinkers, sceptics, or atheists. Sciolism is ever intolerant, and theological hatred is generally to be measured by the mental incapacity of those who indulge in the luxury. But no amount of abuse can reduce the intrinsic value of facts. Nor will the most fiery persecutions demonstrate that the religion of Christ, as it appears in our churches and cathedrals, especially if they are papal, is not tainted by a mass of paganism of disgusting origin.

Figure 37 is copied from the *Journal of the Royal*

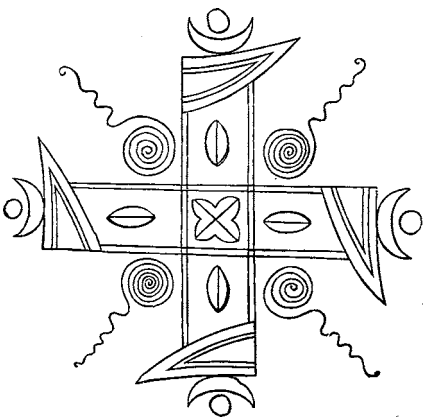
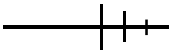


Figure 37.

Asiatic Society, vol. xviii., p. 393, plate 4. It is a Buddhist emblem, and represents the same idea under different aspects. Each limb of the cross represents the *fascinum* at right angles with the body, and presented towards a barleycorn, one of the symbols of the yoni. Each limb is marked by the same female emblem, and terminates with the triad

triangle; beyond this again is seen the conjunction of the sun and moon. The whole therefore represents the mystic *arba*, the creative four, by some called Thor's hammer. Copies of a cross similar to this have been recently found by Dr. Schliemann in a very ancient city, buried under the remains of two others, which he identifies as the Troy of Homer's *Iliad*.

Figures 38 to 42 are developments of the triad triangle, or trinity. If the horizontal limb on the free end of the arm



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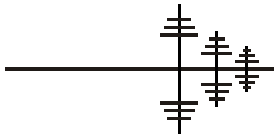

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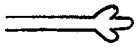

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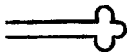


Figure 41.

Figure 42.

were to be prolonged to twice its length, the most obtuse would recognise *Asher*, and the inferior or lower members of the "trinue."

Figure 43 is by Egyptologists called the 'symbol of life.' It is also called the 'handled cross,' or *crux ansata*. It represents the male triad and the female unit, under a decent form. There are few symbols more commonly met with in Egyp-

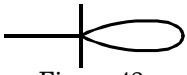


Figure 43.

Figure 44.

Figure 45.

tian art than this. In some remarkable sculptures, where

the sun's rays are represented as terminating in hands, the offerings which these bring are many a *crux ansata*, emblematic of the truth that a fruitful union is a gift from the deity.

Figures 44, 45, are ancient designs, in which the male and female elements are more disguised than is usual. In Fig. 44, the woman is indicated by the dolphin.

Figures 46, 47, are representatives of the ancient male triad, adopted by moderns to symbolise the Trinity.

Figure 46.

Figure 47.

Figures 48, 49, represent the trefoil which was used by

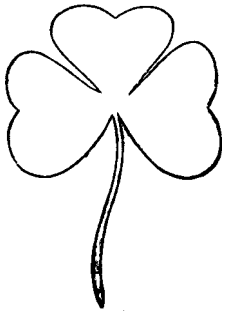


Figure 48.

Figure 49.

the ancient Hindoos as emblematic of the celestial triad, and adopted by modern Christians. It will be seen that from one stem arise three curiously-shaped segments, each of which is supposed to resemble the male scrotum, "purse," "bag," or "basket."

Figure 50 is copied from Lajard, *Culte de Venus*, plate i., fig. 2. He states that it is from a gem cylinder in the British Museum. It represents a male and female figure dancing before the mystic palm-tree, into whose signification we need not enter beyond saying that it is a symbol of Asher. Opposite to a particular part of the figures is to be

seen a diamond or oval, and a *fleur de lys*, or symbolic triad. This gem is peculiarly valuable, as it illustrates in a

Figure 50.

graphic manner the meaning of the symbols in question, and how "the lilies of France" had a Pagan origin.

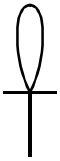


Fig. 51.

Fig. 52.

Figure 53.

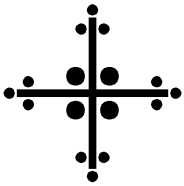


Figure 54.

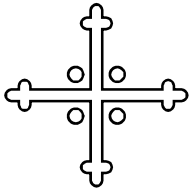


Figure 55.

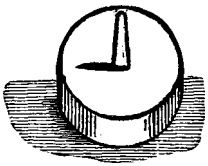


Figure 56.

Fig. 57.

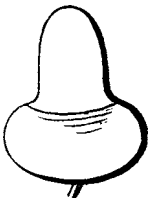


Figure 58.

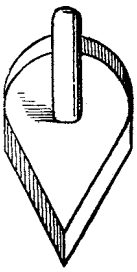


Figure 59.

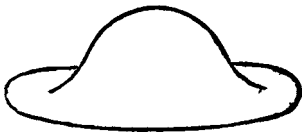


Figure 60.

Figures 51 to 60 are various representaitons of the union of the four, the arba, the androgyne, or the linga-yoni.

Figure 61.

Figure 61. In modern Christian art this symbol is called *vesica piscis*, and is sometimes surrounded with rays. It commonly serves as a sort of framework in which female saints are placed, who are generally the representative of the older Juno, Ceres, Diana, Venus, or other impersonations of the feminine element in creation. We should not feel obliged to demonstrate the truth of this assertion if decency permitted us to reproduce here designs which naughty youths so frequently chalk upon walls to the disgust of the proper part of the community. We must, therefore, have resort to a religious book, and in a subsequent figure demonstrate the meaning of the symbol unequivocally.

Figure 62 represents one of the forms assumed by the

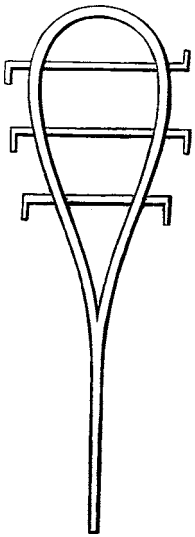


Figure 62.

sistrum of Isis. Sometimes the instrument is oval, and

occasionally it terminates below in a horizonal line, instead of in an acute angle. The inquirer can very readily recognise in the emblem the symbol of the female creator. If there should be any doubt in his mind, he will be satisfied after a reference to Maffei's *Gemme Antiche Figurate* (Rome, 1707), vol. ii., plate 61, wherein Diana of the Ephesians is depicted as having a body of the exact shape of the sistrum figured in Payne Knight's work on the remains of the worship of Priapus, etc. The bars across the sistrum show that it denotes a pure virgin (see *Ancient Faiths*, second edition, Vol. II., pp. 743-746). On its handle is seen the figure of a cat—a sacred animal amongst the Egyptians, for the same reason that Isis was figured sometimes as a cow—viz., for its salacity and its love for its offspring.

Figure 63.

Figure 64.

Figures 63 to 66 are all drawn from Assyrian sources.

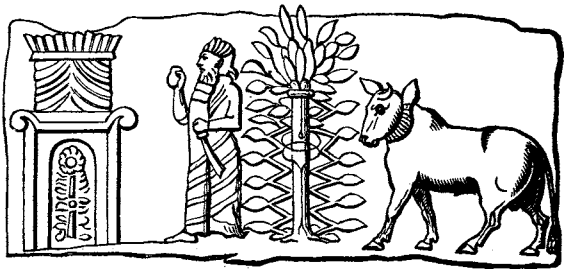


Figure 65.

Figure 66.

The central figure, which is probably the biblical "grove," represents the delta, or female "door." To it the attendant genii offer the pine cone and basket. The signification of these is explained subsequently. I was unable at first to quote any authority to demonstrate that the pine cone was a distinct masculine symbol, but now the reader may be referred to Maffei, *Gemme Antiche Figurate* (Rome, 1708), where, in vol. iii., plate 8, he will see a Venus Tirsigera. The goddess is nude, and carries in her hand the tripliform arrow, emblem of the male triad, whilst in the other she bears a thyrsus, terminating in a pine or fir cone. Now this cone and stem are carried in Bacchic festivities, and can be readily recognised as *virga cum ovo*. Sometimes the thyrsus is replaced by two leaves, which, like the fig, are symbolic of the triple creator. Occasionally the thyrsus was a lance or pike, round which vine leaves and berries were clustered; Bacchus *cum vino* being the companion of Venus *cum cerere*. But a stronger confirmation of my views may be found in a remarkable group (see Fig. 124 *infra*.). This is entitled *Sacrifizio di Priapo*, and represents a female offering to Priapus. The figure of the god stands upon a pillar of three stones,

and it bears a thyrsus from which depend two ribbons. The devotee is accompanied by a boy, who carries a pine- or fir-cone in his hand, and a basket on his head, in which may be recognised a male effigy. In Figure 64 the position of the advanced hand of each of the priests nearest to the grove is very suggestive to the physiologist. It resembles one limb of the Buddhist cross, Fig. 37, *supra*. The finger or thumb when thus pointed are figurative of Asher, in a horizontal position, with Anu or Hea hanging from one end. Figure 65 is explained similarly. It is to be noted that a door is adopted amongst modern Hindoos as an emblem of the sacti (see Figs. 152, 158, *infra*).

My friend Mr. Newton, who has taken great interest in the subject of symbolism, regards these "groves" as not being simply emblems of the yoni, but of the union of that part with the lingam, or mystic palm tree. As his ideas are extremely ingenious, and his theory perfect, I have requested him to introduce them at the end of this work.

Figures 67, 68, 69, are fancy sketches intended to repre-

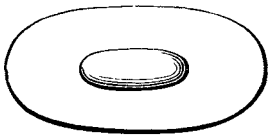


Figure 67.

Figure 68.

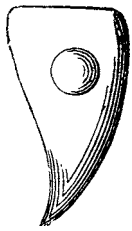


Figure 69.

sent the "sacred shields" spoke of in Jewish and other history. The last is drawn from memory, and represents a

Templar's shield. According to the method in which the shield is viewed, it appears like the *os tincæ* or the navel.

Figures 70, 71, represent the shape of the sistrum of

Figure 70.

Figure 71.

Isis, the fruit of the fig, and the yoni. When a garment of this shape is made and worn, it becomes the "pallium" donned alike by the male and female individuals consecrated to Roman worship.

King, in his *Ancient Gnostics*, remarks: "The circle of the sun is the navel, which marks the natural poition of the womb—the navel being considered in the microcosm as corresponding to the sun in the universe, an idea more fully exemplified in the famous hallucination of the Greek anchorites touching the mystical 'Light of Tabor,' which was revealed to the devotee after a fast of many days, all the time staring fixedly upon the region of the navel, whence at length this light streamed as from a focus." Pages 153, 154.

Figures 72, 73, represent an ancient Christian bishop, and a modern nun wearing the emblem of the female sex. In the former, said (in *Old England Pictorially Illustrated*, by Knight) to be a drawing of St. Augustine, the amount of symbolism is great. The "nimbus" and the tonsure are solar emblems; the pallium, the feminine sign, is studded with phallic crosses; its lower end is the ancient ⊤, the mark of the masculine triad; the right hand has the forefinger extended, like the Assyrian priests whilst doing homage to the grove, and with it is the fruit, *tappuach*, which is said to have tempted Eve. When a male dons the pallium in worship, he becomes the representative of the trinity in the unity, the *arba*, or mystic four. See *Ancient Faiths*, second edition, Vol. II., pp. 915-918.

I take this opportunity to quote here a pregnant page of King's *Gnostics and their Remains,* (Bell & Daldy, London,

1864). "To this period belongs a beautiful sard in my collection representing Serapis, . . . whilst before him *stands* Isis, holding in one hand the sistrum, in the other

Figure 72.

Figure 73.

a wheatsheaf, with the legend . . . 'Immaculate is our lady Isis,' the very terms applied afterwards to that personage who succeeded to her form (the 'Black Virgins,' so highly reverenced in certain French Cathedrals during the middle ages, proved, when examined critically, basalt figures of Isis), her symbols, rites, and ceremonies. . . . Her devotees carried into the new priesthood the former badges of their profession, the obligation to celibacy, the tonsure, and the surplice, omitting, unfortunately, the frequent ablutions prescribed by the ancient creed. The sacred image still moves in procession as when Juvenal laughed at it, vi. 530, 'Escorted by the tonsured surpliced train.' Her proper title, Domina, the exact translation of Sanscrit *Isi,* survives with slight changes in the modern Madonna, Mater Domina.

By a singular permuation the flower borne by each, the lotus—ancient emblem of the sun and fecundity—now re-named the lily, is interpreted as significant of the opposing quality. The tinkling sistrum . . . is replaced by . . . the bell, taken from Buddhist useages. . . . The erect oval symbol of the Female principle of Nature became the Vesica Piscis, and the Crux Ansata, testifying the union of the male and female in the most obvious manner, is transformed into the orb surmounted by the cross, as an ensign of royalty." Pp. 71, 72.

Figure 74 is a well known Christian emblem, called "a foul anchor." The anchor, as a symbol, is of great antiquity. It may be seen on an old Etruscan coin in the British Museum, depicted in *Veterum Populorum et Regum Nummi*, etc. (London, 1814), plate ii., fig. 1. On the reverse there is a chariot wheel. The foul anchor represents the crescent

Figure 74.

moon, the yoni, ark, navis, or boat; in this is placed the mast, round which the serpent, the emblem of life in the "verge," entwines itself. The cross beam completes the mystic four, symbolic alike of the sun and of androgeneity. The whole is a covert symbol of that union which results in fecundity. It is said by Christians to be the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. This it certainly cannot be, for a foul anchor will not hold the ground.

Figure 75 to 79 are Asiatic and Egyptian emblems in use amongst ourselves, and receive their explanation similarly to preceding ones.

Figure 75.

Figure 76.

Figure 77.

Figure 78.

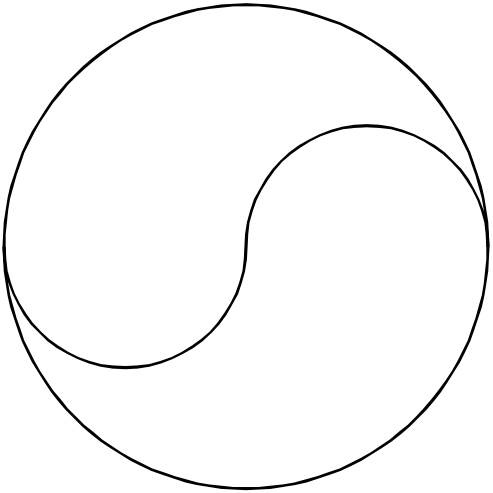


Figure 79.

Figure 80 is copied from Godfrey Higgins' *Anacalypsis*, vol. ii., fig. 27. It is drawn from Montfauçon, vol. ii., pl. cxxxii., fig. 6. In his text, Higgins refers to two similar

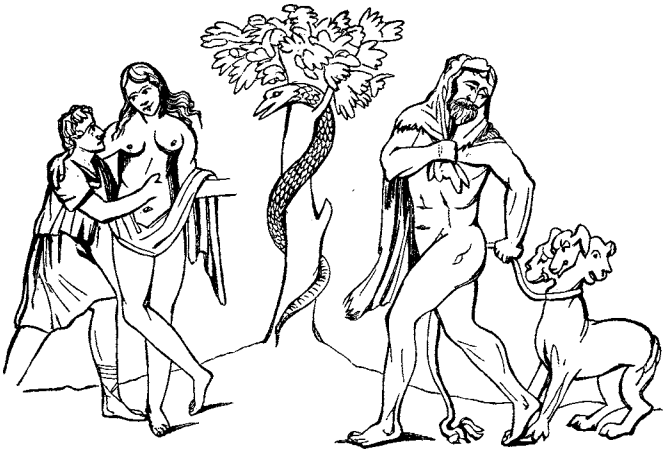


Figure 80.

groups, one of which exists in the Egyptian temple of Ipsam-

bul in Nubia, and is described by Wilson, *On Buddhists and Jeynes*, p. 127, another, found in a cave temple in the south of India, described by Col. Tod, in his *History of Rajpootanah*. The group is not explained by Montfauçon. It is apparently Greek, and combines the story of Hercules with the seductiveness of Circe. The tree and serpent are common emblems, and have even been found in Indian temples in central America, grouped as in the woodcut.

Figure 81 is copied from Lajard, *Culte de Venus*, plate xix., fig. 11. The origin of this, which is a silver statuette in the author's possession, is unknown. The female represents Venus bearing in one hand an apple; her arm rests upon what seems to be a representative of the mystic triad (the two additions to the upright stem not being seen in a front view) round which a dolphin (δελφίς, 'dolphin,' for δελφύς, 'womb') is entwined, from whose mouth comes the stream of life. The apple plays a strange part in Greek and Hebrew mythology. The story of "the apple of discord," awarded by Paris to Venus, seems to indicate that where beauty contends against majesty and wisdom for the love of youth, it is sure to win the day. We learn from Arnobius that a certain Nana conceived a son by an apple (*Op. Cit.*, p. 286), although in another place the prolific fruit is said to have been a pomegranate. Mythologically, that writer sees no difficulty in the story, for those who affirm that rocks and hard stones have brought forth. In the Song of Solomon, apples and the tree that bears them are often referred to; and we have in Ch. ii. 5 the curious expression, "Comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love." We are familiar with the account of Eve being tempted by the same fruit. Critics imagine that as the apple in Palestine is not good eating, the quince

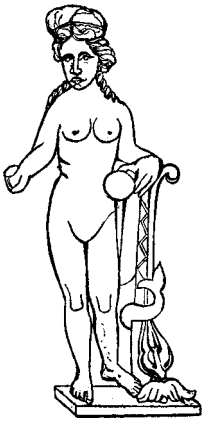


Figure 81.

is meant; if so, we know that a leaf of that tree is to be seen in every amorous picture found in Pompeii, the plant having been supposed to increase virile power. Others imagine that the citron is intended, whose shape makes it an emblem of the tetis. However this may be decided, it is tolerably clear, from all the tales and pictures in which a fruit like the apple figures, that the emblem symbolised a desire for an intimate union between the sexes. The reader will doubtless remember how, in Genesis xxx, Leah is represented as purchasing her husband's company for a night by means of mandrakes, the result being the birth of Issachar; and in the well-known story of the Creation we find that the apple gives birth to desire, as shown in the recognition for the first time of the respective nudity of the couple, which was followed immediately, or as soon as it was possible afterwards, by sexual intercourse and the conception of Cain.

Figure 82 is from Lajard (*op. cit.*), plate xiv*b*, fig. 3.

Figure 82.

The gem is of unknown origin, but is apparently Babylonish; it represents the male and female in conjunction; each appears to be holding the symbol of the triad in much respect, whilst the curious cross suggests a new reading to an ancient symbol.

I have of late heard it asserted, by a man of considerable learning, though of a very narrow mind in everything which

bears upon religious subjects, that there is no proof that the sun was commonly regarded as a male, or the moon as a female; and he based his strange assertion solely on the ground that in German and some other languages the sun was represented by a feminine, and the moon by a masculine noun. The argument is of no value, for σάβυττος, χοϊρος, μυχὸς, and other Greek and Latin names of the yoni, are masculine nouns, and Virga and Mentula, the Roman words for the Linga, are feminine. In Hindostan, the sun is always represented as a God; the moon is occasionally a male, and sometimes a female deity. In anceint Gaulish and Scandinavian figures, the sun was always a male, and the moon a female. Their identification will be seen in Figure 113—as their conjunction is in the one before us—in the position of the individuals, and in the *fleur-de-lys* and oval symbol.

Figure 83 may be found in Fabretti's *Corpus Inscriptionum Italicarum* (Turin, 1867), plate xxv., fig. 303 f. The

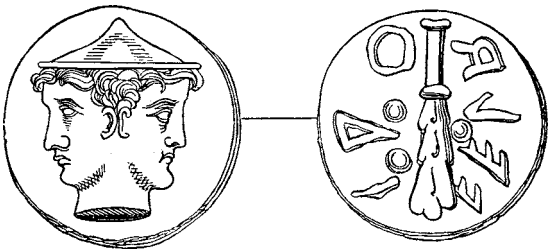


Figure 83.

coins which bear the figures are of brass, and were found at Volaterre. In one the double head is associated with a dolphin and cresent moon on the reverse, and the letters VELATHRI, in Etruscan. A similar inscription exists on the one containing the club. The club, formed as in Figure 83. occurs frequently on Etruscan coins. For example, two clubs are joined with four balls on a Tudertine coin, having on the reverse a hand apparently gauntleted for fighting, and

four balls arranged in a square. On other coins are to be seen a bee, a trident, a spear head, and other tripliform figures, associated with three balls in a triangle; sometimes two, and sometimes one. The double head with two balls is seen on a Telamonian coin, having on the reverse what appears to be a leg with the foot turned upwards. In a coin of Populonia the club is associated with a spear and two balls, whilst on the reverse is a single head. I must notice, too, that on other coins a hammer and pincers, or tongs, appear, as if the idea was to show that a maker, fabricator, or heavy hitter was intended to be symbolised. What that was is further indicated by other coins, on which a head appears thrusting out the tongue. At Cortona two statuettes of silver have been found, representing a double-faced individual. A lion's head for a cap, a collar, and buskins are the sole articles of dress worn. One face appears to be feminine, and the other masculine, but neither is bearded. The pectorals and the general form indicate the male, but the usual marks of sex are absent. On these have been found Etruscan inscriptions (1) V. CVINTI ARNTIAS CULPIANSI ALPAN TURCE; (2) V. CVINTE ARNTIAS SELANSE TEZ ALPAN TURCE. Which may be rendered (1) "V. Quintus of Aruntia, to Culpian pleasing, a gift"; (2) "V. Quintus of Aruntia to Vulcan pleasing gave a gift," evidently showing that they were *ex voto* offerings.

Figure 84. The figure here represented is, under one form or another, extremely common amongst the sculptured stones in Scotland. Four varieties may be seen in plate 48 of Col. Forbes Leslie's *Early Races of Scotland*. In plate 49 it is associated with a serpent, apparently the cobra. The design is spoken of as "the spectacle ornament," and it is very commonly associated with another figure closely resembling the letter Z. It is very natural for the inquirer to associate the twin circles with the sun and earth, or the sun

Figure 84.

and moon. On one Scottish monument the circles represent wheels, and they probably indicate the solar chariot. As yet I have only been able to meet with the Z and "spectacle ornament" once out of Scotland; it is figured on apparently a Gnostic gem (*The Gnostics and their Remains*, by C. W. King, London, 1864, plate ii., fig. 5). In that we see in a serpent cartouche two Z figures, each having the down stroke crossed by a horizontal line, both ends terminating in a circle; besides them is a six-rayed star, each ray terminating in a circle, precisely resembling the star in Plate IV., Fig. 3, *supra*. I can offer no satisfactory explanation of the emblem.

Figures 85, 86, represent a Yorkshire and an Indian

Figure 85.

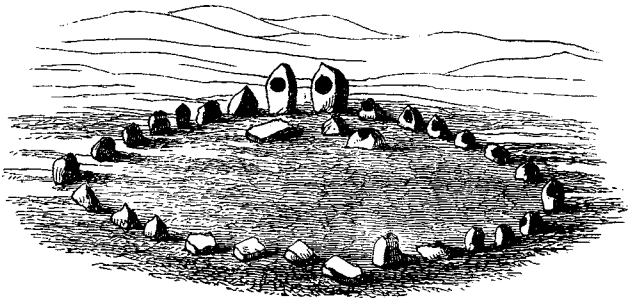


Figure 86.

stone circle. The first is copied from *Descriptions of Cairns, Cromlechs, Kistvaens, and other Celtic, Druidical,*

or Scythian Monuments in the Dekkan, by Col. Meadows Taylor, *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv. The mound exists at Twizell, Yorkshire, and the centre of the circle indicates an ancient tomb, very similar to those found by Taylor in the Dekkan; this contained only one single urn, but many of the Indian ones contained, besides the skeleton of the great man buried therein, skeletons of other individuals who had been slaughtered over his tomb, and buried above the kistvaen containing his bones; in one instance two bodies and three heads were found in the principal grave, and twenty other skeletons above and beside it. A perusal of this very interesting paper will well repay the study bestowed upon it. Figure 86 is copied from Forbes Leslie's book mentioned above, plate 59. It represents a modern stone circle in the Dekkan, of very recent construction. The dots upon the stones represent dabs of red paint, which again represent blood. The circles are similar to some which have been found in Palestine, and give evidence of the presence of the same religious ideas existing in ancient England and Hindostan, as well as in modern India. The name of the god worshipped in these recent shrines is Vetal, or Betal. It is worth mentioning, in passing, that there is a celebrated monolith in Scotland called the Newton Stone, on which are inscribed, evidently with a graving tool, an inscription in the Ogham, and another in some ancient Aryan character (see Moore's *Ancient Pillar Stones of Scotland*).

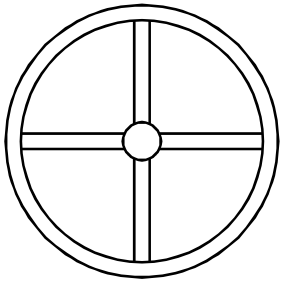


Figure 87.

Figure 87 indicates the solar wheel, emblem of the chariot of Apollo. This sign is a very common one upon ancient coins; sometimes the rays or spokes are four, at others they are more numerous. Occasionally the tire of the wheel is absent, and amongst the Etruscans the nave is omitted. The solar cross is very common in Ireland, and amongst the Romanists generally as a head dress for male saints.

Figure 88 is copied from Hyslop, who gives it on the

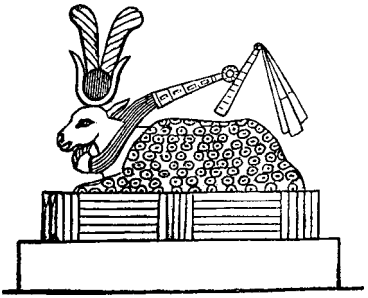


Figure 88.

authority of Col. Hamilton Smith, who copied it from the original collection made by the artists of the French Institute of Cairo. It is said to represent Osiris, but this is doubtful. There is much that is intensely mystical about the figure. The whip, or flagellum, placed over the tail, and the head passing through the *yoni*, the circular spots with their central dot, the horns with solar disc, and two curiously shaped feathers (?), the calf reclining upon a plinth, wherein a division into three is conspicuous, all have a meaning in reference to the mystic four.

I have long had a doubt respecting the symbolic mean-ing of the scourge. Some inquirers have asserted that it is simply an emblem of power or superiority, inasmuch as he who can castigate must be in a higher position than the one who is punished. But of this view I can find no proof. On

the other hand, any one who is familiar with the effect upon the male produced by flagellation, and who notices that the representations of Osiris and the scourge show evidence that the deity is in the same condition as one who has been subjected to the rod, will be disposed to believe that the flagellum is an indication or symbol of the god who gives to man the power to reproduce his like, or who can restore the faculty after it has faded. It is not for a moment to be supposed that a deity who was to be worshipped would be depicted as a task-master, whose hands are more familiar with punishment than blessing.

Figure 89 is taken from Lajard's *Culte de Venus*, plate i.,

Figure 89.

fig 14., and is an enlarged impression of a gem. A similar figure is to be found in Payne Knight's work *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus*. In both instances the female is fringed with male emblems. In the one before us a fish, apparently a dolphin, is borne in hand. In the other the woman is bearded. These are representations of Ashtaroth—the androgyne deity in which the female predominates.

Fig. 90 represents an ancient Italian form of the Indian Ling Yoni. It is copied from a part of the Frontispiece of Faber's *Dissertation on the Cabiri* where it is stated that the plate is a copy of a picture of a nymphœum found when excavating a foundation for the Barbarini Palace at Rome. It deserves notice, because the round mound of masonry surmounted by the short pillars is precisely similar to similar erections found in Hindostan on the East and

America on the West, as well as in various parts of Europe. The oval in the pediment and the solitary pillar have the same meaning as the Caaba and hole—the upright stone and pit revered at Mecca long before Mahomet's time—the tree serves to identify the pilar, and *vice versâ*. Apertures were common in ancient sepulchral monuments, alike in

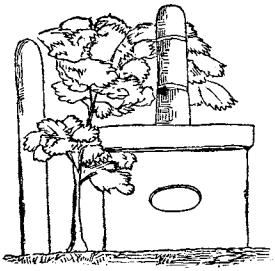


Figure 90.

Hindostan and England; one perforated stone is preserved as a relic in the precincts of an old church in modern Rome. The aperture is blackish with the grease of many hands, which have been put therein whilst their owners took a sacred oath. We have already remarked how ancient Abraham and a modern Arab have sworn by the Linga; it is therefore by no means remarkable that some of a different form of faith should swear by the Yoni.

Figure 91 is stated by Higgins, *Anacalypsis*, p. 217, to be a mark on the breast of an Egyptian mummy in the

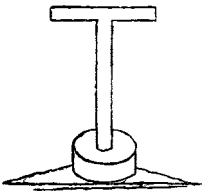


Figure 91.

Museum of University College, London. It is essentially the same symbol as the *crux ansata*, and is emblematic of the male triad and the female unit.

Figure 92 is simply introduced to show that the papal tiara has not about it anything particularly Christian, a

Figure 92.

similar head-dress having been worn by gods or angels in ancient Assyria, where it appeared crowned by an emblem of "the trinity." We may mention, in passing, that as the Romanists adopted the mitre and the tiara from "the cursed brood of Ham," so they adopted the episcopalian crook from the augers of Etruria, and the artistic form with which they clothe their angels from the painters and urn-makers of Magna Grecia and Central Italy.

Figure 93 is the Mithraic lion. It may be seen in Hyde's *Religion of the Ancient Persians*, second edition, plate i. It may also be seen in vol. ii., plates 10 and 11, of Maffei's *Gemme Antiche Figurate* (Rome, 1707). In plate 10 the Mithraic lion has seven stars above it, around which are placed, respectively, words written in Greek, Etruscan

and Phœnician characters, ZEDCH. TELKAN. TELKON. TELKON. QIDEKH. UNEULK. LNKELLP., apparently showing that the emblem was adopted by the Gnostics. It would be unprofitable to dwell uon the meaning of these letters. After puzzling over them, I fancy that "Bad spirits, pity us," "Just one, I call on thee," may be made

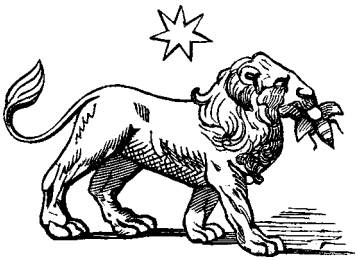


Figure 93.

Figure 94.

out by considering the words to be very bad Greek, and the letters to be much transposed.

Figure 94 is copied by Higgins, *Anacalypsis*, on the authority of Dubois, who states, vol. iii., p. 33, that it was found on a stone in a church in France, where it had been kept religiously for six hundred years. Dubois regards it as wholly astrological, and as having no reference to the story told in Genesis. It is unprofitable to speculate on the draped figures as representatives of Adam and Eve. We have introduced it to show how such tales are intermingled with Sabeanism.

Figure 95 is a copy of a gem figured by Layard (*Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 156), and represents Harpocrates seated on a lotus, adoring the mundane representative of the mother of creation. I have not yet met with any ancient gem or sculpture which seems to identify the yoni so completely with various goddesses. Compare this with Figure 138, *infra*, wherein the emblem is even more strikingly identified with woman, and with the virgin Mary. Those who are familiar with the rude designs too often chalked on hoardings, will see that learned ancients and boorish moderns represent certain ideas in precisely similar fashion, and will understand the mystic meaning of **O** and **Γ**. I have elsewhere called attention to the idea that a sight of the yoni is a source of health, and a charm against evil spirits; however grotesque the idea may be, it has existed in all ages, and in civilised and savage nations alike. A rude image of a woman who shamelessly exhibits herself has been found over the doors of churches in Ireland, and at Servator, in Spain, where she is standing on one side of the doorway, and an equally conspicuous man on the other. The same has been found in Mexico, Peru, and in North America. Nor must we forget how Baubo cured the intense grief of Ceres by exposing herself in a strange fashion to the distressed goddess. Arnobius, *op. cit.*, pp. 249, 250.

Figure 95.

As I have already noticed modern notioned on the influence produced by the exhibition of the yoni on those who are suffering, the legend referred to may be shortly described. The goddess, in the story, was miserable in consequence of her daughter, Proserpine, having been stolen away by Pluto. In her agony, snatching two Etna-lighted torches, she wanders round the earth in search of the lost one, and in due course visits Eleusis. Baubo receives her hospitably; but nothing that the hostess doues induces the guest to depose her grief for a moment. In despair the mortal bethinks her of a scheme, shaves off what is called in Isaiah "the hair of the feet" and then exposes herself to the goddess. Ceres fixes her eyes upon the denuded spot, is pleased with the strange form of consolation, consents to take food and is resotred to comfort.

Figure 96 is copied from plate 22, fig. 3, of Lajard's *Culte de Venus*. He states that it is an impression of

Figure 96.

a cornelian cylinder, in the collection of the late Sir William Ouseley, and is suppoed to represent Oannes, or Bel and two fish gods, the authors of fecundity. It is thought that Dagon of the Philistines resembled the two figures supporting the central one.

Figure 97 is a side view of Plate I. The idol represents a female. Dagon, the fish god, male above, piscine below, was

one of the many symbols of an androgyne creator. In the first of the Avatars of Vishnu, he is represented as emerging from the mouth of a fish, and being a fish himself; the

Figure 97.

legend being that he was to be the saviour of the world in a deluge which was to follow. See Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*, and Coleman's *Mythology of the Hindus*.

Fig. 98.

Figure 98 is a fancy sketch of the *fleur-de-lys*, the lily of France. It symbolises the male triad, whilst the ring around it represents the female. The identification of this emblem of the trinity with the tripliform Mahadeva, and of the ring with his sacti, may be seen in the next figure.

Figure 99, which we have already given on page 46, is one of great value to the inquirer into the signification of certain symbols. It has been reintroduced here to show the identification of the eye, fish, or oval shape, with the yoni, and of the *fleur-de-lys* with the lingam, which is recognised by the respective positions of the emblems in front of parti-

cular parts of the mystic animals, who both, on their part, adore the symbolic palm tree, with its pistil and stamens. The rayed branches of the upper part of the tree,

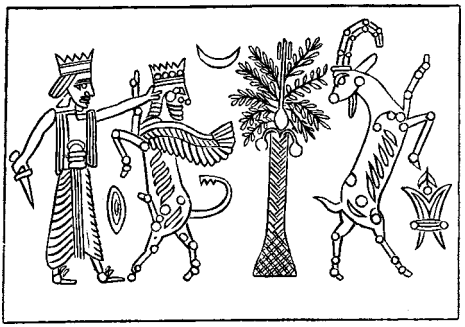


Figure 99.

and the nearness of it to the crescent moon, seem to indicate that the palm was a solar as well as a sexual emblem.

The great similarity of the palm tree to the ancient round towers in Ireland and elsewhere will naturally strike the observer. He will perhaps remember also that on certain occasions dancing, feasting, and debauchery were practised about a round tower in Wicklow, such as were practised round the English may-pole, the modern substitute of the mystic palm tree. We have now humanised our practice, but we have not purified our land of all its veiled symbols.

In some parts, where probably the palm tree does not flourish, the pine takes its place as an emblem. It was sacred to the mother of the gods, whose names, Rhœa, Ceres, Cybele, are paraphrastic of the yoni. We learn from Arnobius, *Op. Cit.*, p. 239, that on fixed days that tree was introduced into the sanctuary of that august personage, being decorated by flowers and violets. It does not require any recondite knowledge to understand the signification of the entrance of the pine into the temple of the divine mother, nor what the tree when buried in the midst of a fleece depicts. Those who have heard of the origin of the Spanish

Royal Order of the Golden Fleece know that the word is an euphemism for the *lanugo* of the Romans. Parsley round a carrot root is a modern symbol, and the violet is as good an emblem of the lingam as the modern pistol.

It has long been known that the ancient custom of erecting a may-pole, surrounding it with wreaths of flowers, and then dancing round it in wild orgy, was a relic of the ancient custom of reverencing the symbol of creation, invigorated by the returning spring time, without whose powers the flocks and hords would fail to increase. It will not fail to attract the notice of my readers, that a pine cone is constantly being offered to the sacred "grove" by the priests of Assyria.

Figures 100, 101, represent the Buddhist cross and one of its arms. The first shows the union of four phalli. The

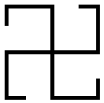


Figure 100.

Figure 101.

single one being a conventional form of a well-known organ. This form of cross does not essentially differ from the Maltese cross. In the latter, Asher stands perpendicularly to Anu and Hea; in the former it is at right angles to them. "The pistol" is a well-known name amongst our soldiery, and four such joined together by the muzzle would form the Buddhist cross. Compare Figure 37, *ante*.

Figures 102, 103, 104, indicate the union of the four creators, the trinity and the unity. Not having at hand any copy of an ancient key, I have used a modern one; but this makes no essential difference in the symbol.

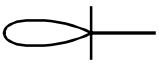


Figure 102.

Figure 103.

Figure 104.

Figures 105, 106, are copied from Lajard, *Sur le Culte de Venus*, plate ii. They represent ornaments held in the hands of a great female figure, scultured in bas relief on a rock at Yazili Kaia, near to Boghaz Keui, in Anatolia, and described by M. C. Texier in 1834. The goddess is crowned with a tower, to indicate virginity; in her right hand she holds a staff, shown in Figure 106; in the other, that given in Figure 105, she stands upon a lioness, and is attended by an antelope. Figure 105 is a complicated emblem of the 'four.'

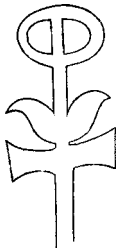


Figure 105.

Figure 106.

Figures 107, 108, 109, are copied from Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*, plate lxxxiii. They represent the lingam and the

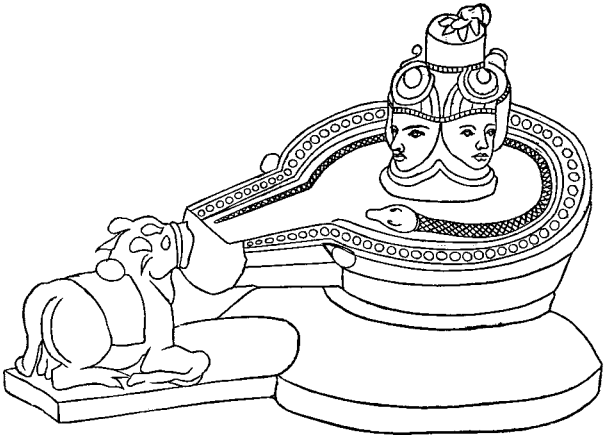


Figure 107.

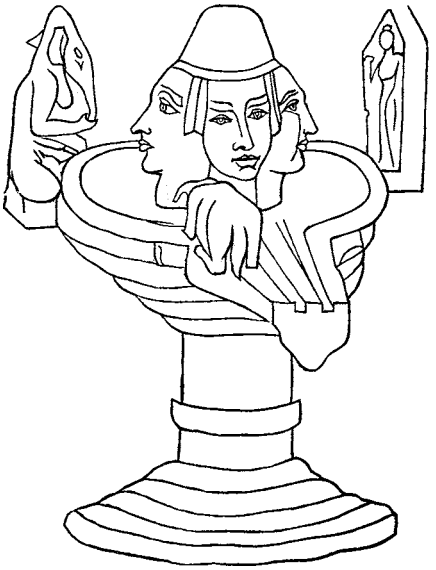


Figure 108.

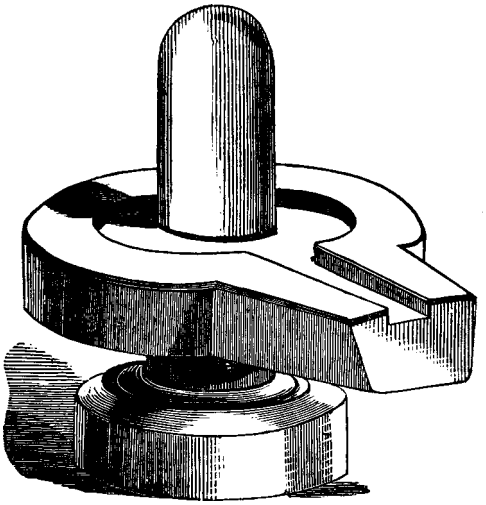


Figure 109.

yoni, which amongst the Indians are regarded as holy emblems, much in the same way as a crucifix is esteemed by certain modern Christians. In worship, *ghee*, or oil, or water, is poured over the pillar, and allowed to run off by the spout. Sometimes the pillar is adorned by a necklace, and is associated with the serpent emblem. In Lucian's account of Alexander, the false prophet, which we have condensed in *Ancient Faiths*, second edition, there is a reference to one of his dupes, who was a distinguished Roman officer, but so very superstitious, or, as he would say of himself, so deeply imbued with religion, that at the sight of a stone he would fall prostrate and adore it for a considerable time, offering prayers and vows thereto. This may by some be thought quite as reasonable as the practice once enforced in Christian Rome, which obliged all persons in the street to kneel in reverence when an ugly black doll, called "the bambino," or a bit of bread, over which some cabalistic words had been muttered, was being carried in procession past them. Arnobius, *op. cit.*, p. 31, says, "I worshipped images produced from the furnace, gods made on anvils and by hammers, the bones of elephants, paintings, wreaths on aged trees; whenever I espied an anointed stone, and one bedaubed with olive oil, as if some person resided in it, I worshipped it, I addressed myself to it, and begged blessings from a senseless stock." Compare Gen. xxviii. 18, wherein we find that Jacob set up a stone and anointed it with oil, and called the place Bethel, and Is. xxvii. 19, xl. 20, xliv. 10-20.

I copy the following remarks from a paper by Mr. Edward Sellon, in *Memoirs of the London Anthropological Society*, for 1863-4. Speaking of Hindostan, he remarks, "As every village has its temple so every temple has its Lingam, and these parochial Lingams are usually from two to three feet in height, and rather broad at the base. Here the village girls, who are anxious for lovers or husbands, repair early in the morning. They make a lustration by sprinkling the god with water brought from the Ganges; they deck the

Linga with garlands of the sweet-smelling bilwa flower; they perform the *mudra*, or gesticulation with the fingers, and, reciting the prescribed *mantras*, or incantations, they rub themselves against the emblem, and entreat the deity to make them fruitful mothers of *pulee-pullum* (*i.e.*, child fruit).

"This is the celebrated Linga puja, during the performance of which the *phanchaty*, or five lamps, must be lighted, and the *gantha*, or bell, be frequently rung to scare away the evil demons. The *mala*, or rosary of a hundred and eight round beads, is also used in this puja."

See also Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*, plate xxii., pp. 68, 69, 70. Again, in the *Dabistan*, a work written in the Persian language, by a travelled Mahometan, about A.D. 1660, and translated by David Shea, for the Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland (3 vols., 8vo., Allen and Co., Leadenhall Street, London), we read, vol. ii., pp. 148-160, "The belief of the Saktian is that Siva, that is, Mahadeva, who with little exception is the highest of deities and the greatest of the spirits, has a spouse whom they call *Maya Sakti*. . . . . With them the power of Mahadeva's wife, who is Bhavani, surpassed that of the husband. The zealous of this sect worship the *Siva Linga*, though other Hindoos also venerate it. *Linga* is called the virile organ, and they say, on behalf of this worship, that as men and all living beings derive their existence from it, adoration is duly bestowed upon it. As the linga of Mahadeva, so do they venerate the *bhaga*, that is, the female organ. A man very familiar with them gave the information that, according to their belief, the high altar, or principal place in a mosque of the Mussulmans, is an emblem of the *bhaga*. Another man among them said that as the just-named place emblems the bhaga, the minar or turret of the mosque represents the linga." The author then goes on to describe the practices of the sect, which may be summed up in the words—the most absolute freedom of love.

Apropos of the Mahometan mineret and Christian church towers and spires, I may mention that Lucian describes the magnificent temple of the Syrian goddess as having two vast phalli before its main entrance, and how at certain seasons men ascended to their summit, and remained there some days, so as to utter from thence the prayers of the faithful.

Figures 110, 111, both from Moor, plate lxxxvi., are forms of the *argha*, or sacred sacrificial cup, bowl, or basin, which represent the yoni, and some other things besides. See Moor, *Hindu Pantheon*, pp. 393. 394.

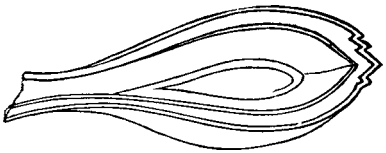


Figure 110.

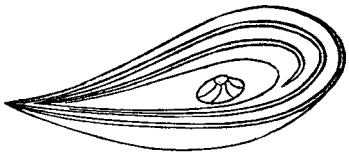


Figure 111.

Figure 112. Copied from Rawlinson's *Ancient Monar-*

Figure 112.

chies, vol. i., p. 176, symbolises Ishtar, the Assyrian representative of Devi, Parvati, Isis, Astarte, Venus, and Mary. The virgin and child are to be found everywhere, even in ancient Mexico.

Figure 113.

Figure 113 is copied from Lajard, *Sur le Culte de Venus*, plate xix., fig. 6, and represents the male and female as the sun and moon, thus identifying the symbolic sex of those luminaries. The legend in the Pehlevi characters has not been interpreted.

Figure 114 is taken from a mediæval woodcut, lent to me by my friend, Mr. John Newton, to whom I am indebted for the sight of, and the privilege to copy, many other figures. In it the virign Mary is seen as the Queen of Heaven, nursing her infant, and identified with the crescent moon, the emblem of virginity. Being before the sun, she almost eclipses its light. Than this, nothing could more completely identify the Christian mother and child with Isis and Horus, Ishtar, Venus, Juno, and a host of other pagan goddesses, who have been called 'Queen of Heaven,' 'Queen of the Universe,' 'Mother of God,' 'Spouse of God,' the 'Celestial Virgin,' the 'Heavenly Peace Maker,' etc.

Figures 115, 116 are common devices in papal churches and pagan symbolism. They are intended to indicate the sun and moon in conjunction, the union of the triad with

the unit. I may notice, in passing, that Mr Newton has showed to me some mediæval woodcuts, in which the young

Figure 114.

unmarried women in a mixed assemblage were indicated by wearing upon their foreheads a crescent moon.

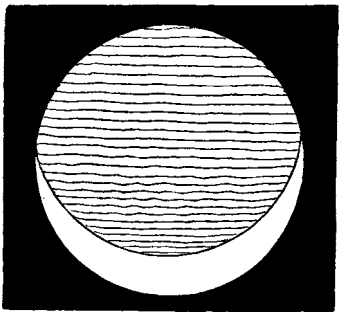


Figure 115.

Figure 116.

Figure 117 is a Buddhist symbol, or rather a copy of

Figure 117.

Maityna Bodhisatwa, from the monastery of Gopech, in the valley of Nepaul. It is taken from *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. xviii., p. 394. The horse-shoe, like the *vesica piscis* of the Roman church, indicates the yoni; the last, taken from some cow, mare, or donkey, being used in eastern parts where we now use their shoes, to keep off the evil eye. It is remarkable that some nations should use the female organ, or an effigy thereof, as a charm against ill luck, whilst others adopt the male symbol. In Ireland, as we have previously remarked, a female shamelessly exhibiting herself, and called Shelah-na-gig, was to be seen in stone over the door of certain churches, within the last century.

From the resemblance in the shape of the horse-shoe to the "grove" of the Assyrian worshippers, and from the man standing within it as the symbolic pine tree stands in the Mesopotamian "Asherah," I think we may fairly conclude

that the Indian, like the Shemitic emblem, typifies the union of the sexes—the androgyne creator.

That some Buddhists have mingled sexuality with their ideas of religion, may be seen in plate ii. of Emil Schlagintweit's *Atlas of Buddhism in Tibet*, wherein VAJARSATTVA, "The God above all," is represented as a male and female conjoined. Rays, as of the sun, pass from the group; and all are enclosed in an ornate oval, or horse-shoe, like that in this figure. Few, however, but the initiated would recognise the nature of the group at first sight.

I may also notice, in passing, that the goddess DOLJANG (A.D. 617-98) has the *stigmata* in her hands and feet, like those assigned to Jesus of Nazareth and Francis of Assisi.

Figure 118.

Figure 118 is a copy of the medal issued to pilgrims at the shrine of the virgin at Loretto. It was lent to me by Mr. Newton, but the engraver has omitted to make the face of the mother and child black, as the most ancient and renowned ones usually are.

Instead of the explanation given in *Ancient Faiths*, Vol. II., p. 262, of the adoption of a black skin for Mary and her son, D'Harcanville suggests that it represents night, the period during which the feminine creator is most propitious or attentive to her duties. It is unnecessary to contest the

point, for almost every symbol has more interpretations given to it than one. I have sought in vain for even a plausible reason for the blackness of sacred virgins and children, in certain papal shrines, which is compatible with decency and Christianity. It is clear that the matter will not bear the light.

Figure 119 is from Lajard, *op. cit.*, plate iii., fig. 8. It represents the sun, moon, and a star, probably Venus.

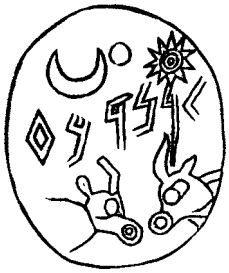


Figure 119.

The legend is in Phœnician, and may be read LNBRB. Levy, in *Siegel und Gemmen*, Breslau, 1869, reads the legend לכברבע, LKBRBO, but does not attempt to explain it.

Figure 120 is also from Lajard, plate i., fig. 8. It represents an act of worship before the symbols of the male and

Figure 120.

female creators, arranged in three pairs. Above are the heavenly symbols of the sun and moon. Below are the male

palm tree, and the barred κτεὶς, identical in meaning with the sistrum, *i.e.*, *virgo intacta*. Next comes the male emblem, the cone, and the female symbol, the lozenge or yoni.

Figure 121 represents also a worshipper before the barred female symbol, surmounted by the seven-rayed star, emblem

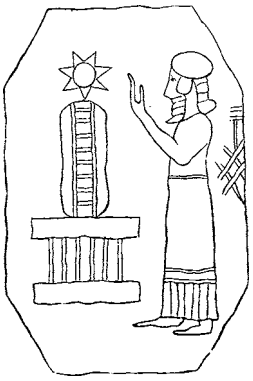


Figure 121.

of the male potency, and of the sun or the heavens. It will be noticed—and the matter is significant—that the hand which is raised in adoration is exactly opposite the conjunction of the two. Compare this with Fig. 95, where the female alone is the object of reverence.

Lajard and others state that homage, such as is here depicted, is actually paid in some parts of Palestine and India to the living symbol; the worshipper on bended knees offering to it, *la bouche inférieure*, with or without a silent prayer, his food before he eats its. A corresponding homage is paid by female devotees to the masculine emblem of any very peculiarly holy fakir, one of whose peculiarities is, that no among of excitement stimulates the organ into what may be called creative energy. It has long been a problem how such a state of apathy is brought about, but modern observation has proved that it is by the habitual use of weights. Such homage is depicted in Picart's *Religious Ceremonies*

of all the People in the World, original French edition, plate 71.

Figure 122 is copied from Bryant's *Ancient Mythology*, third edition, vol. iii., p. 193. That author states that he

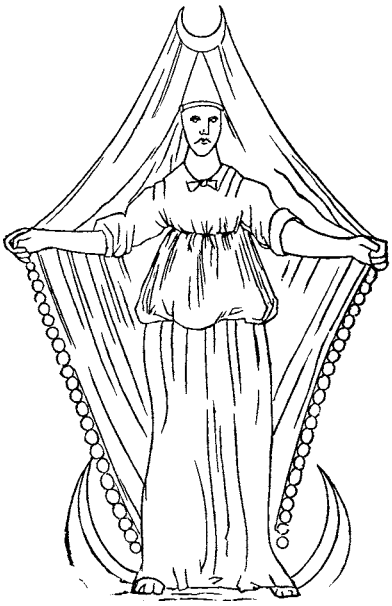


Figure 122.

copied it from Spanheim, but gives no other reference. It is apparently from a Greek medal, and has the word CAMIΩN as an inscription. It is said to represent Juno, Sami, or Selenitis, with the sacred peplum. The figure is remarkable for showing the identity of the moon, the lozenge, and the female. It is doubtful whether the attitude of the goddess is intended to represent the cross.

As in religious Symbolism every detail has a signification, we naturally speculate upon the meaning of the beads which fringe the lower part of the diamond-shaped garment. We have noticed in a previous article that the Linga when

worshipped was sometimes adorned with beads, which were the fruit of a tree sacred to Mahadeva; in the original of fig. 4, plate xi. *supra*, the four arms of the cross have a series of beads depending from them. On very ancient coin of citium, a rosary of beads, with a cross, has been found arranged round a horse-shoe form; and beads are common ornaments on Hindoo Divinities. They may only be used for decoration and without religious significance; if they have the last, I have not been able to discover it.

Figure 123 is a composition taken from Bryant, vol. iv., p. 286. The rock, the water, the crescent moon as an ark,

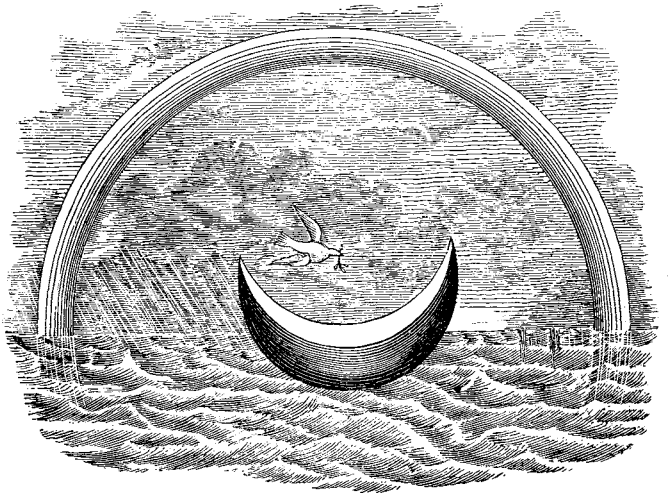


Figure 123.

and the dove hovering over it, all all symbolical; but though the author of it is right in his grouping, it is clear that he is not aware of its full signification. The reader will readily gather the true meaning from our articles upon the ARK and WATER, and from our remarks upon the DOVE in *Ancient Faiths*, second edition.

Figure 124 is copied from Maffei's *Gemme Antiche Figurate*, vol. 3, plate xl. In the original, the figure upon

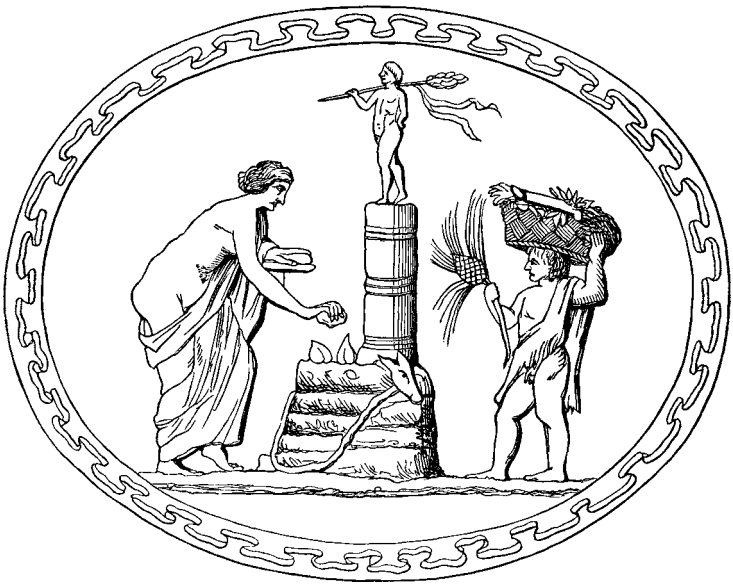


Figure 124.

the pillar is very conspicuously phallic, and the whole composition indictes what was associated with the worship of Priapus. This so-called god was regarded much in the same light as St. Cosmo and St. Damian were at Isernia, and St. Foutin in Christian France. And it is not at all surprising that a church, which has deified or made saints of a spear and a cloak, under the names Longinus and Amphibolus, should also adopt the "god of the gardens," and consecrate him as an object for Christian worship, and give him an appropriate name and emblem. But the patron saint of Lampsacus was not really a deity, only a sort of saint, whose business it was to attend to certain parts. The idea of guardian angels was once common, see Matt. xviii. 10, where

we read, that each child has a guardian in heaven, who looks after his infantile charge. As the pagan Hymen and Lucina attended upon weddings and parturitions, so the Christian Cosmo and Damian attended to spouses, and assisted in making them fruitful. To the last two were offered, by sterile wives, wax effigies of the part left out from the nude figure in our plate. To the heathen saint, we see a female votary offer quince leaves, equivalent to *la feuille de sage*, egg-shaped bread, apparently a cake; also an ass's head; whilst her attendant offers a pine cone. This amongst the Greeks was sacred to Cyble, as it was in Assyria to Astarte or Ishtar, the name given there to the mother of all saints. The basket contains apples and phalli, which may have been made of pastry. See Martial's *Epigrams*, b. xiv. 69. This gem is valuable, inasmuch as it assists me to understand the signification of the pine cone offered to the 'grove,' the equivalent of *le Verger de Cypris*. The pillar and its base are curiously significant, and demonstrate how completely an artist can appear innocent, whilst to the initiated he unveils a mystery.

Figures 125, 126, 127, are various contrivances for indicating decently that which it was generally thought religious to conceal, *la bequille*, *ou les instrumens*.

Figure 125.

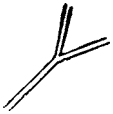


Figure 126.

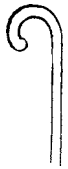


Figure 127.

Figure 128 represents the same subject; the cuts are grouped so as to show how the knobbed stick, *le báton*, becomes converted either into a bent rod, *la verge*, or a priestly crook, *le báton pastoral*. There is no doubt that the episcopal crozier is a presentable effigy of a very private and once highly venerated portion of the human frame,

which was used in long by-gone days by Etruscan augurs, when they mapped out the sky, prior to noticing the flight of

Figure 128.

birds. Perhaps we ought to be grateful to Popery for having consecrated to Christ what was so long used in that which divines call the service of the devil.

Figures 129, 130, 131, are, like the preceding four, copied from various antique gems; Fig. 129 represents

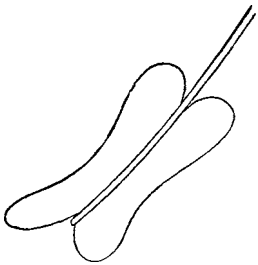


Figure 129.

Figure 130.

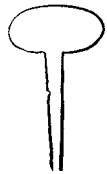


Figure 131.

a steering oar, *le timon*, and is usally held in the hand of good fortune, or as moderns would say "Saint Luck," or *bonnes fortunes;* Fig. 130 is emblematic of Cupid, or Saint Desire; it is synonymous with *le dard*, or *la pique;* Fig. 131 is a form less common in gems; it represents the hammer, *le marteau qui frappe l'enclume et forge les enfans*. The ancients had as many pictorial euphemisms as ourselves, and when these are understood they enable us to comprehend many a legend otherwise dim; *e.g.* when Fortuna, or luck, always depicted as a woman, has for her characteristic *le timon*, and for her motto the proverb, "For-

tune favours the bold," we readily understand the *double entente*. The steering oar indicates power, knowledge, skill, and bravery in him who wields it; without such a guide, few boats would attain a prosperous haven.

Figure 132 is copied from plate xxix. of Pugin's *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament* (Lond., 1868). The plate repre-

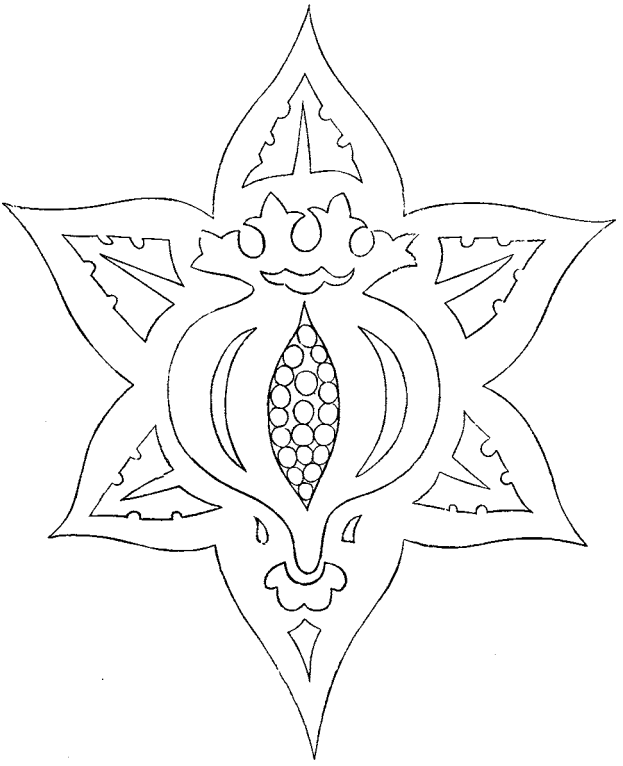


Figure 132.

sents "a pattern for diapering," and is, I presume, thouroughly orthodox. It consists of the double triangle, see Figures 20,30, 31, 32, pp. 32, 38, the emblems of Siva and Parvati, the male and female; of Rimmon the pomegranate,

the emblem of the womb, which is seen to be full of seed through the "*vesica piscis*," *la fente*, or *la porte de la vie.* There are also two new moons, emblems of Venus, or *la nature*, introduced. The crown above the pomegranate represents the triad, and the number four; whilst in the original the group which we copy is surrounded by various forms of the triad, all of which are as characteristic of man as Rimmon is of woman. There are also circles enclosing the triad, analogous to other symbols common in Hindostan.

Figure 133 is copied from Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*, pl. ix., fig. 3. It represents Bhavhani, Maia, Devi, Lakshmi, or

Figure 133.

Kamala, one of the many forms given to female nature. She bears in one hand the lotus, emblem of self-fructification,—in other similar figures an effigy of the phallus is placed,—whilst in the other she holds her infant Krishua, Crishna, or Vishnu. Such groups are common in India

as in Italy, in pagan temples as in Christian churches. The idea of the mother and child is pictured in every ancient country of whose art any remains exist.

Figure 134 is taken from plate xxiv., fig. 1, of Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*. It represents a subject often depicted by

Figure 134.

the Hindoos and the Greeks, viz., androgynism, the union of the male and female creators. The technical word is Arddha-Nari. The male on the right side bears the emblems

of Siva or Mahadeva, the female on the left those of Parvati or Sacti. The bull and lioness are emblematic of the masculine and feminine powers. The mark on the temple indcates the union of the two; and aureole is seen around the head, as in modern pictures of saints. In this drawing the Ganges rises from the male, the idea being that the stream from Mahadeva is as copious and fertilising as that mighty river. The metaphor here depicted is common in the East, and is precisely the same as that quoted in Num. xxiv. 7, and also from some lost Hebrew book in John vii. 33. It will be noticed, that the Hindoos express androgyneity quite as conspicuously, but generally much less indelicately, than the Grecian artists.

Figure 135.

Figure 135 is a common Egyptian emblem, said to signify eternity, but in truth it has another meaning. The serpent and the ring indicate *l'andouille* and *l'anneau*. The tail of the animal, which the mouth appears to swallow, is *la queue dans la bouche*. The symbol resembles the *crux ansata* in its signification, and imports that life upon the earth is rendered perpetual by means of the union of the sexes. A ring, or circle, is one of the symbols of Venus, who carries indifferently this, or the triad emblem of the male. See Maffei's *Gemme*, vol. iii., page 1, plate viii.

Figure 136 is the *vesica piscis*, or fish's bladder; the

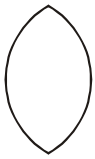


Fig. 136.

emblem of woman and of the virgin, as may be seen in the two following woodcuts.

Figures 137, 138, are copied from an acient Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, printed at Venice, 1524, with a

Figure 137.

license from the Inquisition; the book being lent to me by my friend, Mr. Newton. The first represents the same part as the Assyrian "grove." It may appropriately be called the Holy Yoni. The book in question contains numerous figures, all resembling closely the Mesopotamian emblem of Ishtar. The presence of the woman therein identifies the two as symbolic of Isis, or *la nature;* and a man bowing down in adoration thereof shows the same idea as is depicted in Assyrian sculptures, where males offer to the goddess symbols of themselves. Compare Figs. 63, 64, 65, 66, pp. 48 *seq*.

If I had been able to search through the once celebrated Alexandrian library, it is doubtful whether I could have found any pictorial representation more illustrative of the relationship of certain symbolic forms to each other than is Figure 138. A circle of angelic heads,

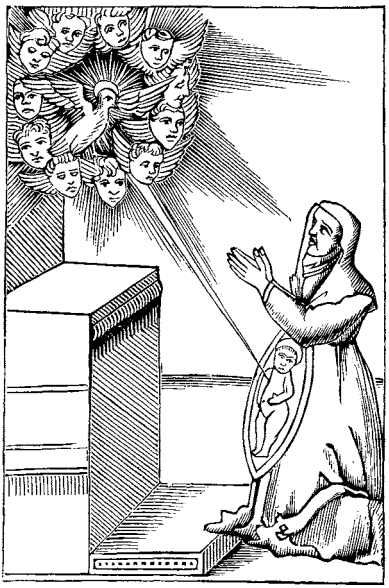


Figure 138.

forming a sort of sun, having luminous rays outside, and a dove, the emblem of Venus, dart a spear (*la pique*) down upon the earth (*la terre*), or the virgin. This being received, fertility follows. In Grecian story, Ouranos and Ge, or heaven and earth, were the parents of creation; and Jupiter came from heaven to impregnate Alemena. The same mythos prevailed throughout all civilised nations. Christianity adopted the idea, merely altering the names of the respective parents, and attributed the regeneration of the world to "holy breath," and Mary. Every individual, indeed, extraordinary conspicuous for wisdom, power, goodness,

etc., is said to have been begotten on a woman by a celestial father. Within the *vesica piscis*, artists usually represent the virgin herself, with or without the child; in the figure before us the child takes her place. It is difficult to believe that the ecclesiastics who sanctioned the publication of such a print could have been as ignorant as modern ritualists. It is equally dificult to believe that the latter, if they knew the real meaning of the symbols commonly used by the Roman church, would adopt them.

The last two figures, symbolic of adoration before divine sexual emblems, afford me the opportunity to give a description of a similar worship existent in Hindostan at the present time. My authority is H. H. Wislon, in *Essays on the Religion of the Hindoos*, Trübner and Co., London. "The worshippers," he remarks, vol. i., p. 240; "of the Sakti, the power or energy of the divine nature in action, are exceedingly numerous amongst all classes of Hindoos—about three-fourths are of this sect, while only a fifth are Vaishnavas and a sixteenth Saivas. This active energy is personified, and the form with which it is invested deponds upon the bias of the individuals. The most favourite form is that of Parvati, Bhavani, or Durga, the wife of Siva, or Mahadeva."

"The worship of the female principle, as distinct from the divinity, appears to have originated in the literal interpretation of the metaphorical language of the Vedas, in which the *will or purpose to create* the universe is represented as originating from the creator, and consistent with him as his bride." "The *Sama Veda*, for example, says, the creator felt not delight being alone; he wished another, and caused his own self to fall in twain, and thus became husband and wife. He approached her, and thus were human beings produced." A sentiment or statement which we may notice in passing is very similar to that propounded in Genesis, ch. i. 27, and v. 1, 2, respecting Elohim—viz., that he created man and woman in his own image, *i.e.*, and male and female, bisexual but united—an androgyne.

"This female principle goes by innumerable cognomens, inasmuch as every goddess, every nymph, and all women are identified with it. She—the principle personified—is the mother of all, as Mahadeva, the male principle, is the father of all."

"The homage rendered to the Sakti may be done before an image of any goddess—Prakriti, Lakshmi, Bhavini, Durga, Maya, Parvati, or Devi—just as in the same was as Romanists may pray to a local Mary, or any other. But in accordance with the weakness of human nature, there are many who consider it right to pay their devotions to the thing itself rather than to an abstraction. In this form of worship six elements are required, flesh, fish, wine, women, gesticulations, and *mantras* which consist of various unmeaning monosyllabic combinations of letters of great imaginary efficacy."

"The ceremonies are mostly gone through in a mixed society, the Sakti being personified by a naked female, to whom meat and wine are offered and then distributed amongst the company. These eat and drink alternately with gesticulations and mantras—and when the religious part of the business is over, the males and females rush together and indulge in a wild orgy. This ceremony is entitled the *Sri Chakra* or *Purnabhisheka*, the Ring or Full Initiation."

In a note apparently by the editor, Dr. Rost, a full account is given in Sanscrit of the *Sakti Sodhana*, as they are prescribed in the *Devi Rahasya*, a section of the *Rudra Yámala*, so as to prove to his readers that the *Sri Chakra* is performed under a religious prescription.

We learn that the woman should be an actress, dancing girl, a courtesan, washerwoman, barber's wife, flower-girl, milk-maid, or a female devotee. The ceremony is to take place at midnight with eight, nine, or eleven couples. At first there are sundry mantras said, then the female is disrobed, but richly ornaments, and is placed on the left of a circle (Chakra) described for the purpose, and after

sundry gesticulations, and formulas, she is purified by being sprinkled over with wine. If a novice, the girl has the radical mantra whispered thrice in her ear. Feasting then follows, lest Venus should languish in the absence of Ceres and Bacchus, and now, when the veins are full of rich blood, the actors are urged to do what desire dictates, but never to be so carried away by their zeal as to neglect the holy mantras appropriate to every act and to every stage thereof.*

It is natural that such a religion should be popular, especially amongst the young of both sexes.

Figures 139 to 153 are copied from Moor's *Hindu Pantheon;* they are sectarial marks in India, and are usally

Fig. 139

Fig. 140.

Fig. 141.

Fig. 142..

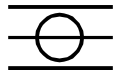


Fig. 143.

Fig. 144.

Fig. 145.

Fig. 146.

Fig. 147.

Fig. 148.

Fig. 149.

Fig. 150.

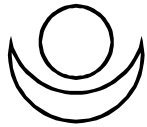


Fig. 151.

Fig. 152.

Fig. 153.

traced on the forehead. Many resemble what are known as "mason's marks," *i.e.* designs found on tooled stones,

* The above quotations from Wilson's work are selections from his and his Editor's account. In the original the observations extend over eighteen pages, and are too long to be given in their entirety; the parts omitted are of no consequence.

in various ancient edifices, like our own, "trade marks." They are introduced here to illustrate the various designs employed to indicate the union of the "trinity" with the "unity," and the numerous forms representative of "*la nature*." *A priori*, it appears absurd to suppose that the eye could ever have been symbolical of anything but sight; but the mythos of Indra, given in *Ancient Faiths*, second edition, Vol. II., p. 649, and p. 7, *supra*, proves that it has another and hidden meaning. These figures are alive emblematic of the "trinity," "the virgin," and the "four."

Figure 154 is from Pugin, plate v., figure 3. It is the outline of a pectoral ornament worn by some Roman eccle-

Figure 154.

siastic in Italy, A.D. 1400; it represents the Egyptian *crux ansata* under another form, the T signifying the triad, the O the unit.

Figures 155, 156, are different forms of the sistrum, one of the emblems of Isis. In the latter, the triple bars have one signification, which will readily suggest itself to those who know the meaning of the triad. In the former, the emblem of the trinity, which we have been obliged to conventionalise, is shown in a distinct manner. The cross bars indicate that Isis is a virgin. The cat at the top of the instrument indicates "desire," Cupid, or Eros. Fig. 155 is copied from plate ix., R. P. Knight's *Worship of Priapus*.

Figure 157 represents the cup and wafer, to be found in the hands of many effigies of papal bishops; they are alike symbols of the sun and moon, and of the elements in the Eucharist. See Pugin, plate iv., figs. 5, 6.

Figure 158 is copied from Lajard, plate xv., fig. 6. It

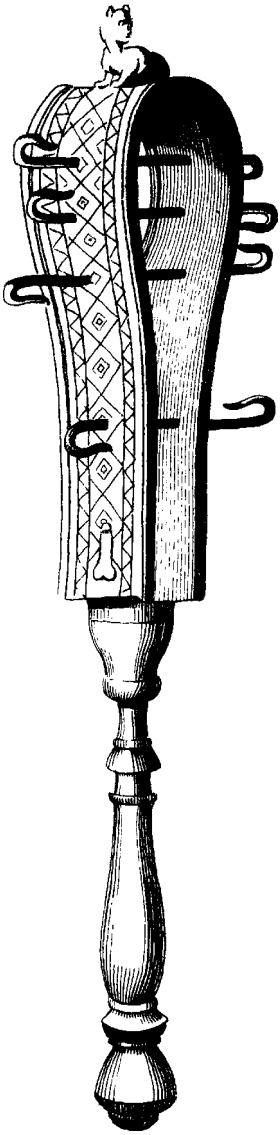


Figure 155.

represents a temple in a conventionalised form; whilst below, Ceres appears seated within a horse-shoe shaped ornament.

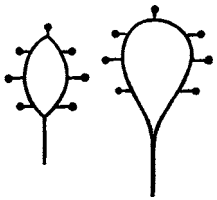


Fig. 156.

Fig. 157.

This, amongst other symbols, tends to show what we have so frequently before observed, that the female in creation is

Figure 158.

characterised by a great variety of designs, of which the succeeding woodcuts give us additional evidence.

Figure 159 represents the various forms symbolic of Juno, Isis, Parvati, Ishtar, Mary, or woman, or the virgin.

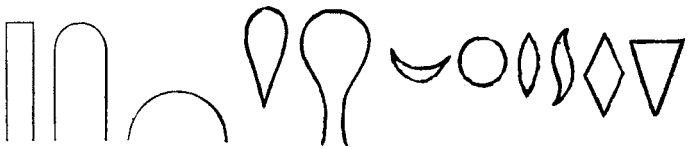


Figure 159.

Figures 160, 161, 162, are copied from Audsley's *Christian Symbolism* (London, 1868). They are ornaments worn by the Virgin Mary, and represent her as the crescent moon,

conjoined with the cross (in Fig. 160), with the collar

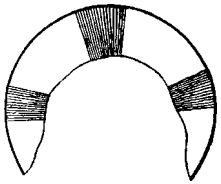


Figure 160.

Figure 161.

Figure 162.

of Isis (in Fig. 161), and with the double triangle (in Fig. 162).

Figure 163 represents a tortoise. When one sees a

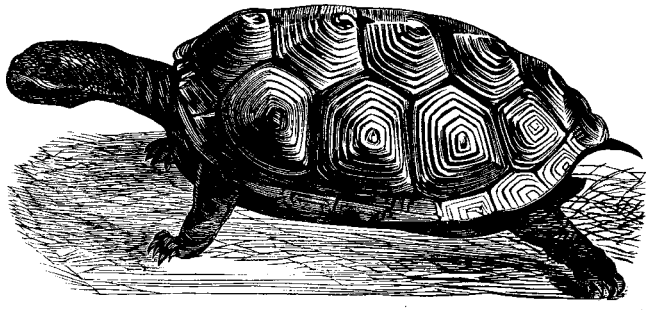


Figure 163.

resemblance between this creature's head and neck and the linga, one can understand why both in India and Greece the animal should be regarded as sacred to the goddess personifying the female creator, and why in Hindoo myths it is said to support the world.

In the British Museum there are three Assyrian obelisks, all of which represent, in the most conspicuous way, the phallus, one of which has been apparently circumcised. The body is occupied with an inscription recording the sale of land, and also a figure of the reigning king, whilst upon the part known as the *glans penis* are a number of symbols, which are intended apparently to designate the generative powers in creation. The male is indicated by a serpent, a spear head, a hare, a tiara, a cock, and a tortoise. The female

appears under precisely the same form as is seen on the head of the Egyptian Isis, Fig. 28. The tortoise is to this day a masculine emblem in Japan. See Figs. 174, 175.

But there is no necessity for the animal itself always to be depicted, innasmuch as I have discovered that both in Assyrian and Greek art the tortoise is pourtrayed under the figure which resembles somewhat the markings upon the segments into which the shell is divided. In symbolism it is a very common thing for a part to stand for the whole; thus an egg is made to do duty for the triad; and a man is sometimes represented by a spade. A woman is in like manner represented by a comb, or a mirror; and a golden fleece typifies in the first place the "grove," which it overshadows, and the female who possesses both.

It has been stated on page 19, *supra*, that Pausanias mentions having seen at some place in Greece one figure of Venus standing on a tortoise, and another upon a ram, but he leaves the ingenious to discover why the association takes place.

It was this intimation which led me to identify the tortoise as a male symbol. Any person who has ever watched this creature in repose, and seen the action of the head and neck when the quadruped is excited, will recognise why the animal is dear to the goddess of amorous delight, and that which it may remind her of. In like manner, those who are familiar with the ram will know that it is remarkable for persistent and excessive vigour. Like the cat, whose salacity caused it to be honoured in Egypt, the ram was in that country also sacred, as the bull was in Assyria and Hindostan.

In fact, everything which in shape, habits, or sound could remind mankind of the creators and of the first part of creation was regarded with reverence. Thus tall stones or natural pinnacles of rock, the palm, pine, and oak trees, the fig tree and the ivy, with their tripliform leaves, the

mandrake, with its strange human form, the thumb and finger, symbolised Bel, Baal, Asher, or Mahadeva. In like manner a hole in the ground, a crevice in a rock, a deep cave, the myrtle from the shape of its leaf, the fish from its scent, the dolphin and the mullet from their names, the dove from its note, and any umbrageous retreat surrounded with thick bushes, were symbolic of woman.

So also the sword and sheath, the arrow and target, the spear and shield, the plough and furrow, the spade and trench, the pillar by a well, the thumb thrust between the two fore-fingers or grasped by the hand, and a host of other things were typical of the union which brings about the formation of a new being.

I cannot help regarding the sexual element as the key which opens almost every lock of symbolism, and however much we may dislike the idea that modern religionists have adopted emblems of an obscene worship, we cannot deny the fact that it is so, and we may hope that with a knowledge of their impurity we shall cease to have a faith based upon a trinity and a virgin—a lingam and a yoni. Some may cling still to such a doctrine, but to me it is simply horrible—blasphemous and heathenish.

Figures 164, 165, represent a pagan and Christian cross and trinity. The first is copied from R. P. Knight (plate x.,

Fig. 164.

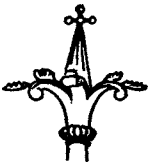


Fig. 165.

fig. 1), and represents a figure found on an ancient coin of Apollonia. The second may be seen in any of our churches to-day.

Figure 166 is from an old papal book lent to me by Mr. Newton, *Missale Romanum*, illustrated by a monk (Venice,

1509). It represents a confessor of the Roman church, who wears the *crux ansata*, the Egyptian symbol of life, the

Figure 166.

emblem of the four creators, in the place of the usual *pallium*. It is remarkable that a Christian church should have adopted so many pagan symbols as Rome has done.

Figure 167 is copied from a small bronze figure in

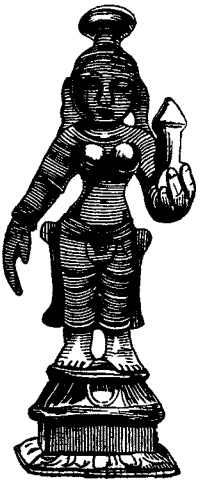


Figure 167.

the Mayer collection in the Free Museum, Liverpool. It represents the feminine creator holding a well marked lingam in her hand, and is thus emblematic of the four, or the trinity and the virgin.

Figure 168 represents two Egyptian deities in worship before an emblem of the male, which closely resembles an Irish round tower.

Figure 168.

Figure 169 represents the modern *pallium* worn by Roman priests. It represents the ancient sistrum of Isis, and the yoni of the Hindoos. It is a symbol of the celstial virgin, and the unit in the creative four. When donned by a Christian priest, he resembled the pagan male worshippers, who wore a female dress when they ministered before the altar or shrine of a goddess. Possibly the Hebrew ephod was of this form and nature.

Fig. 169.

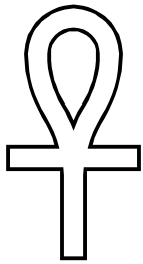


Fig. 170.

Figure 170 is a copy of an ancient *pallium*, worn by papal ecclesiastics three or four centuries ago. It is the old Egyptian symbol described above. Its common name is *crux ansata*, or the cross with a handle.

Figure 171 is the *albe* worn by Roman and other ecclesiastics when officating at mass, etc. It is simply

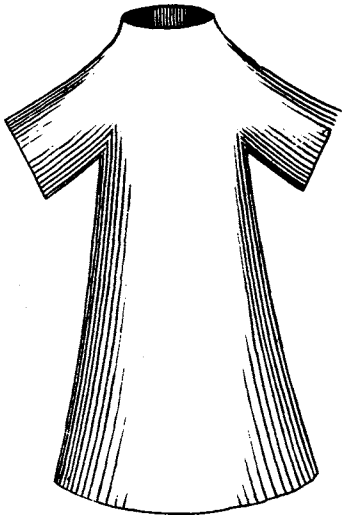


Figure 171.

a copy of the chemise ordinarily worn by women as an under garment.

Figure 172 represents the *chasuble* worn by papal hierarches. It is copied from Pugin's *Glossary*, etc. Its form is that of the *vesica piscis*, one of the most common emblems of the yoni. It is adorned by the triad. When worn by the priest, he forms the male element, and with the chasuble completes the sacred four. When worshipping the ancient goddesses, whom Mary has displaced, the officating ministers clothed themselves in feminine attire. Hence the use of the chemise, etc. Even the tonsured head, adopted from the priests of the Egyptian Isis, represents "*l'anneau;*" so that on head, shoulders, breast and body, we may see on Christian priests the relics of the worship of Venus and the adoration of woman! How horrible all this would sound if, instead of using veiled language, we had employed vulgar words. The

idea of a man adorning himself, when ministering before God and the people, with the effigies of those parts which nature

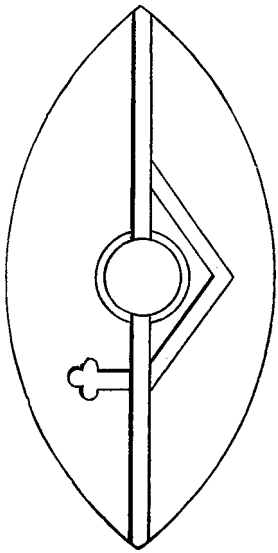
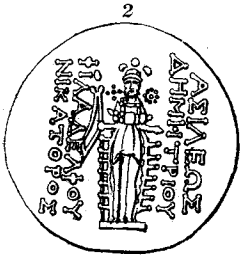


Figure 172.

as well as civilisation teaches us to conceal, would be simply disgusting, but when all is said to be mysterious and connected with hidden signification, almost everybody tolerates and many eulogise or admire it!

PLATE XVII.

2



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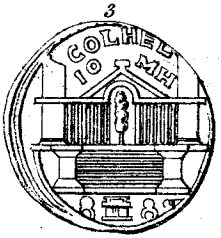

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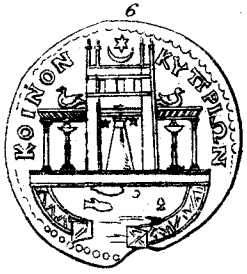

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APPENDIX.

THE ASSYRIAN "GROVE" AND OTHER EMBLEMS,

BY

JOHN NEWTON, M. R. C. S.

The study of sacred symbols is as yet in its infancy. It has hitherto been almost ignored by sacerdotal historians; and thus a rich mine of knowledge on the most interesting of all subjects—the history of the Religious Idea in man—remains comparatively unexplored. The topic has a two-fold interest, for it equally applies to the present and the past. As nothing on earth is more conservative than religion, we have still a world of symbolism existing amongst us which is far older than our sects and books, our creeds and articles, a relic of a forgotten, pre-historic past. Untold ages before writing was invented., it is believed that men attempted to express their ideas in visible forms. Yet how can a savage, who is unable to count his fingers up to five, and has no idea of abstract number, apart from things, whose habits and thoughts are of the earth, earthy, form a conception of the high and holy One who inhabiteth eternity? Even under the highest forms of ancient civilisation, abundant proofs exist that the imagination of men, brooding over the idea of the Unseen and the Infinite, were bounded by the things which were presented in their daily experience, and which most moved their passions, hopes and fears. Through these, then, they attempted to embody such religious ideas as they felt. They could not teach others without visible symbols to assist their conceptions; and emblems were rather crutches for the halting than wings to help the healthy to soar. Mankind in all ages has clung to the visible and tangible. The people care little for the abstract

and unseen. The Israelites preferred a calf of gold to the invisible Jehovah; and senusous forms of worship still fascinate the multitude.

Whilst studying a collection of symbolism, gathered: from many climes and ages, such as this volume presents, I feel sure that every intelligent student will have asked himself more than once—Is there not some key which unlocks these enigmas, some grand idea which runs through them all, connecting them like a string of beads? I believe that there is, and that it is not far to seek. What do men desire and long for most? *Life*. "Skin for skin; all that a man hath will he give for his life," is a saying as true now as in the days of Job. "Give me back my youth, and I will give you all I possess," was said by the aged Voltaire to his physician. And our poet laureate has sung,

> 'T is Life, whereof our nerves scant,
> O life, not death, for which we pant;
> *More life, and fuller, that I want*.

But we must add, as necessarily contained in the idea of Life in its highest sense, *those things which make Life desirable*.

This fulness of life has been the *summum bonum*, the highest good, whioh mankind has sighed for in every age and clime. For this the alchemists toiled, not to advance chemistry, but to discover the Elixir of Life and the Philosopher's Stone. But, what nature refused to science, the gods, it was believed, would surely give to the pious! and the glorious prize referred to has been promised by every religion. "I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Life is the reward which has been promised under every system, including that of the founder of Christianity. A Tree of Life stood in the midst of that Paradise which is described in the book of Genesis; and when the first human couple disobeyed their Maker's command, they were punished, by being cut off from

the perennial found of vitality, lest they should eat its fruit and thus live for ever; and in a second Paradise, which is: promised to the blessed by the author of the book of Revelation, a tree of life shall stand once more "for the healing of the nations." To the good man is promised, in the Hebrew Scriptures, long life, prosperity, and a numerous offspring. "Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."* Ps. ciii. 5.

In the wondrous theology of Ancient Egypt, which at length is open to us, the "Ritual of the Dead" celebrates the mystical reconstruction of the body of the deceased, whose parts are to be reunited, as those of Osiris were by Isis; the trials are recorded through which the deceased passes, and by which all remaining stains of corruption are wiped away; and the record ends when the defunct is born again glorious, like that Sun which typified the Egyptian resurrection.†

In the ancient mythology of India, it is recounted that of old the gods in council united together to procure, by one supreme effort, the Amrita cup of immortality, which, aftar the success of their scheme, they partake of with their worshippers. Even for the Buddhist, his cold, atheistical creed promises a Nirvana, an escape from the horrors of metempsychosis, a haven of eternal calm, where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away;" "there the weary be at rest." Rev. xxi. 4, Job iii. 17.

This idea of tranquility is in striking contrast to the heaven promised by the religion of the north of Europe, which was the .one most congenial to a people whose delight was in conquest and battle. Those who had led a life of heroism, or perished bravely in fight, ascended to Valhalla; and the eternal manhood which awaited them there was to

* St. Paul points out (Eph. vi. 2) that to only one of the ten commandments is a promise added. And what is the promise? "That thy days may be long." (Exod. xx. 19.) See also Psalm cxxxiii. 3, "the blessing, even life for evermore."

† Apuleius, who had been initiated into the mysteries of Isis, informs us that long life was the reward promised to her votaries. (*Metam*., cap. xi.)

be passed in scenes that were rapture to the imagination of a Dane or a Saxon. Every day in that abode of bliss was to be spent in furious conflict, in the struggle of armies and the cleaving of shields; but at evening the conflict was to cease; every wound to be suddenly healed. Then the contending warriors were to sit down to a banquet, where, attended by lovely maidens, they could feast on the exhaustless flesh of the boar Sæhrimnir, and drink huge draughts of mead from the skulls of those enemies who had not attained to the glories of Valhalla.

The paradise promised to the faithful by Mahomet is full of sensuous delights. The Arabian prophet dwells. with ratpture on its gardens and palaces, its rivers and bowers. Seventy-two houris, or black-eyed girls, rejoicing in beauty, and ever-blooming youth, will be created for the use of the meanest believer; a moment of pleasure will be prolonged to a thousaud years, and his. powers will be increased a hundred-fold to render him worthy of his felicity.

Thus we see that in all these great historical faiths the prize held out to the true believer has this in common, viz., *Life, overflowing, ever-renewed, with the addition of those things which make life desirable for men;* whether they are sensuous pleasures, or those which, under the loftier ideal of Christianity, are summed up in *Life, both temporal and eternal, in the light of God*.

Such being the case, we might anticipate that the symbols of every religion would reproduce, in some shape or other, the ideal which is common to all. The earliest and rudest faiths were content with gross and simple emblems of life. In the later and more refined forms of worship, the rudest types were highly conventionalised, and replaced by a more intricate and less obvious symbolism.

We proceed now to investigate the more primitive emblems. The origin of life is, even to us, with all our lights, as great a mystery as it was to the ancients. To the primitive races of mankind, the formation of a new being

appeared to be a constant miracle, and men very naturally used as tokens of life, and even worshipped, those objects or organs by which the miracle appeared to be wrought. Thus, the glorious sun, that "god of this world," the source of life and light to our earth, was early adored, and an effigy thereof used as a symbol. Mankind watched with rapture its rays gain strength daily in the Spring, until the golden glories of Midsummer had arrived, when the earth was bathed during the longest days in his beams, which ripened the fruits that his returning course had started into life. When the sun once more began its course downwards to the Winter solstice, his votaries sorrowed, for he seemed to sicken and grow paler at the advent of December, when his rays scarcely reached the earth, and all nature, benumbed and cold, sunk into a death-like sleep. Hence feasts and fasts were instituted to mark the commencement of the various phases of the solar year, which have continued from the earliest known period, under various names, to our own times.

The daily disappearance and the subsequent rise of the sun, appeared to many of the ancients as a true resurrection; thus, while the east came to be regarded as the source of light and warmth, happiness and glory, the west was associated with darkness and chill, decay and death. This led to the common custom of burying the dead so as to face the east when they rose again, and of building temples and shrines with an opening towards the east. To effect this, Vitruvius, two thousand years ago, gave precise rules, which are still followed by Christian architects.

Sun-worship was spread all over the ancient world. It mingled with other faiths, and assumed many forms.* Of the elements, fire was naturally chosen as its earthly symbol. A sacred fire, at first miraculously kindled, and subsequently

* We may point out that according the all the Gospels, Christ expired towards sunset, and the sun became eclipsed as he was dying. He rose again exactly at day-break.

kept up by the sedulous care of priests or priestesses, formed an important part of the religions of Judea, Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome, and the superstition lingers amongst us still. So late as the advent of the Reformation, a sacred fire was kept over burning on a shrine at Kildare, in Ireland, and attended by virgins of high rank, called "*inghean au dagha*," or daughters of fire. Every year is the ceremony repeated at Jerusalem of the miraculous kindling of the Holy Fire at the reputed sepulchre, and men and women crowd to light tapers at the sacred flame, which they pass through with a naked body. Indeed, solar myths form no unimportant part of ancient mythology. Thus the death of nature in the winter time, through the withdrawal of the sun, was supposed to be caused by the mourning of the earth-goddess oyer the sickness and disappearance into the realms of darkness of her hasband and mate, the sun.

Mr. Fox Talbot has lately given the translation of an Egyptian poem, more than three thousand years old, and having for its subject the descent of Ishtar into Hades. To this region of darkness and death the goddess goes in search of her beloved Osiris, or Tammuz. This Ishtar is identical with the Assyrian female in the celestial quartette, the later Phœnician Astarte, "The Queen of Heaven with crescent horns," the moon-godess) also with the Greek Aphrodite and Roman Venus; and the Egyptian legend reappears in the west as the mourning of Venus for the loss of Adonis.

Again, the fable of Ceres mourning the death of her daughter Proserpine is another Sun-myth. The Roman Ceres was the Greek Δημήτηρ or γῆ-μήτηρ, Mother Earth, who through the winter time wanders inconsolable. Persephone, her daughter, is the vegetable world, whose seeds or roots lie concealed underground in the darkness of winter. These, when Spring comes with its brightness, bud forth and dwell in the realm of light during a part or the year, and provide ample nourishment for men and

animals with their fruits. The sun, being the active fructifying cause in nature, was generally regarded as male. Thus, in the Jewish scriptures, he is compared to "a bridegroom coming out of his chamber" (Ps. xix. 5), *i.e.* as a man full of generative, procreative vigour. The moon and the earth, being receptive only, were naturally regarded as female.

At the vernal equinox, the ancients celebrated the bridal of the sun and the earth. Yet, inasmuch as the orbs of heaven and the face of nature remain the same from year to year, and perpetually renew light and life, themselves remaining fresh, in vigour and unharmed by age, the ancients conceived the bride and mate of the sun-god as continuing ever virgin. Again, as the ancient month was always reckoned by the interval between one new mon and the next,—an interval which also marks a certain recurring event in women, that ceases at once on the occurence of pregnancy,—the lunar crescent became a symbol of virginity, and as such adorns the brow of the Greek Artemis and Roman Diana. This was used as a talisman at a very remote period, and was fixed over the doors of the early lake-dwellers in Switzerland, like the horse-shoe is to modern side-posts. With the sun and moon were often associated the five visible planets, forming a sacred seven,—a figure which is continually cropping up in religious emblems.

So much for the great cosmic symbols of Life. But the primitive races of mankind found others nearer home, and still more suggestive—the generative parts in the two sexes, by the union of which all animated life, and mankind, the most interesting of all to human beings, appeared to be created. This reverence for, or worship of, the organs of generation, has been traced to a very early period in the history of the human race. In a bone-cave recently excavated near Venice, and beneath its ten feet of stalagmite, were found bones of animals, flint implements, a bone needle, and a phallus in baked clay. And if we turn to those savage tribes who still reproduce for us the pre-

historic past, this form of religious symbolism meets us everywhere. In Dahomey, beyond the Ashantees, it is, according to Captain Burton, most uncomfortably prominent. In every street of their settlements are priapic figurcs. The "Tree of Life" is annointed with palm oil, which drips into a pot or shard placed below it, and the would-be mother of children prays before the image that the great god Legba would make her fertile.

Burton tells us that he peeped into an Egbe temple or lodge, and found it a building with three courts, of which the innermost was a sort of holy of holies. Its doors had carvings on them of a leopard, a fish, a serpent, and a land tortoise. The first two of these are female symbols, the two latter emblems of the male. There were also two rude figures representing their god Obatala, the deity of life, who is worshipped under two forms, a male and a female. Opposite to these was the male symbol or phallus, conjoined *in coitu* with the female emblem. Du Chaillu met with some tribes in Africa who adore the female only. His guide, he informs us, carried a hideous little image of wood with him, and at every meal he would take the little fetish out of his pocket, and pour a libation over its *feet* before he would drink himself.

We know that a similar superstition prevailed in Ireland long after the advent of Christianity. There a female, pointing to her symbol, was placed over the portal of many a church as a protector from evil spirits; and the elaborate though rude manner in 'whichthese figures were sculptured shows that they were considered as objects of great importance. It was the universal practice among the Arabs of Northern Africa to stick up over the door of their house or tent the genital parts of a cow, mare, or female camel, as a talisman to avert the influence of the evil eye. The figure of this organ being less definite than that of the male, it has assumed in symbolism very various forms. The commonest substitution for the part itself has been a horse-shoe, which

is to this day fastened over many of the doors of stables and shippons in the country, and was formerly supposed to protect the cattle from witchcraft. From a lively story by Beroalde de Verville, we learn that in France a sight of the female organ was believed, as late as the sixteenth century, to be a powerful charm in curing any disease in, and for prolonging the life of, the fortunate beholder.

As civilisation advanced, the gross symbols of creative power were cast aside, and priestly ingenuity was taxed to the utmost in inventing a crowd of less obvious emblems, which should represent the ancient ideas in a decorous manner. The old belief was retained, but in a mysterious or sublimated form. As symbols of the male or active element in creation, the sun, light, fire, a torch, the phallus or linga, an erect serpent, a tall straight tree, especially the palm and the fir or pine, were adopted. Equally useful for symbolism were a tall upright stone (menhir), a cone, a pyramid, a thumb or finger pointed straight, a mast, a rod, a trident, a narrow bottle or amphora, a bow, an arrow, a lance, a horse, a bull, a lion, and many other animals conspicuous for masculine power. As symbols of the female, the passive though fruitful element in creation, the crescent moon, the earth, darkness, water, and its emblem a triangle with the apex downwards, "the yoni," a shallow vessel or cup for pouring fluid into (*cratera*), a ring or oval, a lozenge, any narrow cleft, either natural or artificial, an arch or doorway, were employed. In the same category of symbols came a ship or boat, the female date-palm bearing fruit, a cow with her calf by her side, the fish, fruits having many seeds, such as the pomegranate, a shell (*concha*), a cavern, a garden, a fountain, a bower, a rose, a. fig, and other things, of suggestive form, etc.

These two great classes of conventional symbols were often represented in conjunction with each other, and thus symbolised in the highest degree the great source of life, ever originating, ever renewed. The Egyptian temple

at Denderah has lately been explored by M. Mariette. In a niche of the Holy of Holies he discovered the sacred secret. This was simply a GOLDEN SISTRUM (see *ante*, pp. 44 and 70), an emblem formed by uniting the female oval ⵔ with the male sacred Tau ⵜ; and thus identical in meaning with the coarse emblem seen by Captain Burton in the African idol temple. A similar emblem is the linga standing in the centre of a yoni, the adoration of which is to this day characteristic of the leading dogma of Hindu religion. There is scarcely a temple in India which has not its lingam; and in numerous instances this symbol is the only form under which the great god Siva is worshipped. (See *ante*, pp. 72, 73.)

The linga is generally a tall, polished, cylindrical, black stone, apparently inserted into another stone formed like an elongated saucer, though in reality the whole is sculptured out of one block of basalt. The outline of the frame, which reminds us of a Jew's harp (the conventional form of the female member), is termed *argha* or *yoni*. The former, or round perpendicular stone, the type of the virile organ, is the *linga*. The entire symbol, to which the name *lingyoni* is given, is also occasionally called *lingam*. This representative of the union of the sexes typifies the divine *sacti*, or productive energy, in union with the procreative, generative power seen throughout nature. The earth was the primitive *pudendum*, or *yoni*, which is fecundated by the solar heat, the sun, the primitive *linga*, to whose vivifying rays man and animals, plants and the fruits of the earth, owe their being and continued existence. These "lingas" vary in size from the tiny amulets worn about the neck, to the great monoliths of the temples. Thus the lingam is an emblem of the Creator, the fountain of all life, who is represented in Hindu mythology as uniting in Himself the two sexes.

Another symbol, the *caduceus*, older than Greek and Roman art, in which it is associated with Esculapius and Hermes, the gods of health and fertility, has precisely the

same signification as the sistrum and the lingam. This is made clear enough in the following extract from a letter by Dr. C. E. Balfour, published in Fergusson's *Tree and Serpent Worship*, 1873. "I have only once seen living snakes in the form of the Esculapian rod. It was at Ahmednuggar, in 1841, on a clear moonlight night. They dropped into the garden from the thatched roof of my house *and stood erect*. They were all cobras, and *no one could have seen them without at once recognising that they were in congress*. Natives of India consider that it is most fortunate to witness serpents so engaged, and believe that if a person can throw a cloth at the pair so as to touch them with it, the material becomes a representative form of Lakshmi,* of the highest virtue, and is preserved as such." The serpent, which casts its skin and seems to renew its youth every year, has been used from remotest times as a living symbol of generative energy, and of immortality; indeed, in the most ancient Eastern languages, the name for the serpent also signifies life.† It has been usually worshipped as the *Agathodæmon*, the god of good fortune, life, and health; though in the Hebrew scriptures, and elsewhere, we meet with a good and a bad serpent—Oriantal dualism. The *Kakodæmon*, however, is usually represented as winged—the Dragon, as in. the following example.

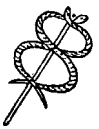
Fig. 173

In the remarkable Babylonian seal, Plate iv., Fig. 3, the deity is represented as uniting in himself the male and the female. On each side is a serpent, as the emblem of the life flowing from the Creator; that on the male side, having round his head the solar glory, is compared to the sun-god, as the active principle in creation; that on the female side, over whose head is the lunar crescent, to the moon- and earth-goddess, the passive principle in creation. Both are

* The consort, or life-giving energy of Vishnu.

† As in French, the name for the male organ and for life is the same in sound, though not in spelling or gender.

attacked by a winged dragon, the kakodæmon, or the evil principle. This is according to the ancient Chaldean doctrine of two creations of living beings, the one good and the other malign. The Chinese still think that an eclipse is caused by the efforts of a furious dragon to destroy the sun and moon; and Apollo, the sun-god, destroying the serpent Python, has reappeared on our coin as St. George killing the dragon. Even Apollyon appears in old paintings with huge wings, like those ofa bat.

Having thus explained what appears to be the key to a wide range of religious symbolism, and shown its application in many cases, we shall further apply it to unlock the famous object of Assyrian worship. Soon after the discoveries of Botta and Layard were published, it was conjectured that this strange object, so continually represented as being adored, might be the *asherah* of the Hebrew scriptures, translated "*grove*" in the English version. How far the view was correct we shall now proced to examine.

The religion of the East at a very remote period appears to have been the worship of one God, under several names. The most primitive was *El*, *Il*, or *Al*, = the strong, the mighty one; or its plural *Elohim*, as expressing His many powers and manifestations. Another name was *Baal* or *Bel*, = the lord, which also had a plural form, *Baalim*. The first word is continually used in the Hebrew scriptures, and applied both to the true God and the gods of the nations. Baal is only once thus applied, Hosea ii. 16; yet Balaam, inspired by God, prophesies from the high places of Baal. This name, though so appropriate to the Almighty, became abhorrent to the Jews when it was so frequently associated with idolatry, and a new cognomen, or "the Supreme," was adopted by them, viz., Jehovah, = the Eternal, the Ever-Living One, the Creator; see Exod. iii. 14. "Baal" was the supreme god of all the great Syro-Phœnician nations, with the insignificant exception of the Jews; and when the latter migrated into Canaan they were surrounded

on all sides, by his worshippers. Towns, temples, men, including even a son of Saul, of David and of Jonathan, viz., Eshbaal, Meribbaal, and Beelida, were called after him. As the sun-god, Baal-Hammon, Song of Sol. viii. 11; 2 Kings xxiii. 5; he was worshipped on high places, Num xxii. 41; and an image of the sun appeared over his altars, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4. As the generative and productive power, he was worshipped under the form of the phallus, *Baal-Peor;* and youths and maidens, even of high birth, prostituted themselves in his honour or service; Num. xxv.; 2 Kings xxiii. 7. As the creator, he was represented to be of either or of both sexes; and Arnobius tells us that his worshippers invoked him thus:

"Hear us, Baal! whether thou be a god or a goddess."

Though he is of the masculine gender in the Hebrew, הַבַּעַל, the lord, yet Baal is called ἡ Βάαλ, = the lady, in the Septuagint; Hos. ii. 8; Zeph. i. 4; and in the New Testament, Romans xi. 4. At the licentious worship of this androgyne, or two-sexed god, the men on certain. occasions wore female garments, whilst the women appeared in male attire, brandishing weapons. Each of this god's names had a female counterpart; and the feminine form of *Baal* was *Beltis*, *Ishtar*, and *Ashtarte*. As he was the sun-god, she was the moon-goddess. Now, whilst the masculine name (as Bël or Bâl, Baal, Baalim) appears nearly one hundred times in the Hebrew Old Testament, the feminine equivalent is only found three times in the singular Ashtoreth, and six times in the plural Ashtaroth; always in association with Baal-worship. Knowing, as we do, the immense diffusion of her worship amongst the Babylonians, Assyrians, and Phœnicians, this appears strange. There is a word of the feminine gender occurring in the Hebrew twenty-four times, viz., אֲשֵׁרָה, *Asherah* or *Asharah*; plural אֲשֵׁרוֹת, *Asharoth*, translated in the Septuagint and Latin Vulgate, a tree, or "grove," in which they have been followed by most modern versions, including the English. This supplies the void, for

Asharah may be regarded as another name for the goddess *Ashtoreth*, as is plainly seen by the following passages: "They forsook Jehovah and served Baal and Ashtoreth;" Judges ii. 13; whilst in the following chapter we read, "They forgot Jehovah their God, and served the Baalim and the Asharoth;" iii.. 7. What, then, was the *Asharah?* It was of wood, and of large size; the Jews were ordered to cut it down; Exod. xxxiv. 13, etc.; and Gideon offered a bullock as a burnt sacrifice with the wood of this Asherah. Occasionally it was of stone. It was carved or graven as an image; 2 Kings xxi. 7. It often stood close to the altar of Baal; Judges vi. 25 and 30; 1 Kings xvi. 32, 33; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3. Usually on high places and under shady trees; 1 Kings xiv. 23; Jer. xvii. 2; but one was erected in the temple of Jehovah by Manasseh; 2 Kings xxi. 7. It had priests; 1 Kings xviii. 19; and its worship was as popular as that of Baal; for whilst the priests of "the Baal" were four hnndred and fifty, those of "the Asherah" were four hundred, who ate at the table of Queen Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon. It was sometimes surrounded with hangings, and was worshipped by both sexes with licentious rites; 2 Kings xxiii. 7; Ezek. xvi. 16. As Baal was associated with sun-worship, so was the Asherah with that of the moon; 2 Kings xxi. 8; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4.

Besides these Asheroth, female emblems of Baal, their were Asherim, אֲשֵׁרִים, male emblems of Baal, "symbolising his generative power" (Fürst, Hebrew Lexicon), which are mentioned sixteen times in the Hebrew scriptures. It is only found in the plural, and must have been a multiple representation of the singular, Asher, אשר, which means "to be firm, strong, straight, prosperous, happy,"* and cognate with the Phœnician אבר (Osir), "husband," "lord,"

* The lupanars at Pompeii were distinguished by a sign over the street door, representing the erect phallus, painted or carved, and having the words underneath, "Hic habitat felicitas."

an epithet of Baal. Doubtless this was also identical with the Egyptian Osiris, = the sun, = the phallus. He was said to have suffered death like the sun; and Plutarch tells us that Isis, unable to discover all the remains of her husband, consecrated the phallus as his representative. Thus "the Asharim" were male symbols used in Baal-worship, and sometimcs consisted of multiple phalli, of which the branch carried by an Assyrian priest, in Plate iii. Fig. 4. is a conventional form. They were then counterparts of the "*multimammia*" of Greek and Roman worship.* This is confirmed by a curious passage, 1 Kings xv. 13 (repeated 2 Chron. xv. 16). We learn (xiv. 23) that the Jews, under Rehoboam, son of Solomon, having lapsed into idolatry, had "built them high places, images, and Asharim ("groves," A. V.) on every high hill, and under every green tree; and that there were also consecrated ones ("sodomites," A. V.) in the land." But Asa, his brother, on succeeding to the throne, swept away all these things, and (xv. 13) deposed the queen mother, Maachab, because she had made a *miphletzeth* to an Asherah ("an idol in a grove," A. V.) מִפְלֶצֶת, *miphletzeth*, is rendered by the Vulgate "simulacrum Priapi," The word is derived from פלץ, *palatz*, "to be broken," "terrified," or the cognate פלש, *phalash*, *palash*, "to break or go through," "to open up a way;" a word or root found in the Hebrew, Phœnician, Syriac, and Ethiopic. Doubtless the Greek φαλλος, *phallos*, was hence derived, since it has no independent meaning in Greek; and Herodotus and Diodorus expressly assert that the chief gods of Greece and their mysteries, especially the Dionysiac or Bacchic revels, in which the *phallus* was carried in procession, were derived from the east. Compare also the Latin *pales*, English *pale*, *pole*, = May*pole*. A similar word, with a corresponding meaning, exists in the Sanskrit. Thus, then, according to the Hebrew scriptures, there were two chief

* See Figs. 15, 16.

symbols used in the worship of Baal, one male, the other female.

We can now look upon the very symbols themselves, which were so used—perhaps the most remarkable in existence. It is well known that the Chaldeans, from whom all other nations derived their religion, astronomy, and science, gave the name of Bel or Baal to their chief god. In the most ancient inscription yet deciphered, written in the Babylonian and Accadian languages, a king rules by "the favour of Bel." Another name for Baal is Assur, or Asher, from whom Assyria is named. In the cuneiform inscriptions of Sennacherib, the great king of Assyria, Nineveh is called "the city of Bel," and "the city beloved by Ishtar." In another inscription he says of the king of Egypt:— "The terror of Ashur and Ishtar overcame him and he fled." Assurbanipal thus commences his annals: "The great warrior, the delight of Assur and Ishtar, the royal offspring am I." In a cuneiform inscription of Nebobelzitri, we read:— "Nineveh the city, the delight of Ishtar, wife of Bel." Again, "Beltis, the consort of Bel." "Assur and Beltis, the gods of Assyria." Thus we see that Baal and Bel were identical with Assur, and Ashur. Doubtless, then, "*Asherah*" is the last name with the feminine termination (as Ish - man, Ishah = woman), and is identical with Ishtar, Ashteroth, Astarte and Beltis. The Septuagint has rendered "Asherah" by "Astarte," in 2. Chron. xv. 16, and the Vulgste by "Astaroth," in Judges iii. 7. Herodotus described (B.C. 450) the great temple of Belus at Babylon and its seven stages dedicated to the sun, moon, and planets, on the top of which was the shrine. This contained no statue, but there was a golden couch, upon which a chosen female lay, and was nightly visited by the god. Now, therefore, that the palaces of the Assyrian kings, and their "chambers of imagery," have been by great good fortune laid open to us, we might expect to discover the long-lost symbolism of Baal-worship. And so we have.

To commence with the simplest. The אשרים (*Asherim*) is seen as the mystic palm-tree, the tree of life; Fig. 99; the phallic pillar putting forth branches like flames, Fig. 65; and the tree with seven phalloid branches, so common on Assyrian and Babylonian seals, Plate xvii., Fig. 4. See also the remarkable Syrian medals, Plate xvii., Fig. 2, on which is represented Baal as the sun-god, holding the bow, and surrounded by phalli.

Or, least conventional of all, the simple phallus, of which there are two remarkable specimen in the British Museum. Each of these is about two and a half feet high, and once guarded the bounds of an estate. Among the Greeks and Romans, boundaries were also marked by a phallic statue of Hermes, the god of fertility. These Assyrian emblems have donbtless often been honoured with rural sacrifice. Themselves the most expressive symbol of life, they are also covered with its conventional emblems. A back view of one is given, Figure 174. The body is mainly occupied with a full length portrait of the great king. For as the Assyrians represented the Deity, the source of all life, by the phallus, so the monarch was the god of this lower world, the incarnation of God on earth. He was the. source of life to the empire, and as such was addressed "O king, live for ever" (Dan. v. 10). He, like the gods, never dies. "*Le Roi est mort; Vive le Roi*." The ensigns of royalty were also those of the creator-god. Accordingly, his garments and crown are embroidered with that sacred emblem, the Asherah. He bears the strung-bow and arrows, emblems of virile power, borne afterwards by the sun-god Apollo, and the western son of Venus. An erect serpent occupies the other side, and ends with forky tongue near the orifice. The *glans* is covered with symbols. On the summit is a triad of sun emblems; beneath are three altars, over two of which are the glans-shaped caps, covered with bulls' horns, always worn by the Assyrian guardian angels, and intense emblems of the male potency. For in ancient symbolism, *a part of*

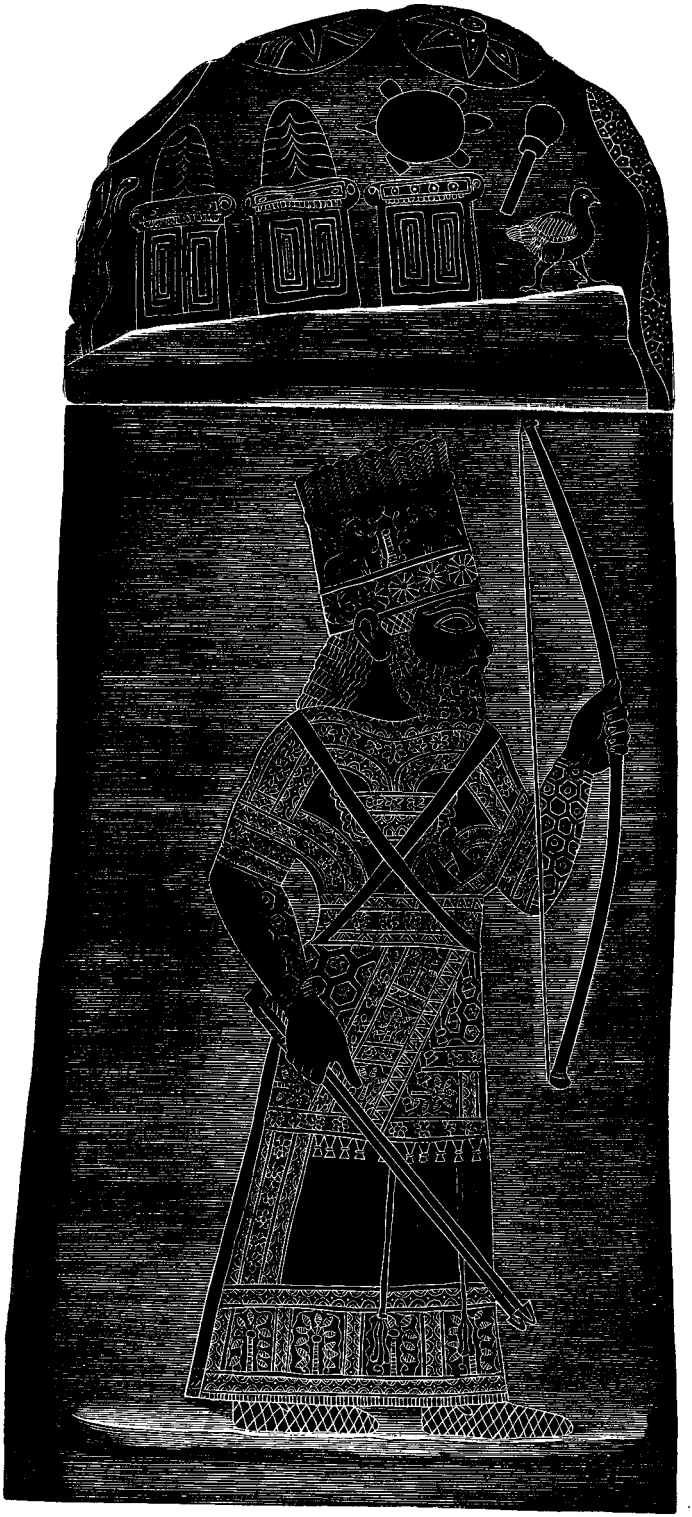

Figure 174.

a symbol stands for the whole; as here, the horns represent the bull, and the glans the phallus. Above the third altar is a tortoise, whose protruded head and neck reminded the initiated of the phallus; and the altars are covered with a pattern drawn from the tortoise scales. We have, besides, a vase with a a rod inserted, symbolic of sexual union, and a cock, with wings and plumage ruffled, running after a hen in amorous heat. The glans only of the other is copied.

Figure 175.

Fig. 175. At the top are the sun-symbols, as before. Beneath is the horse-shoe-like head-dress of Isis, and there are two altars marked with the tortoise-emblem in front. Over both rised the erect serpent, and upon one lies the head of an arrow or dart, both male symbols. The *miphletzeth* which Queen Maachah placed in or near the Asherah, probably resembled these Assyrian phalli, or the Asherim.

And now we come to the Asherah, a much more complex and difficult symbol than any other which we have named. This object has long puzzled antiquarians, and though it is continually recurring in the sculptures from Nineveh, it has not yet been fully explained. In Fig. 176 we see it

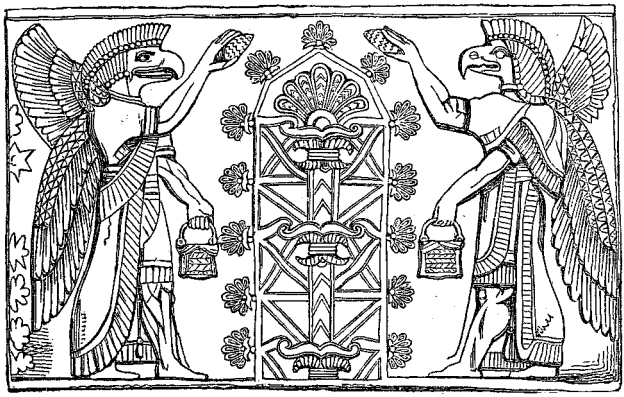

Figure 176.

worshipped by human figures, with eagle' heads and wings, who present to it the pine-cone = the testis,. and the basket, = the scrotum (?), intense emblems of the male creator. In

Figure 177.

Fig. 177 it is adored by the king and his son or successor,

with their attendant genii. The kings present towards it a well-known symbol of life and good fortune, the fist with the forefinger extended, or "the phallic hand." Here, then, we have evidently the Asherah, or Ashtaroth-symbol, the female Baal, the life-producer, "the door" whence life issues to the world. As such the goddess is here symbolised as an arched door-way. In the Phœnician alphabet, the fourth letter, *daleth*, דָּלֶת = a door, has the shape of a tent-door, as on the Moabite stone, Δ, and also in the Greek Δέλτα. But another form, perhaps as ancient, is D, which, when placed in its proper position, would be ⊐, the very form of the Asherah.* In the plural, this word stands for the *labia pudendi*, כִּי אֹל סָגַר דַּלְתֵי בִטְנִי, "because it shut not up the *doors* of the womb," Job iii. 10.† We infer from Numbers xxv. 6–8, that in the rites of Baal-peor, the *Kadeshoth*, or women devoted to the god, offered themselves to his worshippers each in a peculiar bower or small arched tent, called a *qubbah*, קֻבָּה. The part also through which Phinehas drove his spear (see Num. xxv. 8), the woman's vulva, is also called *qobbah*, קֹבֶה, the one word being derived from the other, according to Onkelos, Aquila, and others. *Qubbah* means, according to Fürst, *Heb. Lex.*, "something hollow and arched, an arched tent, like the Arabic *El. Kubba*, whence the Spanish *al-cova*, and our *Alcove*." In the Latin also, the word *fornix*, a vault, an arch, meant a brother, and from it was derivated *fornicatio*. *Qubbah* is translated by the LXX. κάμινος, *kaminos*, "an oven or arched furnace" (Liddell and Scott); but it meant also the female parts. See Herodotus v. 92 (7). Thus, then, the *Alcove* was itself a symbol of woman, as though a place of entrance and emergence, and whence new life issues to the world. And when the male

* The first letter, Aleph, = an ox, is, even on the Moabite stone, written thus, ≺, and has become the modern A. In the earlier hieroglyphs is must have been thus ∀. The Egyptian hieroglpyh for ten is ∩. Compare the Greek Δεκα and the Latin *Decem*.

† The first of the Orphic Hymns is addressed to the goddess Artemisias Προθυραια, (Prothuraia) or the Door-keeper, who presided over childbirths, like the Roman Diana Lucina.

worshipper of Baal entered to the *kadeshah*, the living embodiment of the goddess, the analogy to the Asherah became complete, as we shall now show.

The central object in the Assyrian "grove" is a male date-palm, which was well known as an emblem of Baal, the sun, the phallus, and life. This remarkable tree, תָּמָר, *m*., *Tamar*, in Phœnician and Hebrew, the phœnix (ὁ φοίνιξ) in Greek, was formerly abundant in Palestine and the neighbouring regions. The word *Phœnicia* (Acts xi.19, xv. 3) is derived from φοίνιξ,, *phoinix*, as the country of palms; like the "*Idumeæ palmæ*" of Virgil. Palmyra, the city of the sun, was called in the Hebrew *Tamar* (1 Kings ix. 18). In Vespasian's famous coin, "*Judea capta*," Judea is represented as a female sitting under a palm-tree. The tree can at once be identified by its tall, straight, branchless stem, of equal thickness throughout, crowned at the top with a cluster of long, curved, feather-like branches, and by its singularly wrinkled bark. All these charactenstics are readily recognised in the highly conventional forms of the religious emblem, even in the ornament on the king's robe, fig. 174. The date-palm is dicœcious, the female trees, which are sometimes used as emblem, being always distingnished by the clusters of date fruit. "Thy stature is like to a palmtree; thy breasts to clusters." (Cant. vii. 7). "The righteious shall flourish like the palm-tree" (Ps. xcii. 12), fruitful and ever green. "They are upright as the palm-tree, but speak not" (Jer. x. 3-5). The prophet is evidently describing the making of an Asherah. There was a Canaanite city called Baal-Tamar, = Baal, the palm-tree, designated so, it is probable, from the worship of Baal there "under the form of a priapus-column," says Fürst, *Heb. Lex*. The real form was doubtIess an "Asherim," a modified palm-tree, as we have already shown. Palm branches have been used in all ages as emblems of life, peace, and victory. They were strewn before Christ. Palm-Sunday, the feast of palms, is still kept. Even within the present century, on this festival, in

many towns of France, women and children carried in procession at the end of their palm-branches a phallus made of bread, which they called, undisguisedly, "la pine," whence the festival was called "La Fête des Pinnes." The "pine" having been blest by the priest, the women carefully preserved it during the following year as an amulet. (Dulaure, *Hist. des différens Cultes*.)

Again, the Greek name for the palm-tree, *phœnix*, was also the name of that mythical Egyptian bird, sacred to Osiris, and a symbol of the resurrection. With some early Christian writers, Christ was "the Phœnix." The date-palm is figured as a tree of life on an Egyptian sepulchral tablet, older than the Exodus, now preserved in the museum at Berlin. Two arms issue from the top of the tree; one of which presents a tray of dates to the deceased, whilst the othet gives him water, "the water of life." The tree of life is represented too by a date-palm on some of the earliest Christian mosaics at Rome. Something very like the Assyrian Asherah, or sacred emblem, was sculptured on the great doors of Solomon's temple, by Hiram, the Tyrian (1 Kings vii. 13-21). We read "he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm-trees and open flowers, and spread gold upon the cherubims and palm-trees" (1 Kings vi. 32-35). He also erected two phallic pillars in front of the Temple, *Jachin* and *Boaz*, = It stands—In strength. No wonder Solomon fell to worship Astarte, Chemosh, and Milcom.

Although to our modern ideas the mystical tree, symbol of life and immortality, seems ont of place in Judaism, yet no sooner did the Jews possess a national coinage under the Maccabees than the palm-tree reappears, *always* with seven branches (like the golden candlestick, Ex. xxv.), as on the shekel represented Plate xvii., Fig. 4. The Assyrian tree has *always* the same number, and the tufts of foliage (symbolising the entire female tree) which deck the margins of the mystic ⏢—apt emblems of ferlility—have also invariably seven branches. This may remind us of the

seven visible spheres that move around our earth "in mystic dance," and of Balak's offering, upon seven altars, seven bulls and seven rams (Num. xxiii. 1; Rev. ii. 1). The mystic door is also barred, like the Egyptian sistrum carried by the priestesses of Isis, to represent the inviolable purity and eternal perfection which were associated with the idea of divinity. When Mary, the mother of Jesus, took the place in Christendom of "the great goddess," the dogmas which propounded her immaculate conception and perpetual virginity followed as a matter of course.

Thus, then, we explain the greatest symbol in Eastern worship,—it is the "Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden," which has remained so long a mystery. To Dr. Inman belongs the distinguished merit of having first broken ground in the right direction. In his *Ancient Faith*s, vol. 1, 1868, he identified the Assyrian "Asherah" with the female "door of life," and pointed out its analogy to the barred sistrum. We have seen that it is really much more complex, being precisely analogous in meaning to the famous *crux ansata* (Fig. 170), the central mystery of Egyptian worship; to the lingam or lingyoni of India (Fig. 109), the great emblem of Siva-worship; and to the caduceus of Greece and Rome. As represented on the Assyrian sculptures, it is always substantially the same. Probably this stereotyped form was the result of a gradual refinement upon some rude primitive type, perhaps as coarse as that seen by Captain Burton in the African idol-temple.

To exhibit all the strange developments and modifications which this idea has assumed in the religions symbolism of Eastern and Western nations would require a large volume. But the subject is so rich in varied interest that we cannot conclude without taking a glance at it. First, the simple ⊐, barred, is reproduced with a contraction towards the base, as in the Indian "yoni," and the Egyptian sistrum, used in the worship of Isis. Second, within the ⊐ was represented the goddess herself, as revealed within her own symbol. This

is illustrated in Plate xvii., Fig. 5, where Demeter or Ceres is thus depicted, with her cornucopia, from a bronze coin of Damascus. Thirdly, but much more commonly, the goddess holds in her hands emblems of the male potency in creation, and thus completes the symbol. As in the coin figured Plate xvii., Fig. 8, the goddess, standing within the ⏢, the portico of her temple, holds in her right hand the gross, that most ancient emblem of the male and of life. In the beautiful Greek coin of Sidon next figured, the goddess—evidently Astarte, the moon-goddess, the Queen of Heaven—stands on a ship, the mystic *Argha* or *Ark*, holding in one hand a crozier, in the other the the cross. (Plate xvii., Fig. 7.)

Under Christianity, the Virgin Mary, who, as Queen of Heaven, stands on the crescent moon, is pictured beneath the mystic doorway, with (the God as) a male child in her arms. See Plate xviii., copied from the woodcut title to the *Psalter of the Blessed Virgin*, printed at Czenna, in old Prussia, 1492. Like Isis, she is the mother and yet the spouse of God, "clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet" (Rev. xii. 1). The upper half of the picture is very like the Assyrian scenes. On either side is a king, Frederick III. and his son the Emperor Maximilian, at their devotions. The alcove is of roses, an emblem of virginity. The famous Mediæval "Romaunt de la Rose" turns upon this. Among the many titles given to "the Virgin" in Mediæval times, we find *Santa Maria della Rosa*, that flower being consecrated to her. Hence it is often represented in her hand. Dante writes:—

> "Here is the Rose,
> Wherein the Word Divine was made incarnate."

In Plate xviii., the Virgin goddess is seated with the God-child in a bower, exactly the shape or the Assyrian, composed of fruits highly significant of sex as has already been explained. In some Hindoo pictures, the child is naked, having the

member erect, and also making the phallic hand, with the right forefinger erected. (Plate xiv., Fig. 14.)

In other conventional forms we have male symbols only within the female ⏢. This is a very numerous class. In the Fig. 3, Plate xvii., we see the fir-tree or pine take the place of the palm-tree, and in Fig. 6, Plate xvii., the cone. On this remarkable medal of Cyprus is a representation of the temple of Venus at Paphos, famous even in the days of Homer. (*Odyss*. viii. 362.) The worship of that divinity is said to have been imported into Cyprus from the East. The goddess united both sexes in her own person, and was served by castrated priests. We see here, within the innermost sanctum of the temple, a cone as emblem of the male; and the meaning is further pointed by the sun-emblem above, inserted within the crescent moon.

Let us next examine how the cone came to be used as a masculine emblem. If we turn to Figs. 174 and 175, it will be seen that the "glans" was particularly honoured as the head of the phallus; it was also the part dedicated to God by effusion of blood in the rite of circumcision. This "acorn" is conical or dome-shaped, and thus—a part being taken for the whole—the cone or pyramid was used as a conventional symbol of the male creator. Placed on a stem it is frequently represented as worshipped on Assyrian bas reliefs. See Fig. 178. It was also a symbol of fire, the sun, and life; as such it formed a fitting monument for the Egyptian kings. Our word pyramid is from the Greek πυραμίς, *puramis*, itself derived from πυρ, *pur*, *fire*, and πυρος, *puros*, *wheat*, because pyramid-shaped cakes of wheat and honey were used in the Bacchic rites. It played an important part in sun-worship. The emperor Heliogabalus (who, as his name implies, had been a priest of Baal, the sun-god, in Syria) established the Syrian worship at Rome. He himself drove

Fig. 178.

the golden chariot of the sun, drawn by six white horses, through the streets of Rome to a splendid new temple on the Palatine mount, the god being represented by a conical black stone, said to have fallen from heaven; and which the emperor removed from a temple of the sun, at Emesa, in Syria. At a subsequent period, an image of the moon-goddess, or Astarte, was brought by his orders from a celebrated fane at Carthage to Rome, and there solemnly married with licentious rites to the sun-god, amidst general rejoicing.*

A curious parallel to these mystic nuptials of the Assyrian god and goddess may be found in some of the religious ceremonies of the modern Hindoos. Fergusson tells us that "the most extraordinary buildings connected with Hindy temples are the vast pillared colonnades or *choultries*. By far their most important application is when used as nuptial halls, in which the mystic union of a male and female divinity is celebrated once a year."

Again, in Indian mythology, the Pyramid plays an important part. It belongs to Siva, = the sun, = fire, = the phallus, = life. By one complex symbol, very common on ancient Hindoo monuments in China and Thibet, the universe was thus represented. Notice the upward gradation. Earth + water = this globe. The creator-god, whose emblem, flame, mounts upwards, is the author and representative of all life upon it; he is the connecting link, united by the crescent moon with heaven. The arrow- or spear-head inserted within the crescent is an emblem of Siva; like the lingam it typified the divine source of life, and also the doctrine that perfect wisdom was to be found only in the combination

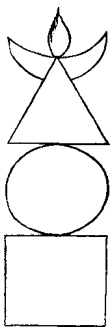

Fig 179.

* In Astrology, the conjunction of Jupiter and Venus was considered the most fortunate of all; such as kings and princes should be born under.

of the male and female principles in nature. It decorates the roof of the Buddhist monasteries in Thibet, and like the sacred lotus flower and the linga, both of which became emblems of Buddha, was derived from older faiths. Other interpretations may suggest themselves. This will enuble us to understand the remarkable sculptures of the second or third century, from the Amravati Tope, Plate xix., which present so many points in common with the religious symbols of the Chaldeans. In Fig. 2 we see a congregation of males and females, the sexes being separated, worshipping a linga, or stone conical pillar, on the front of which is sculptured the sacred tree, with branches like flames; three symbols of life in one. It rises from a throne, on the seat of which are placed the two emblems of earth and water. In the other figure, the sacred tree takes the place of the linga, rising above the throne, as if from the *trisul* or *trident*, male emblems of Siva. Winged figures, *Garudas*, attend it above, floating over the heads of the worshippers. An intrnsion of the newer faith is also to be recognised, as the feet of Buddha are sculptured before the throne.

In the mysteries of Mithra, the symbols in Fig. 179 were also employed. They represented the elements to which the soul ought to be successiveIy united in passing through the new birth.

We will add but two more emblems, culled from mediæval heraldry, Figs. 180 and 181, in both of which the Asherah, the "grove" of Baal-worship, will be at once recognised; the arrow and the cross, symbols, of the male creator, taking the place of the mystic palm-tree.

Fig 180.

Fig 181.

In all these, from the

rudest to the most complex, we are thus able to trace no common idea, viz., a feeling after God, as the Life and Light of the Universe, and and attempt to express a common hope in visible forms.

PLATE XVIII.

Nouum beate marie virgis psalterium
de dulcissimis noue legis mirabilib⁹ dini amoris refertis nouit ad ꝛci pteritoꝝ pfectu
Aller ch Dag
Adolf v. Nassaw
M
O
R

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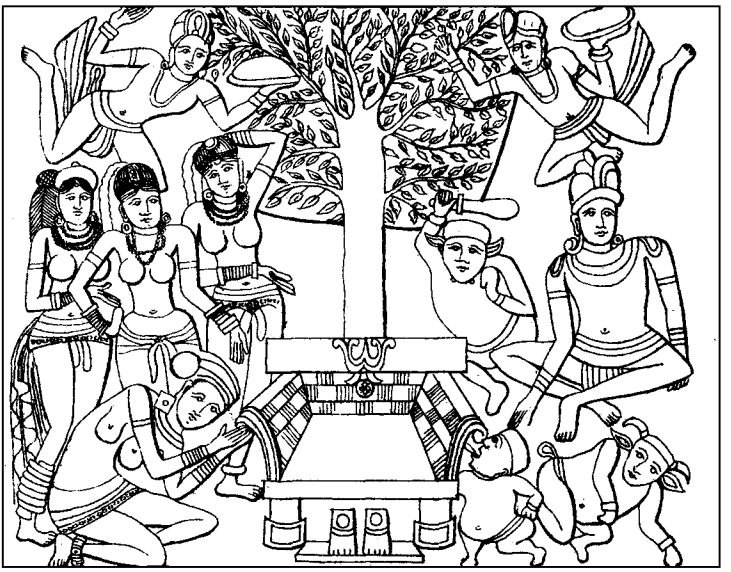
PLATE XIX.



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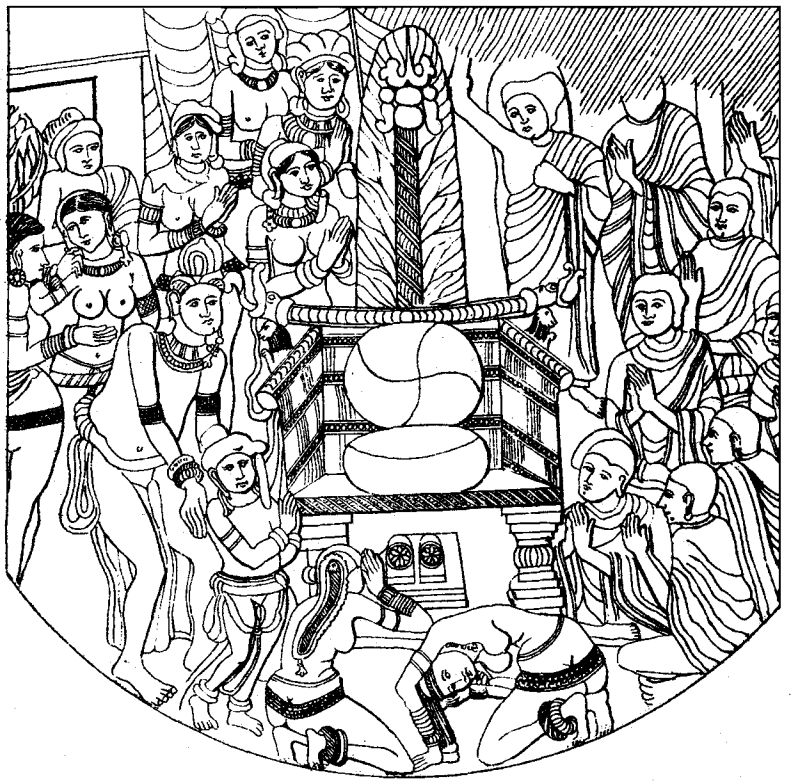

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EDITORIAL NOTE TO THE ELECTRONIC EDITION.

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

This e-text of *Pagan and Christian Symbolism* was key-entered / OCR'd and proofed by Frater T.S. from page images of the expanded second edition (1874, reprinted 1875). A few obvious compositor's errors have been corrected. Layout has been conformed as far as possible to the 1874 printing, with the exception of the position of plates II-XIX, which have here been so arranged as to minimise the number of blank pages.

The title page (leaving aside the substitution of the publisher's name) neither entirely follows the 1874 printing, which omitted the reference to Newton's essay, or the 1875 printing, which omitted "Exposed and Explained" from the main title.

Those of the figures which were simple geometric designs have been redrawn; the rest were scanned from a copy of the 1874 printing in the collection of Leeds City Library, with the exception of Fig. 155 which was taken from page images of Payne Knight's *Worship of Priapus* found online at the Digital Library of India, as in the original printing of *Symbolism* Inman had, as he notes on p. 96, Bowdlerised the figure by turning the phallus on the side of the instrument into an inverted Tau. Several figures have been slightly retouched or cleaned up from the scans.

As indicated by the preface, the body of *Symbolism* essentially consists of the illustrations (with a few omissions for reasons which are unclear) from *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names* with the explanatory text which was prefixed to that work (in vol. II of the first edition, vol. I of the second edition), with various rants and digressions interspersed. The first edition ran to about half the page count (68pp + 16 plates) and omitted Newton's essay; I have not had a chance to examine a copy.

A complete e-text of *Ancient Faiths … Ancient Names* is projected by Celephaïs Press but owing to its length (a little under 2000 octavo pages), the number of other large texts in my wish list of "mad 19th century works on Comparative Religion and speculative prehistory" (Massey, Forlong, Higgins, &c.) and the fact that I really need to get a day job, is unlikely to manifest any time soon.

Love is the law, love under will.

T.S.
September 2004 e.v.

Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?

by Fred R. Coulter

York Publishing Company
Post Office Box 1038
Hollister, California 95024-1038

Unless otherwise noted,
all Scriptures used in
this book are quoted from
The Holy Bible In Its
Original Order—A Faithful
Version With Commentary
ISBN 978-0-9675479-9-2

About the Cover

The cover was designed by *Curley Creative*. The picture of the human skull, provided by www.punchstock.com, symbolically depicts the way of man that leads to death. The emblem of the Ten Commandments symbolizes God's way to life—"If you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. 19:17).

ISBN 978-0-9675479-7-0
Copyright 2008
First Edition 2006
Second Edition 2008, 2010
York Publishing Company
Post Office Box 1038
Hollister, California 95024-1038

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Foreword

Confused and disillusioned, many today are wondering, "Is there a God? Where is He? What, if anything, is God doing?" Mankind sees scant evidence in religion of God's direct involvement in the course of humanity. Shackled by tradition and religious myths, even professing "Christianity" gropes in a vacuum of ignorance regarding God's true plan for mankind.

Why? Because man has (for the most part, unknowingly) rejected the key to that plan—the knowledge of the seventh-day Sabbath and holy days of God. Instead, traditional holidays—including Sunday—have been adopted and accepted as "Christian."

Declaring the "end from the beginning," the true God of the Bible is actively involved in the affairs of man, ordering events according to His master plan as outlined by His Sabbath and feast days. Obviously, Satan the devil hates God's plan—for it also pictures his ultimate removal as the "god of this present age."

In what is perhaps one of the greatest conspiracies in the history of mankind, Satan has devised a cleverly disguised counterfeit "Christianity" to blind men from the knowledge of God's true plan. Analogous to King Jeroboam of ancient Israel—who substituted false "feast days" in place of God's true holy days—Satan has deceptively ensnared an unsuspecting world into believing that pagan occult holidays are acceptable forms of worship toward God.

In *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?,* Fred R. Coulter brings to light this satanic conspiracy, uncovering in detail the occult roots of today's so-called "Christian" holidays—Halloween, Christmas, Easter, etc.—proving that such holidays are, in reality, a form of Satan worship.

Mr. Coulter demonstrates how God's seven annual holy days form a type of framework upon which are hung the various aspects of God's plan as they are fulfilled over time. This publication fully illustrates how God's seventh-day Sabbath and holy days picture His plan of salvation for all of mankind, concentrating on the establishment of the Kingdom of God and the eternal rule of Jesus Christ.

For a materialistic generation surrounded by religious indifference, intolerance and confusion, this book provides vital information. Emphasis is placed on the fact that the God of truth cannot be worshiped with pagan lies, myths and forms of worship, as God can only be worshiped "in spirit and in truth."

In a world of relativism where the line between right and wrong, good and evil are increasingly blurred, *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* pulls no punches. Fred Coulter has captured, in a single book, the crux of the matter: Will we worship the true God, as He instructs—with the understanding of His true plan for mankind—or will we continue to look to myths, fables and false forms of worship that are of no avail?

The reader, indeed, will be compelled to choose—*Which?*

Philip Neal
May 2006

About the Author

Fred R. Coulter attended the University of San Francisco and graduated from San Mateo State College before graduating from Ambassador University (Ambassador College), Pasadena, California, with a BA in Theology in 1964. He was ordained a minister of Jesus Christ in 1965 and pastored churches of God in the Pacific Northwest, the Mountain States, the greater Los Angeles area and Monterey, including the central coast area of California. Mr. Coulter completed advanced biblical and ministerial studies in 1972-75 under the Ambassador University Master's Program. While completing these studies, he was encouraged by his professor of *Koiné* Greek to consider translating the books of the New Testament.

For the next twenty years, Mr. Coulter diligently studied, continuing to expand his knowledge of *Koiné* Greek. While undertaking a verse-by-verse study of the books of the New Testament, he was moved to translate the New Testament into clear, easy-to-read English for contemporary readers—resulting in *The New Testament In Its Original Order—A Faithful Version With Commentary*. He has consistently used this translation of the New Testament in his other publications.

Fred Coulter has dedicated his life and talents to proclaiming Jesus Christ as personal Savior for all. Since 1983, Mr. Coulter has been the president of the Christian Biblical Church of God, headquartered in Hollister, California. He has an active ministry which reaches all parts of the United States and Canada, with additional offices in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Ethiopia and Kenya.

Each year nearly 500,000 people from around the world actively utilize the church's Web sites—where they find timely, inspiring weekly sermons and in-depth, verse-by-verse biblical study materials covering virtually all of Scripture.

With his ministry now spanning over 40 years, Fred R. Coulter has again been inspired to take up the sword of God's Word and has published this recent book: *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* This work documents the pagan and occult origins of the holidays accepted and celebrated today by Orthodox Christendom. The book then demonstrates in great detail God's true biblical feasts and holy days that He has commanded His people to keep—through which God actually reveals His plan and ultimate purpose for mankind, the pinnacle of His creation.

Acknowledgments

We first acknowledge God the Father and Jesus Christ, and thank them for preserving the Holy Bible—in spite of mankind's tumultuous history—so that today the truth is available for everyone. It is the very Word of God that gives us the true understanding of the purpose of human existence. Jesus said, "Your Word is the truth" (John 17:17), and "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32).

A special "thank you" goes to all the faithful brethren whose tithes and offerings made this book possible.

As with my other publications, many people have helped and shared in the production of this book. Their diligent work and support has made it possible. First, I give my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to my loving, dear wife, Dolores, for her personal encouragement, editing and assistance. Special thanks go to Kay Dye for contributing in the research of Halloween, Philip Neal and Duncan MacLeod for their diligent editing of the text and appendices, and Rod Repp and Rowan St. Clair Howell for proofreading. John and Hiedi Vogele are to be highly commended for the final formatting and proofreading of the entire text.

Fred R. Coulter
May 2006

Other Works by the Author

The Holy Bible In Its Original Order—A Faithful Version With Commentary is a *new* translation that reflects the meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek with fidelity and accuracy—and is the *only* English version in which the books of the Bible are arranged in their *original* order. The easy-to-read translation retains the grace and grandeur of the *King James Version* while clarifying many of its problematic passages. Included are commentaries on the writing, canonization and preservation of the Scriptures. Various appendices cover numerous controversial biblical teachings, and detailed footnotes and marginal references explain hard-to-understand passages. A vital tool for all students of the Bible!

The New Testament In Its Original Order—A Faithful Version With Commentary is Coulter's original translation of the New Testament from *Koiné* Greek. At 928 pages, the work includes numerous detailed commentaries and appendices on a wide variety of biblical subjects.

A Harmony of the Gospels in Modern English brings to life the message and purpose of the true Jesus, portraying His life and ministry in their true historical setting. This easy-to-understand, step-by-step account of the life of Christ is an indispensable study aid for every Bible student.

The Christian Passover details the scriptural and historical truths of the Passover in both the Old and New Testaments, leading the reader step-by-step through every aspect of one of the most vital and fundamental teachings revealed in the Bible. With over 500 pages, the book fully explains the meaning of the Christian Passover—a remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Passover Lamb of God—in a most compelling and inspiring manner. The full meaning of the body and blood of Jesus Christ is revealed, showing the magnitude of God's love for every person.

The Day Jesus the Christ Died—the Biblical Truth about His Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection is THE ONLY BOOK to present "the rest of the story"—left out by Mel Gibson in his epic movie *The Passion of the Christ*. Without the true historical and biblical facts, one cannot fully understand the meaning of Jesus Christ's horrific, humiliating and gruesome death by beating, scourging and crucifixion. The author presents the full biblical account in a most compelling way. As you will see, the truth is more astounding than all of the ideas, superstitions and traditions of men!

The Seven General Epistles is designed for an in-depth verse-by-verse study of the epistles of James; I and II Peter; I, II and III John and Jude. As part of the living Word of God, these epistles are as meaningful today for personal Christian growth as when they were written.

Lord, What Should I Do? is a book for Christians who are confused by the escalating spiritual and doctrinal chaos in churches today—which is undermining the true faith of the Bible. Any religious organization that teaches the Word of God is a target for the forces of evil behind this chaos. This book clarifies the problem and offers the solution.

On-Line Studies for the serious Bible student—with additional written material and in-depth Bible studies in audio format—can be obtained at **www.cbcg.org**, **www.biblicaltruthministries.org** and **www.churchathome.org**.

Preface

A carefully crafted worldview being disseminated in western society today is one which is not founded on the moral absolutes of yesteryear—a time when most people agreed on what was right and what was wrong, what was good and what was evil, who was wicked and who was righteous, and which things were true and which things were false. Instead, this new mindset tenaciously maintains that individuals must "consider" all the different religious and lifestyle alternatives of a culturally diverse world, accepting all beliefs and customs as equal and valid (with the exception of the Christian viewpoint, which is rejected with hostility and disdain). In the name of "tolerance," judging moral behavior is simply not permitted.

The inevitable outcome of this approach is a world where it is believed there is no absolute truth, or if there is, it cannot be known. The individual becomes his own god, creating his own "reality"—and "truth" is whatever one wants or imagines it to be. This pervasive "postmodern thinking," as it is called, has gone mainstream in just one generation.

In his book *The Death of Truth*, Jim Leffel writes: "Postmodernists believe that truth is created, not discovered…. In a recent series of more than twenty interviews conducted at random at a large university, people were asked if there was such a thing as absolute truth—truth that is true across all times and cultures for all people. All but one respondent [a Bible-believing Christian] answered along these lines:

'Truth is whatever you believe.'

'There is no absolute truth.'

'If there *were* such a thing as absolute truth, how could we know what it is?'

'People who believe in absolute truth are dangerous.' "

Leffel continues: "Truth, declares a growing collective consciousness, is *relative*: what is true, right or beautiful for one person isn't necessarily true, right or beautiful for another. ***Relativism* says that truth isn't fixed by outside reality** [especially by a Creator God in heaven], but is decided by a group or individual for themselves. Truth isn't discovered, but manufactured. Truth is ever-changing not only in insignificant matters of taste or fashion, but in crucial matters of spirituality, morality, and reality" (pp. 20, 31, bold emphasis and bracketed comments added).

It is not difficult to follow this mindset to its logical conclusion. If twenty people have twenty different concepts about what is right and what is wrong, where does law and order fit in? Eventually, total lawlessness—even anarchy—is certain to follow. In trashing the truth of God, one falls prey to his own corrupt nature and his life becomes empty, void of purpose and understanding. As King David noted: "Behold, You have made my days as a handbreadth, and my age is as nothing before You. **Surely every man at his best state is altogether vanity**…. Surely every man walks about in a vain show! Surely they are in an uproar in vain. He heaps up riches and does not know who shall gather them" (Psa. 39:5-6).

The apostle Paul prophesied of a time when lawlessness would reign

in men's hearts. "Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come; for men will be **lovers of self**, **lovers of money**, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good, betrayers, reckless, egotistical, **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**; having an outward appearance of godliness, but denying the power of *true* godliness. But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these…. *They are* always learning but *are* never able to come to *the* knowledge of *the* truth" (II Tim. 3:1-5, 7).

Although knowledge in the sciences has increased exponentially in this postmodern age, secular society has become spiritually atrophied, crippled and incapable of attaining the truth of God in Christ Jesus because it has repudiated the Word of God.

Paul wrote that creation itself is a witness to all mankind of the truth of God—and that in renouncing His visible truth as displayed throughout His creation, man becomes vulnerable to countless deceptions and chicanery: "For the invisible things of Him are perceived from *the* creation of *the* world, being understood by the things that were made—both His eternal power and Godhead—so that they are without excuse; because when they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful; but they became vain in their own reasonings, and their foolish hearts were darkened. While professing themselves to be *the* wise ones, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into *the* likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed creatures, and creeping things.

"For this cause, God also abandoned them to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to disgrace their own bodies between themselves, **who exchanged the truth of God for the lie; and they worshiped and served the created thing more than the one Who is Creator**, Who is blessed into the ages. Amen" (Rom. 1:20-25).

Satan the devil, who is "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2) and anti-Christ, is behind the many deceptions that elevate the created above the Creator. One vehicle he utilizes to accomplish this in society today is, paradoxically, public education.

A former teacher, Beverly K. Eakman, is the current executive director of the National Education Consortium and the author of *Cloning of the American Mind: Eradicating Morality Through Education* (Huntington House). In her insightful article "Bushwhacking Johnny," published in the September 2002 issue of *Chronicles Magazine*, Eakman expounded how the educational system is destroying truth, morals and independent thought in today's young students by using what is called "cognitive dissonance" to psychologically disorient them. She writes: "When cognitive dissonance is employed against an unsuspecting person—or worse, against a captive audience such as schoolchildren—the short-term objective is to prompt insecure individuals to find company, leading to a group (mob) mentality. **This makes it easier to reverse values held by the majority**. 'Truth' can even

be turned against itself—for example, 'freedom of speech' is now used to legitimize pornography [and other degrading, immoral lifestyles]. The very people freedom of speech was designed to protect are left not only vulnerable but suspicious of the principle itself.

"What 'new values' are educators trying to instill? Here is a seven-point list, given to educators in North Carolina at an in-service workshop:

> **There is no right or wrong, only conditioned responses**.
> The collective good is more important than the individual.
> Consensus is more important than principle.
> Flexibility is more important than accomplishment.
> **Nothing is permanent except change.**
> **All ethics are situational; there are no moral absolutes.**
> There are no perpetrators, only victims.

"Notice that all of the items on this list involve no particular issue; rather, they reflect ethical 'outcomes' that a child is supposed to 'internalize'. "

Eakman continues: "Cognitive dissonance 'is a stressful mental or emotional reaction caused by trying to reconcile two opposing, inconsistent, or conflicting beliefs held simultaneously.' [double mindedness] ... So cognitive dissonance is not quite brainwashing, and it's not quite subliminal advertising, either. It's more like setting somebody up for a psychological fall. It plays with the mind by pitting various perceived 'authorities' against one another [parents, teachers, friends, political leaders, religious leaders and especially God and obedience to Him], exacerbating tensions [in the minds of the students]. After a while, intellectual deliberations shut down, and emotions take over. Only the strongest-willed individuals can hold out—[and they are labeled as] 'the troublemakers.'

"Thus was my generation (the Baby Boomers) educated to 'need' our peers more than we needed our principles, making us easy marks for such tactics as cognitive dissonance. Our children are now sitting ducks, with civilized norms forever under attack … [wherein] all choices are equally legitimized…. **Today, cognitive dissonance is an institutionalized method used to force-feed whatever is politically expedient**" (www.BeverlyE.com, bold emphasis and bracketed comments added).

The use of cognitive dissonance is not limited to education. It is used in religion by clergy, in government by politicians and bureaucrats, in music, in entertainment, and in all other forms of media. Consequently, many societies around the world are seemingly caught in a downward spiral of immorality that is rapidly approaching the degradation and hyper-immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah. Few voices of sanity are raised to warn against the onslaught of wickedness and immorality—and such voices are generally rejected, ridiculed or silenced.

Analyzing the marketing methods purveyors of evil have used in the past fifty years to achieve their goals, David Kupelian writes: "As Americans, we've come to tolerate, embrace, and even champion many things that would have horrified our parents' generation. Things like abortion-on-demand

virtually up to the moment of birth, judges banning the Ten Commandments from public places, a national explosion of middle-school sex, the slow starvation of the disabled, thousands of homosexuals openly flouting the law [with governmental sanctioned public displays of gross, lewd hetero- and homosexual sex acts] and getting 'married,' and online porn creating late-night sex addicts in millions of middle-class homes.

"At the same time, our courts have scrubbed America's classrooms surgically clean of every vestige of religion on which this nation was founded—Christianity.

"The plain truth is, within the space of our lifetimes, much of what Americans once almost universally abhorred has been **packaged, perfumed, gift-wrapped, and sold to us as though it had great value**. By skillfully playing on our deeply felt national values of fairness, generosity, and tolerance, these marketers have persuaded us to embrace as enlightened and noble that which all previous generations since America's founding rejected as grossly self-destructive—in a word, evil" (*The Marketing of Evil*, pp. 11-12, bold emphasis and bracketed comments added).

As a result, today's world is upside down! Because people have rejected God's truth, God has given them over to their own delusions. Truth, especially the truth of God's Word, has been branded as error and lies, and error and lies have been packaged as truth. A well-known quote by Dresden James illustrates this paradox:

"*When a well-packaged web of lies*
has been sold gradually to the masses over
generations, the truth will seem
utterly preposterous and its
speaker a raving lunatic."

But you may ask, "What do occult holidays have to do with this? Aren't they wonderful times of year for children to have fun and for adults to party? How can the observance of these days possibly have anything to do with the death of truth? Aren't they, after all, 'Christian' celebrations?"

In *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?*, you will understand the intense promotion and acceptance of the occult. Witchcraft, the feminine divine, New Age spirituality and Satanism have all been "jump-started" by the observance of Halloween and other "acceptable" occult holidays. **For centuries religious leaders have "sugar-coated, packaged, perfumed, gift wrapped and sold" these holidays to the masses "as though they had great value."**

We will begin by determining just how the "Christian" world has been duped. Then we will uncover the true origins of Halloween—which actually is the beginning and ending of the occult year—and progress through all the occult holidays. It will become transparent that they are not Christian! Yet, **the vast majority of church-going people have blindly accepted them** as such.

Upon examining the holy days and feasts of God, we will understand that God's holy days have deep spiritual meaning for true Christians, as well as all mankind, in His plan of salvation—past, present and future.

Prophecies of the Bible reveal that in the end time occult practices and open Satan worship will sweep the entire world. It's already happening. This generation is being prepared mentally, emotionally and spiritually to accept a universal deception which will usher in the final New World Order, the Antichrist and the False Prophet. **It will be Satan's finest hour!** Those who do not heed God's repeated warnings to repent—but reject the laws and commandments of God as well as the teachings of Jesus Christ and the New Testament—will be deluded. The masses will be deceived into accepting and worshiping the coming Antichrist—declared by the False Prophet to be the supreme manifestation of "God" in the flesh, the false savior of the world (II Thess. 2:1-12; Rev. 13:4-6).

New in the Second Edition (July 2008)

This updated and expanded version of *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* includes two key additions: A new appendix addressing difficult passages of Scripture written by the apostle Paul, and a new chapter dealing with how the occult utilizes the world of entertainment to achieve its sinister goals. Also, all Old Testament passages have been updated using *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order*. This new, easy-to-read translation by Fred Coulter faithfully clarifies many commonly mistranslated passages.

Appendix A, *Understanding Paul's Difficult Scriptures Concerning the Law and Commandments of God*, provides the reader with a firm foundation from which to study the epistles of Paul. Typically, those with Protestant backgrounds assume that God's laws and commandments are no longer in force and rendered obsolete by Jesus' sacrifice. This approach is based primarily on the misunderstanding of certain passages written by Paul (mostly in the books of Romans and Galatians). The complexity of these particular passages makes them difficult to translate into English—and many of them are indeed poorly translated in the *KJV* and other English translations. Consequently, they appear to contradict the many clear passages concerning God's laws and commandments.

Appendix A explains these difficult-to-understand passages and proves unequivocally that the laws and commandments of God are fully in force today. Covered in detail are such topics as the "curse of the law," "works versus grace," "justification by faith," and more. The wonderful *purpose* of God's law is fully explained—and how *both* works and faith are required for salvation. In a world where mainstream religion is in a rapidly deteriorating "death spiral" brought on by a lethal dose of humanism and New Age ideology, this new appendix provides crucial understanding. In fact, you'll probably want to read Appendix A *first!*

In Chapter Five—*The World of Entertainment: Vehicle of the Occult*—the author examines the pivotal role of the media in the current

worldwide explosion of interest in the occult. The phenomenal influence of the Harry Potter movie series is analyzed; the seductive concept of so-called "white magic" is examined; and the tragic effects of video game violence are considered. As this new chapter demonstrates, Satan the devil has left no stone unturned in his efforts to lure an unsuspecting mankind to the brink of utter self-destruction.

Additional sections have been added dealing with ouija boards, tattoos, atheism—and the highly influential role of Oprah Winfrey as she injects her brand of New Age spirituality into the occult phenomenon.

PART ONE

Secrets of Halloween and Other Occult Holidays

CHAPTER ONE

How the "Christian" World Has Been Deceived

In spite of being forewarned in the Word of God, today the vast majority of professing "Christians" are deceived! Why? Because they do not read and study their Bibles for themselves, but believe the religious teachings of their leaders. As a result, most have failed to heed the repeated warnings of Jesus Christ and His apostles. Jesus specifically warned His disciples that false prophets would come in sheep's clothing, presenting themselves as messengers of God—and yet deceive the majority of people. While they would proclaim the name of Jesus and acknowledge Him as Savior, they would teach evil things in His name: "But beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, for within *they* are ravening wolves. **You shall know them by their fruits**. They do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, do they? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree *that is* not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into the fire. Therefore, **you shall assuredly know them by their fruits**." (Matt. 7:15-20).

Knowing someone by their fruit involves examining their teachings and behavior. If such teachers do not conform to the teachings of Jesus Christ, then they are not of God—though they preach in His name and even perform miracles (Matt. 24:24). Jesus said they are workers of lawlessness! Inspired by Satan the devil, they substitute their own religious teachings and traditions for the commandments and laws of God. This is especially obvious in the holiday traditions of Orthodox Christendom and Protestantism*, many of which are rooted in abominable pagan religious practices.

How did the very abominations that God says He hates come to be observed by those who call themselves "Christians"?

A False Christianity Arises

Apostasy within the very Church of God began before the original apostles of Jesus Christ had even died. Shortly before his death, the apostle Peter gave this prophetic warning: "But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed **there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies,** personally denying *the* Lord who bought them, and bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many people will follow *as authoritative* their destructive ways; *and* because of them, **the way of the truth will be blasphemed**. Also, through

* *In this publication the term* Orthodox Christendom *includes Roman Catholicism, Eastern and Russian Orthodox and Protestant religions.*

insatiable greed they will with enticing messages exploit you for gain; for whom the judgment of old is in *full* force, and their destruction is *ever* watching" (II Pet. 2:1-3).

In his epistle, Jude, a brother of the Lord Jesus Christ, emphatically warned the brethren to stand for the truth that was originally delivered by Jesus Christ and the apostles. He urged them to resist ungodly men who were infiltrating the churches and changing the grace of God into a lie: "Beloved, when personally exerting all *my* diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation, I was compelled to write to you, exhorting *you* to fervently fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints. For certain men have stealthily crept in, those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment. *They are* ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness, and are personally denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 3-4).

The apostasy that began during the lifetimes of the apostles rapidly developed after the last original apostle, John, died in about 99-100 AD. Within twenty years of his death a vastly different, counterfeit "Christian" church began to emerge. Historian Jesse Lyman Hurlburt summarized this critical period: "At the end of the first century, the doctrines set forth by the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Romans were accepted throughout the church as the standards of the faith. The teachings of St. Peter and St. John in their epistles show a complete accord with the views of St. Paul. Heretical opinions were arising and sects were forming, the germs of which had been noted and warned against by the apostles, but their full development came later" (*The Story of the Christian Church*, p. 44).

It was not long before this apostasy gained popularity and power. As Hurlburt notes: "We name the last generation of the first century, from 68 to 100 A. D., 'The Age of Shadows,' partly because the gloom of persecution was over the church; but more especially because of all periods in the history, it is the one about which we know the least. We have no longer the clear light of the Book of Acts to guide us; and no author of that age has filled the blank of history. We would like to read of the later work by such helpers of St. Paul as Timothy, Apollos and Titus, but all these and St. Paul's other friends drop out of the record at his death. **For fifty years after St. Paul's life a curtain hangs over the church, through which we strive vainly to look; and when at last it arises, about 120 A. D. with the writings of the earliest church fathers, we find a church in many aspects very different from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul**" (Ibid., p. 42, bold emphasis added).

In succeeding centuries the religious leaders of this apostate Christianity further developed their counterfeit teachings, traditions and dogmas, branding many of the true teachings of Jesus and His apostles as "heresy." They continually adapted pagan practices—via various holidays—into Christendom. Over time these practices became so entrenched that today when "Christians" encounter the truth of the Word of God through public preaching or personal study, they find it almost unbelievable.

The Religious Traditions of Men

The easiest way to incorporate a teaching into a religious system is to surround it with tradition. In the case of Judaism, Scripture cites the "traditions of the elders." In the case of Christendom, traditions originated with the early "church fathers." In both cases, men brought in false doctrines by establishing traditions. Once a tradition has been established, it becomes "dogma"—considered to have equal or even greater authority over the religious faithful than the very Word of God.

The Traditions of Judaism: During His earthly ministry, Jesus continually confronted and rebuked the Jewish religious leaders for esteeming their traditions above the God-breathed Scriptures. While hypocritically giving lip service to God, they actually rejected and replaced the Word of God with their traditions. We find an account of one such confrontation in the Gospel of Mark: "Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes from Jerusalem came together to Him. And when they saw some of His disciples eating with defiled hands (that is, unwashed *hands*), they found fault. **For the Pharisees and all the Jews, holding fast to the tradition of the elders**, do not eat unless they wash their hands thoroughly. Even *when coming* from the market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves. And there are many other things that they have received to observe, *such as the* washing of cups and pots and brass utensils and tables. For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, '**Why don't Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders**, but eat bread with unwashed hands?'

"And He answered *and* said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, "**This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men.**" **For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men**, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*.' Then He said to them, '**Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your *own* tradition** … **nullifying the authority of the Word of God by your tradition which you have passed down; and you practice many *traditions* such as this**' " (Mark 7:1-9, 13).

Some 1440 years before the ministry of Jesus Christ, God commanded the children of Israel not to add to or take away from the Word of God; neither were they to adopt the religious rituals of the Canaanites, who were idolaters and sun worshipers. Furthermore, they were not to worship the true God in the same manner that the heathen worshiped their idol gods: "When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations before you, where you go to possess them, and you take their place and dwell in their land, **take heed to yourself that you do not become ensnared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods that I may also do likewise?'** You shall not do so to the LORD your God, for every

abomination to the LORD, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods. **Whatsoever thing that I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it.**" (Deut. 12:29-32). Nearly all the added traditions of Judaism violated this command of God. (The oral traditions of Judaism were later codified in the Mishna in the second century AD and in the Talmud in the fourth century AD. For interested readers, thousands of these oral laws have been compiled by Rabbi Solomon Ganzfried in the *Code of Jewish Law*, Hebrew Publishing Company, New York, 1993, ISBN 0-88482-779-8; phone 1-518-392-3322).

The Traditions of Orthodox Christendom: While Orthodox Christendom maintains a pretense of upholding the Scriptures, it in fact holds the traditions of men on par with, or esteems them greater than, the Scriptures. These traditions originated in the teachings of the so-called "early church fathers," who were some of the leading apostate teachers from the second to fourth centuries AD. For example, upon close examination it becomes apparent that nearly all of the teachings of Roman Catholicism are based upon human traditions, arbitrary edicts of popes and misinterpretations of Scripture, rather than on sound scriptural interpretation alone. Hence, just as in Judaism, their traditions have replaced the Word of God.

In the catechism book, *My Catholic Faith*, Louis LaRavoire Morrow writes: "Divine Revelation comes down to us by two means: through Holy Scripture, written down under divine inspiration, and through Tradition, handed down orally from Apostolic times. We read the Bible with great respect, for it is the Word of God. We treat Tradition with as great reverence, for God speaks through Tradition as well. **It is wrong to believe the Bible alone without Tradition**" (p. 22).

This is absolutely false! The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be believed—it is the only standard upon which all teachings are to be based. The apostate traditions of men are to be rejected, not sanitized and given new "Christian" meanings so that "the faithful" may freely observe them.

Morrow further states that Roman Catholicism could preach the gospel without even having the Bible. "***It would have been possible* for the Church to bring the truths of Jesus Christ to all mankind without the Bible**…. Even today it is possible for many people to learn about Jesus Christ without reading the Scriptures" (Ibid., p. 28, non-italicized bold emphasis added). This teaching is also patently contrary to the teaching of the Old and New Testaments.

When the apostle Paul wrote to instruct Timothy about what he was to teach, he made no appeal to the oral traditions of men. Instead, he clearly pointed to the Word of God as the only basis for sound teaching. "**Diligently *study*** to present yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, **rightly dividing the Word of the truth**; but avoid profane and vain babblings [the traditions and doctrines of men] because they will *only* give rise to more ungodliness, and their words will eat away at the body like gangrene; of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus,

who have gone astray from the truth, claiming that the resurrection has already taken place, and are destroying the faith of some. Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands firm…" (II Tim. 2:15-19).

Paul further encouraged Timothy concerning the written Word of God: "But *as for* you, continue in the things that you did learn and were assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*; and that from a child **you have known the holy writings** [the Old Testament], which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which *is* in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture** [New Testament, as well as Old Testament] ***is*** **God-breathed** and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work" (II Tim 3:14-17).

Again, Paul did not make a single appeal to any so-called oral traditions of men for his authority, but only to the God-breathed Scriptures. (For an in-depth commentary on the history of the writing and preservation of the Bible, especially the New Testament, see *The New Testament In Its Original Order—A Faithful Version With Commentary* by Fred R. Coulter, 2004; ISBN 0-9675479-3-8; York Publishing Company, P.O. Box 1038, Hollister, California 95024-1038; also available through www.amazon.com.)

The apostle Peter—who Roman Catholicism falsely claims was the first pope—also condemned the vain traditions of men and upheld the authority of the Word of God. "**Knowing that you were not redeemed by corruptible things, by silver or gold, from your futile way of living, inherited *by tradition* from *your* forefathers**; but by *the* precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who truly was foreknown before *the* foundation of *the* world, but was manifested in *these* last times for your sakes; *even for you* who through Him do believe in God, Who raised Him from *the* dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God. Having purified your lives by obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love through *the* Spirit, love one another fervently with a pure heart. *For* you have been begotten again, not from corruptible seed, but from incorruptible *seed*, **by *the* living Word of God, *which* remains forever**" (I Pet. 1:18-23).

The apostle Paul charged those who would preach to preach only the Word of God, Old and New Testaments. "I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge *the* living and *the* dead at His appearing and His kingdom: **Preach the Word! Be urgent in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all patience and doctrine**. For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves *a great number of* teachers, having ears itching *to hear what satisfies their cravings*; but **they shall turn away their own ears from the truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths** [the traditions of men]" (II Tim. 4:1-4).

The apostle Peter wrote that the Word of God alone is the truth, not cleverly concocted myths. "Therefore, I will not neglect to make you always

mindful of these things, although you *already* know them and have been established in **the present truth**…. But I will make every effort *that,* after my departure, you may always have a *written* remembrance of these things *in order* to practice *them* for yourselves, **for we did not follow cleverly concocted myths *as our authority*, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His magnificent glory**; because He received glory and honor from God *the* Father when *the* voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, 'This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I am well pleased.' And this *is the* voice from heaven that we heard when we were with Him on the holy mountain. We also possess the confirmed prophetic Word [God-breathed New Testament] to which you do well to pay attention, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and *the* morning star arises in your hearts; **knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone's own *private* interpretation**; **because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the* Holy Spirit**" (II Pet. 1:12, 15-21).

Peter also wrote that there would be false teachers (inspired by Satan the devil) who would introduce destructive heresies (II Pet. 2:1-2).

Satan and His Ministers Appear to be Righteous

The master deceiver cleverly masquerades as an angel of light. He even quotes Scripture—but not for the sake of the truth. Instead, as he did when he tempted Jesus Christ for forty days and forty nights, Satan misapplies the truth of Scripture (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). Likewise his ministers use the same tactics today.

The apostle Paul warned the Corinthians concerning these false apostles. He wrote, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds might be corrupted from *the* simplicity that *is* in Christ. For indeed, if someone comes **preaching another Jesus**, whom we did not preach, or you receive **a different spirit**, which you did not receive, or **a different gospel**, which you did not accept, you put up with it as *something* good…. For such *are* false apostles—deceitful workers who are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And *it is* no marvel, for **Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light**. Therefore, *it is* no great thing if his servants also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness—whose end shall be according to their works" (II Cor. 11:3-4, 13-15).

The brethren of Corinth were allowing these false apostles to have authority over their lives, even to the point of spiritual abuse. Because of the seriousness of the situation, Paul attempted to bring them to their senses by exposing their foolishness for listening to such teachers. "Since many [false apostles] boast according to *the* flesh, I also will boast. **For since you are *so* intelligent** [thinking they knew more than Paul did], **you gladly bear with fools. For you bear *it* if anyone brings you into bondage, if anyone devours *you*, if anyone takes *from you*, if anyone exalts himself, if**

anyone beats you on the face. I speak as though we were under reproach for being weak; but in whatever *way* anyone else is bold (I speak in foolishness), I also am bold. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they *the* seed of Abraham? So am I. **Are they servants of Christ?** (I am speaking as if I were out of my mind.)" (verses 18-23).

Likewise, the apostle Peter exhorted the brethren to beware of the teachings of men who use these devious tactics: "And bear in mind that the long-suffering of our Lord *is* salvation, exactly as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has also written to you; as *he has* also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them concerning these things; in which are some things *that are* difficult to understand, which **the ignorant and unstable are twisting *and distorting*, as *they* also *twist and distort* the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction**. Therefore, beloved, since you know this in advance, be on guard against *such practices,* lest you be led astray with the error of the lawless ones, *and* you fall from your own steadfastness" (II Pet. 3:15-17). And again, Paul wrote, "For we are not like the many, who for *their own* profit are corrupting the Word of God; but we speak with sincerity, as from God, *and* before God, *and* in Christ" (II Cor. 2:17).

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul commanded the brethren to prove all things and to avoid every form of wickedness. "**Prove all things. Hold fast *to that which* is good. Abstain from every form of wickedness**" (I Thess. 5:21-22). Therefore, all religious teachings must be examined and judged in the light of God's Word, the God-breathed Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments. If any teaching does not conform to the teachings of the Bible—"if they do not speak according to this Word" (Isa. 8:20)—it is a false teaching promulgated by false prophets and is to be rejected.

In Chapter Two we will expose the pagan origins of Halloween—and examine ancient evidence proving that the holiday's origins predate its observance by Orthodox Christendom. Although promulgated as Christian, "Hallowed Eve" (or "Holy Evening") has nothing to do with holiness and the true Jesus Christ—but has everything to do with the worship of Satan the devil, the false god of this world.

CHAPTER TWO

The Occult Origins of Halloween, Heathen Gods and Goddesses

Every year hundreds of millions of people throughout the world celebrate Halloween. During this celebration, children put on costumes or disguise themselves, walk through neighborhoods, knock on doors, and speak the words "trick or treat," expecting to receive candy or money. Many churches are involved, sponsoring Halloween parties for children, complete with costumes, games and apple-bobbing contests. Adults attend glitzy Halloween costume parties, dances and balls, most of them oblivious to the fact that this night celebrates Wicca's most important "high Sabbat" in devotion to pagan gods and goddesses.

Centuries after the apostles' deaths, Orthodox Christendom appropriated Halloween as one of its official holidays, and Halloween's observance has been accepted as "Christian" ever since. However, it is anything but Christian! In fact, the custom originated in the ancient pagan world and was celebrated centuries before the New Testament Church was founded. In tracing the roots of this pagan holiday, it is necessary to go back to an early period in mankind's history, to the time just after sin entered the world through disobedience to God and His laws and commandments.

Pre-Christian History

After Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden for their sins, their descendants continued to live in disobedience and wickedness. There were only a few who loved and obeyed God. After fifteen hundred years, all mankind had given themselves over to evil and wickedness, causing the Lord God to execute His judgment against them and destroy that world with a universal flood. "And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved in His heart. And the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the crawling thing, and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them.'… Now the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt—for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them. And, behold, I will destroy them *with* the earth' " (Gen. 6:5-7, 11-13). (See Appendix C, *Halloween and the Flood of Noah—Is There a Link?*

p. 287.) Because Noah was a just man and walked with God, he found "grace in the eyes of the LORD." In His mercy God rescued Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives. In addition, God selected certain animals, and together they were all saved in the ark from the destruction of that world by the flood (Gen. 6:8-8:22).

After the flood, however, mankind soon returned to their wicked ways in rebellion against God and began following Nimrod. "And Cush begat Nimrod. **He began to be a mighty one in the earth**. He was a mighty hunter against [in place of] the LORD. Therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod—the mighty hunter against [in place of] the LORD.' And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar" (Gen. 10:8-10).

At Babel, Nimrod and his wife, Semiramis, established a religious system in rebellion against God—wherein they and their followers also tried to establish a dictatorial government epitomized by building a tower to "reach unto heaven." They believed Satan's lie that if they worshiped him they would become gods in the flesh. (See *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop for a complete and detailed historical documentation; available at www.cbcg.org or www.biblicaltruthministries.org.)

The book of Genesis contains this account: "And the whole earth was of one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they traveled from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar. And they settled there. And they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, 'Come, let us build us a city and a tower, *with* its top reaching into the heavens. And let us establish a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth.' And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men had built. And the LORD said, '**Behold, the people *are* one and they all have one language. And this *is only the beginning of* what they will do—now nothing which they have imagined to do will be restrained from them**. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they cannot understand one another's speech.' So the LORD scattered them abroad from that place upon the face of all the earth. And they quit building the city. Therefore the name of it is called Babel, because the LORD confused the language of all the earth there. And from there the LORD scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (Gen. 11:1-9).

Wherever the people were scattered, they took their false religion with them. Since their one language was changed into many languages, we find in antiquity various names for the same false gods and goddesses (or demons).

In his epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul wrote that because men did not want to retain the knowledge of God, He abandoned them to their own depraved imaginations: "**And in exact proportion as they did not consent to have God in *their* knowledge, God abandoned them to a reprobate mind**…" (Rom. 1:28-32).

The worship of the sun (symbolized by the sacred serpent), along with nature worship, has its roots in this rejection of God and His Word. In rebellion, mankind watched the changing of the seasons and observed the life and death of crops, perceiving such natural processes as mystic. They developed fertility cults with gods and goddesses who died and were reborn. Thus the worship of the earth's "spirit" as a mother and the incarnation of the earth's fertility forces within dying gods and goddesses developed into one of the most widespread forms of pagan religion recorded in antiquity.

Whether it was Inanna of the Sumerians, Ishtar of the Babylonians, or Fortuna of the Romans, every civilization had a sect of religion based on the embodiment of the earth's spirit as a caring mother-goddess. The Egyptians worshipped Hathor in this manner, as did the Chinese with Shingmoo. The Germans worshipped Hertha as the great Mother Earth, and the apostate Jews idolized "the queen of heaven." In Greece, Gaia is Mother Earth, the creator of all things. Beneath her were many other earth goddesses including Demeter, Artemis, Aphrodite, and Hecate. Hecate, the Titan earth mother of wizards and witches, was considered to be the underworld sorceress of all that is demonic.

Goddess Hecate: As the dark goddess of witchcraft, Hecate was worshiped with mystical rites and magical incantations. Her name was most likely derived from the ancient Egyptian word Heka ("sorcery" or "magical"), which may explain her association with the Egyptian frog goddess of the same name. This may also explain the affiliation of frogs with witchcraft.

Hecate's followers sincerely believed in and feared her magic and presence, and magical ritual was used to appease her. This appeasement of the dark goddess was primarily due to her role as the sorceress of the afterlife, but pagans also thought she had the ability to afflict the mind with madness.

Physical locations that had a history of violence were believed to be magnets for malevolent spirits, a concept similar to that of "haunted houses." If one wanted to get along with the local resident ghosts, he needed to sacrifice to the ruler of the darkness, Hecate. A night owl was thought to announce the acceptance of these sacrifices, and those who gathered on the eve of the full moon perceived its hoot as a good omen. Hecate's devotees left food offerings for the goddess ("Hecate's Supper") and sometimes sacrificed puppies and female black lambs.

Deformed and vicious owl-like affiliates of Hecate called "strigae" were thought to fly through the night feeding on the bodies of unattended babies. During the day the strigae appeared as simple old women, and such folklore may account for the myths of flying witches. The same strigae hid amidst the leaves of trees during the annual festival of Hecate, held on August 13, when Hecate's followers offered up the highest praise to the goddess, communed with the tree spirits (earth spirits, including Hecate, were thought to inhabit trees—the basis for the modern radical ecology movement) and summoned the souls of the dead from the mouths of nearby

caves. It was here that Hecate was known as Hecate-Chthonia ("Hecate of the earth"), a depiction in which she most clearly embodied the popular earth-mother-spirit—or Mother Nature.

Hecate was known by other names throughout the pagan world. Some people regarded her as Hecate-Propylaia, "the one before the gate," a role in which she guarded the entrances of homes and temples from nefarious outside evils. Others knew her as Hecate-Propolos, "the one who leads" as an underworld guide. Finally, she was known as Hecate-Phosphoros, "the light bearer," her most sacred title and one that recalls another powerful underworld spirit, Satan, who appears as a messenger of light. However, it was her role as the feminist earth-goddess-spirit Hecate-Chthonia that popularized her divinity (Anderson, D., *Happy Halloween?* 2004).

Modern pagans perceive the earth similarly, often referring to the earth as Gaia—a living, caring entity. They believe that people are one of Mother Earth's species rather than her dominators. She provides the living biosphere—the regions on, above, and below her surface, where created things, both physical and spiritual, live (Anderson, D., *What Witches Do After Halloween,* 2004).

Wiccans (modern pagans) and witches acknowledge all of the so-called deities (demons) that ancient peoples worshipped. However, the primary deities are "the Goddess and the God," the Great (Earth) Mother and her horned consort, the "Horned God," the ancient god of fertility.

Horned God: The Horned God is actually a modern term invented in the 20th century to link together numerous male nature gods out of such widely dispersed and historically unconnected mythologies as the Celtic Cernunnos, the Welsh Caerwiden, the English Herne the Hunter, the Hindu Pashupati, the Greek Pan and various satyrs—and even a Paleolithic cave painting known as "the Sorcerer" in the Cave of the Three Brothers in France.

The Greek god Pan is perhaps the most familiar form of the Horned God/Wild Man archetype. The ancient scholars of Alexandria believed that Pan personified the Natural Cosmos, and the word Pantheism is derived from this idea in which all Nature is God and God is All Nature. Arcadian Greece first recorded Pan's worship.

The Horned One, or Cernunnos, is a Celtic god of fertility, life, animals, wealth, and the underworld. His worship spread throughout Gaul and into Britain as well. Paleolithic cave paintings found in France that depict a stag standing upright or a man dressed in stag costume seem to indicate that Cernunnos' origins date to those times. Known to the Druids as Hu Gadarn, he was the god of the underworld and astral planes and the consort of the great goddess.

The Horned God has cloven hoofs or the hindquarters of a goat with a human torso and a human but goat-horned head. The god's horns are seen as phallic symbols, representing male potency, strength and protection. As a symbol of sexuality, the Horned God is complementary to female fertility deities known collectively as the Great Mother. In this context, he is

sometimes referred to as the Great God or the Great Father. He impregnates the goddess and dies during the autumn and winter months and is reborn gloriously in the spring, while the goddess always lives on as Mother Earth, giving life to the Horned God as he moves through the eternal cycle of life, death and rebirth. He alternates with the goddess of the moon in ruling over life and death, continuing the cycle of death, rebirth and reincarnation (Wikipedia, *Horned God,* 2005; Smith, Dr. A., *Cernunnos,* 1997, 1999).

This pagan belief in a cycle of life, death and rebirth as portrayed by the seasons of the year can be found in every ancient culture.

Druid Origins and Customs of Halloween

The origins of Halloween can specifically be traced to the ancient Celts (who lived in what is now known as Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Northern France) and their Druid priests. The end of October commemorated their festival of the waning year, when the sun began its downward course and the fields yielded ripened grain. "Samhain" or "Summer's End," as this feast to the dying sun was called, was celebrated with human sacrifice, divination or soothsaying and prayers. Druids believed that during this season spirits walked, and evil held power over the souls of men.

On October 31, their New Year's Eve, great bonfires were kindled, which were thought to simulate the sun and to procure blessings for the entire succeeding year. The fires remained burning as a means to frighten away evil spirits. The Druids held these early Halloween celebrations in honor of Samhain, also known as Lord of the Dead, whose festival fell on November 1. These bonfires, or "bone fires," were also used in animal and human sacrifice—thus the name. The tradition of lighting a bonfire has continued to modern times.

The Druids believed that people needed to be cleansed after they died. Samhain supposedly condemned the souls of the departed to inhabit the bodies of animals. Kurt Koch writes in *Occult ABC,* "During the night of October 31, the enchanted souls were freed by the Druid god, Samhain, and taken together into the Druid heaven. This festival was always accompanied by animal and sometimes human sacrifices and linked with all kinds of magic" (p. 87). The Druids held back no cruelty in attempting to please the Lord of the Dead!

During the festival of Samhain, people believed that there was a very thin veil between the living and the dead, and they feared that the dead would come back in search of bodies to possess. Fearing possession, people did many things to trick the spirits such as dressing up to look like them. Druid priests wore masks, so they would not be recognized and attacked by evil spirits. Others wore frightening costumes to scare the evil spirits away. Celts also hollowed out a turnip, on which they carved a grotesque face to fool demons. They carried lanterns to light their way in the dark and to ward off evil spirits (*Pagan Traditions of the Holidays*, pp. 79-80).

Druid Jack-O-Lantern and Trick-or-Treat: The Druids originated the practice of hollowing out turnips or potatoes (Jack-O-Lanterns) and

filling them with human fat. Whenever a raiding party came to a home to demand of the husband that someone inside be surrendered as a human sacrifice, they would light a Jack-O-Lantern filled with human fat; if the husband relented and provided one of his loved ones as a sacrifice, the Druid party would leave the burning Jack-O-Lantern on the porch. This lantern would tell the other raiding parties and the demonic host that this home had surrendered a human for sacrifice and that the remaining people inside were to be left alone. This guarantee, that no one else in the house would be harmed, was the "treat."

If the husband refused to surrender one of his loved ones, a "trick" would be placed upon the house. The members of the raiding party would draw a large hexagram using human blood on the front door. (They got the blood for the hexagram from a dead body which they dragged around with them.) The demonic host would be attracted to this hexagram and would invade the house, causing one or more of the inhabitants to either go insane or die from fright (*America's Occult Holidays*, p. 20).

Various names for the Jack-O-Lantern through the years have included "Lantern Men," "Hob-O-Langer," "Will-O-The-Wisp," "Fox Fairy," etc. "Jack" is a nickname for "John," which is a common slang word meaning, "man." Thus, "Jack-O-Lantern" literally means, "man with a lantern."

Many legends have grown up around the lore of the Jack-O-Lantern. According to some, Jack is a wandering soul trapped between heaven and hell. Another tale—about a drunk named Jack who made a deal with the devil—claims to be the true origin of the Jack-O-Lantern myth. In *Halloween,* Helen Borten writes:

> *An Irish legend tells how this [lantern] custom began. A man named Jack was kept out of Heaven because he was stingy. The gates of Hell were closed to him, too, because he had played jokes on the Devil. Poor Jack, carrying a lantern to light his way, was supposed to walk the earth forever.*

Whatever the true roots of the Jack-O-Lantern, it has become a predominant symbol of Halloween.

Games to divine the future have always been popular Halloween rituals. "Bobbing for apples" was a game played during the ancient Roman Pomona's festival (Pomona was the goddess of fruit), which occurred at about the same time after the autumn equinox. This game was later adopted by the Celts, who used it to divine the future. A young man who was able to secure an apple between his teeth was assured of his girl's love for the coming year. The Snap Apple game was one in which each person, in his turn, would spring up in an attempt to bite an apple that was being twirled on the end of a stick. The first to succeed would be the first to marry.

Questions concerning marriage, luck, health, and the time of one's death were popular subjects of divination. In Scotland, young people pulled

shoots out of the ground to ascertain which of them would marry during the coming year and in what order the marriages should occur.

Owls, bats, cats and toads were an essential part of Halloween divination. Witches considered these creatures to be demon-possessed and controlled. Traditionally they were known as the "witch's familiars." A divining "familiar" was the species of animal whose shape Satan would assume in order to aid the witch in divining the future. A witch would closely watch the animal's movements (whether slow or fast)—and she would note the direction in which the animal moved and the kinds of sounds it made in order to foretell length of life and/or impending illness (*Pagan Traditions of Holidays*, pp. 75-76).

Today in parts of Ireland, October 31 is still known as "Oidhch Shamhna," or "Vigil of Saman." In the next chapter, we will learn how Halloween became an official holiday of Orthodox Christendom.

CHAPTER THREE

Halloween and Orthodox Christendom

The general practice of the Christianized Roman Empire was to try to convert pagans as quickly as possible. However, the pagans were reluctant to give up their false gods and ancient practices, so pagan religious practices were appropriated in order to encourage the pagans' conversion. This was accomplished by renaming pagan holidays and changing their symbolism to reflect "Christian" themes. In his catechism book, *My Catholic Faith,* Louis LaRavoire Morrow proudly boasts of the Roman Catholic Church's practice of renaming pagan festivals in order to encourage conversions to the church. "In the history of the Church we find that she often christened pagan festivals, making use of dates and ceremonies, and endowing them with an entirely new and Christian significance" (p. 416). In her book *Witches*, Erica Jong writes, "Christian holidays were deliberately set at times that had been sacred since the earliest Pagan days. The Christians knew the power Paganism had over the people and usually renamed rather than reinvented holidays" (p. 124).

The pagan festival of the dead continued to be observed until the sixth century, when it was slowly integrated into Christian practice. Pope Gregory the Great (540-604 AD) advised the Archbishop of Canterbury to retain the Druid sacrifices and celebrate them in honor of Christian saints. The Roman Church first introduced All Saints' Day on May 13, 609 AD, to commemorate all those saints and martyrs who had no special day of recognition. In the 8th century, the day was moved from May 13 to November 1 to counteract the pagan celebrations held on that same day. By the ninth century the Roman Church was holding a Eucharist of reconciliation for those dead who had not been named among the saints. The evening before, October 31, was called "All Hallowed Eve" (holy evening).

In the tenth century, "All Souls' Day" was added to the Roman Catholic calendar on November 2 for the souls still suffering in purgatory. Visiting cemeteries and setting out "soul cakes" (currant buns), wine, tobacco and gifts for the dead became a popular practice. People went from house to house begging for these soul cakes; in return, the recipients would offer up prayers for the souls of the contributor's dead relatives. This was referred to as a "souling."

During the Reformation, Protestant authorities saw fit to remove "All Souls' Day" from the church calendar. John King reveals, "The feast was restored only as late as 1928, when it was presumably felt that superstition or the pagan influence no longer offered any significant danger to Christian orthodoxy" (King, *The Celtic Druids' Year: Seasonal Cycles of the Ancient Celts,* p. 28).

Morrow writes of the significance of the feast of "All Saints' Day," November 1, for the Roman Catholic Church: "On this day ***the Church honors the Angels and Saints*** in heaven. ***It is a holy day of obligation.*** This day is a great family feast. It has its origin in the year 610, when Boniface IV dedicated the Pantheon of Rome to the Blessed Virgin and all the martyrs. ***It is in special commemoration of the millions of Saints in heaven who have not been officially canonized by the Church,*** and thus have no special commemoration during the year" (*My Catholic Faith*, p. 417; bold emphasis added). Since Scripture condemns the worship of angels, men and any other "deity" besides God Himself, Morrow's reference to honoring "Angels," "Saints," and the "Blessed Virgin" can only be referring to pagan deities or demons, disembodied souls, and the mother goddess.

Likewise, November 2 is the feast of "All Souls' Day." Morrow explains its meaning for Catholics: "This day commemorates ***all the souls in purgatory.*** It is a day for ***pious remembrance of the dead,*** and for offering of Masses and prayers for them. On this day as on Christmas, priests are allowed to say three Masses, for the souls of the departed, that they may be free from Purgatory" (Ibid., bold emphasis added). The concept of "souls in purgatory" closely resembles the wandering disembodied souls of the Druid religion who have not gained entrance into heaven.

The Roman Catholic Church's historical practice of appropriating pagan celebrations and giving them new "Christian" names and meanings is quite universal—with far too many instances to be covered in depth in this book. However, Sir James George Frazer gives this succinct summary: "**Taken altogether, the coincidences of the Christian [Catholic feasts] with the heathen festivals are too close and too numerous to be accidental**. They mark the compromise which the Church in the hour of its triumph was compelled to make with its vanquished yet still dangerous rivals. The inflexible Protestantism of the primitive missionaries, with their fiery denunciation of heathendom, had been exchanged for the supple policy, the easy tolerance, the comprehensive charity of shrewd ecclesiastics, who clearly perceived that if Christianity [Catholicism] was to conquer the world it could do so only by relaxing the too rigid principles of its Founder, by widening a little the narrow gate which leads to salvation" (*The Golden Bough,* p. 419, bold emphasis and bracketed comments added).

Modern Celebration

"All Hallowed Eve," or Halloween, was nearly absent in America during the first few hundred years of settlement. Adhering to the Word of God, the English Puritans in America (a strict Protestant sect) rejected Halloween as a Catholic and pagan holiday. Over two hundred years later, the Irish potato famine of the 1840s brought thousands of Irish immigrants to America, who in turn brought the Halloween custom with them. At that time Halloween was regarded as a night of fear—and wise men, respectful of hobgoblins and wandering demons, stayed indoors. Only in modern times has Halloween developed into a festive time for children.

Direct parallels can be made between pagan traditions and modern customs of Halloween. Trick or treating rehearses the ancient custom of people visiting neighborhood homes on Halloween night to represent the dead in search of food. Those who pass out candy represent the homes visited by the dead and may also represent worried individuals seeking to appease Hecate and other nighttime terrors. Many children and adults disguise themselves today with masks and costumes on Halloween. Such masks of devils and hobgoblins symbolize evil spirits seeking mischief, as well as representing an attempt to scare evil spirits away. Yet, there are even more sinister reenactments on Halloween that have been largely ignored by society.

Wicca and Satanist High Sabbat: For modern pagans, Wiccans, witches and Satanists, Halloween is the holiest day of the year—a High Sabbat—and a serious celebration. Celebrated above all other occult holidays, Halloween is a festival of the dead and represents both the end and the beginning of the occult year. It also marks the beginning of the death and destruction associated with winter. "At this time the power of the underworld is unleashed, and spirits are supposedly freed to roam about the earth; it is considered the best time to contact spirits" (*Halloween and Satanism,* p. 146).

As in times past, modern pagans celebrate Samhain Sabbat (Halloween) because they believe that at this time of the year the veil between the living and the dead is at its thinnest, allowing communication with the spirit world.

Historically, real witches were known to revel on Halloween night. According to *Man, Myth & Magic,* the witches of Aberdeen danced "round an old grey stone at the foot of the hill at Craigleuch, the Devil himself playing music before them." Modern Wiccans practice a similar sky-clad (nude) Halloween tradition, calling on earth spirits and goddesses to visit their knife-drawn circles of power. It is preferable to hold this sky-clad circle of power in an evergreen grove, especially when Halloween falls on the night of a full moon. Halloween is strongly associated with goddess worship. "It is a time when the summer goddess (the Great Mother) relinquishes her power to the winter god (the Horned God)" (*Witches,* p. 122).

For Satanists, who celebrate the holiday as one of two *highest* holy days, Halloween is the sinister, direct celebration of Satan and death. Sacrifices are performed by a select few at the highest levels of witchcraft covens, satanic cults and various occult secret societies. "**At Halloween the sacrifices of some of these satanic cults are unspeakably vicious and brutal**. This includes a series of six weeks of rituals including the slaughter of a small animal like a bird or cat, progressing through each week with a larger animal such as a goat, and **then the murder of a small infant or child until the final night where they ritually murder not only another child but also an adult female**" (*Like Lambs to the Slaughter,* pp. 190, 192; bold emphasis added).

Every year there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of missing children and young adults who are never found, nor are their bodies ever recovered. Are these victims of secret occultists' human sacrifices? Only God knows!

How ironic and tragic that on a night when paganism and occultism are at their zenith and unspeakably vile and violent acts are being played out among Wiccans and Satanists, many Christians—rather than involving themselves in prayer and repentance—are having their own Halloween celebrations!

Halloween's Popularity: In the past few decades Halloween's popularity has grown by leaps and bounds. Second only to Christmas, Halloween is the biggest shopping holiday for many retailers, generating more than $6 billion in sales. More candy is sold for Halloween than is sold for Valentine's Day, and there are more Halloween parties than New Year's Eve parties! Two-thirds of all adults celebrate Halloween, and consumers send each other 28 million Halloween cards (*The Halloween Industry,* 2001-2002*)*.

An example of Halloween's growing popularity can be seen in San Francisco. Halloween in San Francisco is what Mardi Gras, another occult celebration, is to New Orleans—one of the biggest events of the year. No other city in America has anything to equal it. Promoted as a peaceful and happy event, it is the biggest impromptu bash of its kind, bringing out a quarter of a million revelers to the Castro and Market Street neighborhood.

The following excerpt was written by an eager traveler from the United Kingdom who celebrated Halloween in San Francisco. "Firstly, unlike in the UK, Halloween in America is a big deal. Whilst we half-heartedly celebrate it, over here it's one of the biggest holidays of the year. So it [was] by luck that I found myself in San Francisco, which happens to host the biggest Halloween celebration in the world with 300,000 people taking to the Castro area of San Francisco [which is otherwise the epicenter of gay culture in San Francisco]. The party however soon turned to violence, and multiple arrests were made as seven people were stabbed, and police in riot gear had to step in. A friend I was with was attacked by several black men. I could only watch as they tore into him" (*Brian Webb's Travel Journal*).

Halloween Is Darkness

Visions of Jack-O-Lanterns with burning candles inside to make the jeering faces look even more eerie; thoughts of skeletons and ghosts, goblins and devils; the use of black, a favorite color of Halloween; rooms made to be dark and scary—all point to **the theme of Halloween, which is clearly darkness**. I John 1:5 states that "God is light and there is no darkness in Him." Jesus Christ tells us in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world; the one who follows Me shall never walk in darkness, but shall have the light of

life." Through the prophet Isaiah, God solemnly warns, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isa. 5:20).

Halloween is the very antithesis of true Christianity. Its images are images of death, demons, ghosts, goblins, spiritism and Satanism. All this is absolutely contrary to God's Word. Halloween is about the dead, whereas the true God is the God of the living! Further, Halloween glorifies the spirit realm—a realm composed of fallen angels or demons and Satan, its ruler, who are opposed to God and to the truth.

The Spirit Realm

The Scriptures teach that there is an unseen world of angelic beings that make up the spirit realm. Righteous angels—"ministering spirits"—are used of God to serve those who are to inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). Gabriel, one of two archangels, appears to play a key role in bringing about the fulfillment of prophecy (Dan. 8; 9)—especially those relating to the first coming of Christ (Luke 1:11-19; 26-38). The other archangel, Michael, is particularly involved with the end-time nations of Israel (Dan. 10; 12). (Also see Jude 9; Rev. 12:17.)

Demon spirits—"fallen" angels under the sway of Satan the devil—inhabit the earth, where they seek to interact with and influence mankind in various ways. Humans can be misled and swayed by evil spirits; as numerous Scriptures show, people can also be tormented and even possessed by demons or unclean spirits (see Mark 1:32; Acts 8:7; etc.).

Jesus dealt with such evil spirits numerous times throughout His ministry. In a Capernaum synagogue, for example, He encountered a man with an "unclean spirit" who cried out, "Ah! What have we [demons] to do with You, Jesus *the* Nazarean? Have You come to destroy us? I know Who You are, the Holy *One* of God" (Luke 4:34). Jesus rebuked the spirit, commanding it to be silent and come out of the man (verse 35). Others afflicted by demons were brought to Christ later that same day: "And [following Jesus' command] demons went out from many, crying out and saying, 'You are the Christ, the Son of God.' But He rebuked them *and* did not allow them to speak, because they knew *that* He was the Christ" (verse 41). Also, a person can be possessed by many demons at once (Luke 8:30).

Satan himself prowls about like a lion, seeking those he may devour (I Pet. 5:8). We learn from the story of Job that God sometimes allows Satan to test us (Job 1:6-12). As the present "god of this world" (I Cor. 4:4), Satan is the "prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). The apostle Paul warns us to put on the "whole armor of God" in order to resist the "wiles of the devil," explaining that we are "not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*" (Eph. 6:11-12).

Demon Influence on Nations: In the preceding passage from Ephesians, Paul refers to "powers" and "world rulers of the darkness of this age"—wicked spirits in "high places." The powerful spirit influence behind such leaders as Hitler, Stalin, etc. is well documented. Even today we see whole groups, tribes and even nations under the sway of Satan and his demons. In certain African and Asian nations in particular, demon influence is so pervasive that it has led to mass slaughtering and genocide.

In Jesus' time, He chastened the Jewish leadership as a whole for being a "wicked and adulterous generation" (Matt. 12:39). He told them that they were like a man from which an unclean spirit had departed—only to return later with seven additional spirits more wicked than the first. Warning that the state of such a person would be much worse in the end, He aimed His message right at the heart of the Jewish leaders: "Likewise shall it also be with this wicked generation" (verses 43-45). The implication here is obvious: The Jewish leadership of that time was under the influence of demonic spirits—they were "of [their] father the devil" and followed after the lusts of Satan (John 8:44). Furthermore, because they refused to repent when given the opportunity, that spirit influence would only get worse.

Certain powerful demons are bound in the physical earth. Job 26:5 says, "Dead *things* are formed from under the waters" (*KJV*). A literal translation of the Hebrew would read, "The Rafa [fallen angels] are made to writhe from beneath the waters." Additional biblical references indicate that some places on the earth are a kind of holding tank or prison, where God has bound certain fallen entities (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). Apparently, some of these powerful demons are to be released in order to play key roles in the fulfillment of end-time prophecy. In Revelation 9:14, John writes of "four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates"—which are released to kill a third of mankind.

The ultimate in satanic/demonic influence will take place when the coming seven-headed, ten-horned "beast system" dominates the entire world. Revelation 13 shows that the leader of this coming political and military system—which will encompass government, education, religion, economics and commerce, technology, entertainment, etc.—will **derive his "power and his throne and great authority" from "the dragon"** (verse two). This "dragon" is identified as the "ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is deceiving the whole world" (Rev. 12:9). As the final accomplishment of the occult agenda, the entire world will worship Satan, the dragon: "And **they worshiped the dragon**, **who gave *his* authority to the beast**..." (Rev. 13:4).

Interestingly, Satan once tried to give this *same* authority to Christ: "After that, the devil took Him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and said to Him, 'All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me' " (Matt. 4:8-9). Of course, Jesus refused, rebuking the devil. But the coming "beast" will wholly embrace Satan and the occult. He will fully accept Satan's offer to "rule the world" as he leads mankind in giving Satan

what he desires most—to be worshipped!

Occultism is Idolatry: Participation in the occult can lead to powerful spirit influence in the lives of those involved—and often results in demonic possession. Even Christians can be affected by the spirit realm, as some in the end times will unknowingly "follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" (I Tim. 4:1).

The Hebrew people were warned that earth spirits pretending to be gods might seek communion with men. In I Sam. 28:13 we read that the witch of Endor summoned such a fallen spirit, which ascended from "out of the earth." These and other scriptures reveal that the dynamic (or energy) behind the earth-goddess-spirits of Halloween is indeed real—and is the same power behind the legions of fallen spirits bound within the earth.

Sadly, as in antiquity, those who practice modern paganism are deceived into worshipping "devils" (Rev. 9:20). Dogma embraced as the wisdom of goddesses is defined in the Scriptures as "doctrines of devils." The apostle Paul said, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons" (I Cor. 10:20). In Acts 7:41-42 we read that those who worship idols are joined to the "army of heaven" (Greek, *stratos*, a "fallen angel army"). Psalm 96:5 concludes that "all the gods of the nations are idols" (Hebrew *elilim*, meaning nothing or vanity; the LXX translates *elilim* as *daimonia*, or demons). Thus, the pagan images which represented the ancient gods and goddesses were *elilim*—empty, nothing, vanity. But behind such empty idols were the living dynamics of idolatry itself and the very objects of heathen adoration—demons and Satan the devil himself.

Because the Bible clearly defines earth-centered goddess worship as actually paying homage to Satan and his demons—and since demons are eternal personalities who desire the worship of humans—it is clear that Wiccan deities are, in reality, nothing more than neo-pagan titles given to demon spirits (*Happy Halloween?*).

Satan the Devil Is the God of This World

The New Testament reveals that Satan the devil is the god of this world, as the apostle Paul wrote: "For we [the apostles and true Christians] have personally renounced the hidden things of dishonest gain, not walking in *cunning* craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, we are commending ourselves to every man's conscience before God. But if our gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are perishing; in whom **the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe**, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is *the* image of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:2-4).

Satan is also called the prince of the power of the air. This is why he can deceive people into following him and rejecting the true God and His Son Jesus Christ. Paul reminded the Ephesians that before their conversion they were dead in their sins: "Now you were dead in trespasses

and sins, in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, **according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience**; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest *of the world*" (Eph. 2:1-3).

Satan's spiritual power even extends into high places in government and religion (Eph. 6:11-18). He uses these institutions to further deceive the whole world. Indeed, the apostle John described him as "the great dragon … **the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is deceiving the whole world**" (Rev. 12:9).

Many who profess to be Christians have been deceived into celebrating Halloween. In Revelation Two, Jesus Christ personally rebukes the church of Thyatira, saying, "I have a few things against you, because you allow the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants into committing fornication [spiritual fellowship with satanic religions] and eating things sacrificed to idols [the Catholic Eucharist is sacrificed to idols]. And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, but she did not repent. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their works. **And I will kill her children with death**; and all the churches shall know that I am He Who searches *the* reins and hearts; and I will give to each of you according to your works. But to you I say, and to *the* rest who *are* in Thyatira, **as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan**, as they speak; I will not cast upon you any other burden" (Rev. 2:20-24).

The "depths of Satan" are found not only in Halloween, but also in all the other occult holidays of this world. In chapter four we will take a more in-depth look at how Satan is deceiving the world through occult saturation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Secrets of the Occult Saturate the World Today

The Occult: What Is It? The word *occult* comes from the Latin *occultus,* which means "concealed." In its ordinary usage, it means "beyond the bounds of ordinary knowledge—the mysterious, the concealed, or that which is hidden from view." Witchcraft, magic, etc., are occult substitutes for Bible miracles. Whereas God does miracles for His people, believers in the occult seek miracles by appealing to spirit powers (demons).

Students of the occult frequently divide occult phenomena into three areas: (1) forms of divination, (2) types of mystical experience, and (3) magical manipulation.

Divination is an attempt to obtain, by supernatural means, information which cannot be obtained by the natural processes of study and investigation. Divination seeks especially to foretell the future. Just as magic is the occult substitute for divine miracles, divination is the occult substitute for God-inspired prophecy. God drove Israel into captivity because they practiced sins that included divination (II Kings 17:17-18) or soothsaying.

Augury (another form of divination) involves interpreting omens—and is based on the belief that the activities of gods could be predicted. This is done by observing events in nature (the weather, behavior of animals, the movement of stars, etc.), or by observing the results of ritual ceremonies involving chance (casting lots, tossing arrows, etc.). King Manasseh of Israel practiced such things and did evil before God (II Kings 21:6; II Chron. 33:6). The most common form of divination (augury) today is astrology. Other examples of divination include reading palms (palmistry), Ouija boards, tarot cards, crystal balls, and interpretation of dreams.

Any attempt to transcend the bounds of the physical world with out-of-body experiences such as astral flight or levitation fits into category two—types of mystical experience. Séances, necromancy and psychic healing also fit into this category.

Necromancy is the alleged power to communicate with the spirits of dead people ("ghosts"). The Scriptures call this "having a familiar spirit." Today, people who do this are called spiritists, spiritualists, or mediums. There are millions of people in South America who claim this power, and hundreds of thousands in the United States, many of whom are members of the hundreds of spiritualist or spiritist churches (*The Occult: Witchcraft, Magic, Divination and Psychics*).

Magical manipulation—using hidden forces of the spiritual realm to manipulate people and circumstances—is the third category. Practitioners include sorcerers, witches and witch doctors (*The Occult Connection*).

Today, the tentacles of occult philosophy reach into every area of society. Police departments request psychics to help solve crimes; universities offer courses in paranormal and occult science; well-known science fiction writers mask occult doctrines in their works through pseudo-scientific language; and leaders of the women's movement urge their followers to return to the ancient religions in which female deities were worshiped (witchcraft). Even the American Medical Society endorses the search for "new" powers to aid the healing process.

Is this saturation of occult philosophy a mere coincidence—or is there an agenda being implemented by these varied, seemingly unconnected disciplines?

Occult Saturation: Preparation for a New World Order

Within the past few decades many voices have been crying for a *New World Order*. These include, among others, past and present presidents of the United States, the pope, the president of Russia and the prime minister of England. What is being declared as "new" is really not new at all, but is a renewed attempt by mankind to unite in order to build a kingdom or government without God's intervention or rulership. It is in fact a continuation of the ancient Tower of Babel and is the driving philosophical/religious force behind the United Nations and the planned New World Order. Scholars believe that the Babylonian Tower was a type of pyramid. This pyramid was never completed because God intervened and confused the languages of man, dispersing humanity over all the earth.

The unfinished pyramid on the back of the U.S. one-dollar bill depicts the renewal of this one-world vision. The all-seeing eye above the pyramid is thought by some to represent "big brother" or the ruling Elite, but it is also thought to represent Lucifer or the occult force behind the New World Order. One writer notes: "The New World Order as envisioned by the Elite is hardly a recent undertaking. Theirs is a philosophy rooted in ancient occult traditions. Success is near, and the infiltration of society by New Age occultism is the reason for this success. The New World Order has never been solely about world government; rather, from the beginning its proponents have been privy to secret doctrines and **it is a spiritual plan more than anything**" (*New World Order or Occult Secret Destiny? The New Age Movement and Service to The Plan*).

Robert Hieronimus is a proponent of the New Age and the Secret Brotherhood's plan for a New World Order. In his book, *America's Secret Destiny*, he traced the spiritual vision of America's founding fathers and the plan's eventual fruition in the New World Order and the New Age Movement (both of which are synonymous).

Willy Peterson, though writing from the opposite camp, confirms the assertions of Hieronimus. "In order to reach their aims of world unity and thus engage the whole world in service to the Plan, 'enlightened' Freemasons and New Agers have been pushing for collectivist motifs that promote

monistic pantheism and unity. This is why the chief instigators to the globalist League of Nations and the United Nations have been Theosophists, trying to work out the plan. This is why the verbiage and aims at the UN is for world peace and brotherhood. It is a spiritual undertaking in a secular world."

These so-called "enlightened people" are considered to be the torchbearers of a spiritual plan that can be traced to the time of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel, up through to the Illuminati and onwards. David Allen Lewis writes in *Dark Angels of Light,* "Whether the Illuminati has one special organization that is its original descendant ... its philosophical torchbearers are represented by literally hundreds of organizations and individuals in many diverse realms."

A Blueprint for Destiny

It is no coincidence that America has become the center of New Age and New World Order conspiracies. Heironomus states that "America's Great Seal may be seen as a blueprint for the elevation of consciousness. It says, in part, that we must transform ourselves before we can change the world, and it is during the process of self-transformation that we can catch a glimpse of what part we are to play in national and global transformation."

Texe Marrs, author of *Dark Secrets of the New Age*, writes: "The New World Order, or rather the philosophy its deliverers hold to be true, is one and the same as the New Age ideal of man's divinity and self-transformation. In order to partake ... one must awaken to the original sin of Lucifer, as proposed to Eve in the Garden of Eden, that we "shall be like God' [now in this physical life]." (See Genesis 3:5.) It is not surprising, then, that Christians are often cited as the main obstacle hindering its success.

True Christians proclaim only one Savior—Jesus Christ—and only one salvation through Him. On the other hand, the New Age belief allows for many 'saviors' and enlightened teachers, masters and gurus, and hence many ways to salvation. Therefore, the only belief system not compatible with the New Age and coming New World Order is true Christianity.

"The New Age is a universal open-arms religion that excludes from its ranks only those who believe in Jesus Christ and a Personal God. Buddhists, Shintoists, Satanists, Secular Humanists, witches, witch doctors and shamans—and all who reject Christianity are invited to become trusted members of the New Age family. Worshippers of separate faiths and denominations are to be unified in a common purpose: THE GLORIFICATION OF MAN" (Ibid.).

Secular Humanism: The glorification of man is both the philosophy and goal of Secular Humanism. The Humanist Manifesto I was written in 1933. A second addition, Humanist Manifesto II, was completed in 1973 and signed by such notables as the author Isaac Asimov; professors Brand Blanshard, Anthony Flew, and A.J. Ayer; psychologist B.F. Skinner; situational ethicist Joseph Fletcher; and biologist Jacques Monod. The following are selections that show the general direction of the manifesto.

" 'Promises of immortal salvation and fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful.' Why? Because 'they distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices.' Moreover, science has found 'no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body.'

" 'We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction.'

" 'In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct.' The authors affirm 'the right to birth control, abortion, and divorce.' They also permit any form of 'sexual behavior between consenting adults,' for 'short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, individuals should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their lifestyles as they desire' " (McCallum, D., *Optimistic Secular Humanism*, 2004).

Secular Humanism has dominated western thinking and is finding its ultimate expression in plans for a New World Order. And one way to get all people—including professing Christians—mentally prepared for this New World Order is to desensitize them by saturating them with teachings and practices of humanism, sexual promiscuity, eastern mysticism, witchcraft, satanism, paganism and occultism as well as ethnic diversity and politically correct "tolerance" propaganda. Astrology is one such example.

Astrology

In 2003 a U.S. public opinion poll was taken regarding beliefs in astrology. Of those participating, 31%, or nearly 1 in 3 people, believed in the accuracy of astrology—and among those aged 25 to 29 that number rose to 46%, nearly 1 in 2. Belief by people over age 64 was only 17%, or about 1 in 6. These statistics clearly show how influential this saturation campaign has been at all levels of society in changing beliefs in just one generation.

In the United States and Canada, 1,800 newspapers print daily horoscopes. Twelve thousand Americans claim to be full-time astrologers, and another 200,000 work at it part-time. Author Linda Goodman's two books on astrology have sold an incredible 60 million copies. The phenomenon of astrology is growing.

God's View of Astrology: Throughout history, man has searched the heavens for answers to life's questions. And throughout history, God has condemned such practices.

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed, "Now let the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save you from these things that shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame; *there shall* not *be* a coal to warm them; nor fire, to sit before it. Thus shall they be to you with whom you have labored, even your merchants from your

youth. Each one shall wander to his own quarter; none shall save you" (Isaiah 47:13-15).

As Isaiah explains, astrologers do not have the power to save anyone from troubles or death. Reading the stars and planets will not tell man what he needs to know. God Himself reveals what man needs to know, as the biblical account of Daniel and his companions shows. "And *in* all matters of wisdom *and* understanding that the king asked them, he found them [Daniel and his friends] ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters who were in all his kingdom…. Daniel answered before the king and said, 'The secret which the king has demanded cannot be shown to the king by the wise men, the enchanters, the astrologers or the magicians. **But there is a God in heaven Who reveals secrets and makes known to King Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days**' " (Daniel 1:20 and 2:27-28).

Therefore, people who use astrology are using witchcraft. It makes no difference if it is checking one's astrological "forecast" in the daily newspaper, making and using astrological charts, or consulting with astrologers. True Christians live by the Word of God and walk in faith, believing God the Father and Jesus Christ, and do not seek to know the future through astrology.

Ouija Boards—Doorway to the Occult

One of the chief tools used in divination is the Ouija board. Promoted as a "harmless game," players place their fingertips on a "pointer" which moves around a board indicating answers to questions asked by the users. The pointer's movement is touted to be nothing more than the subconscious actions of the participants. Occultists, however, know better.

Precursors to the Ouija board date back to ancient times. Similar instruments are known to have been used in China and Greece in the 500s BC, allegedly to communicate with the dead. Third-century Romans employed such devices as well. The Ouija board was widely used as a "parlor game" in the mid-1800s in Europe. But it was not until after World War I that the board became enormously popular in America—when many were desperate to communicate with loved ones lost in the war. The design of the modern Ouija board is credited to inventor William Fuld.

The Ouija board's popularity surged again in the 1960s and 1970s alongside a renewed interest in the occult and the supernatural. In 1966, the Parker Brothers game company acquired the patent from Fuld and began producing Ouija boards by the millions—stressing that the "game" was for "entertainment" purposes only. In fact, the company markets the controversial board under the tagline, "It's only a game—isn't it?"

Unfortunately, many are deceived into believing that the Ouija board *is* just a game. The board, in reality, is an occult device designed primarily to contact spirit entities (or, ostensibly, the dead) in an effort to gain knowledge or insight concerning careers, relationships, the afterlife, etc. Those who use Ouija boards are often amazed at the kinds of information the board will reveal—things that would otherwise be impossible to know.

While advocates claim the Ouija board is a legitimate means to discover insight, wisdom and truth from the spirit world, even those steeped in the occult warn of its use. Vicar Kevin Logan writes of his participation in a 1987 television program with a group of witches. "A variety of witches faced us across the TV studio and encouraged us by supporting our warning to the public to avoid playing around with the Ouija board. One witch said, 'It is a powerful tool in the occult and we would warn anybody who does not know what they are doing to steer well clear of the Ouija' " (Kevin Logan, *Paganism and the Occult*, p. 130; www.spotlightministries.org.uk/ouija.htm).

Master occultist J. Edward Cornelius affirms that concerns over Ouija boards are founded in truth. He warns: "Tragedies prove beyond a shred of a doubt that the [Ouija] board is capable of bridging the invisible world with our own" (Cornelius, *Aleister Crowley and the Ouija Board;* deals with the life of Aleister Crowley, one of the greatest occult magicians of the twentieth century; www.feralhouse.com/press/mini_sites/ouija).

But the dead cannot be contacted (Eccl. 9:5), and the only spirit entities that respond to such "channeling" are *demons*. Such "consulting of spirits" is condemned in Scripture as a serious sin: "There shall not be found among you anyone who … **uses divination**, or an observer of times, or a fortuneteller, or a witch, or a charmer, or **a consulter with familiar spirits**, or a wizard, or **one who seeks oracles from the dead**. For all that do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD…" (Deut. 18:10-12).

The prophet Isaiah writes: "And when they shall say to you, 'Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and to wizards who peep and mutter'—*but* should not a people seek unto their God? *Should* the dead *be sought* on behalf of the living?" (Isa. 8:19). God desires that we look to Him for answers, not to demon spirits that can take control and ruin our lives.

While at first appearing to be an innocent "game" for entertainment and enjoyment, the Ouija board is clearly a gateway to the occult. Demonic spirits greatly desire to influence the lives of humans—and such influence often begins by opening the door of communication through Ouija boards. Users may find themselves addicted to the "guidance" offered by the spirit world—only to be quickly pulled into numerous occult practices.

Scripture warns us: "Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil [with his demons] is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). The Ouija board may be advertised as "only a game"—but that is exactly what Satan would have us believe. After all, he pawns even himself off as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14).

Tattoos—Links to the Spirit World

Many people today believe that tattoos are an innocent form of artistic "self-expression." But what is the origin of the practice of tattooing? What does the Bible have to say about *marking* the human body?

Traditionally, tattoos have been associated with rebellion, immoral behavior, crime, gang membership, etc. Much of this is true, but the ancient

origins of tattooing are even more ominous. An abundance of research shows that the practice of tattooing the human body originated in occult mysticism. The "tattooist"—the one who creates and applies the tattoo—was anciently a priest or a practitioner of magical arts.

The following quotes are taken from Terry Watkins' Web site, www.biblebelievers.com/watkins_tattoos/pagan.html. They demonstrate that tattooing is clearly linked to some form of occult practice. Bold emphasis has been added.

"Tattooing is often **a magical rite** in the more traditional cultures, and **the tattooist is respected as a priest or shaman**" (Michelle Delio, *Tattoo: The Exotic Art of Skin Decoration*, p. 73). Remember, a *shaman* is well known to be an intermediary (*medium*) between the physical and the supernatural—and uses "magic" to cure illnesses, predict the future, control spirits, etc.

"In Fiji, Formosa, New Zealand and in certain of the North American Indian tribes, **tattooing was regarded as a religious ceremony**, and **performed by priests or priestesses**" (Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, p. 64).

"The actual tattooing process, **which involved complex rituals and taboos**, could only be **done by priests** and was **associated with beliefs which were secrets known only to members of the priestly caste**…. [Researchers have] concluded that historically tattooing had **originated in connection with ancient rites** of scarification and bloodletting which were associated with **religious practices** intended to put the human soul in harmony **with supernatural forces** and ensure continuity between this life and the next" (Steve Gilbert, *Tattoo History: A Source Book*, p. 158).

According to Watkins, Delio notes in his book that many tattoo designs have mystical and occult meanings. Tribal tattoos, in particular, were known to be "channels into spiritual and demonic possession."

"Tattooing is about personalizing the body, making it a true home and **fit temple for the spirit** that dwells inside it…. When the designs are chosen with care, **tattoos have a power and magic all their own.** They decorate the body but they also **enhance the soul**…. Some tattooists in the West are experimenting with **ritual tattooing**. This method of working incorporates **doing a ritual to create a sacred space** in the area where the tattoo is positioned. Often incense is burned and **the gods are invited to bless the proceedings**" (Delio, pp. 8, 13, 75).

Indeed, the origin, meaning and purpose behind the practice of tattooing is clearly pagan—and involves demonism, shamanism and occult mysticism. Furthermore, the tattooist—the shaman or occult priest—often uses the tattoo as a "point of contact" to the spiritual world. Thus the tattoo is much more than just a body decoration—more than a layer of ink cut into the skin. According to Watkins, in *every* culture, up until the 20th century, the tattoo has been a "vehicle for pagan, spiritual and religious invocations." Even today, in many countries including the United States, the tattoo "continues to be a bridge into the supernatural world."

Amazingly, *Rolling Stone* magazine verifies this tattoo-supernatural link in its March 28, 2002, issue which features the famous tattoo artist Paul Booth. The writer describes Booth's technique as "allowing **his clients' demons to help guide the needle**" (p. 40; bold emphasis added; quoted on Watkins' Web site).

God warned the nation of Israel that they were not to follow the ways of the pagan nations around them (Deut. 12:29-32). He specifically commanded them not to practice tattooing: "You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you. I *am* the LORD" (Lev. 19:28).

Obviously, having a "rose" tattooed on one's forearm doesn't necessarily indicate an interest in the occult. But it does violate God's command against tattooing. And Christians are called by God to be **unspotted from the ways of this world** (James 1:27). Can we honestly participate in *anything* that is associated in *any way* with Satan and the occult? The apostle Paul warns, "You cannot drink *the* cup of *the* Lord, and *the* cup of demons. You cannot partake of *the* table of *the* Lord, and *the* table of demons" (I Cor. 10:21).

Occult Influences in Schools

The public school system has become an important vehicle for promoting the anti-God, anti-Christ, humanist and occult agenda of the New World Order. The assault on children's minds under the guise of education is reflected in this brief sampling of actual events that have occurred in various public schools across America:

"*The Witches*, by Roald Dahl, was read aloud to second graders … during regular school hours…. The book starts out with the caveat: This is NOT a Fairy Tale. This is about REAL witches! The book goes on to say that real witches dress in ordinary clothes; look like ordinary women; hate children; and get their pleasure from doing away with one child [i.e., human sacrifice] a weekend, 52 a year. The parents learned about this horrendous instruction only when their second graders had nightmares.

"Seventh graders … have for years been assigned to read the guide to the London Dungeon, a British museum where tourists can see frightening displays of wax figures demonstrating hideous torture practices that were used in bygone eras. The guide itself states that the exhibition is not recommended to unaccompanied or young children. The class assignment instructed the children to write a paragraph describing their own form of torture. One child announced that he was going home to try this kind of torture on his little brother.

"In another school, eleven-year-olds were given a book called *The Headless Cupid,* which is about a girl practicing to be a witch. The book graphically describes the First Amendment-protected religion of witchcraft, occult practices, spirit guides, séances and initiation rites.

"A class of sixth graders was shown the R-rated movie *Dawn of the Dead* as a reward after they had finished a test. Parents were not informed

in advance, and when they finally reviewed the film, were shocked to find that it contained cannibalism, brutally violent scenes and was steeped in satanic and occult-related themes.

"In still another American school, the film *The Sword and the Sorcerer* was shown to sixth graders. Parents complained because it shows a witch calling up the devil from the pit of hell while the walls appeared to be coming alive with humans who are bleeding and screaming in agony. The witch worships the devil by licking and kissing him, calling him 'my god and my master' " (*The NCSCIA FOCUS Pre-Halloween,* 2001 Edition).

The Occult and the Feminine Divine

Under the guise of New Age spirituality, feminine occult practices and Satanism are increasing in scope and activity. For example, at the 13th annual Women of Wisdom Conference held in Seattle, February 16-21, 2005, the theme was "Living Boldly with Heart, Intention & Commitment." It was billed as, "A week of lectures, performances and experiential workshops, with presenters from diverse ethnic and spiritual backgrounds exploring the Divine Feminine."

The WOW New Age workshops bring in elements from diverse perspectives, such as Hindu, Wiccan, Celtic and others, incorporating occult practices such as tarot reading, meditation, chanting, ecstatic drumming, and "ecstatic tantric dancing." They dwell on issues such as sexuality, eroticism, feminine consciousness, and personal altars as well as healing with chakras, medicine wheels, crystals and colors.

Examples of the various features of such New Age workshops follow:

Sharron Rose, a 56-year-old DVD producer/distributor in Shoreline, Wash., taught a full-day workshop on *Tantric Dance of Durga*. Rose, also a teacher and choreographer who has studied dance and spirituality in India, focused on the mythical teachings of Durga, a Hindu goddess of power and beauty. In her teachings, Rose said, she wants to remind women of how females in various spiritual traditions have always been "the spirit and foundation of everything."

Danielle Rama Hoffman, LMP, a self-proclaimed energy healer, transformational trainer and leader of spiritual tours to Egypt, hosted ***Awaken the Sekhmet Within: Solar Feminine Power***. Her summary said: "Fortify your feminine nature with the solar power of Sekhmet: the Egyptian lioness goddess of courage, compassion and healing."

Suzanna McCarthy, LICSW, Spiritual Director, Wisdom's Gate, offered ***Traversing the Dark Night of the Soul—Companioned by Hecate and Isis-Wisdom-Sophia***. The pamphlet for her workshop read: "The Dark Night of the Soul is a solitary experience that follows the path of 'no path.' The 'self' is stripped away; slowly, the true SELF emerges. Realizing that matters are out of our control, we enter into the mystery. This journey requires courage and consciousness as the outcome is unwritten. **Powerful allies Hecate and Isis-Wisdom-Sophia provide ancient wisdom and**

spiritual gifts as they companion us during our journey."

Joanne Halverson, LMHC, and Margaret Riordan, PhD, IFCM, (with 20 years of experience in goddess spirituality and shamanism), presented ***Ancient Power, Ancient Healing: the Sacred Snake, the Eternal Goddess and the Feminine Face of the Divine***. Their ad read: "Explore the ancient power of the Divine Feminine, delving into archaic stories, myths and images centered around the Sacred Snake and her association with the Mother Goddess. **The Sacred Snake was a symbol of female power and holiness in many pre-patriarchal cultures**. Her energy represents wisdom, strength, healing, transformation and a capacity for ecstatic experience of the Divine in one's life. Reclaim this mysterious and awesome power, bringing this transformative gift into your daily life." (Adapted from www.womenofwisdom.org, bold emphasis added.)

The above excerpts reveal the underlying philosophies and the satanic spiritual powers behind feminist movements worldwide.

Divine Goddess Worship in Modern Israel: While normative Judaism proudly boasts that it worships the one true God of the Old Testament (while rejecting Jesus Christ and the New Testament), some modern Jews are reviving goddess worship and occult practices in the land of Israel—just as it was in ancient Judah. *The Jerusalem Post* gives the following report on a group of goddess worshipers who worship Mother Earth: "Thirteen men and women are seated around the artifacts. A bag of instruments is passed around, and a shrine with Neolithic goddess figurines, babushkas, photographs of goddess statues, and a ceramic plate painted with a spiral design is quietly constructed. The earth below is the archeological site of a civilization over 8,000 years old. A few hundred meters away, one of the oldest known wells, now covered, marks the spot where people of the Yarmukian society once came to fill buckets of fresh water for pottery, drinking and bathing.

"We are in Kibbutz Sha'ar Hagolan, south of Lake Kenneret, but the modern blessing ceremony some Israeli women have invented might have origins much older than was previously imagined. They have chosen this place to conduct their ritual because of the goddess figurines recently found in this area. Iris Yotvat, one of the leaders of the goddess spirituality movement in Israel and a former movie star, leads the group in songs and prayers. As a chalice filled with water passes from hand to hand, each person places a few drops on their skin and thanks Mother Earth for her blessings.

"Some of the women remind everyone that we were not here first, and we will not be here last. A thin bundle of smoking sage, tightly bound with white string, is passed around for meditation and cleansing. After each person says his or her blessings and thoughts, Yotvat begins to sing to the beat of a slow drum. Tambourines, flutes, shakers and darbukas join in the songs of praise to the Great Mother, the creator of life.

"For many of the men and women seated here, the power of the circle represents a sacred space. It provides a medium for group meditation and unity. It relates to the moon and the ancient symbol of eternity, where

time has no end and no beginning. The goddess worshipers believe that a divine goddess was praised thousands of years ago when agricultural societies lived in relative peace, and that the loss of that feminine spirit is part of what ails our modern culture.

"Despite their marginality, their convictions are supported by a growing body of archeological evidence and by many biblical scholars. **Many of those who believe in a divine feminine recently united in the Negev desert for a Shakti festival to learn more about ancient goddess figurines and how they connect to their lives today**" (*The Jerusalem Post*, April 28, 2005; bold emphasis added).

These modern-day Jews are worshiping the queen of heaven, as the ancient Jews did before God sent them into exile for these and other occult, pagan religious practices. They have forgotten that those who are involved in goddess worship of any kind, whether Jew or Gentile, are in direct defiance of Almighty God! In fact, they are committing gross, abominable sins in transgressing the first and second commandments. God's fierce judgment against these practices is revealed in Jeremiah 44, and once again will be executed against such sins.

Feminine Divine—Virgin Mary and Pagan Goddess Worship: Roman Catholicism makes "the Virgin Mary" the central focus of its worship and blasphemously calls her "the Queen of Heaven," "co-Mediatrix" and "co-Redemptrix" with Jesus Christ—Who, in fact, is the **only** Redeemer and Mediator (see Hislop, pp. 264-267). Notwithstanding, the Bible presents an entirely different view of the "queen of heaven."

Mary Ann Collins, a former Catholic nun, has written extensively on her Web site on numerous topics related to Roman Catholicism. The following section is excerpted from her article, "Mary Worship?"

"Goddess worship is not ancient history. It is going on today. It is practiced in Wicca and a variety of modern pagan religions. (Wicca is a religion based on witchcraft. It involves goddess worship, rituals and spells.)

"The credibility of goddess worship has been increased through its acceptance by university professors and its incorporation into textbooks. Wiccan doctrines are being promoted in publicly funded, accredited colleges and universities. Nursing school textbooks are overtly promoting goddess worship, including textbooks written by the National League for Nursing (an accrediting agency for nursing schools).

"In the following table, I will compare Catholicism's version of Mary with the goddess who is worshiped by Wiccans and modern pagans. My reason for doing this is that Wiccans and modern pagans live in modern America. If I compared Catholic doctrine about Mary with the goddess worship of ancient civilizations, it would seem remote and far removed from the real world. It would seem like a legend instead of real life.

"[O]vert goddess worship has infiltrated a number of main-line Protestant denominations. There have been some conferences in which Catholics and representatives of various Protestant groups worshiped the goddess

Sophia and openly said that Jesus Christ is irrelevant.

"All Christian groups need to guard against goddess worship. According to the Bible, God's people are not supposed to worship any other deities. The Old Testament prophets often rebuked the people of Israel for worshiping 'foreign gods.' The people who worshiped the goddess Sophia at those conferences were doing the same kind of thing that the ancient Israelites did. They claimed to be God's people, but they were worshiping a 'foreign god.'

"The table compares the Mary of Roman Catholic theology and religious practice with the Biblical portrayal of Mary and with the goddess which is worshipped by Wiccans and modern pagans. My information about Wicca comes from the book, 'Wicca: Satan's Little White Lie,' by Bill Schnoebelen (who was the high priest of a Wiccan coven before he became a Christian), the 'World Book,' and the on-line version of 'The Encyclopedia Britannica.'

"One popular prayer in Mary's honor is the 'Hail Holy Queen,' which is known in Latin as the 'Salve Regina.' It is traditionally included as part of praying the rosary. 'Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy! Our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping, in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.' "

Marian Apparitions: Collins continues: "On May 13, 1981, a man shot Pope John Paul II. As the ambulance carried him to the hospital, the Pope kept praying, 'Mary, my mother! Mary, my mother!' One year later, the Pope made a pilgrimage to Fatima to thank Our Lady of Fatima for saving his life and to consecrate the entire human race to her. The video 'Catholicism: Crisis of Faith' shows the Pope kissing the feet of a statue of Mary.

"Millions of pilgrims go to shrines which honor apparitions of Mary. Every year fifteen to twenty million pilgrims go to Guadalupe in Mexico, five and a half million go to Lourdes in France, five million go to Czestochowa (Jasna Gora) in Poland, and four and a half million go to Fatima in Portugal….

"Are these pilgrims worshipping Mary? You can observe them and see for yourself, thanks to a video entitled 'Messages from Heaven.'

"If you watch the video, you will see the Pope bow in front of a painting of Mary and cover the area with incense. You will see a million pilgrims walking in a procession, following a statue of Our Lady of Fatima and singing songs in her honor. You will see several million people in a procession following a painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe. You will see people weeping and raising their arms towards Mary. You will see the largest assembly of bishops and cardinals since the Second Vatican Council, gathered together to join Pope John Paul II in solemnly consecrating the entire world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. [You can watch this video

Biblical Mary	*Catholic Mary*	*The Goddess*
Humble and obedient. Calls herself "the handmaid of the Lord."	The Pope officially gave Mary the title "Queen of Heaven" and established a feast day honoring Mary, Queen of Heaven.	Wiccans call their goddess the "Queen of Heaven."
Knew she needed a savior: "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour" (Luke 1:47).	"Immaculate Conception" (Mary was conceived sinless, without original sin) and "All-Holy" (Mary lived a sinless life).	Goddesses don't need salvation. They make the rules.
Wife and mother who had other children (Mark. 6:3-4).	"Perpetual Virginity" (Jesus' brothers and sisters are considered to be cousins).	Goddesses don't have human children.
No biblical evidence that Mary didn't die like a normal person.	"Glorious Assumption" (Mary was bodily taken up into Heaven).	Goddesses don't die.
Jesus told John to take Mary into his home and take care of her as if she was his own mother.	Catholics are the adopted children of Mary. "Woman behold your son" (John 19:26) is taken to apply literally to every Catholic.	Witches are the adopted, "hidden children" of the Queen of Heaven.
Normal woman.	Sometimes pictured standing on a crescent moon, wearing a crown or with a circle of stars around her head.	Moon goddess.
Normal woman.	Supernatural (apparitions accompanied by miracles and healings).	Supernatural.
Points people to Jesus. Mary said, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5).	Can make Jesus do things. A full page newspaper ad showing Mary and Jesus says, "He hasn't denied her anything in 2,000 years. What would you have her ask Him?" This is not official Catholic doctrine, but it is a widespread attitude which is encouraged by pious literature.	Points to herself. Wants to be worshiped.
Knew that she needed a savior (Luke 1:47).	Apparitions of "Mary" have promised that if people wear certain objects (such as a Scapular or Miraculous Medal) or say certain prayers, then they are guaranteed to go to heaven. The Catholic Church has not officially approved of these practices, but it has also not discouraged them.	Invoked to make supernatural things happen through witchcraft (the use of special objects and special verbal formulas). Goddesses don't need a savior.

online; the information is available on Collins' Web site.]

"Goddess worship has infiltrated mainline Christian denominations. In November 1993, a Re-Imagining Conference was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Most of the 2,000 participants were women. This ecumenical church conference was sponsored by and attended by members of over a dozen denominations, including Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Catholics, Lutherans and Methodists. They prayed to Sophia, the goddess of Wisdom, calling her their Creator. They did rituals for this goddess, including a communion service where bread and wine were replaced by milk and honey. They openly rejected the doctrines of the incarnation and the atonement. This conference was repeated in 1996, 1998 and 2000.

"There are Wiccan Web sites with Web pages devoted to individual goddesses. The Virgin Mary is included among the goddesses of the following Web sites: The Spiral Goddess Grove, The White Moon, and Goddess 2000. They consider Mary to be the 'Divine Feminine' and say that for centuries many people have 'blended' their ancient goddesses with Mary." (See www.catholicconcerns.com/MaryWorship.html.)

In II Thessalonians Two, Paul writes about the Mystery of Iniquity that was already at work in the first-century Church. The mixing in of pagan and occult beliefs and practices has no place in the true Church of God, which acknowledges Jesus Christ as its Head (Eph. 1:22-23) and worships God the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

Deepak Chopra and Occult Eastern Spirituality

Eastern spirituality has attracted many followers in the past four decades. In the Western Hemisphere, especially in America, Deepak Chopra is the most prominent and widely known teacher, author and advocate of Eastern spirituality. His teachings are a combination of Buddhism and Hinduism. Chopra does not believe that God is a Spirit Being, nor does he believe in a personal God as the Bible teaches. Rather, he believes in a pantheistic God that is a force of pure energy. Since everything is based on energy, and God is energy, God is in everything. Since God is in everything, God also exists in everyone. Therefore, Chopra teaches that in order to know God, one needs to find the deepest inner self. Consequently, when a person connects with that pure spiritual energy of the self, *then* one knows God.

Chopra teaches that one knows God through seven stages of spiritual development. The end result is "nirvana," a state of enlightenment that supposedly puts one on the same level as God. To achieve this, a person has to empty his mind through yoga and meditation until he hears nothing. What Chopra calls God and knowing God through yoga and meditation is, in reality, being familiar with and submitting to demon spirits, principalities and powers—for Satan is "the god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4).

Eastern spirituality as taught by Chopra is cloaked in the same lie that Satan told Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan told her that if she and Adam ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they

would "become as God." Chopra has developed this satanic philosophy into a highly sophisticated seven-step process in his book, *How to Know God—The Soul's Journey into the Mystery of Mysteries* (all quotes are from the Large Print Edition).

Of nirvana, Chopra writes: "However long it takes, according to Buddhism, my mind will eventually desire the opposite of what I have. The karmic pendulum swings until it reaches the extreme of poverty, and then it will pull me back toward wealth again. Since only God is free from cause and effect, to want nirvana means that you want to attain God-realization [i.e., you realize that you yourself are God]. In the earlier stages of growth this ambition would be impossible, and most religions condemn it as blasphemy. **Nirvana isn't moral. Good and evil don't count anymore, once they are seen as the two faces of the same duality**" (*How to Know God*, p. 258; bold emphasis added).

This duality—good and evil co-existing in God—is nearly the same belief as that of witchcraft, which believes that good and evil are embodied in the "Force." Yet, the Scriptures teach that God is light, and there is no darkness in Him at all!

Chopra continues: "For the sake of keeping society together, religions hold it as a duty to respect goodness and abhor evil. Hence a paradox: the person who wants to be liberated [where nothing is good or evil] is acting against God. Many devout Christians find themselves baffled by Eastern spirituality because they cannot resolve this paradox. How can God want us to be good and yet want us to go beyond good?" (Ibid., p. 258.) Chopra misunderstands because he does not know the true God of the Bible. Jesus Christ said that the only one Who is good is GOD (Matt. 19:17). To go "beyond good" is to go beyond God—be greater than God Himself—which is an absolute impossibility.

Yet, there is another meaning that Chopra is implying. In going "beyond good," one may choose a life of sin or lawlessness without guilt. Hence, one is "liberated." To substantiate this claim, he shows that according to Hinduism there is a right-hand and a left-hand path to God: "The answer takes place in consciousness. Saints in every culture turn out to be exemplars of goodness, shining with virtue. But the *Bhagavad-Gita* [Hindu religious writings] informs us that there are no outward signs of enlightenment, which means that **saints do not have to obey any conventional standards of behavior**. In India there exists the 'left-hand path' to God. On this path a devotee shuns conventional virtue and goodness. Sexual abstinence is often replaced with sexual indulgence (usually in a highly ritualized way). One might give up a loving home to live in a graveyard; some tantric devotees go so far as to sleep with corpses and eat the most repulsive decayed food. In other words, the left-hand path is not so extreme, but it is always different from orthodox religious observance.

"The left-hand path may seem like the dark side of spirituality, totally deluded in its barbarity and insanity—certainly Christian missionaries to India had no problem holding that interpretation. They shuddered to look upon

Kali [an Indian goddess] with her necklace of skulls and blood dripping from her fangs. What kind of mother was this? But the left-hand way is thousands of years old, its origins are in the sacred texts that exhibit as much wisdom as any in the world. They state that God cannot be confined in any way. His infinite grace encompasses death and decay; he is in the corpse as well as the newborn baby. For some (very few) people, to see this truth isn't enough; they want to experience it. And God will not deny them. In the West our abhorrence of the left-hand path doesn't need to be challenged. Cultures each go their own way" (Ibid., pp. 259-260; bold emphasis added).

The Effects of the Left-Hand Path on Youth Culture Today: David Kupelian, in his book *The Marketing of Evil*, explains the adoption of the "left-hand path" by the modern youth culture today. Those who promote this kind of aberrant behavior do not refer to it as the left-hand path of Hinduism. Rather, they promote it as "freedom of expression" that has deep "spiritual" qualities: "[S]omething … is intent on degrading this generation so totally that little hope would be left for the next generation of Americans" (p. 70).

"Hollywood's depictions [of Sodom and Gomorrah] don't even *begin* to capture the shocking reality of what is going on in America's culture today—they're not even close.

"First of all, there's sex. Very simply, there seem to be neither boundaries nor taboos any more when it comes to sex. Anything goes—from heterosexual to homosexual to bi-, trans-, poly-, and you-don't-want-to-know sexual experiences. Sex has become a ubiquitous, cheap, meaningless quest for ever-greater thrills…."

"Moreover, with the evolution of online pornography, every type of sexual experience has literally been shoved under the noses of millions of Americans against their will, who find their e-mail in-boxes filled with hardcore sexual images. As a result, many pastors are struggling with how to deal with large numbers of churchgoers reportedly caught up with Internet pornography.

"What about body piercing? It has progressed from traditional earrings for females, to earrings for males (eager to display their 'feminine side' which the '60 cultural revolution sold them), to multiple piercings for both males and females in literally every part of the body—the tongue, nose, eyebrow, lip, cheek, navel, breasts, genitals—again, things you don't really want to know.

"It's the same progression to extremes with tattooing. But why stop with 'conventional' piercing and tattooing? Ritual scarification and 3D-art implants are big. So are genital beading, stretching and cutting, transdermal implants, scrotal implants, tooth art and facial sculpture.

"How about tongue splitting? How about branding? How about amputations? That's right—amputations. Some people find these activities a real 'turn-on.'

"There are no bounds—no lower limits. Whatever you can imagine, even for a second in the darkest recesses of your mind, know that someone

somewhere is actually doing it, praising it, and drawing others into it via the Internet.

"**Strangest of all is the fact that any behavior, any belief—no matter how obviously insane—is rationalized so it sounds reasonable, even spiritual. Satanism itself, and especially its variant, the worship of Lucifer** (literally, 'Angel of Light') **can be made to sound almost enlightened—of course, only in a perverse way**. But if you were sufficiently confused, [Satan is the author of confusion] rebellious and full of rage—if you had been set up by cruelty or hypocrisy (or both) to rebel against everything 'good'—the forbidden starts to be mysteriously attractive.

"Let's pick just one of these bizarre behaviors. How about hanging by your skin from hooks? It's called 'suspension.' In literally any other context, this would be considered a **gruesome torture**. But to many people who frequent 'suspension parties,' it's a **spiritual experience**. Consider carefully what 'Body Modification Ezine' (www.bmezine.com)—the Web's premiere site for body modification—says about 'suspension':

" 'What is suspension?

" 'The act of suspension is hanging the human body from (or partially from) hooks pierced through the flesh in various places around the body.

" 'Why would someone want to do a suspension?

" 'There are many different reasons to suspend, from pure adrenaline or endorphin rush, to conquering one's fears, to **trying to reach a new level of spiritual** consciousness and everything in between. In general, people suspend to attain some sort of "experience."

" 'Some people are seeking the opportunity to discover a deeper sense of themselves and to challenge pre-determined belief systems which may not be true. Some are **seeking a rite of passage or a spiritual encounter** to let go of the fear of not being whole or complete inside their body.

" 'Others are looking for control over their body, or seek to prove to themselves that they are more than their bodies, or are not their bodies at all. Others simply seek to explore the unknown.

" 'Many people believe that learning how one lives inside one's body and seeing how that body adapts to stress—and passes through it—**allows one to surrender to life and explore new realms of possibility**.'

"Gosh—'control over their body,' 'discover a deeper sense of themselves,' 'conquering ones fears,' '**trying to reach a new level spiritual consciousness**.' What could be wrong with that?

"Or, how about tongue splitting—literally making yourself look like a human lizard—how could that be a positive, spiritual experience?

" 'The tongue,' explains the BME Web site, 'is one of the most immense nervous structures in your body. We have incredibly fine control over it and we receive massive feedback from it. When you dramatically alter its structure and free yourself of the physical boundaries your biology imposes, **in some people it triggers a larger freeing on a spiritual level**' " (Ibid., pp. 71-73; bold emphasis added).

The left-hand path is an occultic, demonic, bizarre corruption of the mind and body that breeds a culture of rebellion and death—while the right-hand path of Eastern spirituality leads to worship of self as "God."

Spiritual Evolution—Idolatry of Self: Chopra defines the spiritual evolution of coming to know God as a seven-step union of the mind, soul and God—which is nothingness: "Believe it or not, we find ourselves very close to the soul now. We have whittled away the scientific objections to God by placing him outside the reach of measurement. This means that a person's subjective experience of God can't be challenged—at the quantum level, objectivity and subjectivity merge into each other. The point of the merger is the soul [demon possession]; therefore knowing God comes down to this: like a photon nearing a black hole, your mind hits a wall as it tries to think about the soul. The soul is comfortable with the uncertainty; it accepts that you can be two places at once (time and eternity); it observes cosmic intelligence at work and is not bothered that the creative force is outside the universe….

"The mind is creeping closer and closer to the soul, which sits on the edge of God's world, at the event horizon. The gap of separation is wide when there is no perception of spirit; it grows smaller as the mind figures out what is happening. Eventually the two will get so close that mind and soul have no choice but to merge [demon possession]. When that happens, the resemblance to a black hole is striking. To the mind, it will be as if falling into God's world lasts forever, an eternity in bliss consciousness. From God's side, the merging takes place in a split second; indeed, if we stand completely in God's world, where time has no meaning, the whole process never even occurred. The mind was part of the soul all along, only without knowing it" (Ibid., pp. 487-489, bracketed comments added).

Chopra describes his seven-step processes: "If you regard the soul as a kind of force field steadily pulling the mind toward it, every one of the seven stages can be described as closing the separation:

Stage One:	*I am in such separation that I sense deep fear inside.*
Stage Two:	*I don't feel so separate; I am gaining a sense of power.*
Stage Three:	*Something larger than me is drawing near; I feel much more peaceful.*
Stage Four:	*I am beginning to intuit what that larger thing is—it must be God.*
Stage Five:	*My actions and thoughts are drawing on God's force field, as if we are both involved in everything.*
Stage Six:	*God and I are almost together now. I feel no separation;* ***my mind is God's mind****.*
Stage Seven:	***I see no difference between myself and God****"* (Ibid., p. 490, bold emphasis added).

Chopra's seven-step thought process creates in a person a kind of "self idolatry." One will never come to know the true God through such means—for He reveals Himself to the humble. The prophet Ezekiel warned

the leaders of ancient Israel, who had set up idols in their hearts: "And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, '**Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts**, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I at all be inquired of by them? Therefore speak to them, and say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Every man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him according to the multitude of his idols: So that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart because they have deserted Me for their idols—all of them.' "

" 'Therefore say to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD, '**Repent and turn yourselves from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations**. For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger who lives in Israel, who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to a prophet to ask of him concerning Me; I the LORD will answer him Myself. And I will set My face against that man, and I will make him for a sign and for a proverb. And I will cut him off from the midst of My people; and you shall know that I *am* the LORD' " ' " (Ezekiel 14:2-8).

Besides idolatry of the self, Chopra's teachings illustrate a renaissance of ancient yoga philosophies. As he states, "In ancient India this closing of the gap was described as *yoga* or union (the same Sanskrit root gave us the verb 'to yoke') [that is, in bondage to the elemental spirits of the world—Satan, his principalities, powers and demons]. Because the Indian sages had thousands of years to analyze it, the entire process of joining the soul was turned into a science. Yoga precedes Hinduism, which is a particular religion, and at its inception the practices of Yoga [that are also taught by "Yoda," the master teacher of the mysteries in the *Star Wars* movies] were intended to be universal. The ancient sages had at their disposal the power to witness their own spiritual evolution, which boiled down to watching the mind approach the soul.

> "What they discovered can be stated in a few cardinal points:
>
> *Evolution takes place inside.* It isn't a matter of pilgrimages, observances, and obeying religious rules. No codes of conduct can alter the fact that every mind is on a soul journey.
>
> *Evolution is automatic.* In the larger view, the soul is always pulling at us. Its force field is inescapable.
>
> *A person is required to pay attention.* Since the journey to the soul happens only in awareness, if you block out awareness you impede your progress; if you pay attention, you build up momentum.
>
> *The final goal is inevitable.* No one can resist the soul forever. Saints and sinners are on the same road.

"You can accurately graph a person's spiritual growth on this scale alone. The ego moves from an isolated, helpless state to a realization that it might have power; then it looks where the power comes from, at first

deciding that it must be external, in the form of money and status, but in time realizing that the power source is internal. More time passes and the difference between inner and outer power dissolves. All reality is perceived as having one source; **in the end, you are that source**…."

Chopra continues, describing how "faith" is involved: "FAITH …

Stage One: *Faith is a matter of survival. If I don't pray to God, he can destroy me.*

Stage Two: *I'm beginning to have faith in myself. I pray to God to help me get what I want.*

Stage Three: *Faith brings me peace. I pray that life should be free from turmoil and distress.*

Stage Four: *I have faith that inner knowledge will uphold me. I pray for more insight into God's ways.*

Stage Five: *Faith tells me that God will support my every desire. I pray that I am worthy of his faith in me* [God puts faith in no man, nor is any man worthy].

Stage Six: *Faith can move mountains. I pray to be God's instrument of transformation.*

Stage Seven: *Faith melts away into universal being. When I pray,* ***I find that I am praying to myself*** [because I become a god, 'I am']"

(Ibid., pp. 490-495, bold emphasis and bracketed comments added).

Like all other religious systems that man has fabricated, Chopra's belief hangs precariously upon the ability of the individual to achieve salvation by vain philosophy and empty works. This is clearly a deception.

In his epistle to the Colossians, the apostle Paul warned the brethren not to be deceived by such ideas: "Beware lest anyone takes you captive through **philosophy and vain deceit**, according to the **traditions of men**, according to the elements [elemental spirits] of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:8-10).

Oprah Winfrey—New Age Champion

The popular and highly influential talk-show host Oprah Winfrey is one of many entertainment personalities staunchly supporting today's New Age agenda. The fact that Winfrey is pushing New Age philosophy is an indication of the movement's growing popularity.

Winfrey's daily talk show on XM Satellite Radio, called "Oprah and Friends," features various New Age programs—such as her "Soul Series" in which she gives the "shared spiritual wisdom of the world's great religions" (including one of her favorites, Buddhism). "Oprah and Friends" also features a daily "spiritual" lesson from a curriculum called "A Course in Miracles," taught by Winfrey's longtime friend Marianne Williamson, one of today's principal New Age leaders. (See www.oprah.com/xm/mwilliamson/mwilliamson_main.jhtm.) Williamson

is a co-founder of the Peace Alliance, which exists for the purpose of ushering in an era of global peace established on New Age/New Spirituality principles.

According to information from its publishers Web site, www.acim.org, "A Course in Miracles" teaches students to rethink everything they believe about God and life. The course workbook openly states: "This is a course in mind training," and focuses on "thought reversal." According to the program's objectives, by the time Winfrey's followers have completed the year-long course they will have developed a new mindset—a New Age worldview in which **there is no sin, no evil, no devil, and where God is "in" everyone and everything**.

Proponents claim that "A Course in Miracles" is a "new revelation" from Jesus to help humanity work through troubled times. This "Jesus"—who is "another Jesus" (II Cor. 11:4) and bears no resemblance to the Jesus of the Bible—allegedly began "channeling" the teachings in 1965 to Helen Schucman, a Columbia University Professor of Medical Psychology. One day Schucman heard an "inner voice" stating, "This is a course in miracles. Please take notes."

According to the Web site, Schucman "experienced the process as one of a distinct and clear dictation from an inner voice, which earlier had identified itself to her as Jesus…. [The seven-year process] included heightened dream imagery, psychic episodes, visions, and an experience of an inner voice. The experiences also became increasingly religious, with the figure of Jesus appearing more and more frequently to her in both visual and auditory expressions."

Subsequently, "A Course in Miracles" was quietly published in 1975 by the Foundation for Inner Peace (originally called the "Foundation for Para-Sensory Investigations"). For many years the material remained an underground cult classic, studied by New Age-seekers individually, with friends, or in small study groups. There are currently over one and a half million copies of the course in circulation worldwide.

Supporters agree that the principles of New Age spirituality—often collectively referred to as a "civil rights movement for the soul"—are clearly articulated in Schucman's "A Course in Miracles," which is fast becoming the "New Age Bible."

Touted as a "complete self-study spiritual thought system" that reveals the way to "universal love and peace," each lesson focuses on a particular New Age teaching. For example, Lesson 29 instructs the student to go through his or her day affirming that "God is in everything I see." Lesson 35 asks the follower to believe, "My mind is part of God's. I am very holy." Lesson 61 encourages the student to repeat the affirmation, "I am the light of the world." Lesson 70 teaches the student to believe and say, "My salvation comes from me."

Other affirmations include: "There is no sin." A "slain Christ has no meaning." "The recognition of God is the recognition of yourself." "The oneness of the Creator and the creation is your wholeness, your sanity

and your limitless power." "The name of Jesus Christ … is but a symbol…. It is a symbol that is safely used as a replacement for the many names of all the gods to which you pray." "The Atonement is the final lesson he [a man] needs to learn, for it teaches him that, never having sinned, he has no need of salvation."

A key teaching from "A Course in Miracles" is that "we are all one" because God is "in everyone and everything." But diligent Christians recognize that these teachings are the exact opposite of what the Bible really teaches. Men are not God (Ezek. 28:2; Hosea 11:9), and, as Christians, our "oneness" exists only through the true God the Father and Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:26-28; John 17:11, 21).

The course's manual specifically states that "a universal theology is impossible, but a universal experience is not only possible but necessary" (page 77). In other words, absolute truth does not exist; we each determine what is true or false, right or wrong, good or evil by our relative experiences and how we "feel" about those experiences. "We look inside [ourselves] first, decide the kind of world we want to see and then project that world outside, **making it the truth as we see it**. **We make it true by our interpretations** of what it is we are seeing" (bold emphasis added). But Scripture says, "Your Word is the truth" (John 17:17).

By the end of the course, the student is "left in the hands of his or her own Internal Teacher"—that is, their own self-centered "conscience" led astray by the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9). Or worse, their new "internal voice" is a "familiar spirit"—a demon who will implant all manner of satanic thoughts and ideas. Scripture warns: "Now the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith, *and* shall **follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons**" (I Tim. 4:1). The prophet Isaiah wrote: "And when they shall say to you, 'Seek unto **them that have familiar spirits** and to wizards who peep and mutter'—*but* should not a people seek [instead] unto their God?…" (Isa. 8:19).

Indeed, such wicked spirits are more than willing to become one's "inner teacher" if invited in through New Age practices. Giving heed to one's so-called "inner-god" or "internal voice" can quite easily result in becoming directly influenced by powerful demon spirits—and is a first step in being drawn fully into the occult. And Satan always works subtly, disguising himself and his teachings to *appear* good and right—as if he were an "angel of light" (II Cor. 11:13-14). But Isaiah tells us where to find the truth: "To the law and to the testimony! If they [who teach New Age philosophies] do not speak according to this Word, *it is* because ***there is*** **no light in them**" (Isa. 8:20).

In reality, such New Age gobbledygook is nothing but repackaged teachings from ancient Hinduism—just as Eastern spiritualist Deepak Chopra teaches. Ultimately, however, such teachings stem from the same *lie* that Satan the devil told Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan told Eve that she should *liberate* herself and take of the

"tree of the knowledge of good and evil"—that she could determine and choose *for herself* what was true and false, good or evil—that she would, in effect, become a god (as Satan believes himself to be a god).

Why does New Age philosophy appeal to so many people? Precisely because people do not like to be told how to live—for the "carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*" (Rom. 8:7). Any religion or philosophy that appeals to the *self* as an "inner-god" undermines authority and absolves people of responsibility. It soothes the conscience—live as you please, since you "make the truth as *you* see it."

In stark contrast to New Age ideology, the Bible teaches about the inherently deceitful nature of the self, about the need for repentance and a change of heart, about the blessings that come from *obedience* to the Creator's immutable laws. Jesus said, "I am the way, **and the truth**, and the life" (John 14:6). The real Jesus of Scripture would direct us to worship God the Father and keep His commandments.

Indeed, Oprah Winfrey's "A Course in Miracles" is an unmistakable sign of the times. At this critical juncture in history, New Age teachings are spreading like wildfire around the world. Even within nominal Christianity, the Jesus of the Bible is being reinvented and redefined—resulting in a popular but false New Age gospel. Meanwhile, the "New Age Peace Plan" is deceptively gaining momentum as mankind progresses rapidly toward a New World Order.

Atheism—Pathway to the Occult

When God created the first humans, He intended that they enjoy an intimate personal relationship with their Maker. Genesis 3:8 indicates that God, Adam and Eve walked together in the Garden of Eden, perhaps daily. Indeed, the innate need for such a relationship is so profound that, without it, man is at best a mere survivor, spending his days in virtual futility.

While any sin can ultimately cut one off from a relationship with God, there is perhaps no offense so disturbing as the extreme stance of atheism. To categorically deny the existence of God is to deny the very purpose of human life. As the psalmist wrote, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God!'…" (Psa. 14:1).

Atheism in the United Kingdom and the United States is evidently on the rise—largely thanks to Richard Dawkins' highly controversial book, *The God Delusion*. Alvin Plantinga, writing for *Christianity Today*, says Dawkins' book, published in 2006, is mostly "an extended diatribe against religion in general and belief in God in particular"—and worries that such books will only "encourage timorous atheists to come out of the closet" ("The Dawkins Confusion," *Christianity Today*, March/April 2007; www.christianitytoday.com/bc/2007/002/1.21.html).

Robert Steward, a writer for the *Journal of Evolutionary Philosophy*, admits that Dawkins' book reads like a "declaration of war upon

mainstream religion." He writes: "Dawkins is one of today's most vocal advocates for atheism and his new book is a potent expression of a growing [anti-religion, anti-God] atheist viewpoint…. [In his book, Dawkins] asks us to imagine a world without the destructive influence of religion" (www.evolutionary-philosophy.net/review_god_delusion.html).

Steward adds that Dawkins, by his own definition, describes an atheist as someone who "believes in nothing beyond the natural, physical world" (Ibid.).

Indeed, atheists not only deny the reality of God, they deny the existence of the spirit realm itself. Ironically, this position **puts the atheist one step closer to the occult**. Without a relationship with God, a huge void exists in the atheist's life. But there are evil spirit beings—demons—more than willing to fill such a void. Satan and his demons typically operate in "disguise" (see II Cor. 11:14)—so it is clearly to their advantage if one denies their existence. One cannot guard against what one denies—thus, for some, atheism may be their first unwitting step towards the occult.

Voodoo and the Occult

While the Western Hemisphere has absorbed Eastern spirituality, Voodoo (also known as Vodun) is practiced by over 60 million people worldwide, predominantly in the Southern Hemisphere and many Island countries.

The 2003 *Encyclopedia Britannica* contains this entry on voodoo: "**VOODOO:** Also spelled Voudou, French Vaudou, national religious folk cult of Haiti. **Voodoo is a mixture of Roman Catholic ritual elements, which date from the period of French colonization**, and African theological and magical elements, which were brought to Haiti by slaves formerly belonging to the Yoruba, Fon, Kongo, and other peoples of Africa. The term voodoo is derived from the word vodun, which denotes a god, or spirit, in the language of the Fon people of Benin (formerly Dahomey, which also included parts of today's Togo, and Nigeria).

"Although voodooists profess belief in a rather distant supreme God, the effective divinities are a large number of spirits called the **loa**, which can be variously identified as local or African gods, deified ancestors, or Catholic saints. The loa are believed to demand ritual service, which thereby attaches them to individuals or families. In voodoo ritual services, a number of devotees congregate at a temple, usually a humble meeting place, where a priest or priestess leads them in ceremonies involving song, drumming, dance, prayer, food preparation, and the ritual sacrifice of animals [including drinking the blood of the animal]. The voodoo priest, or houngan, and the priestess, or mambo, also act as counselors, healers, and expert protectors against sorcery or witchcraft.

"The loa are thought by voodoo devotees to act as helpers, protectors, and guides to people. **The loa communicate with an individual**

during the cult services by possessing him during a trance state in which the devotee may eat and drink, perform stylized dances, give supernaturally inspired advice to people, perform medical cures, or display special physical feats; these acts exhibit the incarnate presence of the loa within the entranced devotee. Many urban Haitians believe in two sharply contrasting sets of loas, a set of wise and benevolent ones called Rada loas, and a harsher, more malevolent group of spirits called Petro loas. Petro spirits are called up by more agitated or violent rituals than Rada spirits are evoked by.

"A peculiar, and much sensationalized, aspect of voodoo is the zombie. A zombie is regarded by voodooists as being either a dead person's disembodied soul that is used for magical purposes, or an actual corpse that has been raised from the grave by magical means and is then used to perform agricultural labour in the fields as a sort of will-less automaton. In actual practice, certain voodoo priests do appear to create 'zombies' by administering a particular poison to the skin of a victim, who then enters a state of profound physical paralysis for a number of hours.

"For decades the Roman Catholic church in Haiti denounced voodoo and even advocated the persecution of its devotees, but because voodoo has remained the chief religion of at least 80 percent of the people in Haiti, **the Catholic church by the late 20th century seemed resigned to coexisting with the cult**" (CD-ROM Version, bold emphasis and bracketed comments added).

The modern Roman Church's inability to triumph over occult religious belief and practice in Haiti—and her eventual willingness to co-exist with it—recalls her early history in which she absorbed many of the occult beliefs and practices of Roman paganism.

The Only Way to Know the True God is through Jesus Christ

God cannot be known through Eastern mystic philosophy. He cannot be known through any religious system. The only way to know God the Father is through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Jesus is the only one who can reveal the Father to a person. "At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for it was well pleasing in Your sight *to do* this. **All things were delivered to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; neither does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son personally chooses to reveal *Him***' " (Matt. 11:25-27).

And again Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day…. For this reason, I have said to you, no one can come to Me unless it has been given to him from My Father" (John 6:44, 65).

God also revealed through the prophet Isaiah that if a person truly seeks Him, he or she will find Him, because Jesus will reveal Him. "**Seek the LORD while He may be found**; call upon Him while He is near. **Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts**; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:6-7).

Jesus Himself promised, "Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7-8).

Obedience—Key to Knowing God: Anciently, when King David handed over the twelve-tribe Kingdom of Israel to his son Solomon, he gave this charge: "And now in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, **keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God**, so that you may possess this good land and leave *it* for an inheritance for your children after you forever. And you, Solomon my son, **know the God of your father** and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts. **If you seek Him, He will be found by you**. But if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever" (I Chron. 28:8-9).

The New Testament shows that in order to truly know God one must first repent of all sin—and sin is the transgression of God's law (I John 3:4). Afterwards, a person must be baptized for the forgiveness of those sins: "Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

The Holy Spirit enables a person to obey God. And a person who knows God will be obedient to His standards. This is the opposite of what Chopra advocates when he claims that "**saints do not have to obey any conventional standards of behavior**." The apostle John wrote that Christians who know God will be keeping His commandments: "And by this *standard* **we know that we know Him**: **if we keep His commandments**. **The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him**. On the other hand, ***if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected**. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked" (I John 2:3-6).

In the next chapter we will examine how occult themes have pervaded the entire entertainment industry.

CHAPTER FIVE

The World of Entertainment: Vehicle of the Occult

Most Christians understand, to some degree, that a powerful spirit being called Satan—literally the "enemy"—is currently the "god of this [present] world [age]" (II Cor. 4:4). Satan, however, is *exceedingly* crafty. Even the average Christian has no idea how pervasive his deceptions have become. The apostle John describes him as the "ancient serpent [hearkening back to the Garden of Eden] who is called the Devil and Satan, who **is [actively] deceiving the whole world**…" (Rev. 12:9). This means the Enemy has literally left *no stone unturned* in his exhaustive efforts to deceive and destroy mankind.

As humans, we love to be entertained—and Satan knows this. It should come as no surprise then that the *entire* world of entertainment—literature, music, movies and television, games, etc.—has been thoroughly corrupted. In particular, the vast film and movie industry has now been fully utilized by Satan as a powerful tool to not only lead people into false ways of thinking (and thus living), but to present the occult in all of its facets as "acceptable"—with the intent of ultimately drawing the unsuspecting into its snare.

Satan's approach is quite simple: Mix a little *bad* in with the *good* and, in time, the bad will corrupt the good. Satan applied his twisted philosophy to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when he told Eve that eating of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil"—which in effect meant taking to herself the right to *decide* what was good or evil—would make her like God. This certainly seemed like a *good* thing to Adam and Eve—so they both ate of the tree. (Satan even implied that God was unfairly denying them this right, making them appear *victims*.) The Devil appeared as "the good guy"—"an angel of light"—coming along just in time to help poor, oppressed Adam and Eve. Of course, God *wanted* them to learn to discern between good and evil—by living His way, according to His laws and commandments. But usurping God's prerogative to decide or define good and evil was, in effect, rejecting Him as Lawgiver and Lord.

This has been Satan's methodology down through the ages—and it hasn't changed. He still appears as a "an angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14). In the world of entertainment, he subtly mixes good and evil—using "good" witches and "good" wizards, and "white" magic. And this is always presented in a context of "good versus evil." But as we will see, this is still a dangerous mix—one that all too often leads young people, in particular, to begin dabbling in the occult.

The Occult and Violence in Films

The ongoing desensitization toward and seduction into pagan spirituality in our modern culture is transparently obvious by the popularity of occult themes in entertainment. Today, occult themes provide the bulk of material for TV shows and movies. Escalating in the 1960s with the hit *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), Hollywood began to churn out increasing numbers of films with dark, occult themes. *Rosemary's Baby* featured a young woman who mothered a child by the Devil. As the decade of the seventies progressed, violence, sadism, brutality, slasher films, victims of possession, and graphic blood-and-gore tales became more frequent. *Deliverance* (1972) included graphic mutilation and sodomy by crazed hillbillies upon an unsuspecting group of wilderness adventurers. The influential and acclaimed independent-sleeper horror classic *Halloween* (1978), with its creepy soundtrack, featured a knife-wielding killer of teenage babysitters. This popular serial-killer-slasher film inspired numerous sequels—seven more by the year 2002.

Evil spirits possessed the body of a twelve-year-old girl in the box-office success *The Exorcist* (1973). Its horrific visuals terrified audiences. The blockbuster, about the attempted exorcism of a demonic entity by two priests, inspired sequels of its own, e.g., *Exorcist II: The Heretic* (1977), *The Exorcist III* (1990) and *Exorcist: The Beginning* (2004).

Other devil-possession movies in the late 70s and early 80s included *The Amityville Horror* (1979), about a devilish haunted house, and *Poltergeist*, a story about menacing spirits that kidnap a young child by sucking her into a TV set and taking her into a parallel dimension. *Poltergeist* encouraged a sequel in 1986, and another in 1988. *The Omen* (1976), about a young adopted son named Damien—Satan's son—also inspired two sequels: *Damien: Omen II* (1978) and *The Final Conflict* (1981). There was also a made-for-cable TV sequel titled *Omen IV: The Awakening* in 1991. Other Devil films included *The Devil's Advocate* (1997) and *End of Days* (1999) with the lead character as the seductive Devil Lord.

Horror films in the mid-1990s surprised the industry with their phenomenal success. Then movie producers realized "tantalizing" evil as a money maker. *The Craft* (1996), about schoolgirls dabbling in witchcraft and black magic, and the horror/thriller *Scream* (1996), are two examples. The end of the century's expressionistic docu-horror, *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), was filmed using a hand-held camera which enhanced its suggestive, understated horror (Dirks, T., *Horror Films*, 1996-2005).

Below is a sampling of feature-length movies with occult themes (or sub-themes) from 2004 to 2007. Keep in mind that these were selected from literally *hundreds* of similar films.

2004 Occult Movies

• *Hellraiser: Deader*—A journalist is unwittingly drawn into the world of an underground group that can bring back the dead.

• *Hellboy*—Born in the flames of hell and brought onto our world in a pagan ritual, Hellboy must come to terms with his fantastic powers that prove to be both a blessing and a curse.
• *Yu-Gi-Oh!*—A boy, Yugi, unleashes ancient mystical energies through a popular card game.
• *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*—Harry Potter and his friends return as teenagers to Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry for their third year of study, where they delve into the mystery surrounding an escaped prisoner who poses a dangerous threat to the young Potter.
• *Riding the Bullet*—Alan Parker is a struggling artist haunted by images of death. His obsession with the dark side comes to a head on Halloween night, when he unknowingly hitches a ride with the Grim Reaper.
• *Seed of Chucky*—Puppets go on a murderous rampage.
• *Dream Warrior*—In a post-apocalyptic world, a genetic deviant is hunted because of his extra-human powers.
• *Darkness*—A strange force, something ancient and wicked, threatens to pull a family apart.

2005 Occult Movies

• *Elektra*—Warriors battle using super-human powers and dark martial arts.
• *Come Out Come Out Wherever You Are*—A father desperately tries to break through to his nine-year-old daughter when she creates a maniacal imaginary "friend" with a terrifying vendetta.
• *Boogeyman*—In this chilling horror movie, a young man must confront the terrifying visions that have haunted him all his life—in which the line separating what is real and what is not real has vanished.
• *Son of the Mask*—A magical mask finds its way into the possession of a child who utilizes the mask's spectacular powers.
• *Cursed*—An freak accident gives siblings mysterious new powers that threaten to take over their lives as ancient omens are unleashed onto the world.
• *El Muerto the Aztec Zombie*—A Mexican-American is abducted and sacrificed by the Aztec gods of death and destiny—only to return a year later with supernatural powers.
• *Twitches* —Twin teenage girls, witches in training, fight against "The Darkness."

2006 Occult Movies

• *Slither*—Huge slugs from outer space, bloodthirsty zombies and slime-ridden oozing bug overlords come together for survival.
• *The Celestine Prophecy*—Ancient Peruvian scrolls predict an awakening that redefines human life and brings about a new spiritual culture.
• *Ritual*—A physician travels to Jamaica to treat a wealthy American cancer patient, only to discover that her patient is the victim of a powerful Voodoo Priest.

• *Soul Searcher*—Forces of hell and earth collide as Joe, a seemingly ordinary guy, is trained to be the new Grim Reaper.
• *Wicker*—A sheriff investigates a mysterious secluded island where residents are involved in strange sexual rituals, a harvest festival and human sacrifice.
• *Conversations with God*—Based on the trilogy of books by Neale Walsch, which he claims were written by channeling various spirits.
• *Opal Dream*—A bizarre tale of a young girl's imaginary friends.
• *Pan's Labyrinth*—A young girl becomes entangled in a dangerous world of magic and myth.
• *Requiem*—A troubled woman seeks help from a priest who reinforces her conviction that she is possessed.
• *Point of Contact*—A man discovers he is able to see the dead.
• *Beowolf and Grendel*—The harrowing fantasy adventure of a Norse warrior who faces a monstrous troll.
• *Blood-Rayne*—In eighteenth-century Romania, Rayne—a half-human, half -vampire prone to fits of blind rage—strives to avenge her mother's rape.
• *Underworld: Evolution*—Traces an ancient feud between tribes of vampires and werewolves in which the secrets of their bloodlines are unlocked.
• *Nightwatch*—Set in contemporary Moscow, a medieval truce between the forces of light and darkness is threatened.
• *Stay Alive*—Young adults play an untested survival game in which the line between games, legends and reality becomes blurred. After chilling supernatural encounters and death-defying challenges, the players wonder if they are playing the game—or if the game is playing them.

2007 Occult Movies

• *Alice*—A disturbed young woman confronts her fears in a dark and mysterious land of looking glasses, strange potions, talking animals, and the wicked Queen of Hearts.
• *Gabriel*—An angel fights to save souls and bring light to the darkness of purgatory.
• *The Ghost Son*—A young woman enters into another dimension, where reality is mixed with imagination.
• *Highlander: The Source*—A band of immortals set out on a quest to find the origin of the first immortal and the source of their immortality.
• *Mother of Tears*—A young art student unwittingly opens an ancient urn unleashing the demonic power of the world's most powerful witch—and must use her own psychic powers to stop the "Mother of Tears" before her evil conquers the world.
• *The Messengers*—A teen is tormented on a secluded farm by ominous apparitions invisible to others.
• *The Sin Eater*—When a mysterious man "absolves" a woman's sins by eating bread and wine at her grave, ten-year-old Cadi wants the same redemption—which threatens to uncover a dark family secret.

• *Bridge to Terabithia*—Two teens create the secret magical kingdom of Terabithia, where they fight against the Dark Master and his evil creatures.
• *The Last Mimzy*—A mysterious rabbit telepathically communicates with a young girl, causing her to develop astonishing skills.
• *Paprika*—A psychotherapist learns to enter into people's dreams in order to help uncover the source of their anxiety.
• *Rise Blood Hunter*—A reporter wakes up in a morgue to discover she is no longer among the living—and vows revenge against the cult responsible for putting her there.
• *Macbeth*—A man is visited by several extraordinary young witches, who claim that he will become the new "crime king."
• *Stardust*—In an imaginary world, a young man embarks on a quest to retrieve a fallen star—and finds himself in a mysterious, forbidden land of ghosts and witches.
• *Bad Blood*—A family inherits a cursed house located in a small village overshadowed by superstition, religion and mysterious folklore.
• *Halloween*—A zombie turns back time to uncover the making of a pathologically disturbed child.
• *The Dark is Rising*—A young man uses his supernatural powers to fight mysterious evils.
• *Weirdsville*—Workers discover Satanists performing a ritual sacrifice right where they had planned to bury a body.
• *Hallow's Point*—Students lock themselves in an abandoned schoolhouse on Halloween night and accidentally resurrect a serial killer.
• *Khadak*—The epic story of a young Mongolian shepherd who confronts his destiny to become a shaman.
• *Wristcutters*—Zia cuts his wrists and enters a bizarre afterlife reserved for suicides.
• *Headless Horseman*—College students get caught up in a horrific Halloween ritual.
• *Borderland*—On a trip to a Mexican border town, three college friends stumble upon a human-sacrifice cult.
• *Beowulf*—In a time of heroes, the mighty warrior Beowulf slays the demon Grendel in a conflict that transforms a king into a legend.

2008 Occult Movies

• *The Incredible Hulk*—Based on the long-running comic series, the main character morphs into a violent monster when enraged. As such, the Hulk is called upon to defend the world against "The Abomination."
• *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*—Children battle forces of evil in a fantasy land filled with witches and villains.
• *Hellboy II: The Golden Army*—A humanoid demonic creature born in the flames of hell is brought to earth as mankind's only defense against an otherworldly evil.
• *Chronicles of an Exorcism*—At the request of the Catholic Church, two filmmakers attempt to document the exorcism of a young woman.

• *Spiderwick Chronicles*—While exploring the abandoned Spiderwick mansion, children discover an enchanting world of strange creatures—dragons, fairies, goblins, sprites.
• *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*—An explorer must battle a resurrected Chinese emperor.
• *Frontiers*—A gothic horror story featuring extreme sadistic violence.

The Harry Potter Phenomenon

Notice the overwhelming use of children, teens and young adults in the casting of such movies. Occult/horror films are, in general, specifically designed to be attractive to young people. Currently-popular network television shows featuring the occult include *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (a "good" witch for younger audiences), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (also for young audiences), *Charmed* ("good" witches verses "bad" witches for young adults), *Ghost Whisperer* and *Reaper*. Then there's the highly popular *Supernatural*, which includes virtually every horrid aspect of the occult world.

When it comes to movies targeted at children, there has never been a series with greater popularity—and thus greater occult influence—than the phenomenally successful Harry Potter series. The seventh and final film—*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*—is due out in the summer of 2008. Yet after only the *fifth* movie, the Potter series has already become the **number one film franchise of all time**, grossing $4.48 billion worldwide—topping all 22 *James Bond* films and the six *Star Wars* movies (*Life Story, Movie Magic: The Future of Harry Potter*, "A Farewell to Hogwarts"; Bauer Publishing, Spring 2008; p. 97).

How big is the Potter phenomenon? "Potter is sweeping the globe, and truly has an international presence as readers in 200 nations, in over 40 languages, indulge in this series. A United States consumer research survey reports that '**over half of all children between the ages of six and 17 have read at least one Harry Potter book**' " (quoted at www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/harrypotter.html).

What about the Harry Potter books and films? Should they be considered serious occult influences upon children (and adults)—or are they simply harmless entertainment? While some leading evangelical leaders have given the series their stamp of approval, other Christian pastors and leaders are shouting an alarm—and for good reason. The level of occult information contained in the Potter series indicates that the author, J. K. Rowlings, has a **highly sophisticated knowledge of the occult**—which she is subtly passing on to her young audience.

Do movies such as the Potter series actually cause children to develop a genuine interest in the occult? Peter Smith, the General Secretary of the British Association of Teachers and Lecturers, says *yes*. "The premiere of *Harry Potter* the movie will lead to a whole new generation of youngsters discovering witchcraft and wizardry…. Increasing numbers of children are spending hours alone browsing the Internet in search of Satanic

Web sites, and we are concerned that nobody is monitoring this growing fascination" (BBC News Online, *Harry Potter Occult Warning*, November 5, 2000; quoted by Spotlight Ministries, www.spotlightministries.org.uk/harrypotterarticle.htm).

Clearly, such books and movies introduce children to the world of the occult. Defenders, however, say that children are not being led into *real* witchcraft or other aspects of the occult. But according to BBC News reports, even occultists themselves recognize that **some children are being led into the occult** as a result of the current interest being promoted by **fictional witchcraft**. "The Pagan Federation, which represents druids and witches, says it has been 'swamped' with calls following teenage programs featuring **good witches**. [The] Pagan Federation's Steve Paine, the high priest of a coven, said the hit US drama *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the highly successful Harry Potter books were **popular amongst practicing witches**. 'They are taken as fantasy entertainment. **But they do encourage people to think about different forms of spirituality**,' he said" (BBC News Online, *Buffy Draws Children to Witchcraft*, August 4, 2000; quoted by Spotlight Ministries; bold emphasis added).

Despite concerns, there are a number of Web sites which promote Harry Potter, and have links to sites where children are exposed to *genuine* occultism. Peter Smith, quoted earlier, adds: "Youngsters can very easily visit a choice of hundreds of Web sites on witchcraft, Wicca magic, casting hexes and bloodletting techniques, without adults having any control as to what they read. This goes far beyond a case of reading a Harry Potter story. This represents an extremely worrying trend among young people" (BBC News Online, *Occult Sites Lure Teenagers*, April 22, 2000; Spotlight Ministries).

Smith warned that though the Potter stories featured "the struggle between good and evil," he was concerned that they could be used as a "springboard for exploring the more sinister aspects of the occult," and that children were using the Internet to explore the supernatural.

Potter defenders contend that the books and movies do not teach legitimate spells, and are therefore harmless. Occult expert Caryl Matrisciana, author of *Gods of the New Age*, disagrees. "J. K. Rowling, the author of the Harry Potter series, has gone through an awful lot of research. She is very accurate…. **This *is* a true representation of witchcraft, and the black arts, and black magic**. And yet, we have people that say this is merely fantasy and harmless reading for our children. Actually, what makes this *more* dangerous is that it is couched in fantasy language, and [is represented as] children's literature, and is made to be humorous, and is beautifully written and is extremely provocative reading…. *This* is what is so harmful" (*Harry Potter: Witchcraft Repackaged*, Jeremiah Films, 2001; www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/harrypotter.html; bold emphasis added).

At the very least, the books and movies do teach children the *concept* of *magic*—that it can be used to control people and obtain certain results. Even the cover of one highly-popular Potter magazine featured the

teaser, "How To: Cast a Spell, Mix a Potion, Try a Trick!"

The argument that "fantasy" and "make-believe" are inherently harmless is totally false. Berit Kjos has researched the Potter movies and their effect on children in great detail. He writes: "The movie's foundation in fantasy, not reality, **doesn't diminish its power to change beliefs and values**. Imaginary (or *virtual*) experiences and well-written fantasies **can affect the mind and memories as much, if not more, than actual experiences**. Each occult image and suggestion is designed to stir feelings and produce a strong emotional response" (www.crossroad.to/articles2/HP-Movie.htm; bold emphasis added).

He says the result is that "children identify with their favorite characters and **learn to see wizards and witches from a popular peer perspective rather than from God's perspective**." This "peer perspective" is one in which witchcraft and wizardry are not only *accepted*, they are considered "in" or "cool." But as Kjos brings out, God warns us to "abhor what is evil" and "cling to what is good" (Rom. 12:9).

Kjos warns that when children (or adults) dabble in the occult, they end up "**desensitizing their hearts and minds to its evil**. Turning God's truth upside down, they are learning to 'love' what is evil. The natural next step is to reject God's wise boundaries and 'abhor' what He calls good…. [Children] learn to ignore or reinterpret God's truth and **lose their natural aversion for the devious spirits** represented by the creatures and symbols" in the Potter movies.

"Caught up in the exciting story, [children] **absorb the suggested values** and store the fascinating images in their minds—**making the forbidden world of the occult seem more normal** than [what God has to offer].

"This inner change is usually unconscious, for the occult lessons and impressions tend to **bypass rational scrutiny**. After all, who will stop, think and weigh the evidence when caught up in such a fast-moving visual adventure? Fun **fantasies and strategic entertainment has a special way of altering values, compromising beliefs and changing behavior**….

"The main product marketed through this movie is a **new belief system**. This pagan ideology comes complete with trading cards … wizardly games, clothes … action figures and cuddly dolls … [all designed to] keep the child's mind **focused on the occult all day and into the night**" (www.crossroad.to/articles2/HP-Movie.htm; bold emphasis added.)

John Murray, writer and director of *Think About It: Understanding the Impact of TV-Movie Violence*, summarizes the concern for parents: "With the growing popularity of youth-oriented TV shows on witchcraft—*Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, *Charmed*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*—**a generation of children is becoming desensitized to the occult**. [And now] with Hollywood's help, Harry Potter will likely surpass all these influences, potentially **reaping some grave spiritual consequences**" (www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/harrypotter.html).

But God has understood the **seductive effect of the occult** all along. Thus, Scripture expressly forbids *any* kind of involvement with the occult:

"When you come to the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses **divination**, or an **observer of times**, or a **fortuneteller**, or a **witch**, or a **charmer**, or a **consulter with familiar spirits**, or a **wizard**, or **one who seeks oracles** from the dead. For all that do these things *are* an **abomination** to the LORD. And because of these abominations, the LORD your God drives them out from before you" (Deut. 18:9-12).

The following is an edited personal testimony from a *former witch* concerning the Potter series. Bold emphasis has been added.

***Harry Potter: What Does God Have to Say?*—by David Meyer**

"I am writing this urgent message because **I was once a witch**. I lived by the stars as an astrologer and numerologist casting horoscopes and spells. I lived in the mysterious and shadowy realm of the occult. By means of spells and magic, I was able to invoke the powers of the 'controlling unknown' and fly upon the night winds transcending the astral plane. Halloween was my favorite time of the year, and I was intrigued and absorbed in the realm of Wiccan witchcraft. All of this was happening in the decade of the 1960s when witchcraft was just starting to come out of the broom closet.

"It was during that decade of the 1960s, in the year 1966, that a woman named J. K. Rowling was born. This is the woman who has captivated the world in this year of 2000 with four books known as the 'Harry Potter Series.' [Editor's note: As of this publication, Rowling has written three more in the series to bring the total to seven.] **These books are orientational and instructional manuals of witchcraft woven into the format of entertainment**. **These four books by J. K. Rowling teach witchcraft! I know this because I was once very much a part of that world**.

"Witchcraft was very different in the 1960s. There were a lot fewer witches, and the craft was far more secretive. At the end of that spiritually troubled decade, I was miraculously saved by the power of Jesus Christ and His saving blood. I was also delivered from every evil spirit that lived in me and was set free. However, as I began to attend fundamental Christian churches, I realized that even there witchcraft had left its mark. Pagan holidays and Sabbats were celebrated as 'Christian holidays.'

"As time went on, I watched the so-called 'Christian' churches compromising and unifying. I also watched with amazement as teachings from eastern religions and 'New Age' doctrine began to captivate congregations. It was a satanic set-up ... bringing forth a one-world religion with a cleverly concealed element of occultism interwoven in its teachings.

"In order to succeed in bringing witchcraft to the world and thus complete satanic control, an entire generation would have to be induced and taught to think like witches, talk like witches, dress like witches, and act like witches. The occult songs of the 1960s launched the Luciferian project

of capturing the minds of an entire generation.…

"**As a former witch, I can speak with authority when I say that I have examined the works of Rowling and that the Harry Potter books are training manuals for the occult**. Untold **millions of young people are being taught to think, speak, dress and act like witches** by filling their heads with the contents of these books. Children are so obsessed with the Harry Potter books that they have left television and video games to read these witchcraft manuals.

"The first book of the series, entitled *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, finds the orphan, Harry Potter, embarking into a new realm when he is taken to 'Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.' At this occult school, Harry Potter learns how to obtain and use witchcraft equipment. Harry also learns a new vocabulary, including words such as 'Azkaban,' 'Circe,' 'Draco,' 'Erised,' 'Hermes,' and 'Slytherin'—**all of which are names of real devils or demons**. These are not characters of fiction!

"How serious is this? By reading these materials, **many millions of young people are learning how to work with demon spirits**. **They are getting to know them by name**. Vast numbers of children professing to be Christians are also filling their hearts and minds, while willingly ignorant parents look the other way."

"The titles of the books should be warning enough to make us realize how satanic and anti-Christ these books truly are. The aforementioned title of the first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (1998), was a real give-away. The second book was called *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1999), while the third book was entitled *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999). The fourth book in the series is *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000), fifth is *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2003), and the sixth is *Harry Potter and the Half-blood Prince* (2005), with the seventh expected to be released soon. [Editor's note: The seventh Potter book (and movie) is titled, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.] To show the impact and influence of these books on people, especially the younger generation, the total number of books sold worldwide is over 270 million and they have been translated into 62 languages. [Sales have greatly increased through 2007; see statistics quoted earlier.]

"As a real witch, I learned about the two sides of 'the force.'… When real witches have Sabbats and esbats and meet as a coven, they greet each other by saying 'Blessed be,' and when they part, they say 'The Force be with you.' Both sides of this 'Force' are Satan. It is not a good side of the force that overcomes the bad side of the force, but rather it's the blood of Jesus Christ that destroys both supposed sides of the satanic 'Force.'

"**High level witches believe that there are seven satanic princes and that the seventh, which is assigned to Christians, has no name.** In coven meetings, he is called 'the nameless one.' In the Harry Potter books, there is a character called 'Voldemort.' The pronunciation guide says of this being: 'He who must not be named.'

"On July 8 [2000] at midnight, bookstores everywhere were stormed

by millions of children to obtain the latest and fourth book of the series known as *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.* **These books were taken into homes everywhere with a real evil spirit following each copy to curse those homes**…. Now we have learned that the public school system is planning to use the magic of Harry Potter in the classrooms, making the public schools centers of witchcraft training.

"What does God have to say about such books as the Harry Potter series? In the Bible, in the book of Acts, we read the following in the 19th chapter, verses 18-20: 'And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed.'

"As parents, we will answer to God if we allow our children to read witchcraft books. The Word of God will prevail mightily in your life only if such things of Satan are destroyed" (David Meyer, *Harry Potter: What Does God Have to Say?*, 2000).

The Golden Compass

Released in the winter of 2007, *The Golden Compass* is the mystical story of a twelve-year-old girl, Lyra, who wields a mysterious "compass" for guidance. Energized by tiny, *conscious* "dust" particles, the "alethiometer" is in reality a device used for divination. The heroine, from a parallel universe, invokes the swirling masses of dust to communicate to her the "truth" she needs for the battles she must face. Like many occult-oriented movies, *The Golden Compass* is filled with divination, magic, witches and shape-shifting demons. But what sets this film apart from others—and what has attracted considerable attention—is its **obvious anti-Christian perspective**. This is emphasized by the fact that Philip Pullman—the author of the book on which the movie is based—is a declared atheist.

In the film, Lyra discovers that the "Church," a totalitarian religious organization run by the "Magisterium," seeks to suppress free will and the quest for knowledge. She also comes to see that the "God" of that "Church"—called the "Authority"—is not the creator He claims to be, and that Christianity itself is false. "This will mean the end of the Church … the end of all those centuries of darkness!… The Dust [psychic particles] will change everything" (From *The Golden Compass*; quoted by Berit Kjos at www.cross road.to/articles2/007/compass-pullman.htm). To quote Pullman: "The Authority, then, is an ancient *idea* of God, kept alive artificially by those who benefit from his continued existence."

This overt attack against Christianity (which is arguably more anti-Catholic) has rankled numerous church leaders. According to Berit Kjos, the movie subtly suggests that "occult practices are essential to the battle for the 'free' Republic—against the despised old Church…. Pullman's crafty

tale pulls the readers' minds into an occult context where—through their imagination—they experience life from his atheist/occult perspective." Kjos says Pullman's methods are designed to "redefine God and undermine Christianity," make suggestions that "clash with traditional values," "ridicule or reinterpret biblical truth"—all while immersing the reader into "occultism and ritual magic." He concludes: "This [movie] fits our times…. Myth replaces truth, feelings hide morality, and human effort nullifies the cross" (Ibid.).

"Good" Witches and "White" Magic

Children are understandably fascinated with the kind of power Harry Potter and other mythical witches and wizards possess. In writing the Potter books, author J. K. Rowling admits that the "idea that we could have a child who escapes from the confines of the adult world and goes somewhere where he has power, both literally and metaphorically, really appealed to me" (www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/harrypotter.html).

Certainly power is appealing—especially "white" magic or "white" witchcraft, which is made to look so innocent because it is ostensibly performed by "good" wizards and witches. Who doesn't recall the little "fairy" who spreads her magical stardust at the beginning of each Walt Disney movie? Cute, harmless, entertaining—but still, a subtle use of "white" magic designed to gradually make occult ideas acceptable.

One of the first television programs to introduce the use of "white" magic and "good" witches was *Bewitched*. Launched in 1964 when TV was still in black and white, the comedy series revolved around the marriage of a businessman to an immortal *good* witch, Samantha. While Samantha practiced "white" magic, her meddlesome mother, Endora, was pitched as a not-so-good witch who was unhappy with her daughter's marriage to a mere "mortal." Most episodes—which always featured a wide variety of spells and other displays of magical powers—dealt with this ongoing conflict between the good-witch daughter and her disgruntled bad-witch mother. Again, seemingly harmless entertainment. But the process of breaking down barriers and removing inhibitions takes time. **Occult ideas have to be introduced slowly, almost imperceptibly**. Satan is quite patient, and he knew exactly what he was doing back in 1965 with *Bewitched*—and look how far he's come in a single generation!

Disney Productions—in all of its related enterprises—is one of the foremost promoters of the idea of "good" witches and "white" magic. In 2007, the Disney Channel launched *The Wizards of Waverly Place*, a series featuring five school-age kids who secretly study to become wizards. Of course, they're "good" kids, and only use their magical spells for good—such as defending themselves or others from bullies. The tag-line for the show reads, "They've got the power!" The question is, when it comes to the "real thing," what is the *source* of such power?

According to practicing witches and wizards, "black magic" works *against* nature, and is used to cause harm or to bring illicit gain. "White

magic"—practiced by so-called *good* witches and wizards—works *with* nature and is used only to do good. Even in the Potter books and movies, the main characters are good wizards and witches—practicing only "white" magic in self defense or for the good of others. Only the "bad guys" practice the "dark arts." But the problem is, *both* "black" magic and "white" magic **originate from the same source—Satan the devil**! God does not distinguish between "black" and "white" magic—they are *both* an abomination to Him. So-called "white" magic can never be "good" because it, like "black" magic, **calls upon the same supernatural powers—spirit forces that are not of God**. To be sure, God performs wonderful supernatural actions by the power of His Holy Spirit. But they are always righteous—and the actions of His angels are always good and right. Man has no right to such powers—and *any* attempt to harness spirit power through the occult only plays right into Satan's purpose, which is to deceive and ultimately destroy humankind.

Satan's plan is to **slowly, imperceptibly program children to accept occult images and ideas, desensitizing them to the evil and destructive nature** of such "entertainment." Ultimately, Satan desires that all of mankind reject God and the Bible—and embrace the premier occult symbol of all time, the coming antichrist himself.

The Occult in Video Games

Children have long played elaborate, imaginative games with dolls, toy soldiers, forts, tanks, boats and planes—all without causing harm. But times have changed. Violence and horror themes have taken center stage in electronic video games—along with fantasy in role-playing games like *Dungeons & Dragons, Vampire, Werewolf* and *GURPS.* The same goes for card games like *Magic the Gathering, Battle Tech* and *Star Wars*, as well as computer simulation and virtual reality games.

The largest provider of violent and occult games is Wizards of the Coast, producers of *Magic the Gathering* and publisher of *Dungeons and Dragons. Magic the Gathering*, an occult card-trading game, was released in late 1993 and sold out its first 10 million cards in six weeks (instead of the projected six months). More than 500 million cards have been sold, and there are more than five million game enthusiasts in 52 countries, surpassing both *Monopoly* and *Trivial Pursuit.*

Most of such games take place in a setting where the distinctions between good and evil are blurred. This promotes the lie that there is "white" magic, which can be good, and "black" magic, which is bad. A player doesn't merely observe the occult aspects of the game—he is immersed in the occult environment and must participate in order to survive. Some games are filled with violence, destruction, murder, human sacrifice, spells, demons and psychic powers. Nearly all of such games present a view that is hostile to a Christian worldview, incorporating themes which either mock or misinterpret biblical truths.

"Virtual reality" computer games, where participants perceive that they are actually involved in the action, are particularly sinister because players directly participate in witchcraft and the occult and are immersed in activities with familiar spirits.

Doom, by Id Software, is considered by many to be the greatest game of all time. The first episode, "Knee Deep in the Dead," features pentagrams, a Wicca or witchcraft symbol. Toward the end of the episode, the hero of the game exits by stepping onto a platform with the symbol of a goat behind a pentagram. An inverted cross (a symbol of Satanism) can be found near the beginning of the second episode, "The Shores of Hell." The third episode, called "Inferno," features more pentagrams. Teleporters, which move the player to different areas, also utilize pentagrams.

When exiting the shareware version of the game, there is a screen with more information about what is in the full, registered version. In part, it states: "Sure, don't order *Doom.* Sit back with your milk and cookies and let the universe go to Hell. Don't face the onslaught of demons and specters that await you on The Shores of Hell. Avoid the terrifying confrontations with caco-demons and lost souls that infest Inferno. Or, act like a man! Slap a few shells into your shotgun and let's kick some demonic butt. Order the entire *Doom* trilogy now! After all, you'll probably end up in Hell eventually. Shouldn't you know your way around before you make the extended visit?"

In *Afterlife*, by Lucasarts, players develop a heaven and hell that are far different from the heaven and hell of the Bible. The plot-line is that the player is a local deity who must take care of heaven and hell. **What each soul believes determines where they will go**. For example, if one believes in a religion that involves reincarnation, they will return to earth with another life at a later time.

Quake, another game by Id Software, is much like *Doom* but more technologically advanced. While uploading *Quake* or *Doom*, there is a loading indicator on the top or bottom right of the screen. In *Doom*, the indicator is a small picture of a disk, but in *Quake*, it is a pentagram. One of the power-ups in *Quake* is called "the pentagram of protection." It makes one's character invincible for a brief period of time. While the power-up is in effect, the character's armor rating turns to "666," and the character gradually begins to look more sinister.

In the controversial *Duke Nukem 3d*, created by 3D Realms, the third level in the first episode is called "Death Row." In an area near the beginning of the level (a prison facility), there is a chaplain and a cross on the wall. If Duke Nukem, the game's morally decayed hero, touches a gray portrait in front of the cross, it will invert.

In *Warcraft 2*, by Blizzard Entertainment, one of the buildings, the altar of storms, has a pentagram on it. In *Diablo*, another game made by Blizzard, pentagrams can be found rather easily in the menus of the game (Andrew, *Computer Games Used as a Tool to Praise Satan*).

The games mentioned above are just a small sampling of what is

being created and marketed to desensitize people to occult symbols and practices, witchcraft and Satanism. Countless numbers of children and adults are mesmerized by and enslaved to these games, including many professing Christians and their children.

Video Games and Violence

Increasingly, parents are accepting video game violence as simply part of growing up in today's world. But the sheer intensity of violence in many video games ought to be a serious concern for parents. How bad is it? Imagine a video game in which the player has stolen an automobile and is running from the police—with the "option" of targeting the officers, killing them with a sniper rifle, massacring them with a chainsaw, or setting them on fire. Would such a game be popular? Indeed—the game is called *Grand Theft Auto* and has sold 35 million copies, with worldwide sales approaching two billion dollars.

And this is just *one* example of literally scores of violent video games available today to children and young adults.

Researchers are slowly beginning to unravel the effects of video game (and television) violence on the brain—particularly on the undeveloped adolescent brain. In a recent research study, adolescents played two different types of video games—one violent, one nonviolent—for 30 minutes. Teens that played the violent game showed increased activity in the *amygdala*, the part of the brain involved in **emotional arousal**. The study—which employed state-of-the-art brain-scanning technology at the Indiana University School of Medicine—not only indicated an increase in emotional arousal, but a corresponding *decrease* of activity in brain areas involved in **self-control**, **inhibition** and **attention** (Kristin Kalning, *MSNBC Special Report*, Dec. 8, 2006). Vince Matthews, lead researcher in the project, said that at the very least "parents should be aware of the relationship between violent video-game playing and brain function."

Child psychologist David Walsh says the link between video game violence and aggressive behavior can be explained in part by pioneering brain research recently done at the National Institutes of Health. The NIH research shows that the teenage brain is not fully developed. In a CBS *60 Minutes* interview, Walsh said, "[The] teenage brain is different from the adult brain. The impulse control center of the brain, the part of the brain that enables us to **think ahead**, **consider consequences**, **manage urges**—that's the part of the brain right behind our forehead called the prefrontal cortex. That's under construction during the teenage years. In fact, the wiring of that [part of the brain] is not completed until the early 20s." Walsh concludes that because of this developmental difference between adults and teens, young people are definitely more susceptible to the effects of repeated exposure to violent video games (CBS *60 Minutes*, "Can a Video Game Lead to Murder?", March 6, 2005; www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/03/04/60minutes/main678 261.shtml).

Research appearing in the American Psychological Association's (APA) April 2000 *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* supports Walsh's conclusion. Summarizing the research, a press release on the APA's Web site noted: "Playing violent video games like *Doom*, *Wolfenstein 3D* or *Mortal Kombat* can increase a person's aggressive thoughts, feelings and behavior both in laboratory settings and in actual life." Researchers asserted that recent studies showed that "violent video games may be more harmful than violent television and movies because they are interactive, very engrossing and require the player to identify with the aggressor." The studies pointed to the "active nature of the learning environment of the video game" (*Violent Video Games Can Increase Aggression*, www.apa.org/releases/videogames.html.)

The High Moral Cost of Video Games

Matthew Devereux, a writer for *The Christian Science Monitor*, has studied the issues surrounding video game violence. Devereux writes that while most video games operate within a good-versus-evil framework, they conspicuously lack what he calls "moral consequence." He writes: "Once you've killed someone, stolen something, or blown up a building, that's usually the end of it." But, he adds, because it's only a game, the player never gets to "see the emotional impact" of their actions on the characters.

Like many researchers, Devereux's concern is not that teens might be unable to differentiate between real violence and game violence—because they obviously can. Rather, his concern is that they might become **desensitized to the point that they no longer *care***. Devereux says that violent video games "ignore moral consequence and emotional nuance" as they focus entirely on the physical, tangible aspects of the action. "There are only two types of decisions you [as the player] can really make: the strategically correct one or the strategically incorrect one. There is no 'right' or 'wrong'—only success or failure." There is simply **no place for moral or emotional consequences** in the game.

Devereux is convinced that unbridled competition—combined with a lack of moral consequence—eventually **leads to a lack of compassion**. "What [violent video] games risk instilling, not just in kids, but in anyone who plays them, is a kind of sociopathy: a dearth of conscience" (*The Christian Science Monitor*, Jan. 7, 2008).

But in real life, there are *always* moral and emotional consequences when it comes to acts of violence—on everyone involved. And as we have seen, video game violence results in emotional arousal, lack of self-control, lowered inhibition—key entryways into world of demonic spirits. Desensitization to violence is often the first step in one's mind becoming open to occult influences.

Desensitization of Children by the Media

Children are being continuously bombarded by the media with occult symbols, witchcraft, "white" magic and Eastern religion. Television commercials reflect magic, reincarnation and subliminal New Age beliefs—and even many cartoon shows include occult themes. Scores of books—the most damaging being the Potter series—have been written for children over the past few years that feature occult themes. Even public and school libraries are full of witchcraft books for children—and whole sections of libraries are devoted to New Age books. Recent releases (2008) for teen readers includes *The Black Tattoo*, about a young man possessed by a demon named Scourge; *Maximum Ride: School's Out Forever*, features a group of kids on a mysterious quest in which they utilize their ability to fly; *Death Note*, about a youngster who discovers a notebook left behind by a rogue death god; *Uninvited*, deals with a teen who is visited by her dead boyfriend; *The Night Tourist*, about the world of ghosts in New York City; and *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, which features a fantasy world of demonic creatures.

Known throughout the world, Disney Productions is one of the foremost promoters of the occult through its cartoons, videos, movies and theme parks—all of which utilize *magical* characters. Some contain overt messages, such as Jim Henson's *Dark Crystal*, *Thunder Cats*, *She-Ra, He-Man* and *Master of the Universe.*

"Others, like Ted Turner's *Captain Planet and the Planeteers*, are more subtle as they promote the New Age version of ecology…. Popular movies such as *Field of Dreams*, *E.T.*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, the *Star Wars* trilogy, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Temple of Doom*—although often beautifully entertaining—are laced with the New Age messages of benevolent space creatures, positive psychic powers and a **blending of evil and good** characters and themes.

"The sheer volume and **the escalating intensity of these programs in a culture of diminishing biblical values [clouds] children's minds** so that they can no longer discern between the real and unreal or even between right and wrong" (Branch, C., *The Media or the Medium?*, 2000; bold emphasis added).

Satan is master at transforming both himself and his occult promoters into "angels of light" (see II Cor. 11:14)—blurring the line between good and evil, right and wrong. Leaving no stone unturned in his efforts, *every* fabric of society has been affected by occult images and ideas. Society is slowly, imperceptibly becoming *comfortable* with the "scary side" of witchcraft, magic and sorcery. It may only be a matter of time before whole civilizations cast aside God and the Bible as they fully embrace the occult.

In the next chapter we will discuss the origins of other religious holidays observed in Christendom.

CHAPTER SIX

The Origins of Other Occult Holidays Observed in Christendom

Worldly Christendom has adopted as their own a number of holidays that originate and have "evolved" into the pagan and occult religious observances. However, the majority of professing Christians today—who observe these holidays are simply unaware of their origins. Little do they understand that beneath the Christianized veneer of these holidays lie "mysteries" that continue within "non-threatening" secret societies, occult groups and witchcraft covens—that include a long and bloody history of human sacrifice to the god of death, Satan the devil!

Human Sacrifice in Ancient and Modern Occult Worship

In ancient civilizations, the practice of human sacrifice was an open part of occult worship. In his epochal work, *The Golden Bough—A Study in Magic and Religion*, Sir James George Frazer exposes the occult practices and holidays that have been accepted in every age and nation in the world as part of the idolatrous worship of the sun, moon, planets and stars. (The reader is encouraged to read Frazer's single-volume Abridged Edition, The Macmillan Company, 1972.). Frazer details how human sacrifice was an integral part of such religious ceremonies. The following pages reference some of the countries where this occurred: Mexico, 91, 680; South Sea Islands, 110-111; India, 130, 324; Sumatra, 134-135; Japan, Annam, Senegambia, Scandinavia and Scotland, 169; Sweden, 325; Carthage 327; Greece, 337-338, 670; Western Asia Minor, 340; Phoenicia and Moab, 341; Phrygia, 411; Philippine Islands, 412; Egypt, 439, 441; Thrace and New Guinea, 440; Eastern Caucasus, 662; Europe, 706; also Scotland, 715; by the Celts, 757; and by the Druids in Europe, 761-762. These references show that the practice of human sacrifice was nearly universal.

Frazer writes: "Sometimes these human gods [i.e., men proclaimed to be a god or demigod—undoubtedly demon possessed] are restricted to purely supernatural or spiritual functions. Sometimes they exercise supreme political power in addition. In the latter case they are kings as well as gods, and the government is a theocracy. Thus in [the] Marques or Washington Islands there was a class of men who were deified in their lifetime. They were supposed to wield a supernatural power [demonic powers from Satan and his principal demons] over the elements: they could give abundant harvests or smite the ground with barrenness; and they could inflict disease or

death. **Human sacrifices** were offered to them to avert their wrath. There were not many of them [god-men], at the most one or two on each island. They lived in mystic seclusion. Their powers were sometimes, but not always, hereditary. A missionary has described one of these human gods from personal observation. The god was a very old man who lived in a large house within an enclosure. In the house was a kind of altar, and on the beams of the house and on the trees round it were hung human skeletons, head down. No one entered the enclosure except the persons dedicated to the service of the god; only on days when human victims were sacrificed might ordinary people penetrate into the precinct. This human god received more sacrifices than all the other gods; often he would sit on a sort of scaffold in front of his house and call for two or three human victims at a time. They were always brought, for the terror he inspired was extreme. He was invoked all over the island, and offerings were sent to him from every side. Again on the South Sea Islands in general we are told that each island had a man who represented or personified the divinity. Such men were called gods, and their substance was confounded with that of the deity. The man-god was sometimes the king himself; [more often] he was a priest or subordinate chief" (Ibid., pp. 110-111, bracketed comments and bold emphasis added).

Human sacrifice was an accepted part of the worship of gods in ancient civilized Greece (e.g., to the sun god, Zeus) and also in Crete. Frazer describes human sacrifice to the sun-idol Minotaur on the island of Crete: "Stripped of his mystical features [it] was nothing but a bronze image of the sun represented as a man with a bull's head. In order to renew the solar fires, human victims may have been sacrificed to the idol by being roasted in its hollow body or placed on its sloping hands and allowed to roll into a pit of fire. It was in the latter fashion that the Carthaginians sacrificed their offspring to Moloch [Molech]. The children were laid on the hands of the calf-headed image of bronze, from which they slid into the fiery oven, while the people danced to the music of flutes and timbrels to drown out the shrieks of the burning victims" (Ibid., pp. 326-327).

The most bloodthirsty were the Aztecs and Mayans in Central America. In their occult devotion and worship of the sun god, the high priest (high atop a steep pyramid) would cut open the chest of a human victim and quickly cut out his or her heart and thrust it still beating into the air in sacrifice to the sun. Frazer writes: "The ancient Mexicans conceived the sun as the source of all vital force; hence they named him Ipalnemohuani, 'He by whom men live.' But if he bestowed life on the world, he needed also to receive life from it [i.e., the beating heart of the human sacrifice]. And as the heart is the seat and symbol of life, bleeding hearts of men and animals were presented to the sun to maintain him in vigour and enable him to run his course across the sky. Thus the Mexican sacrifices to the sun were magical rather than religious, being designed, not so much to please and propitiate him, as physically to renew his energies of heat, light and motion. The constant demand for human victims to feed the solar fire was met by

waging war every year on the neighboring tribes and bringing back troops of captives to be sacrificed on the altar. Thus the ceaseless wars of the Mexicans and their cruel system of human sacrifices, the most monstrous on record, sprang in great measure from a mistaken theory of the solar system" (Ibid., p. 91, bracketed comments added).

The Mexicans also conducted special human sacrifices to represent the growth of maize from planting to harvest. "For when a god is represented by a living person, it is natural that the human representative should be chosen on the ground of his supposed resemblance to the divine original. Hence the ancient Mexicans, conceiving the maize as a personal being who went through the whole course of life between seedtime and harvest, sacrificed newborn babes when the maize was sown, older children when it had sprouted, and so on till it was fully ripe, when they sacrificed old men. A name for Osiris [to whom human sacrifices were offered in Egypt] was the 'crop' or 'harvest'; and the ancients sometimes explained him as a personification of the corn [or grain]" (Ibid., p. 441, bracketed comments added).

The Aztecs were consumed and obsessed with human sacrifice, perhaps more than any other ancient culture. Frazer writes: "By no people does the custom of sacrificing the human representative of a god appear to have been observed so commonly and with so much solemnity as by the Aztecs of ancient Mexico. With the ritual of these remarkable sacrifices we are well acquainted, for it has been fully described by the Spaniards who conquered Mexico in the sixteenth century, and whose curiosity was naturally excited by the discovery in this distant region of a barbarous and cruel religion which presented many curious points of analogy to the doctrine and ritual of their own church. 'They took a captive,' says the Jesuit Acosta, 'such as they thought good; and afore they did sacrifice him unto their idols, they gave him the name of the idol, to whom he should be sacrificed, and apparelled him with the same ornaments like their idol, saying, that he did represent the same idol. And during the time that this representation lasted, which was for a year in some feasts, in others six months, and in others less, they reverenced and worshipped him in the same manner as the proper idol; and in the meantime he did eat, drink and was merry. When he went through the streets, the people came forth to worship him, and every one brought him an alms, with children and sick folks, that he might cure them, and bless them, suffering him to do all things at his pleasure, only he was accompanied with ten or twelve men lest he should fly. And he (to the end he might be reverenced as he passed) sometimes sounded upon a small flute, that the people might prepare to worship him. The feast being come, and he grown fat, they killed him, opened him, and ate him, making a solemn sacrifice of him.'

"This general description of the custom may now be illustrated by particular examples. Thus at the festival called Toxcatl, the greatest festival of the Mexican year, a young man was annually sacrificed in the character of Tezcatlipoca, 'the god of gods,' after having been maintained and

worshipped as the great deity in person for a whole year. According to the old Franciscan monk Sahagun, our best authority on the Aztec religion, **the sacrifice of the human god fell at Easter** or a few days later, so that, if he is right, it would correspond in date as well as in character to the Christian festival of the death and resurrection of the Redeemer" (Ibid., p. 680).

Abortion—the Sacrifice of the Unborn: Just as it was in ancient civilizations, in today's modern society human sacrifice (to Satan the devil) is still being committed with full government sanction. **It is legalized murder, and it is called abortion**. Under the feminist ideology that women have a "right to choose," millions of unborn babies are killed in the womb—sacrificed to the god of this so-called "right to choose." **Thus, the modern abortion clinic becomes the temple, the abortion table becomes the altar, and the doctor becomes the high priest attending to the bloody sacrifice. Scientists, as well, become gods, experimenting with the body parts of the sacrificial offerings.**

In addition to the open sacrificial slaughter of the unborn, secret adult human sacrifice is being conducted on specified occult holidays. Mac Dominick has written about this at his web site, www.cuttingedge.org/news/n1796.cfm. Some of the following material has been adapted or quoted from this site with his permission.

How America Has Copied Occult Holidays

Too many Christians are enthusiastically celebrating pagan holidays, thinking they are Christian. Once you understand how thoroughly pagan America and the rest of the Western world have become, you will see why God's judgment cannot be far behind.

God reveals His coming judgment against all the systems of the world—religious, political and economic—in the book of Revelation: "And he [the mighty angel] cried out mightily with a loud voice, saying, 'Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a habitation of demons, and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hated bird; because all nations have drunk of the wine of the fury of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the power of her luxury.' And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, '**Come out of her, My people, so that you do not take part in her sins, and that you do not receive of her plagues, for her sins have reached as far as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities**' " (Rev. 18:2-5).

***The Corruption of Christianity*.** During the reign of Constantine, Christianity began to be thoroughly corrupted by pagan practices. With state and religious authority, Constantine permitted the apostate practice of combining Christian doctrine, art, and objects with those of paganism (a process called "syncretization"). While Constantine sanctioned the practice, the Roman Catholic Church perfected it!

In Satanism, the obelisk is the symbol of the male phallus, while the circle represents the female vulva. (Remember, paganism is defined as

worshiping the creature rather than the Creator—Romans 1:25—and one of the easiest aspects of creation to worship has been sex.) Whenever Satanists wanted to represent the sex act, they merely placed the phallus of the obelisk into the vulva of the circle.

Catholic popes have falsely believed that they could "Christianize" a satanic symbol of worship by praying over it and/or anointing it with "holy oil," thus making the object suitable for Christian use. For example, as one can see in any picture of St. Peter's Basilica, there is an obelisk standing in the middle of the huge circular assembly area. Look closely at this obelisk and you will note that it is standing in the middle of an eight-fold path of Satanic Enlightenment. One of the greatest ironies of all time is that the Roman Catholic Church has had (since the seventh century) this permanent symbol of satanic sex worship standing in front of St. Peter's Basilica, where the pope faces it daily—even though the Vatican is the world's greatest proponent of celibacy!

For the past 1,400 years, the Roman Catholic Church has led Western Civilization down the horrid road of syncretization, where satanic worship has been mixed with Christian worship. Once we understand their pagan foundations, we can then find it easier to refuse to participate in those holidays that have their origins in the world of Satanism and the occult.

Occult Holidays and Sabbats

The Satanist believes that numbers contain inherent power—thus, they literally order their lives by occult numerology. Such numerology also is a key component in astrology, another system of divining that Satanists observe very closely. The occult solar calendar is divided into four segments of thirteen weeks each. These periods are as follows, with significant dates noted:

Winter Solstice: 13 weeks—Minor Sabbat

- December 21-22—Winter Solstice/Yule; one of the Illuminati's **human sacrifice** nights.
- February 1 and 2—Candlemas and Imbolg, (Groundhog's Day); one of the Illuminati's **human sacrifice** nights.
- February 14—Valentine's Day

Spring Equinox: 13 weeks—Minor Sabbat, but does require **human sacrifice**.

- March 21-22—Goddess Ostara; Easter is the first Sunday after the first new moon after Ostara; March 21 is one of the Illuminati's **human sacrifice** nights.
- April 1—All Fool's Day, precisely 13 weeks from New Year's Day!
- April 19-May 1—Blood sacrifice to the beast; fire sacrifice is required on April 19.
- April 30-May 1—Beltaine Festival, also called Walpurgis Night; this is the highest day on the Druidic witch's calendar. May 1 is the Illuminati's second most sacred holiday; **human sacrifice** is required.

Summer Solstice: 13 weeks—When the sun reaches its northern most point in its journey across the sky.

- June 21-22—Summer Solstice
- June 21—Litha, one of the Illuminati's **human sacrifice** nights.
- July 4—America's Independence Day, 13 days after the Day of Litha.
- July 19—13 days before Lughnasa.
- July 31-August 1—Lughnasa, Great Sabbat Festival; August 1 is one of the Illuminati's **human sacrifice** nights

Autumnal Equinox: 13 weeks—Minor Sabbath, but does require **human sacrifice**.

- September 21—Mabon, one of the Illuminati's **human sacrifice** nights.
- September 21-22—Autumnal Equinox
- October 31—Samhain, also known as Halloween, or All Hallows Eve. This date is the Illuminati's highest day of **human sacrifice**.

The annual calendar for the entire Western world is ordered by these satanic festival times and days!

Specific Dates within the Occult Solar Calendar

December 21-22, Yule

When the sun begins its northward trek in the sky, and days began to grow longer again, pagans celebrated the Winter Solstice by burning the yule log. Since the sun had reversed itself and was now rising in the sky, pagans believed this was a sign that the human sacrifices carried out in Samhain (Halloween) had been accepted by the gods. Yet, as professing Christians, we continue to sing, "Deck the halls with boughs of holly ... troll the ancient Yuletide carol ... See the blazing Yule before us. Fa la la la la la la la" (*Pagan Traditions of the Holidays*, David Ingraham, p. 71).

The Roman Catholic Church later changed the Winter Solstice celebration to December 25, calling it "Christmas."

Christmas. The festival of Christmas was celebrated by pagan societies many centuries before the birth of Christ. Historian Alexander Hislop wrote extensively about this festival in his book, *The Two Babylons*. Regarding its origin, he states, "Indeed, it is admitted by the most learned and candid writers of all parties that the day of our Lord's birth cannot be determined [However, today it can be determined with great accuracy that Jesus was born near September 2, 5 BC—see *A Harmony of the Gospels in Modern English: the Life of Jesus Christ*, Coulter; York Publishing Co.; Hollister, California; ISBN 978-0-9675479-1-1], and that ***within the Christian Church*** **no such festival as Christmas was ever heard of** ***till the third*** **century**, and that not till the *fourth* century was far advanced did it gain much observance. How then, did the Romish Church fix on December 25th as Christmas-day? Why thus: Long before the fourth century,

and long before the Christian era itself, a festival was celebrated among the heathen, at the precise time of the year, in honour of the birth of the son of the Babylonian queen of heaven; and it may fairly be presumed that, in order to conciliate the heathen, and to swell the number of nominal adherents of Christianity, the same festival was adopted by the Romish Church, giving it only the name of Christ.

"**That Christmas was originally a Pagan festival, is beyond all doubt**. The time of the year, and the ceremonies with which it is still celebrated, prove its origin. In Egypt, the son of Isis, the Egyptian title for the queen of heaven, was born at this very time, '**about the time of the winter solstice**.'

"The Christmas tree, now so common among us, was equally common in Pagan Rome and Egypt. In Egypt that tree was a palm-tree; in Rome it was the fir; the palm-tree denoting the Pagan Messiah, as Baal-Tamar, the fir referring to him as Baal-Berith. The mother of Adonis, the Sun-God and great mediatorial divinity, was mystically said to have been changed into a tree, and when in that state to have brought forth her divine son. If the mother was the tree, the son must have been recognised as the 'Man the branch' " (Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, pp. 92-93, bold emphasis and bracketed comments added).

The Word of God reveals that the custom of the "Christmas tree" is vanity. "For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not" (Jer. 10:3-4). While God calls such customs an abomination, people have been misled into believing that such practices honor God. Yet, every year at Christmas time, religious leaders and historians readily admit that Christmas was originally a holiday in celebration of the pagan sun god. Hislop writes: "Therefore, the 25th of December, the day that was observed at Rome as the day when the victorious god reappeared on earth, was held at the Natalis invieti solis, 'the birth-day of the unconquered Sun' " (Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, pp. 97-98).

The birthday of the "unconquered Sun" is further described by Samuele Bacchiocchi in his book, *From Sabbath to Sunday*. "The adoption of the 25th of December for the celebration of Christmas is perhaps the most explicit example of sun-worship's influence on the Christian liturgical calendar. It is a known fact that the pagan feast of the *dies natalis Solis Invicti*—the birthday of the Invincible Sun—was held on that date…. It was a solemn rite among the pagans to celebrate the festival of the rising of the sun on this very day, December 25th.

"That the Church of Rome introduced and championed this new date [December 25] is accepted by most scholars. For instance Mario Righetti, a renowned Catholic liturgist writes: '… the Church of Rome, to facilitate the acceptance of the faith by the pagan masses, found it convenient to institute the 25th of December as the feast of the temporal birth of Christ, to divert them from the pagan feast, celebrated on the same day in honor of the

"Invincible Sun," Mithras, the conqueror of darkness.'

"It is sufficient to notice that the adoption of the date of December 25th for the celebration of Christ's birth provides an additional example not only of the influence of the Sun-cult, but also of the primacy exerted by Rome in promoting liturgical innovations…. J. A. Jungmann summarizes it well when he writes that 'Christianity absorbed and made its own what could be salvaged from pagan antiquity, not destroying it but converting it, Christianizing what could be turned to good' " (Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, pp. 256-257, and footnote 72; 260-261).

In *The Golden Bough*, Frazer further instructs us about the pre-eminence of Christmas in the pagan world: "An instructive relic of the long struggle [between true Christianity and occult Christianity (Mithraism)] is preserved in our festival of Christmas, which **the Church seems to have borrowed directly from its heathen rival**. In the Julian calendar the twenty-fifth of December was reckoned the winter solstice, and it was regarded as the nativity of the Sun, because the day begins to lengthen and the power of the sun to increase from that turning point of the year…. The Egyptians even represented the new-born sun by the image of an infant, which on his birthday, the winter solstice, they brought forth and exhibited to his worshippers [called a "nativity scene" today]. No doubt the Virgin who thus conceived and bore a son on the twenty-fifth of December was the great Oriental goddess whom the Semites called the Heavenly Virgin or simply the Heavenly Goddess; in the Semitic lands she was a form of Astarte [the queen of heaven]. Now Mithra [the infant savior] was regularly identified by his worshippers with the sun, the Unconquered Sun, as they called him; hence his nativity also fell on the twenty-fifth of December" (Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 416, bold emphasis and bracketed comments added).

Almost identical to the ancient Egyptian practice, "Christians" have for centuries (in their churches, cathedrals and city squares) exhibited a nativity scene, replete with a crib, the little infant "Jesus," and Mary and Joseph. "***The Church*** celebrates the Nativity on ***December 25***…. ***Many*** churches and homes ***set up a crib at Christmas***. This custom, although of very ancient origin [in ancient pagan Egypt], ***was popularized by St. Francis of Assisi***. ***In the year 1223***, he visited Pope Honorius III and sought approval of his plans to make a scenic representation of the Nativity. Having obtained the Pope's consent, Francis left Rome and arrived at Greccio on Christmas Eve. ***There in the church he constructed a crib***, grouping the images of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, of the shepherds, the ox, and the ass. At the Midnight Mass St. Francis acted as a deacon. ***After singing the words of the Gospel, 'And they laid Him in a manger*,'** he knelt down to meditate on the great gift of the Incarnation. And people around saw in his arms a Child, surrounded by a most brilliant light. ***Since then the devotion to the crib has spread far and wide***" (Morrow, *My Catholic Faith*, p. 71).

Worshiping a baby in a manger has continued in modern times to be a prominent theme of the Christian Christmas. The birth of the Savior is reen-

acted each year at the same time that pagan cultures anciently re-enacted the "birth" of the sun. In spite of its clearly pagan origin, Orthodox Christendom has made Christmas a major holiday for its faithful, perpetuating the lies associated with its celebration (such as Jesus having been born in December at the time of the Winter Solstice).

Consider the pagan roots of these popular Christmas symbols:

(1) **Christmas Tree**—The sacred tree of the winter-god; the Druids believed the spirit of their gods resided in the tree. Most ancient pagans knew the tree represented Nimrod—reincarnated into Tammuz! Pagans also looked upon the tree as a phallic symbol.

(2) **Star**—A five-pointed star, the pentalpha is a powerful symbol of Satan, second only to the hexagram. The star is the sacred symbol of Nimrod, and has nothing to do with Christianity.

(3) **Candles** represent the sun god's newly born fire. Pagans the world over love and use candles in their rituals and ceremonies. Certain colors are also thought to represent specific powers. The extensive use of candles is usually a very good indication that a service is pagan, regardless of the outward trappings.

(4) **Mistletoe** is the sacred plant of the Druids, symbolizing pagan blessings of fertility—thus, kissing under the mistletoe is the first step in the reproductive cycle.

(5) **Wreaths** are associated with fertility and the "circle of life." Being circular, they also represent the female sexual organ.

(6) **Santa Claus**—The mythical attributes and powers ascribed to Santa are eerily close to those possessed by Jesus Christ.

(7) **Reindeer** are horned animals representing the "horned-god" or the "stag-god" of pagan religion. Santa traditionally has a team of eight reindeer; in Satanic geomantic, eight is the number of "new beginnings" or the cycle of reincarnation.

(8) **Elves** are imp-like creatures who are Santa's little helpers (or Satan's demons).

(9) **Green and Red** are the traditional colors of the season, as they are the traditional pagan colors of winter.

(10) **December 25** was also known to the Romans as "Saturnalia," a time of deliberate debauchery. Drinking through repeated toasting—known as 'wassail'—was a feature of this celebration. The mistletoe symbolized fornication, and the entire event was finished with a Great Feast, the Christmas Dinner.

New Year's Day

As the nation of Israel was preparing to leave Egypt, God instructed Moses concerning the beginning of the year: "This month [of Abib; March/April on the Roman Calendar] *shall be* to you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you" (Ex. 12:2). This understanding was necessary for the proper observance of God's feasts and holy days—which do *not*

include the first day of the year. In fact, nowhere do the Scriptures teach that Christians are to *celebrate* the beginning of the year.

Like most of the world's so-called "Christian" holidays, the celebration of "New Year's" is an ancient practice, steeped in paganism. The earliest known celebration of the new year took place in Babylon around 2000 BC, in mid-March, and was associated with the spring equinox. A variety of other dates tied to the seasons were also used by various early cultures. The Egyptians, Phoenicians and Persians began their new year with the fall equinox, and the Greeks linked their new year to the winter solstice.

In ancient Rome, the first day of March was designated as the beginning of the year. (At that time, the Roman calendar only had ten months, beginning with March; the month of January did not exist until around 700 BC, when Pontilius, the second king of Rome, added the months of January and February). The first of January was initially celebrated as the beginning of the year in 153 BC in conjunction with the start of the civil year, as January was the month in which Roman consuls were elected to begin their one-year term (www.infoplease.com/spot/newyearhistory.html).

Julius Caesar introduced a new, solar-based calendar in 46 BC—the Julian Calendar—in which January first was officially decreed to be the beginning of the year. In most of the Roman world, January first was consistently observed. But dissention eventually arose. In the Middle Ages, for example, the Roman Church actually attempted to abolish January new year celebrations, claiming they were pagan. The result was that a variety of Christian dates were used throughout the Middle Ages to mark the new year (Ibid.).

In 1582, the Gregorian Calendar was adopted throughout Europe and January first was again proclaimed to be the beginning of the year. The Catholic Church followed suit immediately, but the calendar was only gradually adopted in Protestant countries (Ibid.).

January was named by Pontilius for the Roman god Janus, who was said to have two opposing faces—one looking forward, one looking backwards. Julius Caesar believed Janus' two faces symbolized looking back at the *old* while looking ahead to the *new*. The Greeks paraded a baby in a basket at the start of the new year to represent the "spirit of fertility." Hence the modern New Year's symbols of a newborn baby picturing the coming new year, and an elderly man winding up the old year (www.simpletoremember.com/vitals/NewYearsHistory.htm).

In most parts of the world the new year was celebrated as a religious, cultural and social event—usually marked by traditions symbolizing the casting off of the old and the embracing of the new. Roman pagans observed the new year by engaging in drunken orgies, which they claimed were to "reenact the chaotic world that existed before the cosmos was ordered by the gods" (Ibid.).

January First and Anti-Semitism: Even before the Gregorian Calendar was officially adopted, many areas of Europe had already begun to celebrate the first of January for another reason. Being the eighth day from

December 25 (falsely taught to be Jesus' birthday), the first day of January was celebrated as the *Feast of Circumcision*—based on the biblical command that male babies be circumcised on the eighth day. (However, the Bible nowhere commands the *celebration* of one's circumcision.)

But there was a sinister side to this seemingly innocent tradition. In the Roman Church, Jesus' circumcision was believed to have "initiated the reign of Christianity and the death of Judaism." Thus, throughout the Medieval Period, the first day of January was blatantly anti-Jewish. On that day, synagogues were ransacked or burned, Jewish books were publicly burned, and Jews were tortured and killed.

In keeping with this anti-Jewish trend, Pope Gregory XIII decreed—on New Year's day, 1577—that all Roman Jews were to attend a special Catholic "conversion service" which was to be held in Jewish synagogues every Friday night. A year later—on New Year's day—Gregory signed into law a tax on Jews to pay for a "house of conversion" used to convert Jews to Christianity. Again, in 1581, on January first, Gregory ordered the confiscation of all sacred literature from the Jewish community, leading to the death of thousands of Jews.

In Catholicism, each "Saint" is awarded a particular day on which to be honored. December 31—*New Year's eve*—is "Saint Sylvester Day," and celebrations dedicated to his memory are held on that night. Who was this saint? Sylvester was the Roman pope who reigned during the Council of Nicaea (325 AD). Prior to the council, Sylvester managed to convince Constantine to ban Jews from Jerusalem. Then, during the council, Sylvester "arranged for the passage of a host of viciously anti-Semitic legislation." Even today, Jews have nothing but contempt for January first, and the nation of Israel refuses to recognize the day as a public holiday (www.simpletoremember.com/vitals/New YearsHistory.htm).

The idea of *celebrating* any kind of "New Year's day" is clearly without scriptural backing. And the fact that our modern celebration of January first as New Year's day is linked directly to paganism and prejudice should give pause. New Year's is just one more example of man's rejection of the Word of God while illicitly taking from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

February 1 and 2: Candlemas and Imbolg—or Groundhog's Day

The popular "Punxsutawney Phil" groundhog comes out of his burrow to divine the next few weeks of weather. If he sees his shadow, there will be six more weeks of bad weather until spring finally arrives; if he does *not* see his shadow, the next seven weeks before spring will be good weather. What most people do not realize is that the pagan view of Groundhog's Day (Imbolg) represents the Earth Mother. Consider the uncanny parallels between the groundhog and the Earth Mother: as the Earth Goddess sleeps inside the earth during the winter season, so does the groundhog; both the goddess and the groundhog awaken in the spring; both the goddess

and the groundhog represent the cycle of "rebirth" and "renewal"; and, both the goddess and the groundhog complete the "cycle of reincarnation."

February 14: Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is a pagan festival that encourages physical lust. It is celebrated precisely thirteen days after Imbolg, thus it carries the number "thirteen"—Satan's number of extreme rebellion. While most people view this day as the day to honor your wife or your lover, this celebration is steeped in paganism. Consider the camouflaged occult gods of Valentine's Day: 1) Cupid, the son of Venus, is really Tammuz, son of Semiramis; 2) Jupiter, the head deity and sun god, is Nimrod, Semiramis' husband; and 3) Venus, the daughter of Jupiter, is really Semiramis herself—the "queen of heaven."

Nigel Pennick, author of *The Pagan Book of Days*, describes February, the month in which Valentine's Day falls. "The name of this month comes from the Roman goddess Februa and St. Febronia (from *Febris*, the fever of love). She is the patroness of the passion of love…. Her orgiastic rites are celebrated on 14 February—still observed as St. Valentine's Day—when, in Roman times, young men would draw billets naming their female partners…. This is a time of clear vision into other worlds, expressed by festivals of purification. On the 1st of February is the celebration of the cross-quarter day, or fire festival (Imbolg), a purificatory festival. It is followed on the 2nd by its Christian counterpart, Candlemas, the purification of the Virgin Mary" (p. 37).

Valentine's Day is a day of "orgiastic rites" in which pagans encouraged the flow of lustful passion.

Ostara, Ishtar or "Eostre"

Easter is a shifting date using the common practice of astrology. It is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first new moon after Ostara. This date has nothing to do with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! Rather, this day in the pagan tradition celebrates the return of Semiramis into her reincarnated form as the spring goddess. Pagans observe an "Easter Friday," which has historically been timed to be the third full moon from the start of the year. Since the merging of pagan Easter with Jesus' resurrection, however, Good Friday has been permanently fixed on the Friday prior to Easter.

The Babylonian goddess, Ishtar, the one for whom Easter is named (Ingraham, *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays*, p. 9), is another pseudonym for Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod, and the real founder of the Babylonian cult. After Nimrod died, she created the legend that he was a Divine Son born to her while a virgin. She is considered to be the co-founder of all occult religions.

Easter, or ***the day of Ishtar***, is celebrated widely among various cultures and religions. According to a Babylonian legend, a huge egg fell from

heaven, landing in the Euphrates River. The goddess Ishtar broke out of this egg. Later, the feature of "egg nesting" was introduced—a nest where the egg could incubate until hatched. A "wicker" or reed basket was used to nest the Ishtar egg (hence the Easter-egg basket).

The Easter egg hunt is based on the notion that if anyone found Ishtar's egg while she was being "reborn," she would bestow a blessing upon that lucky person. Because this was a joyous spring festival, eggs were colored with bright spring (pastel) colors.

The Easter Bunny: Among the Celts, custom dictated that "the goddess' totem, the Moon-hare, would lay eggs for good children to eat…. Eostre's hare was the shape that Celts imagined on the surface of the full moon..." (Ibid., p. 10).

Since Ishtar, or Eostre, was a goddess of fertility—and because rabbits procreate quickly—the rabbit became associated with the sexual act, and the egg became symbolic of "birth" and "renewal." Together, the Easter bunny and Easter egg symbolize the sexual union that produced Tammuz, the son and false messiah of Semiramis, the queen of heaven.

It is a very serious spiritual matter, indeed, when so-called "Christian" churches participate in the pagan Easter tradition—complete with an Easter egg hunt for "resurrection eggs"—by which they are clearly guilty of combining Christianity with paganism. Such a combination is a lethal cocktail the Lord Jesus will always reject! "***Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing***." (See II Cor. 6:17, KJV.)

Easter offerings: These were derived from a tradition in which priests and priestesses brought offerings to the pagan temples for Easter. A popular Easter offering was freshly made or purchased clothes. The priests wore their best clothes, while the vestal virgins wore newly made white dresses. They also wore headgear, like bonnets, and many adorned themselves in garlands of spring flowers. They placed freshly cut spring flowers on the altar of the idol they worshipped. In addition, they carried wicker baskets filled with foods and candies to offer to the pagan gods and goddesses.

Easter sunrise services: They originated with the Babylonian priesthood to symbolically hasten the reincarnation of Ishtar.

Easter Traditions and Queen of Heaven Worship: The Easter hot cross buns and traditional dyed eggs have their earliest origins in similar ancient Chaldean pagan religious traditions. Hislop informs us about these early traditions: "The popular [Easter] observances that still attend the period of celebration amply confirm the testimony of history as to its Babylonian character. The hot cross buns of Good Friday, and the dyed eggs of Pasch or Easter Sunday, figured in the Chaldean rites just as they do now. The 'buns,' known too by that identical name, were used in the worship of the queen of heaven, the goddess of Easter, as early as the days of Cecrops, the founder of Athens—that is, 1500 years before the Christian era…. The origin of the Pasch eggs is just as clear. The ancient Druids bore an egg, as the sacred emblem of their order. In the Dionysiaca, or the

mysteries of Bacchus, as celebrated in Athens, one part of the nocturnal ceremony consisted in the consecration of an egg. The Hindoo fables celebrate their mundane egg as of a golden colour. The people of Japan make their sacred egg to have been brazen. In China, at this hour, dyed or painted eggs are used on sacred festivals, even as in this country [England]. In ancient times eggs were used in religious rites of the Egyptians and the Greeks, and were hung up for mystic purposes in their temples" (Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, pp. 108-110).

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God warned of impending judgment for the practices associated with worshiping the queen of heaven. "Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to **make cakes to the queen of heaven and to pour out drink offerings to other gods**, that they may provoke Me to anger. Do they provoke Me to anger?" says the LORD. "Do they not provoke themselves, to the confusion of their own faces?" Therefore thus says the Lord GOD; "**Behold, My anger and My fury shall be poured out on this place**, on man, and on beast, and on the trees of the field, and on the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be put out" (Jer. 7:17-20).

Lent: This is a commemoration of Tammuz' death. The legend of his death claims that he was killed by a wild boar when he was 40 years old. Therefore, Lent is celebrated one day for each year of Tammuz' life (Doc Marquis, *America's Occult Holidays*). Participants are to express their sorrow over Tammuz' untimely death by weeping, fasting, and self-chastisement. Lent was observed exactly 40 days prior to the celebration of Ishtar/Esotre and other goddesses by the Babylonians and, at times, by the ancient Israelites. Lent is observed today by Mexicans, Koordistanians, Roman Catholics and by liberal Protestant churches. We can see God's anger over the celebration of Lent in Ezekiel 8:13-18—and God's judgment for such abominations is described in Ezekiel 9. (We suggest you read these passages carefully, for God has stated that He will similarly punish any nation who does not hear and obey His commands—Jeremiah 12:17.)

April 19, Blood Sacrifice to the Beast

April 19 is the first day of the 13-day satanic ritual relating to fire—the fire god, Baal, or Molech/Nimrod (the sun god). Fire sacrifice is required on April 19, with an emphasis on children. To pagans, this is one of the most important human sacrifice days.

A number of historic events have been staged on April 19 in order to meet this blood sacrifice. For example: the Battle of Lexington & Concord in 1775, which made the Masonic-led Revolutionary War inevitable (war is a most propitious way to sacrifice, for it kills both children and adults); the storming of the compound of David Koresh at Waco, Texas in 1993, which fulfilled the basic requirements for a human sacrifice (trauma, fire, and

young sacrificial victims); and the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing (once again, many young children were killed).

April 30-May 1, Beltaine Festival

Since the Beltaine celebration officially begins the night before Beltaine, a tradition has developed among occultists to celebrate Beltaine as a two-day ceremony. Great bonfires are lit on the Eve of Beltaine, April 30, in order to welcome the Earth Goddess. Participants hoped to gain favor with this goddess so that she might bless their families with procreative fertility. The Royal House of Windsor lights a Beltaine "Balefire" every year (Marquis, *America's Occult Holidays*, p. 30).

The "Maypole" observance originated from the celebration of Beltaine. Since fertility is being asked of the Earth Goddess, the Maypole becomes a phallic symbol around which a circular dance is performed. The dance circle is symbolic of the female sex organ. Four, six-foot ribbons with alternating red and white colors are connected to the pole. Men would dance counterclockwise, while ladies danced clockwise. The union of the intertwining red and white ribbons symbolized the act of copulation.

Such are the origins of the occult holidays practiced by Orthodox Christendom.

Obviously, the majority of those who observe such holidays are not involved in the secret, esoteric, demonic occult practices (such as human sacrifices). Most professing Christians, however, continue to celebrate these days because they are simply ignorant of their satanic origins. Furthermore, religious leaders have assured their "faithful" that the "church" has sanitized, Christianized and sanctioned such holidays. Consequently, people believe that they are at liberty to embrace such practices, since they are no longer celebrating them to honor Satan, but to honor Jesus Christ.

In the next chapter we will learn that God the Father and Jesus Christ **do not accept** worship toward them through the means of pagan practices and occult holidays. In fact, quite the opposite is true—because God commands us **not to learn the way of the heathen**.

PART TWO

Survey of Occult Holidays and Practices in the Bible

CHAPTER SEVEN

"Learn Not the Way of the Heathen"

In the previous chapter, we learned that those who observe occult holidays claim to be worshiping the true God. They rationalize that He now accepts such worship. Yet, the Scriptures do not support these assertions. God says, "**I *am* the LORD, I change not**" (Mal. 3:6). And again, the New Testament declares: "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, affirms that Christians cannot worship the true God with pagan, occult rituals and holidays. "But that which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not wish you to have fellowship with demons. **You cannot drink *the* cup of *the* Lord, and *the* cup of demons**. **You cannot partake of *the* table of *the* Lord, and *the* table of demons**. Now do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?" (I Cor. 10:20-22).

As we will see, the same pagan holidays that were celebrated by the apostate children of Israel and Judah thousands of years before Christ are the same days apostate Orthodox Christendom hallows today. Yet, God has commanded His people to *not* learn the way of the heathen: "Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says the LORD, '**Do not learn the way of the heathen** [occult practices and the worship of false gods], and do not be terrified at **the signs of the heavens** [as in astrology and witchcraft]; for the nations are terrified at them' " (Jer. 10:1-2).

Idol Worship at the Temple

In a vision, God told the prophet Ezekiel, " 'Son of man, lift up your eyes now to the way of the north.' So I lifted up my eyes toward the way of the north, and behold, northward at the gate of **the altar the image of jealousy *was* at the entrance** [an image of Baal, the sun god]" (Ezek. 8:5). In addition to erecting an image of Baal at the north gate, the priests and leaders of ancient Judah secretly worshiped idols and committed other abominations in temple meeting rooms. "And He said to me, 'Son of man, do you see what they do; even **the great abominations which the house of Israel is doing here**, that I should go far off from My sanctuary? But turn again, *and* you shall see greater abominations.' And He brought me to the opening of the [temple] court; and I looked, and behold, a hole in the wall. And He said to me, 'Son of man, dig in the wall now.' And I dug in the wall, and, behold, an opening. And he said to me. 'Go in and see the **evil abominations** that they do here.' And I went in and saw. And behold, every kind of creeping thing, and hateful beast, and **all the idols of the house of Israel**, were carved on the wall all around. And seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel [the Sen-

ate of Israel], and Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan [a priest], standing in front them, these were before them, and each man with his censor in his hand. And the sweet smelling cloud of incense was rising. And He said to me, 'Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, each man in his room of idols? For they are saying, 'The LORD does not see us; the LORD has forsaken the earth" ' " (verses 6-12).

"He also said to me, 'You shall see greater abominations that they are committing.' And He brought me to the opening of the gate of the LORD'S house, toward the north. And behold, **women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz**" (verses 13-14).

The Worship of Tammuz: The son of Nimrod, Tammuz was the ancient false messiah who allegedly died and was resurrected each year. On the worship of and weeping for Tammuz, Frazer writes: "Nowhere, apparently, have these [magical] rites been more widely and solemnly celebrated than in the lands which border the Eastern Mediterranean. Under the names of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, and Attis, the peoples of Egypt and Western Asia represented the yearly decay and revival of life, especially of vegetable life, which they personified as a god who annually died and rose again from the dead. In name and detail the rites varied from place to place: in substance they were the same. The supposed death and resurrection of this oriental deity, a god of many names but essentially [of] one nature, is now examined. We begin with Tammuz or Adonis.

"The worship of Adonis was practiced by the Semitic peoples of Babylon and Syria, and the Greeks borrowed it from them as early as the seventh century before Christ. The true name of the deity was Tammuz…. In the religious literature of Babylonia, Tammuz appears as the youthful spouse or lover of Ishtar, the great mother goddess, the embodiment of the reproductive energies of [Mother] nature…. [E]very year Tammuz was believed to die, passing away from the cheerful earth to the gloomy subterranean world, and every year his divine mistress journeyed in her quest for him … that the two might return together to the upper world, and that with their return all nature might revive.

"Laments for the departed Tammuz are contained in several Babylonian hymns…. His death appears to have been annually mourned, to the shrill music of flutes, by men and women about midsummer in the month named after him, the month Tammuz" (Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, pp. 378-379, bracketed comments added).

Orthodox Christendom practices a similar ceremony in the spring of the year at Easter time. This ceremony begins on "Good Friday" evening with mourning for the crucified Jesus (as was done for Tammuz) and is continued through Saturday night. In some predominantly Roman Catholic countries, women beat themselves with whips and weep in an attempt to enter into the physical sufferings of Jesus. At the stroke of midnight, beginning Easter Sunday, the mourning is turned to joy with shouts, "He is risen! He is risen!" These familiar Good Friday and Easter rituals are clearly derived from pagan Babylonian practices.

The Worship of the Sun at the Temple of the Lord: In all the ceremonies and sacrifices that God commanded to be performed at the temple, the priests and Levites always faced toward the west, not the east. However, when the apostate Israelites and Jews worshiped the sun god Baal, they worshiped toward the east with their backs to the temple of God. Ezekiel recorded God's own description: "And He said to me, 'Have you seen this, O son of man? You shall see greater abonimations than these.' And He brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and behold, at the opening of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were* about twenty-five **men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east**. And He said to me, 'Have you seen, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they do the hateful things which they do here? For they have filled the land with violence and have turned to provoke Me to anger still more. And lo, they put **the branch** [a symbol of Tammuz, the son of the sun god, Nimrod] to their nose' " (Ezek. 8:15-17).

God's Warnings Against Serving Other Gods or Practicing Any Form of the Occult

Thousands of years ago, before God brought them into the Promised Land, He warned the Israelites *not* to follow the customs of the nations around them. "You shall not do according to all that we do here today, each doing whatever *is* right in his own eyes…. Take heed to yourself that you do not become ensnared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods [the customs of the heathen], that I may also do likewise?' **You shall not do so to the LORD your God, for every abomination to the LORD, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods. Whatsoever thing that I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it**" (Deut. 12:8, 30-32).

God made no exceptions when He also commanded Moses to write, "If a prophet rises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder which he foretold to you comes to pass, saying, 'Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them,' **you shall not hearken to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams**, for the LORD your God *is* testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death because he has spoken to turn *you* against the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slaves, to thrust you out of the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put the evil away from the midst of you.

"If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who *is* like your own soul, **lures you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods'—which you have not known, you nor your fathers, that is, of the gods of the people who *are* around you, near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth**—you shall not consent to him nor hearken to him" (Deut. 13:1-8).

In Leviticus, God specifically warned against becoming involved with the magic arts, and those known to be involved were to be put to death. "You shall not turn to those that have familiar spirits, nor seek after mediums to be defiled by them. I *am* the LORD your God…. And the one [any person] who turns to mediums and to familiar spirits to go a whoring after them, I will even set My face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.... A man also or woman who has a familiar spirit or who is a medium shall surely be put to death. They shall stone them with stones. Their blood *is* upon them" (Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27).

Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures uphold God's ban on occult practices, which are named in the book of Deuteronomy. "When you come to the land which the LORD your God gives you, **you shall not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, or an observer of times, or a fortuneteller, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or one who seeks oracles from the dead**. For all that do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations, the LORD your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For these nations whom you shall possess hearkened to observers of times and to diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you *to do* so" (Deut. 18:9-14).

The Scriptures do not make a distinction between using witchcraft or sorcery to achieve a "good" purpose or an evil purpose. Despite the intention, all such practices are inherently evil because they **make an appeal to a forbidden source of power—Satan and the demons**. The Church has the obligation to disfellowship the person or persons committing such sins (Matt. 18:15-17; I Cor. 5:4-13). Individuals themselves are obligated to separate from a congregation where the majority have accepted false doctrines—or where the worship of other gods or images, or other occult practices, are involved. As Paul wrote to Timothy, "If anyone teaches any different doctrine, and does not adhere to sound words, *even those* of our Lord Jesus Christ…. **From such withdraw *yourself***" (I Tim. 6:3-5).

God Hates the Abominable Occult Holidays

God is a jealous God and will not give His glory to any other so-called god, nor to images: "I *am* the LORD; that *is* My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to graven images" (Isa. 42:8). Therefore,

it is *impossible* to worship God by the means of occult holidays and/or rituals. Yet, Israel and Judah repeatedly went into apostasy wherein they denied the true God and worshiped false gods.

As Jeremiah testified, they exchanged God's seventh-day Sabbath and annual holy days for the practices of the other nations. But God proclaims that He hates those practices: "**I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies**. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them. Nor will I regard the peace offerings of your fat animals. Take the noise of your songs away from Me; for I will not hear the melody of your harps.... Have you offered sacrifices and offerings to Me forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? But now you have carried the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves" (Amos 5:21-26).

Again, Isaiah witnessed against the children of Israel because the priests, Levites and people practiced abominable rituals and sacrifices at the temple of God. Notice Isa. 1:10-12: "Hear the Word of the LORD, rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, people of Gomorrah. 'To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?' says the LORD; 'I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I do not delight in *the blood of* bulls, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand, to trample My courts?

" 'Bring no more vain sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me—**new moon and Sabbath** [of Baal], **the calling of assemblies; I cannot endure** iniquity along with the solemn assembly! **Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me; I am weary to bear *them***. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood' " (verses 13-15).

Ancient Israel and Judah became so corrupt that they had the gall and hardheartedness to actually worship other gods at the temple of the true God in Jerusalem!

The prophet Jeremiah continually warned Israel that God's judgment was coming because of these abominable idolatries. He constantly called them to repentance, to turn from their idolatry and obey the words of God in the Law and the words of God that Jeremiah was commanded to speak. "The Word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 'Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this Word, and say, "Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah, who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place' " ' " (Jer. 7:1-3).

" '**Do not trust in lying words, saying,** "**The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD *are* these**." For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; *if* you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in

this place, nor walk after other gods to your hurt; then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever.

" '**Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know; and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say,** "**We are delivered to do all these abominations**"**? Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it,**' **says the LORD**" (verses 4-11). In effect, by embracing these abominable heathen practices at the temple in the name of the Lord, the Jews made God to serve with their sins: "**You have made Me serve with your sins; you have wearied Me with your iniquities**" (Isa. 43:24).

Modern Christendom is doing the same today. In the name of Jesus Christ, ministers, priests and popes command the faithful to worship on occult holidays. They teach people to sin against God while claiming that God has sanctioned these abominable iniquities and lies. Yet, these are the same pagan occult days of worship that ancient Israel and Judah observed when they apostatized—falling away from the living God.

Finally, after much patience, God sent the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to execute His judgment against Jerusalem and the Jews for serving false gods—including the queen of heaven. In 585 BC, Jerusalem was burned and its temple destroyed.

The New Testament Supports the Old Testament in Its Condemnation of Witchcraft and the Occult

The New Testament teachings of Jesus Christ and the apostles confirm all the Old Testament commands and prohibitions against witchcraft and occult practices, which are an appeal to the power of Satan.

Just before Jesus Christ began His public ministry, He was tempted by Satan the devil for forty days and forty nights. Satan tried to induce Jesus to actually tempt God, and to use His God-given powers as if He were a magician. Satan even audaciously asked Jesus to worship him as God. Matthew wrote, "And when He had fasted *for* forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was famished. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' But He answered *and* said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of *the* mouth of God." ' Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him upon the edge of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down; for it is written, "He shall give His angels charge concerning You, and they shall bear You up in *their* hands, lest You strike Your foot against a stone." ' Jesus said to him, 'Again, it is written, "You shall not tempt *the* Lord your God." ' After that, the devil took Him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and said to Him, 'All

these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Begone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve" ' " (Matt. 4:2-10).

All through His ministry, Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons from those who were possessed. "And Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every bodily ailment among the people. Then His fame went out into all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were sick, oppressed by various diseases and torments, and possessed by demons, and lunatics, and paralytics; and He healed them" (Matt. 4:23-24).

The demons knew that Jesus was, in fact, the Son of God—they even talked to Him. "And they were astonished at His doctrine; for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes. Now in their synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit; and it cried out, saying, 'Ah! What have we to do with You, Jesus, *the* Nazarene? Have You come to destroy us? I know Who You are—the Holy *One* of God!' But Jesus rebuked it, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him.' And after throwing him into convulsions and crying out with a loud voice, the spirit came out of him" (Mark 1:22-26).

In one biblical account, a man who was possessed with multiple numbers of demons confronted Jesus. No human power had been able to control the man, but Jesus cast them all out. Luke wrote this account: "Then they sailed down to the country of the Gadarenes, which is across from Galilee. And when He went out on the land, *there* met Him a certain man from the city who had *been possessed by* demons for a long time; and he was not wearing *any* clothes, and did not dwell in a house, but in the tombs. Now when he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down in front of Him, and said with a loud voice, 'What do You have to do with me, Jesus, Son of God the Most High? I beseech You, do not torment me.'

"For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For many times it had seized him, and *each time* he was restrained, being bound with chains and fetters; but *after* breaking the bonds, he was driven by the demon into the desert. And Jesus asked it, saying, 'What is your name?' And it said, 'Legion,' because many demons had entered into him. Then it begged Him that He would not command them to go away into the abyss [a prison for demons]. Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain, and they begged Him that He would allow them to enter into the *swine*; and He gave them permission. And the demons went out of the man *and* entered into the swine, and the *whole* herd rushed *headlong* down the steep *slope* into the lake and were drowned. Now when those who were feeding *the swine* saw what had taken place, they fled; and they went *and* reported *it* to the city and to the country. And those *who heard* went out to see what had taken place; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, clothed and of a sound mind, seated at Jesus' feet. And they were afraid" (Luke 8: 26-35).

Jesus also gave power and authority to His apostles and disciples

to cast out demons because they would encounter them when preaching the Gospel (Luke 10:10-20; Mark 16:17-18).

The Apostles Confront a Powerful Occult Leader in Samaria: The early New Testament Church was confronted with an occult adversary who was a powerful religious leader in Samaria. His name was Simon Magus (i.e., *magician*), a false prophet who bewitched his followers with sorcery. "But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been **practicing sorcery** [witchcraft] in the city and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one. To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, '**This man is the great power of God**.' **Now they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries**. But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the gospel—the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:9-12).

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard of the situation they sent Peter and John down to Samaria. Simon Magus approached Peter and John and offered them money to buy the Holy Spirit. "Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, he offered them money, saying, 'Give this authority to me also, so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the* Holy Spirit.' But Peter said to him, '**May your money be destroyed with you because you thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money. You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God**. Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness, and beseech God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you; for I perceive *that* you are in *the* gall of bitterness and *the* bondage of unrighteousness' " (verses 18-23).

History shows that Simon Magus never repented. Rather, he devised a counterfeit Gnostic religion—which has become the world's greatest "Christian" religion with its headquarters in Rome. (See the entry on Simon Magus in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*.)

The Apostle Paul and His Encounters with Occult Opposition: On Paul's first evangelistic trip, he was confronted with a false prophet named Elymas Bar-Jesus: "And when they had gone through the island as far as Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer [a wizard], a false prophet, a Jew whose name *was* Bar-jesus. He was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man, who called Barnabas and Saul to *him*, desiring to hear the Word of God. But **Elymas the sorcerer** (for so was his name interpreted) **withstood them**, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith. But Saul, who *was* also *called* Paul, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes on him, *and* said, '**O full of all guile and all craftiness, *you* son of the devil *and* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the straight ways of *the* Lord**? And now behold, *the* hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.' And immediately a mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking someone to lead *him* by the hand" (Acts 13:6-11).

On another occasion, when Paul and those with him were evangelizing in the Grecian city of Philippi, they were confronted with a woman possessed with a divining spirit. "Now it came to pass that as we were going to prayer, a certain damsel who had a spirit of Python met us; *and* she brought her masters much gain by divining. She followed Paul and us *and* cried out, saying, 'These men are servants of the Most High God, and are preaching to us *the* way of salvation.' Now she did this for many days. Then Paul, being grieved, turned to the spirit and said, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And it came out the same hour" (Acts 16:16-18).

After Paul came to Athens, he witnessed to the philosophers and religious thinkers gathered at Mars' hill, the center of pagan Greek religious and philosophical thought. The Greeks did not worship the true God and had never heard of Jesus Christ. They worshiped all the known gods and goddesses of their region, and they even had an altar dedicated to an *unknown god.*

"Then Paul stood in *the* center of Mars' hill *and* said, 'Men, Athenians, I perceive *that* in all things you are very reverent to deities [demons]; for *as* I was passing through and observing the objects of your veneration, I also found an altar on which was inscribed, "To an unknown God." So then, He Whom you worship in ignorance *is* the one *that* I proclaim to you. He *is* the God Who made the world and all things that *are* in it. Being *the* Lord of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in temples made by hands; nor is He served by the hands of men, as *though* He needs anything, *for* He gives to all life and breath and all things. And He made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined beforehand *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling; in order that they might seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him; though truly, He is not far from each one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being; as some of the poets among you also have said, "For we are His offspring." Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we should not think that the Godhead *is* like that which *is made* of gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art *devised by the* imagination of man; for *although* God has indeed overlooked the times of this ignorance, **He now commands all men everywhere to repent**' " (Acts 17:22-30).

Paul evangelized and taught in Ephesus for over three years. In the city of Ephesus there was a great temple dedicated to the pagan goddess Diana. Devotees from all over the world came to worship there. When Paul preached in Ephesus, God performed great miracles by his hands and, as a result, thousands were converted from the pagan goddess religion. The new converts destroyed their demonic idols and burned their occult books in a public repudiation of Diana worship. They abandoned the goddess Diana and her great temple for the true God and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the true Savior of the world. The mass conversion of former worshipers of Diana was so vast that it had an enormous impact on the local economy, causing a depression in the idol- and book-making industries associated with

the temple. A riot of newly unemployed craftsmen followed, and Paul had to escape to avoid being killed (Acts 19).

In all of the Gentile areas where Paul preached the gospel of the salvation of God through Jesus Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, he encountered pagan religions and idolatry. As in Ephesus, the believers in Galatia had previously worshipped false gods and idols as well as practiced witchcraft. Some time after their conversion, a number of them began to apostatize from the teachings of Jesus Christ that Paul had taught them and began reverting to pagan practices. Paul instructs them in his epistle: "**[W]hen you did not know God, you were in bondage to those who are not gods by nature**…. [Now] after having known God—rather, after having been known by God—**how *is it that* you are turning again to the weak and impotent elements, to which you again desire to be in bondage? You are *of* your own selves observing [pagan] days, and months, and times and years**. I am afraid for you, lest somehow I have labored among you in vain" (Gal. 4:8-11).

Although these verses are commonly interpreted to mean that the Galatians were observing God's Sabbath and holy days (hatefully denounced as "Jewish" days), such an interpretation is incorrect. From what Paul wrote, it is clear that the Galatians were backsliding into their former paganism, observing occult religious days, months, times and years. In order to revert back to these observances, they were, in fact, forsaking the worship of the true God. (See Appendix D, "The Weekly Sabbath and Annual Feasts and Holy Days," p. 289.)

In the same epistle, Paul writes that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, **licentiousness, idolatry**, **witchcraft** [hence, all pagan occult observances and practices], hatred, strifes, jealousies, indignations, contentions, divisions, sects, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such things as these; concerning which I am telling you beforehand, even as I have also said in the past, that **those who do such things shall not inherit *the* kingdom of God**" (Gal. 5:19-21).

When Paul wrote to the Colossians, he urged them to stand fast in Jesus Christ and not be led away by **vain philosophy and the worship of angels**. "Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him; being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. **Beware lest anyone takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements** [elemental spirits or demons] **of the world, and not according to Christ**. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power…. **Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize *by* doing *his* will in self-abasement and *the* worship of angels, intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind**" (Col. 2:6-10, 18).

Since the time of the apostles until today, Satan and his demons have continued their relentless attacks to subvert the gospel of Jesus Christ and the true Church of God through vain philosophies and the traditions of men. When Jesus instructed John to write the book of Revelation, He gave him stern and specific warnings for the seven churches of God that existed in Asia in the early centuries.

Jesus Christ's Warnings to the Churches: Jesus' warnings in letters to the seven churches of Revelation Two and Three are also prophetic admonitions for the Church today. These ominous warnings carry the authority of Jesus Christ, meaning that every true Christian **must** heed them. (To get the full impact of Christ's personal messages to His Church, please read the letters in their entirety.)

A summary of Jesus' warnings follows:

Ephesus: "Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works; for if *you do* not, I will come to you quickly; and I will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent" (Rev. 2:5).

Smyrna: "I know your works and tribulation and poverty (but you are rich), and **the blasphemy of those who declare themselves to be Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan**. Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life" (Rev. 2:9-10).

Pergamos: "I know your works and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan *is*; but you are holding fast My name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you because you have there *those* who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, **to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication. Moreover, you also have *those* who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate**. Repent! For if *you* do not *repent*, I will come to you quickly, and will make war against them with the sword of My mouth" (Rev. 2:13-16).

Thyatira: "I have a few things against you, because you allow **the woman Jezebel**, [a teacher of the Canaanite religion] who calls herself a prophetess, **to teach and to seduce My servants into committing fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols**. And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, but she did not repent. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their works. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He Who searches *the* reins and hearts; and I will give to each of you according to your works. **But to you I say, and to *the* rest who *are* in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak**; I will not cast upon you any other burden" (Rev. 2:20-24).

Sardis: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which

are about to die. **For I have not found your works complete before God**. Therefore, remember what you have received and heard, and hold on *to this*, and repent. Now then, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you shall by no means know what hour I will come upon you" (Rev. 3:2-3).

Philadelphia: Of the seven churches, Philadelphia and Smyrna are the only two churches that remained faithful to Jesus Christ and were not seduced by satanic false doctrines. Smyrna resisted the synagogue of Satan and was commended by Jesus for being faithful in martyrdom. Philadelphia resisted the synagogue of Satan and was faithful in love, patience, endurance and doctrine. By loving God the Father and Jesus Christ, they faithfully preserved the truth of God and resisted all the satanic doctrinal assaults against them. Jesus commended them because they were faithful—and wherever the prophetic, end time Philadelphian church of God is today, they are still faithful.

"I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no one has the power to shut it because you have a little strength, and **have kept My word, and have not denied My name**. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who proclaim themselves to be Jews and are not, but do lie—behold, I will cause them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. **Because you have kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you from the time of temptation which *is* about to come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth**" (Rev. 3:8-10).

Laodicea: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth. For you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire so that you may be rich; and white garments so that you may be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent" (Rev. 3:15-19).

These are direct warnings from Jesus Christ, the Head of the true Church of God! All who profess His name must **heed these warnings** and repent of following Satan and his demons and their teachings—which have been cleverly sugar-coated, packaged, perfumed, gift wrapped and sold as though they had great value to apostate Christendom and its followers.

In the next chapter we will examine the origin of the most commonly accepted day of "Christian" worship—Sunday, the so-called, "Lord's Day."

CHAPTER EIGHT

Sunday—an Occult Day of Worship or a Christian Day of Worship—*Which?*

We have examined how leaders of Orthodox Christendom and other Christian-professing churches have officially sanctioned and established occult holidays as observances for their followers. As we will now see, Orthodox Christendom has for over sixteen hundred years sanctified Sunday as its "Sabbath." This is in addition to the "Christian" annual holidays.

Today, millions of the devout and faithful assemble each Sunday either to celebrate Mass and partake of the Eucharist, or to listen to a sermon and, at times, partake of communion. Convinced they are doing the will of God, they sincerely believe that going to church on Sunday is the Christian thing to do. Their priests and ministers have assured them, and they have blindly concurred, that Sunday-keeping is a commandment of God. (See Appendix E, "The Biblical Truth About Sunday-Keeping," page 291.)

What about Sunday-keeping? Did God ever command the faithful to keep Sunday, or is it a *tradition* of men? What is the true origin of Sunday worship? When, how, and by whose authority was Sunday instituted as the weekly day of worship? To answer these questions, we will examine the ancient origin of Sunday observance as well as survey the practice of occult sun worship by the children of Israel and Judah as recorded in the Scriptures.

The Ancient Origin of Sunday

Shortly after the flood, Nimrod began to establish his despotic kingdom. He and his wife Semiramis introduced the apostate religious system known as the Babylonian Mysteries, from which all ancient and modern-day pagan religions originated. (See *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop, available online at www.biblicaltruthministries.org and www.cbcg.org.)

Nimrod was a legendary warrior and a champion of the people in their rebellion against God. Yet, it was Satan who inspired the building of Nimrod's kingdom and the tower of Babel, as well as his occult religion—all in defiance of God. He received man's worship under the guise of the sun or fire god and the sacred serpent. Hislop comments on this early apostasy and the red dragon of Revelation 12:3: "[T]he word rendered 'Red' properly means 'Fiery'; so that the 'Red Dragon' signifies the 'Fiery Serpent' or 'Serpent of Fire.' Exactly so does it appear to have been the first form of idolatry that under the patronage of Nimrod appeared in the ancient world. The 'Serpent of Fire' in the plains of Shinar seems to have been the grand object of worship. There is the strongest evidence that apostasy

among the sons of Noah began in fire-worship, and that in connection with the symbol of the serpent" (Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p. 226).

The apostasy begun by Nimrod found its zenith in the lavish temples and huge pyramids dedicated to the sun god, where men offered animal and human sacrifices. Hislop writes about the origin of sun worship as follows: "The beginning, then, of sun-worship, and of the worship of the host of heaven [astrology], was a sin against the light [against the true God Himself]—a presumptuous, heaven-daring sin. As the sun in the heavens was the great object of worship, so *fire* was worshipped as its earthly representative.

"Along with the sun, as the great fire-god, and in due time, identified with him, was the serpent worshipped. 'In mythology of the primitive world,' says Owen, 'the serpent is universally the symbol of the sun.' In Egypt, one of the [most common] symbols of the sun, or sun god, is a disk with a serpent around it. The original reason was that identification seems just to have been that, as the sun was the great enlightener of the physical world, so **the serpent was held to have been the great enlightener of the spiritual, by giving mankind the *'knowledge of good and evil.'***… At all events, we have evidence, both Scriptural and profane, for the fact, that the worship of the serpent began side by side with the worship of fire and the sun" (Ibid., pp. 226-227, bold emphasis and bracketed comments added).

The worship of the sun has a long and daring history, dating from prehistoric times to the close of the fifth century of the Christian era. Together with all of its mystical rituals and sacrifices, it spread from "Mother Babylon" to Egypt, Greece, Rome, Europe, India, China, all of Southeast Asia, Africa, and Central and South America—the entire world. All of these civilizations had highly developed forms of sun worship. The belief in and practice of astrology was predominant in sun worship.

The worship of the six then-known planets was incorporated into the worship of the sun. The Romans named the seven days of the week accordingly—in honor of their pagan deities (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the sun and the moon). Later, the pagan Germans renamed some of the days in honor of the Germanic gods, whose names and qualities corresponded to those of the Roman gods. Therefore, the day of the Sun became Sunday; the day of the Moon became Monday; the day of Mars (the Roman god of war) became Tuesday (after Tiw, pronounced *too*, the German god of war—"Tiw's Day"); the day of Mercury became Wednesday (Woden's Day, the Germanic version of Mercury); the day of Jupiter became Thursday (Thor's Day, the Germanic version of Jupiter); the day of Venus became Friday (after the Germanic female god Frigg or Freyja—pronounced *fry-ya*); and the day of Saturn became Saturday.

These descriptive names of the days of the week demonstrate that Sunday worship was pagan long before it allegedly became a Christian institution. The day of the Sun, *dies Solis*, or Sunday, was pre-eminent over all other days of the week. Although other so-called gods had days named after them, only *dies Solis* was proclaimed to be holy.

Bacchiocchi writes: "There is no question that the existence of the planetary week with its 'Sun-day'—*dies Solis*—is crucial for determining any influence of Sun-worship on the Christian adoption of Sunday observance, inasmuch as the Sun before the existence of a weekly 'Sun-day' was venerated every morning" (*From Sabbath to Sunday*, p. 237).

"The *dies Solis* was evidently the most sacred [day] of the week for the faithful of Mithra and like the [professing] Christians, they had to keep Sunday holy and not [the seventh-day] Sabbath…. The gods have arranged the days of the week, whose names the Romans have dedicated to certain stars. The first day [of the week] they called the day of the sun because it is the ruler of all the stars" (Ibid., p. 250, footnote 53, bracketed comments added).

As it was then, so it is today: the day of the Sun, *dies Solis*, Sunday, was always the most prominent day of worship and stood at the head of all the days of the week. Sunday has always been the predominant pagan occult day of worship to the sun god.

But *when* did Sunday, which was venerated by pagan sun worshippers, become the holiest day of the week for Christians?

It was the Roman emperor Constantine who first issued an edict concerning Sunday in A.D. 321: "Let all the judges and town people, and the occupation of all trades, rest on **the venerable day of the sun**; but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty, attend to the business of agriculture because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines, lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted them by heaven" *(Corpus Juries Civilis Cod*. Liv. 3, Tit. 12:30).

This pagan Sunday law was henceforth enforced as a Christian festival. The church historian Eusebius, in his Commentary on the Psalms, indicates that from the time of Constantine's Sunday edict, the sanctity of the Sabbath was transferred to the first day of the week. "And all things whatsoever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's Day, as more appropriately belong to it, because it has a precedence and is first in rank, and more honourable than the Jewish Sabbath" (Cox's *Sabbath Literature,* Volume 1, p. 361).

Thus, since this fourth-century edict, much of Orthodox Christendom has accepted Sunday as the "Lord's Day," or the so-called "Christian Sabbath." To this day the Roman Catholic Church pontifically claims that it had the authority to change God's Fourth Commandment and transfer the solemnity of the seventh-day weekly Sabbath to Sunday, the first day of the week. This flagrant, bold boast of authority is diametrically opposed to the Word of God. God has never relinquished His authority to any man at any time to change His Sabbath commandment! After Jesus' resurrection and just before He ascended to heaven, He told His disciples, "**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me**. Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; **teaching them to observe all things that I**

have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20).

There is no question that the Roman Catholic Church fully comprehends that **the Scriptures absolutely require the observance of the biblical Sabbath**, the seventh day of the week, called Saturday today. Cardinal James Gibbons fully admits that Sunday keeping is a Catholic institution based solely on the traditions of the "early church fathers," the edicts of Emperor Constantine (321 AD) and the ecclesiastical authority of the Catholic Church in the Councils of Laodicea (336, 364 AD). Gibbons also admits that the establishment of Sunday worship is not based on the authority of the Scriptures: "**You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify.**" (Gibbons, *Faith of Our Fathers*, 1892, p. 111). Rome's challenge to Protestants is that if they truly believed the rallying cry of the Reformation—"*solo scriptura*"—they would reject the Catholic tradition of Sunday keeping and would be ardently keeping the seventh-day Sabbath as God commands. (See Appendix F, "Rome's Challenge to the Protestants," page 293.)

As we peel back the layers of historical and scriptural evidence of sun worship/Sunday keeping, it is undeniable that this false teaching is a **great sin** against God and violates the Fourth Commandment. Yet, Orthodox Christendom continues to channel mankind into the mire of its humanly-devised tradition of Sunday worship—a day originally devised by Nimrod and Semiramis to worship Satan the devil. Sunday keeping is part of the "Mystery of Iniquity," Satan's grand counterfeit that *looks* Christian and proclaims to *be* Christian, but is, in fact, *false*, counterfeit—a blatant lie! (II Thess. 2:3-12; Rev. 13:11-14).

A Survey of Occult Sun Worship in the Bible

For most of their history, Israelites and Jews have worshiped the false gods of the nations around them. They dealt in witchcraft and divination, consulted familiar spirits, and used occult practices. While serving false gods instead of the true God, Israel worshiped the sun god on his day, Sunday. The Bible reveals that Israel, at one time or another, observed all the pagan holidays—which later came to be known as Halloween, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and so on. Moreover, they, without shame, committed these abominations in the **name** of the LORD their God believing they had God's approval to do so!

Typically, except for brief periods of time in their history, Israel and Judah did not faithfully keep God's Sabbaths and holy days as He had commanded. A complete biblical record of this fact is found in all the books of the Old Testament—specifically from Exodus to II Chronicles.

In spite of their sins, God faithfully continued to deal with Israel and Judah because of His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and for His own reputation's sake among the nations. God's covenant with Israel had

guaranteed blessings if they obeyed Him and curses if they disobeyed Him. A summation of these blessings and curses is found in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26. (For a complete understanding of these blessings and cursings, the reader is encouraged to read these chapters in their entirety.)

Ancient Israel and Sun Worship in Egypt

Approximately nine hundred years after God scattered mankind from the tower of Babel throughout the entire world, the children of Israel were enslaved in Egypt. During this time they were mostly serving the gods of Egypt. The chief god of Egypt was the sun god, whose symbols were the sun disk, the sacred cobra, and the sacred bull with a disk of the sun between its horns. Pharaoh, the king and absolute ruler of Egypt, was worshiped as the incarnation of the sun god. On his crown in the center of his forehead was a protruding hooded cobra, demonstrating that he derived his power and authority—both civil and religious—from Satan the devil.

The book of Exodus gives the account of how God miraculously delivered the twelve tribes of Israel from their harsh slavery with great signs and awesome plagues. To show His supreme power over all the demon gods of Egypt, God judged Pharaoh and the Egyptians by using against them the very things they worshiped. God used serpents, turned water into blood, and sent plagues of frogs, lice, fleas, flies and murrain against their animals. Yet, Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let the children of Israel go. Therefore, God intensified the plagues and afflicted the Egyptians with boils.

Still defiant, Pharaoh resolutely would not let the Israelites go. In answer to Pharaoh's implacable defiance, God demonstrated His awesome power and authority as the one true God by using the elements and powers of the earth to further afflict the Egyptians. He sent destructive hail, thunder and lightning, swarms of locusts, and finally three days of thick, tangible darkness. The Egyptians could not venture out of their houses because of the darkness. Yet, in Goshen, the children of Israel had light. Still, Pharaoh refused to relent. Therefore, God brought one final, mighty plague upon the Egyptians—the supernatural death of all their firstborn, both man and beast.

In order to spare the firstborn of the children of Israel, God instructed Moses and Aaron to command all the Israelite heads of households to prepare a special domestic sacrifice of a lamb, called the Passover. It is called the Passover because on that night God "passed over" the houses of the children of Israel, sparing their firstborn—while at midnight He killed all the firstborn of the Egyptians, man and beast.

Why did God do this?

God did this not only to release the children of Israel from their Egyptian slavery, but also to execute His judgment against the gods of Egypt. It was a massive display of God's sovereign, almighty power and authority. Through this act God demonstrated that He alone is the true God. All of the impotent gods of Egypt were proven false—and hence, all of the Satan-inspired, man-made gods throughout all time are nothing! Notice

what the Lord God said: "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And **I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt**. I *am* the LORD" (Ex. 12:12). After God's devastating judgment against the Egyptians and their false gods with the killing of their firstborn, Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go free.

God Gives Israel the Ten Commandments and His Laws at Mount Sinai

With the protection and guidance of God, Moses and Aaron led the Israelites out of Egypt and through the Red Sea on dry ground. After Israel made it safely across the sea, Pharaoh and his pursuing armies attempted to follow. As soon as the Egyptians were in the middle of the dry sea bottom, God commanded the waters to return. All were trapped and destroyed.

On their way to Mount Sinai, God performed additional miracles—providing fresh water to drink, quail to eat, and manna (bread from heaven) to eat. After arriving at Mount Sinai, God displayed His awesome power and glory from the top of the mount while Israel assembled itself at the base. "And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God. And they stood at the base of the mountain. And Mount Sinai was smoking, all of it because the LORD came down upon it in fire. And the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the sound of the trumpet sounded long, and became very strong, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice" (Ex. 19:17-19).

God told Moses to warn the people concerning the base of the mountain, not to come past it, to touch it, or to allow an animal to come near it. After manifesting His incredible power, God personally spoke the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel. We will focus on the first four commandments, which pertain to our personal relationship with God.

The First Commandment: "And God spoke all these words, saying, 'I *am* the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **You shall have no other gods before Me**.' "

The Second Commandment: "**You shall not make for yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of *anything*** that *is* in the heavens above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, the LORD your God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments ."

The Third Commandment: "**You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain**, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."

The Fourth Commandment: "**Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy**. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter; your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates; for *in* six days the LORD

made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it" (Ex. 20:1-11). (See Appendix G, "The Biblical Truth About Sabbath-Keeping," p. 316.)

These commandments are the very words of God Himself. They are not complicated or difficult to comprehend; rather, they are clear, and easy to understand and keep. Contrary to what most professing Christians believe, Jesus did not come to abrogate or abolish the Law or the Prophets with the advent of the New Covenant. Jesus Christ, as God manifested in the flesh—Who was the Lord God of the Old Testament and Who spoke the Ten Commandments to Israel—emphatically said: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, **until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled**" (Matt. 5:17-18).

What Jesus declared, as recorded by Matthew, is verified throughout all Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Isaiah recorded similar words of God: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall become old like a garment; and its inhabitants shall die in the same way. But My salvation shall be forever, and **My righteousness shall not be abolished**" (Isa. 51:6). Again, David said, "The works of His hands are truth and judgment; **all His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever; they are done in truth and uprightness**" (Psa. 111:7-8).

When the leaders of Orthodox Christendom make false claims about God's Word, they are taking His name in vain and following in the sinful footsteps of ancient Israel's religious leaders. The prophet Ezekiel wrote this indictment of such leaders: "And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying,… 'There is a **conspiracy of her prophets** [whenever there is a conspiracy, those involved know better] in her midst, like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they made many widows in her midst. **Her priests have done violence to My law** and have **profaned My holy things**. They have put no difference between the holy and the profane, and have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, **and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths**, and I am profaned among them…. And her prophets have covered themselves *with* whitewash, **seeing false visions and divining lies unto them, saying, "Thus says the Lord GOD," when the LORD has not spoken**' " (Ezek. 22:23-28).

As we will see, almost immediately after God spoke the Ten Commandments to Israel at Mount Sinai, certain leaders began speaking lies in God's name—thus taking His name in vain.

Israel and Sun Worship in the Wilderness

When Moses received the Ten Commandments and other laws from God, he wrote them down in the Book of the Law. Afterwards, Moses read

all of God's words to the people, and the covenant was ratified (Ex. 21-24). They promised in their covenant pledge with God to be obedient to all the words that He had spoken.

"And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, 'All the words which the LORD has said, we will do.' And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar at the base of the mountain and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel who offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of bullocks to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood, and put *it* in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. **And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the ears of the people. And they said, 'All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient**.' **And Moses took the blood and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you concerning all these words**' " (Ex. 24:3-8).

Then, Moses went up Mount Sinai to commune with God for forty days and forty nights. There he received the Ten Commandments, written by the finger of God on tables of stone. In addition, he received all of God's instructions for the tabernacle and the altars as well as the ritual laws that the priests and Levites were to perform.

The last words that God spoke to Moses concerned His holy Sabbaths—both His annual Sabbaths and the weekly seventh-day Sabbath: "And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, "Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths, for it *is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations to know that I *am* the LORD Who sanctifies you" ' " (Ex. 31:12-13).

God continued: "You shall keep the Sabbath therefore, for it *is* holy to you. Everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death, for whoever does *any* work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. **Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations *as* a perpetual covenant**. It *is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed" (verses 14-17).

"And He gave to Moses, when He had made an end of speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, **two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God**" (verse 18).

What occurred next was, perhaps, one of the greatest ironies in the history of the Israelite nation. The last words that God spoke to Moses concerned Israel's keeping His Sabbaths—weekly and annual—as a perpetual covenant. However, while God was instructing Moses during the forty days and forty nights, his brother Aaron was causing the people of Israel to greatly sin—virtually in the presence of God at the foot of Mount Sinai as they waited for Moses to return.

Israel Worships the Golden Calf: Aaron was the first priest of Israel to speak lies, to sanction pagan sun worship and to lead the people into committing idolatry, all in the name of the Creator, the Lord God—even though all Israel had previously heard God speak the Ten Commandments.

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, **then the people gathered themselves to Aaron, and they said to him, 'Up! Make us gods** which shall go before us, for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And Aaron said to them, 'Break off the golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* to me.' And all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron. And he took *them* from their hand, and **fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molten calf**. And they said, '**These *are* your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt**.' And when Aaron saw *the calf*, he **built an altar before it**. And **Aaron made a proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow *is* a feast to the LORD**.' And they rose up early on the next morning, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play [a sex orgy]. And the LORD said to Moses, 'Go! Get you down, for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*. **They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made them a molten calf, and have worshiped it, and have sacrificed to it, and said, 'These *are* your gods**, O Israel, who have brought you up out of the land of Egypt" ' " (Ex. 32:1-8).

The molten calf that Aaron fashioned with his own hands undoubtedly was a replica of the golden Egyptian sacred bull with the sun disk between its horns. After making the calf, Aaron told the people that they could use the idol—the very symbol of the sun god and of Satan—to worship God Himself. This action was a transgression of the First and Second Commandments. He then proclaimed, "Tomorrow *is* a feast to the LORD," taking the name of the Lord God in vain and thus transgressing the Third Commandment.

Therefore, in defiance of God, Aaron led the people back into a familiar celebration of the false gods of Egypt and proclaimed this idolatrous abomination as a sanctified "feast unto the Lord" (thereby breaking the Fourth Commandment). Similarly, very early in its history, Orthodox Christendom used this same deceitful "slight of hand" in taking to itself pagan holidays and sanctioning them as "feasts unto the Lord"—and in taking idolatrous religious rituals and incorporating them into its worship services. And this has all been done "in the name of the Lord," just as Aaron had claimed.

Israel's Great Sin of Sun Worship. God first reacted by determining to destroy the children of Israel for their presumptuous, rebellious sin of worshiping the golden calf. Moses, however, interceded for the people, and God had mercy. Moses then came down from the mount, carrying the tables

of stone with the Ten Commandments written by the finger of God. As he approached the camp he heard the people singing: "And it came to pass, as soon as he came near to the camp and saw the calf and dancing, then Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands, and broke them at the bottom of the mountain. And he took the calf which they had made and burned *it* in the fire, and pulverized *it* to powder, and scattered *it* upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink *of it*.

"And Moses said to Aaron, '**What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?**' And Aaron said, 'Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they *are set* on mischief, For **they said to me,** "**Make us gods** who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." And I said to them, "Whoever has any gold, let them break *it* off." And they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and there came out this calf.'

"And when Moses saw that the people were naked (for Aaron had made them naked to *their* shame among their enemies), then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, '**Who *is* on the LORD'S side?** *Come* to me.' And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves to him. And he said to them, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel, "Each man put his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and kill each one his brother, and each one his companion, and each one his neighbor." ' And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men…. And it came to pass on the next day, **Moses said to the people,** '**You have sinned a great sin**. And now I will go up to the LORD. Perhaps I shall make an atonement for your sin' " (Ex. 32:19-30).

The children of Israel sinned greatly in this rebellion, and God left **no doubt that those who did so were worthy of death**. However, because of Moses' intercession, Aaron and most of the people were spared. Yet, three thousand died by the sword of the sons of Levi—for as the Scriptures teach, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

This incident as recorded in the book of Exodus shows that God will judge disobedience. What happened at Mount Sinai was a prophetic prelude to a long history of Israelite rebellion and disobedience toward God—during which they served the false gods of the nations around them while engaging in occult practices and keeping occult holidays.

The book of Numbers records Israel's repeated apostasy. In chapter 25, just before they entered the Promised Land, we find this account: "And Israel dwelt in Acacia Grove, and **the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people to the sacrifices of their gods. And the people ate and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself to Baal Peor. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel**. And the LORD said to Moses, 'Take all the heads of the people and impale them before the LORD facing the sun, so that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.' And Moses said

to the judges of Israel, 'Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal Peor.'… And those that died in the plague were twenty-four thousand" (Num. 25:1-5, 9).

Israel and Occult Worship in the Promised Land

After forty years of vacillating rebellion and wandering in the wilderness of Sinai, God finally brought the children of Israel to the Promised Land as He had sworn to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses and Aaron died without entering the land. God appointed Joshua to succeed Moses, and Aaron's son, Eleazar, to succeed Aaron. God was with them, and they conquered the land of the Canaanites in seven years, after which God gave them rest from their enemies and divided the land among the twelve tribes.

As long as Joshua and the elders—who had come through the forty years of wandering in the wilderness—lived, the children of Israel followed God: "And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD that He did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being a hundred and ten years old…. And also all that generation were gathered to their fathers. And **there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD**, nor even the works which He had done for Israel" (Judges 2:7-10).

When these godly leaders died, the children of Israel again turned their backs on God and went after the occult gods of the heathen nations around them. "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim [Hebrew plural for *Baal*, meaning various versions of the sun god]: and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, Who brought them out of the land of Egypt. And they followed other gods, even the gods of the people who were around them, and bowed themselves to them, and provoked the LORD to anger.

"**And they forsook the LORD and served Baal** [the sun god] **and Ashtaroth** [the queen of heaven; often spelled *Ashtoreth*]. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hand of spoilers who spoiled them. And He sold them into the hand of their enemies all around, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies" (Judges 2:11-14).

In captivity the children of Israel would typically repent, and God would raise up a righteous judge who would deliver them out of their enemies' hands. The children of Israel would then follow God as long as the godly judge lived. However, as soon as the judge died, they would again reject the true God and begin serving the false gods of the nations—Baal, the sun god, and Ashtoreth, the queen of heaven. Such is the entire story of the book of Judges, covering a period of over 400 years. The last verse of the book of Judges summarizes this entire period: "In those days *there was* no king in Israel. Every man did *what was* right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

Samuel, the Last Judge of Israel: Samuel was the last ruling judge to lead the children of Israel. He was also a priest and a prophet. He taught the children of Israel the true way of God and caused many of the people to serve the Lord instead of the gods of the land—Baalim and Ashtoreth. God restored the Ark of the Covenant that the Philistines had captured because of the sins of the children of Israel and the former priesthood of Eli and his sons. It remained in the house of Abinadab until the time of King David: "And it came to pass from the day the ark *began* to dwell in Kirjath Jearim, the days became many; yea, they were twenty years. And all the house of Israel yearned after the LORD.

"And Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel saying, '**If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts to the LORD, and serve Him only, that He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines**.' And the children of **Israel put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth**, and served the LORD only" (I Sam. 7:2-4).

This revival of the true worship of the Lord was short lived. When Samuel was old—and because of the corruption of his sons who he had appointed as judges—the leaders of the children of Israel demanded that he appoint a king over the nation. They wanted a king to rule them, rather than the judges that God had appointed.

Samuel warned them that if they had a king like the other nations, there would be consequences. "But the thing was evil in the eyes of Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us.' And Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, 'Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but **they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them**. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt **even until this day**—*works* with which **they have forsaken Me and served other gods**—so they do also to you. And now hearken to their voice. Only, you shall surely protest solemnly to them, and show them the kind of king who shall reign over them' " (I Sam. 8:6-9).

Although Israel rejected His rulership, God promised that he would still bless them if they followed Him instead of false gods. Thus when Saul was installed as Israel's first king, Samuel proclaimed, "And now, behold the king whom you have chosen, whom you have desired! And behold, the LORD has set a king over you! If you will fear the LORD, and serve Him, and listen to His voice, and not rebel against the commandments of the LORD, then both you and also the king who reigns over you shall continue following the LORD your God. But if you will not hearken to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the command of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD shall be against you as *it was* against your fathers" (I Sam. 12:13-15).

David Succeeds Saul as King of Israel: Saul failed to follow God's instructions and rebelled against Him. Therefore, he was rejected from being king (I Sam. 15). God then sent Samuel to anoint David, the youngest son of Jesse, as the new king of Israel (I Sam. 16). Although David was not

blameless, God said that he was a man after His own heart. David was the most righteous of all the kings of Israel and reigned for forty years. He wrote hundreds of psalms and proverbs that have been preserved in the Scriptures.

Solomon Succeeds David: Before David died, God gave him the plans for the temple of God that David's son Solomon would build (I Chron. 28-29). As king, young Solomon started out well. His desire for wisdom pleased God so much that God blessed him not only with great wisdom but also with great wealth—making him the wisest and richest man on earth (perhaps in the history of the world). Solomon finished the temple and consecrated it to God. Through the blessings of God, His kingdom prospered. All the kings of the earth sought Solomon's wisdom—and, in tribute, brought gifts of gold and other valuables to Solomon year by year (I Kings 1-10).

Intermarriage Causes Solomon to Forsake the True God: Solomon had the greatest blessings, wealth and power of all the kings of Israel. He wrote hundreds of proverbs and the book of Ecclesiastes, which are part of the Old Testament, preserved for us to read and study today. But Solomon forsook God because of his many wives who worshiped false gods.

"And King Solomon **loved many foreign women**, even the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, Hittites; of the nations which the LORD had said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not go in to them, and they shall not go in to you; surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.' *But* Solomon clung to these in love.

"And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. And **his wives turned away his heart**, for it came to pass when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart **after other gods**. And his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God as *was* the heart of David his father, **for Solomon went after Ashtoreth** [the queen of heaven], the goddess of the Sidonians, and **after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites**; **And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD** and did not *go* fully after the LORD like his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for **Chemosh**, the abomination of Moab, in the hill which *is* before Jerusalem, and for **Molech** [where children were sacrificed in its flaming arms and belly], the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise he did for all his foreign wives, and **burned incense and sacrificed to their gods**" (I Kings 11:1-8).

This historical account should serve as a profound, continuous lesson and warning to all who read it. Solomon had the privilege of building the Temple of God in Jerusalem. He and all the twelve tribes of Israel had received the blessings of God in great abundance. However, toward the end of his life, he became corrupted through the worship of false gods. Moreover, the people of Israel followed him into apostasy.

What a tragedy! The one who built the Temple of God also became the master builder of temples and incense altars for the false gods of his seven hundred wives. Solomon constructed them on a hill west of

the temple, later called the Hill of Abomination. "And the LORD *was* angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel who had appeared to him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; and he did not keep that which the LORD commanded. And the LORD said to Solomon, 'Since this has been done by you, and since you have not kept My covenant and My statutes which I have commanded you, **I will surely tear** [take] **the kingdom from you** and will give it to your servant. But I will not do it in your days, for David your father's sake, *but* I will tear it out of the hand of your son. Only, I will not tear away all the kingdom, *but* I will give one tribe to your son for David My servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen' " (I Kings 11:9-13).

God Gives the Kingship of the Ten Tribes of Israel to Jeroboam: Jeroboam was Solomon's servant, a general in Solomon's army and a ruler over the house of Joseph. After Solomon died, God sent the prophet Ahijah to tell Jeroboam that He had chosen him to be king over the ten tribes of Israel. Solomon's son, Rehoboam, would rule over Judah in Jerusalem (I Kings 11:28-32).

Ahijah told Jeroboam that God was dividing the kingdom because of the sins of Solomon and the children of Israel. "**Because they have forsaken Me, and have worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the goddess of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways**, to do *what is right* in My eyes, and to keep My statutes and My judgments, as David his father did" (verse 33).

God promised Jeroboam that if he would do that which was right in His sight, He would establish his kingdom just as He had for David, "And if you will hearken to all that I command you and will walk in My ways, and do *what is* right in My sight to keep My statutes and My commandments, as David My servant did, then I will be with you and build you a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you " (verse 38).

Thus Jeroboam knew that God had divided the kingdom because Solomon grievously sinned by forsaking Him and exchanging the worship of the one true God for the worship of false gods. However, Jeroboam did not listen to the words of God by Ahijah. Neither did he walk in God's ways, but transgressed worse than Solomon did.

Jeroboam feared that if the people went to Jerusalem to keep the feasts of God, they would align themselves with Rehoboam. In order to prevent this, he appointed a feast day of his own choosing and made two golden calves for the people to worship.

"Then the king took counsel, and **made two calves *of* gold** and said to them, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. **Behold your gods, O, Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt** [the same sin as Aaron]!' And he set the one in Bethel, and he put the other in Dan. **And this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one, even to Dan**" (I Kings 12:28-30).

"And he made houses *of worship* on the high places and made priests of the lowest of the people, who were not the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam **ordered a feast in the eighth month**, on **the fifteenth day of the month**, like the feast that *is* in Judah. And he offered upon the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. And he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month **which he had devised out of his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel**. And he offered upon the altar and burned incense" (verses 31-33).

Jeroboam also forced the Levites to leave the ten tribes, so he could establish his own priesthood for the golden calf worship: "And the Levites left their open lands and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off so that they could not execute the priests' office unto the LORD. And **he ordained priests for himself for the high places, and for the demons, and for the *golden* calves which he had made**" (II Chron. 11:14-15).

God sent another prophet to warn Jeroboam, but he refused to listen and repent. "After this thing Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but turned and again made priests of the high places from the lowest of the people; anyone who desired *to be made a priest*, he consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places. **And this thing became the sin** of the house of Jeroboam, even to destroy it from the face of the earth" (I Kings 13:33-34).

As a consequence of Jeroboam's sins, the ten tribes of Israel completely forsook the Lord God. God sent many prophets to warn them to repent and return to the true God. However, none of the kings and only very few of the people ever repented. It is recorded that during the time of Elijah the prophet, there were just seven thousand who had not "bowed the knee to Baal" (I Kings 19:18).

After Elijah, God sent the prophet Elisha. In spite of Elisha's powerful ministry and miracles—and some reprieve from the wars with the Syrians—Israel would not repent from worshiping false gods, but plunged deeper and deeper into sun worship, witchcraft and occult practices.

The Ten Tribes of Israel Go into Captivity Because of Their Sins: For approximately 300 years after Jeroboam's reign, the ten tribes of Israel continued to serve false gods and idols. They used witchcraft and other occult practices (Micah 5:12-14). They worshiped Baal, the sun god, and Ashtoreth, the "queen of heaven."

In spite of the fact that the priests, Levites, and people of Israel had the book of the Law of God—the five books of Moses—to instruct them, they repeatedly failed to obey the Word of God and to keep His commandments and statutes. Finally, God used Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, to punish Israel. The Assyrians besieged Samaria for three years, 721-718 BC, and afterwards took the Israelites into captivity.

The story is recorded in the book of II Kings:

"In the ninth year of Hoshea [king of Israel], the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria. And he placed them in Halah, and in Habor *by* the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. Now it came to pass because **the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God**, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and **had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the nations** whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which the nations had made. Now the children of Israel **secretly did things that *were* not right** against the LORD their God. And they built high places in all their cities for themselves from the Watch Tower to the fortified city. And they **set up images and groves for themselves in every high hill**, and under every green tree. And they **burned incense in all the high places**, like the nations whom the LORD had removed from before them, and they **practiced evil things to provoke the LORD to anger**, for they **served the idols** of which the LORD had said to them, 'You shall not do this thing.'

"And the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all the prophets, *by* all the seers, saying, '**Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments *and* My statutes**, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.' Nevertheless **they would not hear, but hardened their necks**, like the neck of their fathers who did not believe in the LORD their God. And ***they* rejected His statutes and His covenant which He made with their fathers**, and His warnings that He testified against them. And **they went after vanity, and became vain, and went after the nations** around them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them not to do like them. And **they left all the commandments of the LORD their God and made molten images, two calves for themselves. And they made a grove, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal**. **And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire. And they used divination and sorceries, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger**. So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them out of His sight; not one was left, only the tribe of Judah by itself

"And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers until He had cast them out of His sight, for He tore Israel from the house of David and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. And **Jeroboam drove Israel away from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin**. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did. They did not depart from them until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away out of their own land **to Assyria, *as it is* to this day** [apparently an editorial comment added by Ezra the priest around 500 BC]. And the king of Assyria brought *men* from Babylon and from Cuthah and from Ava and from Hamath and from Sepharvaim and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead of the children

of Israel. And they possessed Samaria and lived in its cities" (II Kings 17:6-18, 20-24).

While the ten northern tribes of Israel and their kings never repented and returned to God, the southern kingdom of Judah, which retained the area of Judea and the city of Jerusalem, experienced periods of repentance and revival. The books of II Kings and II Chronicles record the history of the kings of Judah. Judah, however, failed to return wholeheartedly to God even after the ten tribes of Israel were taken into Assyria. "Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the [apostate] statutes which Israel [had] made [in rebellion]" (II Kings 17:19).

The Kingdom of Judah Also Rebels Against God: Some of the kings of Judah led the Jews to repentance. Others were wicked and followed in the way of Jeroboam, leading the people to sin greatly against God. Of all the kings of Judah, Manasseh, who reigned for fifty-five years, was undoubtedly the most wicked.

Manasseh defied God and rebelled against Him, overturning all the righteous reforms that his father Hezekiah had instituted during his reign. The kingdom of Judah was transformed into a sun-worshiping occult society under his leadership.

"Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. **But he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, like the abominations of the heathen** whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel, for he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim [sun god worship], and made groves [for witchcraft], and worshiped all the host of heaven [the worship of Satan and demons], and served them.

"And he **built altars** in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, 'In Jerusalem shall My name be forever.' And he **built altars for all the host of heaven** in the two courts of the house of the LORD" (II Chron. 33:1-5). Manasseh deliberately desecrated the temple of God, converting it into a pagan monument devoted to sun worship—replete with occult rituals and Satan worship.

"And he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom. He also **observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD to provoke Him to anger. And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God**, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, 'In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever. Nor will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have set apart for your fathers—if only they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.' **And Manasseh seduced Judah and the people of Jerusalem to go astray, *and* to do worse than the nations** whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and to His people, but they would not listen" (verses 6-10).

"Furthermore, Manasseh also shed very much innocent blood until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; besides his sin with which he made Judah to sin in doing the evil in the sight of the LORD" (II Kings 21:16).

Therefore, God sent Manasseh into captivity before the rest of the Jews: "Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh among the thorns and bound him with chains and carried him to Babylon" (II Chron. 33:11).

In prison, Manasseh repented of his sins. He humbled himself, and God restored him to his throne. "And when he was in affliction, **he sought the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers**. And he prayed to Him, and He was entreated of him and heard his prayer, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. And Manasseh knew that the LORD *is* God" (II Chron. 33:12-13).

This account of Manasseh's repentance shows that God will forgive and restore people who wholeheartedly turn to Him and repent of their sins and transgressions. When Manasseh was returned to his throne in Jerusalem, he destroyed the idols that he had built and restored the true worship of God at the temple. "And he took away the strange gods and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mountain of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem, and threw *them* out of the city. **And he repaired the altar of the LORD and sacrificed upon it peace offerings and thank-offerings. And he commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel**. But the people still sacrificed in the high places, *but only* to the LORD their God. And the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they *are written* in the book of the kings of Israel" (verses 15-18).

From Judah's Captivity in Babylon until the Time of Jesus Christ: Over a twenty-year period, from 605 BC to 585 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar's armies attacked Judah and finally removed the Jews to Babylon. After seventy years of captivity, a few thousand Jews returned to Judea under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. Then, for a period of about 120 years—during the time of Ezra and the priests of the Great Synagogue (which ended in 305 BC)—the Jews properly kept the Sabbath and holy days.

The Jews were greatly influenced by the Greek civilization imposed on them by Alexander the Great and his successors. During this time, they again apostatized from God and thoroughly adopted the customs and language of the Greeks. By the 170s BC, the Jews had totally polluted the temple of God and were again worshiping pagan gods. God sent the armies of Antiochus Epiphanes to punish them. In 168 BC, Antiochus desecrated God's temple in Jerusalem by setting up an image of the sun god and slaughtering a swine on the altar of burnt offerings.

There were various revivals during the Maccabean era (from 167 BC to 63 BC). Rome conquered Palestine at the end of that era. The Hellenistic Sadducees retained control of the temple during this period—but only in competition with the Pharisees, another major religious sect of the Jews. From this time on through the ministry of Jesus Christ and the apostles, God's seventh-day Sabbath and annual holy days were continually observed. New Testament Gentile Christians also observed these weekly and yearly holy days.

In the next chapter we will take a closer look at the seventh-day Sabbath—the day God created holy and commanded His people to observe.

PART THREE

Inset—Who and What Is a True Christian?

A Survey of God's Feasts and Holy Days in the Bible

Who and What Is a True Christian?

The world has various ideas about who and what a "Christian" is or isn't. Some think a Christian is anyone born into a Christian-professing family and christened by a priest or minister. Others say a Christian is one who has "given his heart to the Lord" and is "born again"—or perhaps one who simply **claims** to be a Christian.

Is it possible, however, for someone to live and die **assuming** that he or she is a Christian—only to find out in the Judgment that God **never recognized their brand** of "Christianity"? Christ, in fact, warned of that very possibility in Matthew 7:21-23.

What truly makes a person a Christian? How does GOD describe a Christian in His inspired word—the Bible?

Serious followers of Christ will diligently study their Bibles to understand the true definition of a Christian—and to make sure that they are, indeed, true Christians (II Tim. 3:15-17). They will have their minds and hearts set to love God the Father and Jesus Christ with all their hearts and all their minds and all their strength (Mark 12:28-30). They will be committed to **live by every word of God** (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4; Deut. 8:3), proving all things from the Scriptures (I Thess. 5:21; Acts 17:10-12).

No Longer Under the Penalty of Sin

Crucial to understanding the **Bible definition** of a Christian is the fact that all human beings have been sinners, including ourselves (Rom. 3:23). The penalty for sin is permanent death (Rom. 6:23). A Christian is one who has come to realize that he or she had been under that death penalty and in need of a Savior. A Christian understands that Jesus Christ **paid that penalty** by dying on the cross when He was completely innocent of any sin (II Cor. 5:21; I John 2:2; 4:10; Rev. 1:5; 5:9).

A Christian learns just **what, specifically, is sin**—and what brought the death penalty upon them in the first place. Again, the world has its own ideas about what sin is or isn't, but the Bible defines sin for us as the **transgression of the law** of God (I John 3:4).

A true Christian, then, is one who has had the blood of Jesus Christ's sacrificial death applied to him or to her—but only after having acknowledged and **repented** of their sins (toward God the Father) and accepted Christ as their personal Savior (Acts 3:19; 2:38; Ezek. 18:21-23). Repentance literally means a change of mind and attitude, as well as a complete **change of conduct.** In repentance, one literally **turns from** the way of sin (breaking God's

law) that leads to death (Prov. 14:12; 16:25; Matt. 7:13) and begins walking God's way—the true, Christian **way of life** (John 14:4-6; Acts 16:17; 18:25-26; I John 2:3-6).

Living in God's Grace

In order to become a Christian one has to be baptized, by full water immersion, into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. After the laying on of hands (Heb. 6:2), the new convert receives the gift of the Holy Spirit from Christ and the Father, by which a person is begotten as a new creation in Jesus Christ (Mark 1:8; Acts 2:38; 8:14-17; II Cor. 1:22; I John 3:9, 22-24).

By simply believing in Jesus Christ and in His name, repenting of sin, and asking God the Father's forgiveness, one comes under God's saving **grace** (Rom. 3:23-26; 6:23) This grace (which is so precious!) is a **free gift** from God—totally undeserved by anyone. No amount of effort by anyone could ever come close to earning this gift of God's favor. Being a "good person" will not earn you salvation—for God does not "owe" salvation to anyone! "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8-9).

Once baptized—and having received the gift of God's Holy Spirit—what should the newly converted Christian then do? Can a true Christian continue living as before? Does being "under grace" mean that one can go back and continue practicing what he or she supposedly repented of? Absolutely not! The apostle Paul makes it clear that one is not to continue to **live in sin**—continually transgressing the laws and commandments of God. Notice Romans 6:1-3: "What then shall we say? **Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound**? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?"

A New Life in Christ

Notice how Paul goes on in Romans Six to describe the **new life** of a true Christian. "Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should **walk in newness of life**. For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin; because the

one who has died *to sin* has been justified from sin. Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be **dead to sin, but alive to God** through Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof. Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God" (Rom. 6:4-13, emphasis added).

In both the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27) and the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), Christ makes it clear that once having received a gift from God, one is not expected to sit on it or bury it—but to **build on it**, to increase it. Christians are to grow spiritually to become ever more like Jesus and the Father (II Pet. 1:3-11; 3:18; Eph. 4:11-13; 5:1). With this goal in mind, the true Christian studies his or her Bible regularly (II Tim. 2:15) to learn to **follow the example** set by Christ when He walked the earth in the flesh (John 13:15; 14:6; I Pet. 2:21; I John 2:6). In this way, God leads one through the power of His Holy Spirit and creates in each Christian His godly character (Eph. 2:10) and the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5).

Christ's Example Shows the Way

What was the example Jesus Christ set for His followers? For starters, He perfectly kept His Father's commandments (John 15:10). His life's example, however, was not merely a legalistic, letter-of-the-law obedience—it was obedience from the heart, because He loved the Father with his **whole being**. A true Christian is to love God the Father and Jesus Christ with all his heart, all his mind, all his soul, and all his strength—which is the greatest commandment of all (Matt. 22:37-40). In this passage Jesus declares that LOVE, whether toward God or neighbor, is the basis for all of God's spiritual law. Each precept of the law merely tells us **how to love**. Also, there is a **spirit and intent** behind every law or command of God—and that intent is best summed up in one word, LOVE. If God tells us to do (or not to do) something, His motivation is always love (I John 4:8).

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5, 6, 7), Christ outlined how the spirit and intent of the law translates into personal conduct. Belief in the principles He has taught, however, is not enough—for they are of value only IF one **applies and lives by them**

(Matt. 7:24-27). A true Christian—who loves God and knows that His laws are based on love—will in faith obey from the heart whatever He asks of him or her (John 14:15; I John 5:3). And a Christian's obedience will not be based on fear (of losing salvation, etc.), or because it "earns" them anything—but will be motivated by their love toward God, and because they understand that heartfelt obedience empowers them to become more and more like God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Many, unfortunately, mistakenly think that love and obedience to God's commandments are somehow opposites—in conflict with one another. Nothing could be further from the truth! Often, those who claim to be Christian will say they "love the Lord" or "know the Lord"—yet they fail to obey Him. The apostle John has an answer for such people. "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep [obey] His commandments. The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep [obey] His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping [obeying] His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked" (I John 2:3-6).

A Spirit-led Life

Many churchgoers assume they are already pretty good people. The apostle Paul, on the other hand—after relating how he also did that which was not right—said of himself, "O wretched man that I am!" (Rom. 7:14-24). Why did a holy apostle and man of God call himself "wretched"? Because he understood that his own human nature was not godly—and he was honest and humble enough to admit it. He likewise admitted that—even after conversion—his old carnal nature still led him to sin, for which he had to repent and ask forgiveness.

Notice his explanation of human nature in Romans 8:7-14: "Because the carnal mind [the mind of the unconverted] *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*. Now then, those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God. However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you. But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. Now if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. Now if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you. So then, brethren, we

are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to *the* flesh; because if you are living according to *the* flesh, you shall die; but if by *the* Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as **are led by *the* Spirit of God**, these are *the* sons of God" (emphasis added).

A true Christian is one who is **led by the Spirit of God**. In order to grow in that Spirit, which is needed to obey God and grow more like Him, a true Christian draws on the Holy Spirit through regular prayer and Bible study and occasional fasting. Christ taught His disciples to pray (Matt 6:5-15; Luke 18:1-14) and set an example by beginning each day with prayer (Mark 1:35). The Bible is the "God-breathed" words of God (II Tim. 3:16; I Pet. 1:11-12), and is also a powerful source of God's Spirit. Concerning the very words which He spoke, Christ said "they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63). He also taught the right approach to fasting (Matt. 6:16-18).

One might ask, "How does **faith** fit into all of this?" In the 11th chapter of Hebrews (often called the "Faith Chapter"), we find example after example of those who **"by faith"** performed something that God had commanded**.** In each case, those faithful demonstrated their faith by obedience to God. Clearly, **faith and obedience go hand in hand** (Heb. 11:7-38; Rev. 14:12). To think they are somehow at odds with one another is a gross error. A true Christian's faith will **show in what he or she does** (James 2:17-18, 26). It was Abraham's **obedience** to God, by faith, that made him "the father of the faithful" (James 2:21-24). When Christ returns, He will bring His reward with Him and render to each person "according as his **work** shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

Finally, a true Christian will fellowship with others of like mind when possible—again following the example of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:21; Heb. 10:25). By fellowshiping with one another, Christians also fellowship with God (I John 1:3)—thus strengthening their relationship with God and growing in His Way. A true Christian **demonstrates his or her love** for one another by serving and giving materially to those in need (Matt. 25:31-46; I John 3:17, 18)—as well as by praying for and encouraging one another (James 5:16). All of these are expressions of the true love of God.

This, then, is the **Bible description of a true Christian**—one who, through God's grace, has turned from a life of sin and death to a life of love, obedience and the good works of faith as led and empowered by God's Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER NINE

Which Day of Worship Did God Make Holy?

Throughout their history the children of Israel and Judah continually rejected the commandments of God. In particular, they refused to keep God's Sabbath and holy days. At the temple of God in Jerusalem, they literally turned their backs on God to worship the sun and various occult gods. Generation after generation, they repeatedly and grievously transgressed against God. Yet, in His love and mercy for His people and for the sake of His promises to Abraham, God sent numerous faithful prophets over hundreds of years with warnings and calls to repentance. In spite of the repeated warnings, both Israel and Judah refused to repent. Finally, as punishment for their sins, God sent them into captivity at the hands of their enemies.

Ignoring the record of the Old Testament, apostate Orthodox Christendom has in defiance of God **perpetuated the sins of ancient Israel and Judah**. While its leadership professes to represent the God of the Bible and to claim His authority, its popes, priests, ministers and evangelists actually oppose God by **rejecting** much of His Word. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church today accepts and observes the *traditions* of the "church fathers" and various papal proclamations—claiming that they are as binding and authoritative as the Word of God. In practice, however, such traditions and papal proclamations actually *supersede* the authority of the Word of God. Protestants also accept as authoritative the traditions of the "church fathers," and falsely teach that Jesus abolished the Law of God. As a result, they practice the very things God commands them to avoid—even while professing to serve Him! (See Appendix H, "Rome's War Against the Christian Passover, God's Sabbath and Holy Days," p. 319)

The apostle Peter prophesied that this would happen. "But there were also false prophets among the people [of ancient Israel and Judah], as indeed there will be **false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies, personally denying *the* Lord who bought them**, and bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many people will follow *as authoritative* their destructive ways; *and* because of them, **the way of the truth will be blasphemed**. Also, through insatiable greed they will with enticing messages exploit you for gain; for whom the judgment of old is in *full* force, and their destruction is *ever* watching" (II Pet. 2:1-3).

The Scriptures: The Word of Truth from the God of Truth

God is the God of truth, and it is impossible for Him to lie. The apostle Paul wrote, "Paul, *a* servant of God and *an* apostle of Jesus Christ,

according to *the* faith of God's elect and *the* knowledge of *the* truth that *is* according to godliness; in *the* hope of eternal life, which **God Who cannot lie** promised before the ages of time" (Titus 1:1-2). Also: "In this *way* God, desiring more abundantly to show the heirs of the promise the unchangeable nature of His own purpose, confirmed *it* by an oath; so that by two immutable things, in which *it was* **impossible *for* God to lie**…" (Heb. 6:17-18).

In addition, the God of truth keeps truth *forever*. As the psalmist wrote, the one "Who made the heavens and earth, the sea and all that is in them" also "**keeps truth forever**" (Psa. 146:6). The heavens and the earth are witnesses of His truth: "Give ear, **O heavens**, and I will speak; and hear, **O earth**, the words of my mouth. My teachings shall drop as the rain; my speech shall drop down as the dew, as the small rain on the tender plant, and as the showers on the grass because I will proclaim the name of the LORD, *and* ascribe greatness to our God. *He is* the Rock [i.e., Jesus Christ, I Cor. 10:4]; **His work *is* perfect for all His ways *are* just, a God of faithfulness, and without iniquity; just and upright is He**" (Deut. 32:1-4).

Jesus Christ, the true Savior of the world, verified the truth of God, saying, "**Your Word is the truth**" (John 17:17). Of Himself, He said, "**I am the way, and the truth, and the life**; no one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6); and, "The heaven and the earth shall pass away, but **My words shall never pass away**" (Mark 13:31).

Much of the truth of God has been revealed to men through the laws and commandments that God has given. Psalm 119 says: "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and **Your law is the truth**" (verse 142); "You are near, O LORD, and **all Your commandments are truth**" (verse 151); "Therefore **I esteem all Your precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way**" (verse 128). The reader is encouraged to read and study all of Psalm 119, as the entire chapter is a prophecy of Jesus' own attitude toward God's Word. Because Jesus Himself esteemed God's Word as truth, we can be sure that His Word *is* the absolute truth—God-breathed from the God of truth (II Tim. 3:15-16).

With this in mind, we ought to eagerly examine the Scriptures in search of the truth. First century believers in Berea were commended for their diligence in searching the Scriptures, as the writer of the book of Acts notes: "Now these [of Berea] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, *for* they received the Word with all **readiness of mind** *and* **examined the Scriptures daily** *to see* if these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

We also ought to study so that we might learn to *rightly divide* the Word of truth. The apostle Paul encouraged Timothy: "**Diligently *study*** to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, **rightly dividing the Word of the truth**" (II Tim. 2:15). Paul wrote to the believers in Thessalonica, "**Prove all things**. Hold fast *to that which* is good" (I Thess. 5:21).

David wrote, "Teach me Your way, O LORD; **I will walk in Your truth** [as a way of life]" (Psa. 86:11). And Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God that proceeds out of the mouth of

God" (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4). This teachable attitude and approach—coupled with the "Fourteen Rules of Bible Study" (Appendix I, p. 323)—will bring us understanding of the truth of the Word of God.

A Survey of the Seventh-Day Sabbath in the Old Testament

The following account from the book of Genesis reveals that the weekly seventh-day Sabbath is a special creation of God set aside by Him from the beginning. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by *the beginning of* the seventh day God finished His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. **And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work which God had created and made**" (Gen. 2:1-3).

Sanctifying the Sabbath means that God **set it apart** or **made it holy**. Since God is holy, only He has the power and authority to make or declare something holy. God made the Sabbath day holy by personally taking five specific actions: 1) God created it; 2) God blessed it; 3) God sanctified it; 4) God put His presence in it; and, 5) God rested on it. **Therefore, no man has the power or authority to change, annul or abrogate what God has personally made holy**.

The weekly cycle of seven days has been the same from creation. On the Roman calendar today, the seventh-day Sabbath is called Saturday. This day is the weekly Sabbath of God that He personally set aside and made holy from the beginning of creation.

The Ancient Righteous Patriarchs Kept the Sabbath: The laws of God have been in effect from the beginning (Rom. 5:12-14). If there was no law for the 2,500 years from Adam to Moses, there would have been no sin—because where there is no law, sin is not imputed (Rom. 4:15). Sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4)—therefore if there is sin, there is law. The fact that God passed judgment on mankind and destroyed them with a universal flood because of gross wickedness and sin (Gen. 6:5-13), proves that the laws and commandments of God have always been in effect.

The patriarchs Abel, Enoch, and Noah walked with God (Gen. 5:22; 6:9). They were righteous in that they believed God and kept His laws and commandments (Heb. 11:4-5, 7; 12:24). Since all the commandments of God are righteousness, this means the patriarchs kept the seventh-day Sabbath as well as all the other commandments.

After the flood, Abraham, the father of the faithful, received God's promises because he believed and obeyed Him (Gen. 12:1-4; 22:1-18). Abraham's faith was counted as righteousness (Gen. 15:6). Abraham also had righteous works. The apostle James, the brother of the Lord Jesus, writes of Abraham's faith and works: "But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar?

Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and by works *his* faith was perfected? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Now Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness;' and he was called a friend of God. You see, then, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (Jas. 2:20-24).

When the promises given to Abraham were passed on to his son Isaac, God specifically told Isaac that he was receiving the promises because of Abraham's obedience. The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, "Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your seed, I will give all these lands; and I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws**" (Gen. 26:3-5).

Since God does not change (Mal. 3:6), and Jesus Christ is "the same, yesterday, today and forever" (Heb. 13:8), we can conclude that the laws, commandments and statutes that Abraham kept were the same as those given later to Israel at Mount Sinai.

Weeks before the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai, God miraculously provided manna for them to eat. On the sixth day of the week, God sent a *double portion* of manna; He sent none on the seventh day. Thus the children of Israel would not need to gather food on the seventh day and could observe the Sabbath rest. Some, however, went out on the Sabbath to gather manna anyway—but didn't find any. Through Moses, God asked, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?" (Ex. 16:28).

At Mount Sinai God expounded upon the Fourth commandment, saying, "**Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy**. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. **But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God**. In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter; your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates; For *in* six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it" (Ex. 20:8-11).

Moses recounted the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy five, stressing that God's Sabbath was not only to be *remembered*, it was to be *kept*: "**Keep the Sabbath** day to sanctify it as the LORD your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. **But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God**. *In it* you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your livestock, nor your stranger within your gates, so that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm. **Therefore the LORD your**

God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day" (Deut. 5:12-15).

In Leviticus, God declares that the Sabbath is a holy convocation: "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work. It *is* a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings" (Lev. 23:3).

Sabbath-Keeping Is a Perpetual Sign Between God and His People

There are a number of key Scriptures concerning Sabbath-keeping as a special sign between God and His people. For example:

"And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak also to the children of Israel [The true Church of God is called the "Israel of God" in Gal. 6:16], saying, "Truly you shall keep **My Sabbaths**, for it [the keeping of God's Sabbaths] *is* a **sign between Me and you** throughout your generations **to know that I *am* the LORD Who sanctifies you**. You shall keep the Sabbath therefore, for it *is* holy to you. Everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death [The wages of sin is death, Rom. 6:23, and sin is the transgression of the law, I John 3:4.], for whoever does *any* work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people" ' " (Ex. 31:12-14).

"Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. **Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations *as* a perpetual covenant. It *is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever**; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed" (verses 15-17).

God declared, "You shall keep My Sabbaths." (As we will see in the next chapter, this means not only the weekly seventh-day Sabbath, but also the annual holy days—all of which are Sabbaths.) The keeping of His Sabbaths is a sign between God and His people. Those who do not keep His Sabbaths are transgressing God's commandments, regardless of what they profess.

This **perpetual covenant**—meaning it cannot be changed or abolished—of Sabbath-keeping is **in addition** to the covenant that was ratified between God and the children of Israel as recorded in Exodus 24. As such, the Sabbath covenant of Exodus 31 is a basic component of all other covenants. There is little doubt that this perpetual covenant of Sabbath-keeping was included in every covenant of God from creation—because the Sabbath was *from the beginning*!

Sabbath-Breaking Is Rebellion Against God

In Ezekiel 20, God commanded the children of Israel to put away the idols of Egypt and keep His laws and Sabbaths. "And I gave them My statutes and showed them My ordinances, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them. And also I gave them **My Sabbaths** to be a sign between Me and

them, that *they* might know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies them.

"**But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness**; they did not walk in My statutes, and they despised My ordinances, which *if* a man does, he shall even live in them. And **they greatly polluted My Sabbaths**…" (Ezek. 20:11-13). Because of the sins of the children of Israel in the wilderness, God punished them with forty years of wandering—until all those twenty years of age and over died (Num. 14:34).

At the end of the forty years, and just before they went into the Promised Land, God again pleaded with the children of Israel: "But I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I *am* the LORD your God. Walk in My statutes, and keep My ordinances, and do them, and **keep My Sabbaths holy; and they shall be a sign** between Me and you, that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God' " (Ezek. 20:18-20).

Verse 21: "But the children **rebelled** against Me. They did not walk in My statutes, nor keep My ordinances to do them—the ordinances which, *if* a man do, he shall even live in them. And **they polluted My Sabbaths**…." Israel rejected God's pleas to obey Him and keep His Sabbaths. In rebellion, they refused to keep His commandments and laws, and instead worshiped the gods of the nations around them.

Blessings of Sabbath-Keeping

The prophet Isaiah prophesied that in the end times, just before the return of Jesus Christ, salvation would directly involve Sabbath-keeping. "Thus says the LORD, 'Keep justice and do righteousness; for My salvation *is* near to come [beginning with Jesus' ministry in 26 AD until His second coming], and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed *is* the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it; and keeps his hand from doing any evil…. [Blessed also are] the sons of the stranger, who join themselves to the LORD to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, [and] everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, and **takes hold of My covenant** [the perpetual Sabbath-keeping covenant of Exodus 31 and the New Covenant through Jesus Christ]' " (Isa. 56:1-2, 6).

God blesses those who seek to please Him by keeping His holy Sabbath. "If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, *from* doing your own desires on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own desires, nor speaking *your own* words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it" (Isa. 58:13-14).

Sabbath-keeping is not a curse as so many "Christians" have been wrongly taught. Rather, there are **many blessings** for keeping the seventh-day

Sabbath. The fact is, curses are the *result of sin*—and sin is the transgression of God's law. Curses do not come from keeping the Sabbath—curses come from breaking the Sabbath. Anyone who rejects the Fourth Commandment and does not keep the seventh-day Sabbath **is sinning**.

The Old Testament reveals the following truths about the Sabbath:

- The Sabbath is a weekly memorial of God's creation of heaven and earth.
- The Sabbath is a great *gift* from God *to mankind*.
- The Sabbath is the only day of the week that God has specifically blessed and made holy.
- The Sabbath is a day of ceasing from all labor.
- The Sabbath is a holy convocation—a day of assembly and worship.
- God commands *all* mankind to keep the Sabbath.
- God gave the Sabbath as a sign of remembrance of His covenant with His people.
- Sabbath-keeping is a perpetual covenant.
- God owns the Sabbath. "**But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord**."

This brief survey concerning Sabbath-keeping has covered only the more important Old Testament passages. The reader is encouraged to study the many other Scriptures directly relating to the Sabbath.

A Survey of the Seventh-Day Sabbath in the New Testament

In the beginning God created all things, and the one Who did the actual creating was the one Who became Jesus Christ. The apostle John wrote of this fundamental truth: "In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him…. And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:1-3, 14). The book of Hebrews confirms this understanding. "God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His* Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, **by Whom also He made the worlds**; Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His own power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:1-3).

Again, the apostle Paul wrote that Jesus Christ created all things: "Because by Him [Jesus Christ] were all things created, the things in heaven and the things on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by

Him and for Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things subsist. And He is the Head of the body, the church; Who is *the* beginning, *the* firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He Himself might hold the pre-eminence" (Col. 1:16-18; also see Heb. 2:9-10).

This knowledge is of the utmost significance because it means that **Jesus Christ is the Creator of the seventh-day Sabbath. He is the Lord God Who blessed it, sanctified it, and commanded men to keep it as a perpetual covenant**. Moreover, as the Lord God of the Old Testament, He gave the Ten Commandments and all of the laws, commandments, statutes and judgments to ancient Israel at Mt. Sinai.

Jesus Christ Did Not Abolish the Law or the Prophets

When Jesus Christ began His ministry, He taught concerning the laws and commandments of God, and the prophets, saying, "**Do not think** [do not even let it enter your mind] **that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill**. For truly I say to you, **until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the law until everything has been fulfilled**" (Matt. 5:17-18). Since heaven and earth still exist, **the laws and commandments of God are still in full force and effect**!

Jesus further taught regarding the commandments: "Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; **but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven**" (verse 19). Christ Himself made it clear that we are blessed, not cursed, if we do and teach even the "least" of the commandments.

In another account, when a young rich man asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus gave this answer: "If you desire to enter into life, keep [Greek *poiew*, meaning "to practice," "to do"] the commandments" (Matt. 19:17). The man responded by saying that he had kept the commandments from his childhood. Jesus then told the young man that he should sell all that he owned and give to the poor, because commandment-keeping—while required to enter into life—is not enough by itself.

The apostles also taught commandment-keeping to New Testament Christians. In the 90s AD, the apostle John wrote that Christians were to keep the commandments of God. "And whatever we may ask we receive from Him **because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight**…. **And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him, and He in him**; and by this we know that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us" (I John 3:22, 24).

When Peter and the other apostles were called before the Sanhedrin for preaching salvation through Jesus Christ, they gave this answer: "**We are obligated to obey God rather than men**…. And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also **the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him**" (Acts 5:29, 32). We must obey God over men—and where

the teachings of men contradict the Word of God, we must be willing to discard such teachings. If we are obedient to His Word, God will enable us to further discern truth from error.

God's laws, commandments, statutes and judgments are holy, righteous and good—and God has given them to us for our well-being, **so that He might bless us in everything**, because He loves us. (See Deut. 4:1, 39-40; 5:29-33; 6:1-6, 17-18, 24-25; 7:6-15; 10:12-15; 11:1-28.)

Contrary to the Word of God, Dr. Russell K. Tardo champions the **lawless** Protestant viewpoint by claiming that all the laws and commandments of God have been abolished, rendered inoperative, or fulfilled. "In fact, the whole law of Moses has been rendered inoperative. The New Testament message is clear for all who have 'ears to hear.' **The whole of the law of Moses has been rendered inoperative by the death of the Lord Jesus. The law, in its entirety, no longer has any immediate and forensic authority or jurisdiction whatsoever over anyone**…. Christ is the complete end and fulfillment of all of the laws, 613 commandments, ending their jurisdiction over us completely" (Tardo, *Sunday Facts & Sabbath Fiction*, pp. 26-27). To allege that Christ completely fulfilled the Law and brought it to an end is absolute nonsense—the idea creates an untenable "lawless grace"—contradicting Jesus Christ's own plain teachings.

All of God's Laws Are Based on Love

Jesus Christ taught that the whole foundation for the laws and commandments of God is the **love of God**. A doctor of the law asked Jesus, "Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the law?" Jesus answered, " '**You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.**' **This is *the* first and greatest commandment**; and *the* second *one is* like it: '**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**.' **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets**" (Matt. 22:36-40; also see Deut. 6:4-5).

Love is *not* contrary to commandment-keeping, as many religious teachers ignorantly affirm. Rather, all the Law and the Prophets hang on the love of God. In other words, the love of God is the underlying basis for all the laws and commandments of God—the reason they exist in the first place. Law is not opposed to the love of God; instead, law and love complement each other.

Jesus **amplified the meaning** of these two great commandments. Christ, as God manifested in the flesh, was the Lord God of the Old Testament. Therefore, what Jesus said about the commandments of God refers not only to *His* commandments in the New Testament, but also to the commandments *He gave* as the God of the Old Testament. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments…. **The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him**…. If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come

to him and make Our abode with him. **The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me**" (John 14:15-24).

As this precise translation of the Greek shows, if anyone loves God the Father and Jesus Christ, that love will be made evident by obedience. This means that it is impossible to love God while rejecting or denouncing the laws and commandments of God, regardless of one's "profession of love" toward God. Keeping the commandments of God, which includes the seventh-day weekly Sabbath, is the standard by which we know that we love God. The apostle John wrote, "By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: **when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome**" (I John 5:2-3).

John even went so far as to say, "**The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him**. On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. **Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked**" (I John 2:4-6). It is through obedience that the love of God is being perfected in His followers.

How did Jesus walk before God the Father? He loved God and kept His commandments, always doing the things that pleased the Father. "Then Jesus said to them, 'When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you yourselves shall know that I AM, and *that* I do nothing of Myself. But as the Father taught Me, these things I speak. And He Who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone because I always do the things that please Him' " (John 8:28-29). Thus, if we are Christ's, then we will love God, keep His commandments, and please Him in everything as Jesus did. "And in this *way* we know that **we are of the truth**, and shall assure our hearts before Him…. And whatever we may ask we receive from Him **because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight**" (I John 3:19, 22).

When we keep the Sabbath in a loving and godly way, and worship God "in spirit and truth," it is most pleasing to Him—and our spiritual fellowship is with the Father and the Son. "That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son, Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3).

Jesus' Teaching and Example Concerning the Seventh-Day Sabbath

Jesus Christ Kept the Sabbath: Jesus Christ observed the weekly seventh-day Sabbath as a custom. "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and **according to His custom, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read**." (Luke 4:16). On that Sabbath, Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah where it foretold of His

ministry of love, mercy, forgiveness and redemption. "And there was given Him *the* book of the prophet Isaiah; and when He had unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written, '*The* Spirit of *the* Lord *is* upon Me; for this reason, He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to *the* poor; He has sent Me to heal those who are brokenhearted, to proclaim pardon to *the* captives and recovery of sight to *the* blind, to send forth in deliverance those who have been crushed, to proclaim *the* acceptable year of *the* Lord' " (verses 17-19).

After Jesus left Nazareth, He continued to teach the people throughout all Galilee—particularly on the Sabbath. He never at any time claimed that He had come to do away with the Sabbath commandment. "Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and **taught them on the Sabbath days**. And they were astonished at His teaching: for His word was with authority" (Luke 4:31-32).

The Sabbath, as we have previously discussed, was made to be a blessing for all mankind. Jesus used the Sabbath to preach the gospel, to teach and to personally administer God's love, mercy and blessings through healing and the casting out of demons. Jesus Christ used the Sabbath to release people from sin—**not to lead them into sin**! Hence, Jesus revealed that the Sabbath day is a day of love, mercy, forgiveness, redemption and salvation—a day of blessing!

Jesus Healed on the Sabbath Day

Mark recorded Jesus' healing of a man on the Sabbath day as follows: "And again He went into the synagogue, and a man who had a withered hand was there. **And they were watching Him, *to see* if He would heal him on the Sabbath, in order that they might accuse Him** [notice the hard-hearted, unmerciful attitude of the Jewish religious leaders]. Then He said to the man who had the withered hand, 'Stand up *here* in the center.' And He said to them, 'Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbaths, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill?' But they were silent. And after looking around at them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored *as* sound as the other. Then the Pharisees left *and* immediately took counsel with the Herodians *as to* how they might destroy Him" (Mark 3:1-6).

John also recorded how Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath: "Now a certain man was there who had been *suffering with* an infirmity for thirty-eight years. Jesus saw him lying *there*, and, knowing that he had been there a long time, said to him, 'Do you desire to be made whole?' And the infirm *man* answered Him, 'Sir, I do not have anyone to put me in the pool after the water has been agitated [by an angel]. But while I am going, another *one* steps down before me.' Jesus said to him, 'Arise, take up your bedroll and walk.' And immediately the man was made whole; and he took up his bedroll [probably not much bigger than a small sleeping bag] and walked. **Now that day was a Sabbath**.

"For this reason, the Jews said to the man who had been healed, 'It is *the* Sabbath *day*. It is not lawful for you to take up your bedroll.' He answered them, 'The one Who made me whole said to me, "Take up your bedroll and walk." ' Then they asked him, 'Who is the one Who said to you, "Take up your bedroll and walk"?' But the man who had been healed did not know Who it was, for Jesus had moved away, *and* a crowd was in the place.

"After these things, Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, 'Behold, you have been made whole. Sin no more, so that something worse does not happen to you.'

"And for this cause, the Jews persecuted Jesus and sought to kill Him, **because He had done these things on a Sabbath**. But Jesus answered them, '**My Father is working until now, and I work**.' So then, on account of this *saying*, the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, not only because He had loosed the Sabbath, but also *because* He had called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, the Son has no power to do anything of Himself, but only what He sees the Father do. For whatever He does, these things the Son also does in the same manner' " (John 5:5-19).

The Jews did not understand that **spiritual works** such as healing the sick, casting out demons, and helping the poor and destitute **on the Sabbath day glorify God**. These acts are a part of the good works of keeping the Sabbath day holy. Jesus did not work for gain. Rather, His was a spiritual work. Moreover, by healing the man and commanding him to pick up his bedroll, Jesus loosed a traditional law of Judaism that had made the Sabbath a burden. In this account, He most assuredly did not abrogate the Sabbath or any other laws of God, as some misguided theologians allege.

God never made the Sabbath day to be a burden for people—for as John wrote, "His commandments are not burdensome." However, the Jewish religious leaders legislated hundreds of letter-of-the-law "do's and don'ts" which burdened the people with rigorous, harsh restrictions. As a result of these man-made laws, the Sabbath became a yoke of bondage to the people. Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for putting these heavy burdens on the people (Matt. 23:4, 14-15). These added traditional laws made it nearly impossible to truly keep the Sabbath in the manner God intended it, as a day for rest, rejoicing, and worshiping God the Father and Jesus Christ in spirit and in truth.

Lord of the Sabbath: Another dispute arose because Christ and His disciples had plucked ears of grain to eat on the Sabbath day. Afterward, Jesus announced, "The Sabbath was made for man, *and* not man for the Sabbath. **Therefore, the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath**" (Mark 2:27-28).

Jesus Himself is Lord of the Sabbath because He created, blessed, and sanctified the day. It is the *true* "Lord's Day." **The Sabbath day is the seventh day of the week, known as Saturday. The Lord's Day of the New Testament is the seventh-day weekly Sabbath—not Sunday, the first day of the week!**

The Apostles Kept the Sabbath

Throughout the book of Acts, we find that the apostle Paul taught on the Sabbath. When Paul first began preaching in Greece proper, he observed the Sabbath day, as was his custom. Because there was no synagogue in the area, Paul and his entourage sought out a place of prayer where people were keeping the Sabbath. Luke writes: "And from there *we went* to Philippi, which is *the* primary city in *that* part of Macedonia, *and* a colony. And we stayed in this city *for* a number of days. Then **on the Sabbath**, we went outside the city by a river, where *it* was customary *for* prayer to be *made*; and after sitting down, we spoke to the women who were gathered *there*" (Acts 16:12-13).

When Paul came to Thessalonica, he taught on the Sabbath at a synagogue of the Jews: "And as was the custom with Paul, **he went in to them and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures**, expounding and demonstrating that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise from *the* dead, and *testifying*, 'This Jesus, Whom I am proclaiming to you, is the Christ.' Now some of them were convinced, and joined themselves to Paul and Silas, including **a great multitude of devout Greeks** [Gentile converts], and of the chief women not a few" (Acts 17:2-4).

Again, in Antioch, Paul taught on the Sabbath at the synagogue. "They came to Antioch of Pisidia: and they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day *and* sat down" (Acts 13:14). After Paul preached Jesus Christ to them, many of the Jews were offended. However, some of the Jews—and most of the Gentiles—wanted to hear more about the gospel of Jesus Christ. "And when the Jews had gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles entreated *him* that **these words might be spoken to them on the next Sabbath**. Now after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and the proselytes [Gentile converts] who worshiped *there* followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, **persuaded them to continue in the grace of God**. **And on the coming Sabbath** [not the next day, Sunday—but the next *Sabbath*], **almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of God**" (Acts 13:42-44).

If it were indeed true—as taught by theologians and believed by millions of churchgoers—that after the resurrection of Christ the apostles changed the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first day, Paul certainly would have instructed these worship-seekers to come back the very next day, Sunday—but he didn't!

When the apostle Paul was in Corinth, he taught **every Sabbath** for one and a half years. "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded *both* Jews and Greeks. Now when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was stirred in his spirit and was earnestly testifying to the Jews *that* Jesus *was* the Christ. But when they set themselves in opposition and were blaspheming, *Paul* shook *his* garments *and* said to them, 'Your blood *be* upon your heads. I am pure [blameless] *of it*. **From this time forward I will go to the Gentiles**.'

"And after departing from there, he came into *the* house of a certain one named Justus, who worshipped God, whose house adjoined the syna-

gogue. But Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with his whole house; and many Corinthians who heard, believed and were baptized. And the Lord said to Paul in a vision in *the* night, 'Do not be afraid; but speak, and do not be silent, for I am with you; and no one shall set upon you to mistreat you because I have many people in this city.' **And he remained *there for* a year and six months teaching the Word of God among them**" (Acts 18:4-11).

These Scriptures prove that Paul did not institute Sunday-keeping as a replacement for the seventh-day weekly Sabbath among the Gentile communities.

Grace Does Not Eliminate Sabbath-Keeping: In no way does being under grace eliminate the need to obey the Fourth Commandment. Sabbath-keeping is not opposed to grace. In fact, Paul often taught Gentiles on the Sabbath day about the grace of God. In his epistle to the Romans, Paul taught that grace does not abolish law, rather it establishes law. "[There is] indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith. Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing law!" (Rom. 3:30-31).

Later in this same epistle to the Romans, Paul refutes the idea that since God's grace covers sin, the more one sins, the more grace is manifest. He makes it clear that a Christian cannot continue to live in sin, transgressing the commandments of God—including the Fourth Commandment. "What then shall we say? **Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein**? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?

"Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection. **Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin**; because the one who has died *to sin* [through the operation of baptism] has been justified from sin" (Rom. 6:1-7).

There is not even the slightest hint in the New Testament Scriptures that the apostles of Jesus Christ—including Paul, who was the apostle to the Gentiles—taught that Sunday was the Gentile Sabbath. **Never at any time did they teach that Sunday would replace the seventh-day Sabbath**. All the way through the book of Acts, and in the writings of all the apostles, the Sabbath is upheld.

If You Transgress One of the Commandments, You Are Guilty of Breaking Them All

From the days of Constantine, Orthodox Christendom has rejected the Fourth Commandment and has replaced it with Sunday-keeping. Yet, as

strange as it may seem, those who reject this commandment will insist that since they keep other commandments of God, they are still living within the will of God. But is this true?

In his epistle, James shows that Jesus' teachings concerning the spirit of the law in no way eliminates the need to obey the letter of the law. James explains that Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself" requires **obedience to all of God's commandments**. James specifically refers to the Sixth and Seventh Commandments, and makes it clear that to break any of God's commandments is sin: "**If you are truly keeping *the* Royal Law according to the scripture**, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well. But if you have respect of persons, **you are practicing sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors; for *if* anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one *aspect*, he becomes guilty of all**. For He Who said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' also said, 'You shall not commit murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of *the* law. In this manner speak and in this manner behave: as those who are about to be judged by *the* law of freedom" (James 2:8-12).

It is clear that when James wrote of "the Royal Law," he was referring to the laws and commandments of God. Likewise, "the law of freedom" is another reference to the commandments of God—meaning that when people keep the laws and commandments of God, they are **free from sin**. On the other hand, when people do not keep the commandments, they are sinning and are automatically judged by "the Royal Law, the law of freedom."

To borrow from James, "if anyone keeps nine of the commandments, but sins only by breaking the Sabbath command, he is still guilty of being a lawbreaker, as if he had broken them all."

Many Scholars Understand New Testament Sabbath-Keeping

Many theologians have misconstrued Jesus' declaration that He is "Lord of the Sabbath" to mean that He was using His authority to abolish the Sabbath. This interpretation of Jesus' words is completely unfounded. Among those scholars who understand the true meaning of Sabbath-keeping scriptures are the writers of *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Note what they have written about these critical verses: "At times Jesus is interpreted to have abrogated or suspended the sabbath commandment on the basis of the controversies brought about by sabbath healings and other acts. Careful analysis of the respective passages does not seem to give credence to this interpretation. The action of plucking the ears of grain on the sabbath by the disciples is particularly important in this matter. Jesus makes a foundational pronouncement at that time in … [an authoritatively] structured statement of antithetic [contrasting] parallelism: 'The sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath' (Mark 2:27). The disciples' act of plucking the grain infringed against the rabbinic *halakhah* of minute casuistry [i.e., the Jews'

use of false reasoning to create traditional laws to define trivial, frivolous matters] in which it was forbidden to reap, thresh, winnow, and grind on the sabbath (*Sabb.* 7.2). Here again rabbinic sabbath *halakhah* is rejected [by Jesus], as in other sabbath conflicts. **Jesus reforms the sabbath and restores its rightful place as designed in creation, where the sabbath is made for all mankind and not specifically for Israel, as claimed by normative Judaism** (*cf. Jub.* 2:19-20, see D.3). The subsequent logion [pronouncement], 'The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath' (Mark 2:28; Matt. 12:8; Luke 6:5), indicates that man-made sabbath *halakhah* does not rule the sabbath, but that **the Son of man as Lord determines the true meaning of the sabbath**. The sabbath activities of Jesus are neither hurtful provocations nor mere protests against rabbinic legal restrictions, but are part of Jesus' essential proclamation of the inbreaking of the kingdom of God in which man is taught the original meaning of the sabbath as the recurring weekly proleptic [anticipated] 'day of the Lord' in which God manifests his healing and saving rulership over man" (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5, pp. 854-55, bold emphasis and bracketed comments added).

There Remains Sabbath-Keeping for the People of God

As these scholars have written, the Gospel accounts do not support the widespread belief that Jesus abolished the Sabbath day. Rather, as the Lord of the Sabbath, He taught the true meaning of the Sabbath day and set the example for its proper observance. Christ's apostles continued to keep the Sabbath and to teach the early believers to keep it, as Paul's epistle to the Hebrews clearly demonstrates. The apostle Paul wrote this epistle in 61 AD, more than thirty years after the beginning of the New Testament Church. Even at that time, false ministers were beginning to teach that Sunday, the first day of the week, had replaced the Sabbath. To counter these false teachings, Paul gave the brethren a sober warning that to reject the Sabbath and accept Sunday was sin—just as the children of Israel sinned when they rebelled against God in the wilderness.

Paul drew the comparison between the rebellious Israelites—who were not allowed to enter the Promised Land because of their Sabbath-breaking and occult worship of the sun god—and professing Christians who harden their hearts in disobedience to God. He warned them that just as the Israelites were not allowed to enter the Promised Land because of their unbelief and Sabbath-breaking, they likewise would not enter into the Kingdom of God because of their unbelief and Sabbath-breaking. "For He spoke in a certain place about the seventh *day* in this manner: '**And God rested on the seventh day from all His works**'; and again concerning this: 'If they shall enter into My rest—' Consequently, since it remains *for* some to enter into it, and those who had previously heard the gospel did not enter in because of disobedience, again He marks out a certain day, 'Today,' saying in David after so long a time (exactly as it has been quoted above), 'Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.' For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken *long* afterwards of another day. **There**

remains therefore, Sabbath-keeping [Greek, σαββατισμος—*sabbatismos*] **for the people of God**" (Heb. 4:4-9).

Paul does not say, "There remains Sabbath-keeping for the Jews." He clearly declared, "There remains Sabbath-keeping for **the people of God**"—Gentiles as well as Jews (I Pet. 2:10 and Eph. 2:11-13).

Paul carries his instruction even further, showing that we must keep the Sabbath or risk losing salvation. "For the one who has entered into His rest [keeps the Sabbath], he also has ceased from his own works, as God *did* from His own *works* [when He created the Sabbath day by resting]. We should be diligent therefore to enter into that rest [Sabbath-keeping, as well as striving to enter into the Kingdom of God], lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience. For the Word of God *is* living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart" (Heb. 4:10 -12). (See "The True Meaning of Sabbatismos in Hebrews 4:9," p. 237, for a detailed analysis of the Greek word σαββατισμος—*sabbatismos*, Sabbath -keeping.)

What could be clearer? God's Holy Word reveals that if we want to be true Christians, we must love God the Father and Jesus Christ. We must be following the example of Jesus Christ, living by every word of God and keeping all of His commandments. **Our very calling and hope of salvation requires that we observe the seventh-day weekly Sabbath as the day of rest, worship and fellowship**. (See Inset, "Who and What Is a True Christian," p. 114.)

Summary

We have seen from God's Word the following truths about the **seventh-day holy Sabbath of God**:

- God created the seventh-day Sabbath as a day of rest for all of mankind from the beginning of the creation.
- Abraham kept the Sabbath.
- The Sabbath commandment was given to the Israelites before Mt. Sinai.
- The Sabbath commandment is the fourth of the Ten Commandments, and we are commanded to remember the seventh-day Sabbath to keep it holy.
- God owns the Sabbath.
- Jesus Christ was the Creator of the Sabbath.
- Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath day, which means that the Lord's Day is the seventh day—not Sunday, the first day of the week.
- Jesus Christ observed the Sabbath, and taught and healed on the Sabbath.

- The apostles never changed the day of worship to the first day of the week.
- The apostle Paul taught the Gentiles to observe the Sabbath.
- The apostle Paul taught that grace and Sabbath-keeping go hand-in-hand.
- The Bible nowhere teaches that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday.
- Hebrews 4:9 is a direct command for Christians today to keep the Sabbath.
- Sabbath-keeping is essential for salvation and is a sign that we love God and keep His commandments.

In the next chapter we will survey God's annual feasts and holy days in the Old Testament. Just as God commanded the twelve tribes of Israel to keep the weekly seventh-day Sabbath, God likewise commanded that they keep His annual feasts and holy days.

CHAPTER TEN

A Survey of God's Feasts and Holy Days in the Old Testament

Since God has **never at any time** accepted any pagan occult holiday as a day of worship toward Him, what then are the *true* feasts and holy days of God? To answer this question, we will begin by examining the Old Testament Scriptures. We will learn that throughout history God has used His annual feasts and holy days to **make Himself known** to the people of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the children of Israel—and to the world in special, powerful ways. In fact, the biblical feasts and holy days have great significance for God's people and the world because they **outline His plan** for mankind.

God Planned for His Feasts and Holy Days from the Beginning

In the beginning God created the seven-day weekly cycle with the seventh day being His holy Sabbath. Likewise, from the beginning God created the yearly cycle for His annual feasts and holy days. In Genesis we read: "And God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide between the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years' " (Gen. 1:14). The **signs** are the stars and heavenly bodies which continually testify that God is Creator of the heavens and the earth. The **seasons** are for the annual feasts of God that He commands to be observed at their appointed times. The **days** are not only for the weekly cycle and the **seventh day Sabbath**, but are also for the **annual holy days—yearly Sabbath days** that are in addition to the weekly Sabbath.

God also testifies that the Fourth Commandment—regarding the seventh day Sabbath—is the foundational bedrock of all His annual feasts and holy days. "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, "*Concerning* **the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, even these are My appointed feasts**. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work. It *is* a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings" ' " (Lev. 23:1-3). God's instructions to Moses concerning the weekly Sabbath are vital because they specifically point to the Sabbath command as the sanctifying command for the seasonal feasts of God as found in the next verse: "**These *are* the appointed feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their appointed seasons**" (verse 4).

There is no doubt that God has commanded His yearly feasts to be proclaimed in their seasons. These annual holy days are also Sabbaths—holy convocations. Most people, however, have been misled into believing that the weekly Sabbath day as well as the annual feasts and holy days of God are only for the Jews. Countless theologians and churches declare that because God brought the temple rituals and animal sacrifices to a conclusion through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, people are not required to keep the biblical Sabbath, holy days and feasts. All such claims are unfounded. These days **belong** to God, He created them, He owns them and He demands that we keep them—weekly and annually in their seasons.

What are the annual feasts and Sabbaths that God commands us to keep? When are they to be kept?

The Calculated Hebrew Calendar: God has not left men to their own self-serving inventions to determine when the annual feasts and holy days are to be kept. We need to realize that God calculates time differently than we do today with our Roman calendar. First, the Bible teaches that a day is reckoned from sunset to sunset (Lev. 23:32), rather than from midnight to midnight. Second, God has set the months and the year based on the earth's relationship to the sun and the moon. In order to know when God's annual Sabbaths are to be kept, He has given His people the sacred, solar/lunar, calculated Hebrew calendar—as was undoubtedly used by the ancient Hebrews, including Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Later, when God established His covenant with Israel, He provided the methods of calculation for the priests and Levites, so that they could establish the annual feasts of God in their seasons. According to the Hebrew Calendar, God has set the first month of the sacred year to begin in the spring, which corresponds to March/April on the Roman calendar. The first month was originally named Abib, which means "green ears" of grain (Ex. 13:4). Later, after the Babylonian captivity, it was called Nisan. (For detailed information about the sacred, Calculated Hebrew Calendar, please visit www.cbcg.org.)

The Scriptures demonstrate that God has **always used His feasts and holy days to fulfill His promises and to accomplish His will in significant, powerful and profound ways**—often involving **history-making events**. From the beginning of time, God's feasts and holy days have revealed His direct, major interventions in His dealings with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the twelve tribes of Israel and the world—past, present and future. They also foreshadowed and prophesied of the first coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, "the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world." It is through the knowledge and keeping of God's feasts and holy days that He continues to impart understanding to His people concerning His plan of salvation and prophetic events yet to be fulfilled.

God's Feasts and Holy Days in the Old Testament Were Not Dependent on Rituals and Sacrifices

It is imperative to understand that God commanded His feasts to be kept **before** He gave any command to Moses concerning animal sacrifices and rituals at the tabernacle/temple. Consequently, the holy days and feasts of God do not stand or fall because of sacrifices and rituals performed on these days.

We now know that the seventh-day weekly Sabbath is to be kept without regard to animal sacrifices or priestly rituals. Since the holy days are annual Sabbaths, they too are to be kept without regard to such sacrifices. This understanding is punctuated by the historical fact that before and after the final destruction of the temple in 70 AD, faithful Jews of the Diaspora kept the Sabbath and holy days wherever they were—completely cut off from the temple rituals. This clearly proves that the observance of God's holy days was not, and is not now, dependent on sacrifices and rituals.

In the following verses, we find that there is **not a single reference to any sacrifice or ritual**: "You shall keep a feast unto Me three times in the year. You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month *of* Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And no one shall appear before Me empty. Also the Feast of the Harvest of the Firstfruits of your labors, which you have sown in the field [the Feast of Firstfruits of the barley/wheat harvest—also called Pentecost]. And the Feast of Ingathering, in the end of the year, when you have gathered in your labors out of the field [the Feast of Tabernacles]" (Ex. 23:14-16).

In Exodus 34, after Israel's rebellion at Sinai with the golden calf, God restated His commandments to Moses and the children of Israel. Here, God mixes His commands to keep the annual feasts with some of the Ten Commandments. By doing this, He shows that His commands to keep His feasts are just as important as the Ten Commandments. " 'For you shall worship no other god [the First Commandment]; for the LORD, Whose name is Jealous, *is* a jealous God…. You shall make no molten gods for yourselves [the Second Commandment]. **You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened *Bread*. You shall eat unleavened bread seven days**, as I commanded you, in the time of the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out from Egypt. All that opens the womb *is* Mine; all firstlings of male livestock, of oxen or sheep. But the firstling of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty.

" '**You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest. In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest** [the Fourth Commandment]. **And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks**, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest [Pentecost], and the Feast of Ingathering [Tabernacles] at the year's end.

" 'Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel.'... And the LORD said to Moses, 'Write these words for yourself, for in accordance to these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.' And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. **And He wrote upon the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments**" (Ex. 34:14, 17-23, 27-28).

Forty years later, Moses vigorously restated the commandments and covenant of God to the children of Israel just before they entered the Promised Land. Again, we see that God makes no mention of sacrifices in these verses: "Three times in a year shall all your males appear before the LORD your God in the place which He shall choose: in **the Feast of Unleavened Bread**, and in **the Feast of Weeks** [Pentecost], and in **the Feast of Tabernacles**. And they shall not appear before the LORD empty; every man *shall give* as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God, which He has given you" (Deut. 16:16-17).

A Listing of All the Feasts and Holy Days of God

In Leviticus 23, God lists all the feasts and holy days He commands His people to keep, beginning with the weekly seventh-day Sabbath. Before we turn there, it should be noted that Leviticus is basically a book of instructions for the priests and Levites, giving detailed instructions on how they were to carry out their duties at the tabernacle/temple. In chapters 1-7, God instructed the priests and Levites concerning all animal sacrifices, oblations and grain/cereal offerings to be offered at the tabernacle/temple. Also, in Numbers 28-29, God gave a complete listing of all the sacrifices the priests were to offer—covering daily, Sabbath, monthly, and holy day sacrifices. However, as we have seen, the feasts and holy days of God were not dependent on animal sacrifices or other rituals. (A complete study of the Hebrew sacrificial system is contained in *The Law of the Offerings*, by Andrew Jukes, ISBN 0-8254-2957-9. Jukes details how every aspect of the sacrifices and physical rituals were, in reality, prophetic types of Jesus Christ's sacrifice and priesthood.)

Now we can examine the feasts and holy days of God in Leviticus 23, summarizing their significance and meaning as found in the Old Testament.

All Are Holy Convocations: "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, "*Concerning* the appointed **feasts of the LORD**, which you shall proclaim *to be* **holy convocations**, even **these are My appointed feasts**" ' " (Lev. 23:1-2). Again, the Lord makes it abundantly clear that all the holy days and feasts belong to God—*not* to the Jews.

The Weekly Sabbath: "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, **a holy convocation**. You shall not do any work. It *is* a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings" (verse 3).

***The Annual Feasts of the Lord*:** "These *are* the **appointed feasts of**

the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their appointed seasons" (verse 4).

The Passover: "In the fourteenth *day* of the first month, between the two evenings, is **the LORD'S Passover**" (verse 5).

***The Feast of Unleavened Bread*:** "And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the **Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD**. You must eat unleavened bread seven days. On the **first day you shall have a holy convocation** [a holy day]. You shall not *do any servile* work *therein,* but you shall offer a fire offering to the LORD seven days. In **the seventh day *is* a holy convocation** [a holy day]. You shall do no servile work *therein*" (verses 6-8).

The Wave Sheaf Offering Day: The Wave Sheaf offering day is a special day, but it is not a holy day. This day is always the first day of the week during the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. On this day a special offering of the first of the firstfruits of the barley/wheat harvest was made by the high priest. It is the first day of the fifty-day count to the Feast of Firstfruits—also known as Pentecost (which means "count fifty"). The Wave Sheaf offering signaled the beginning of the barley/wheat harvest, and the Israelites were not to eat of the new grain until the Wave Sheaf was offered (verses 9-16).

The Feast of Firstfruits—Pentecost: The Feast of the Firstfruits, a holy day, is the fiftieth day from the Wave Sheaf—seven complete weeks, plus one day. (It is also called the Feast of Weeks in Deuteronomy 16:9-10, because of the counting of seven full weeks.) This is the only holy day of God that always falls on the first day of the week, Sunday. Israel was to count, "Even unto the day after the seventh Sabbath [which would be a Sunday] you shall number fifty days. And you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. You shall bring out of your homes **two wave loaves of two tenth parts. They shall be of fine flour. They shall be baked with leaven, *They are* the firstfruits to the LORD**" (verses 16-17).

On this holy day, each family was to present two freshly-baked loaves of leavened bread made with the new barley/wheat of the harvest to the priests and Levites, who waved them before the Lord. "And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits, a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. And you shall proclaim on the same day that it may be **a holy convocation to you**. You shall do no servile work *therein. It shall be* a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations " (verses 20-21).

The Feast of Trumpets: Trumpets is the first of four holy days that God commanded to be kept in the seventh month, known also as the month *Tishri*. The seventh month of the Hebrew Calendar corresponds to September/October of the Roman year. "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel saying, "In the seventh month, in the first *day* of the month, you shall have **a Sabbath**, a memorial of blowing of ram's horns, a holy convocation. You shall do no servile work *therein* but you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD" ' " (verses 23-25).

The Day of Atonement: The Day of Atonement is a special day of fasting to God: "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Also, on the tenth *day* of this seventh month, is the Day of Atonement. *It shall be* a holy convocation to you. And you shall afflict your souls [meaning a complete fast—no food or water for the day] and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And you shall do no work in that same day, for it *is* the Day of Atonement, in order to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God, for whoever is not afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whoever does any work in that same day, the same one will I destroy from among his people. You shall do no manner of work. *It shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. **It *shall be* to you a Sabbath of rest**, and you shall afflict yourselves. In the ninth *day* of the month at sunset, **from sunset to sunset, you shall keep your Sabbath**' " (verses 26-32).

The Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day: "And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying, "The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. **On the first day *shall be* a holy convocation**. You shall do no servile work *therein*. Seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On **the eighth day** [the Last Great Day] **shall be a holy convocation** to you. And you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a solemn assembly. And you shall do no servile work *therein*…. Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days. On **the first day *shall be* a Sabbath**, and on **the eighth day *shall be* a Sabbath**" ' " (verses 33-36, 39).

Again, God emphatically states that His holy days are Sabbaths: "**These *are* the feasts of the LORD** which you shall proclaim to be **holy convocations** to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, everything on its day; besides **the Sabbaths of the LORD** [all the holy days are Sabbaths], and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD" (verses 37-38).

As we will see, God's feasts and holy days are intrinsically connected to each other—and reveal, step-by-step, **God's master plan for mankind**. We will begin with the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread in the Old Testament

God commanded the children of Israel to observe their first Passover while they were still in Egypt (Ex. 12). He instructed the heads of households to select a male lamb of the first year, without blemish (a type of Christ), on the 10th day of the first month. They were to then kill the lamb on the 14th, just after sunset (which also ended the 13th day of the month). As instructed, they smeared some of the blood on the doorposts

and upper lintels of the doors of their houses. The blood was a sign for protection—so that God would spare the firstborn of the children of Israel from the death sentence that He was to execute against the Egyptians. Next, they were to roast the lamb with fire and eat it that night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The remainder of the lamb was to be burned by morning (verse 10). Finally, they were not to leave their houses until morning, at sunrise (verse 22).

At midnight on the 14th, the Lord passed through the land of Egypt and killed all the Egyptian firstborn of man and beast. "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt. I *am* the LORD. And the blood shall be a sign to you upon the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you. And the plague shall not be upon you to destroy *you* when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be a memorial to you. And you shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it a feast as a law forever" (verses 12-14).

The 14th day of the first month is called the "Passover" because God *passed over* Israel's houses at midnight, sparing their firstborn. "And it will be, when your children shall say to you, 'What *does* this service *mean* to you?' Then you shall say, 'It *is* the sacrifice of **the LORD'S Passover, Who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt**, when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our houses.' And the people bowed their heads and worshiped" (verses 26-27). God commanded them to keep the Passover as a memorial of His sparing their firstborn: "And this day shall be a memorial to you. And you shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it a feast as a law forever" (verse 14).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread: At sunrise, beginning the day portion of the 14th, the Passover day, the children of Israel left their houses, gathered their livestock, and continued to spoil the Egyptians as they made their way to the city of Rameses—the assembly area from which they would begin the Exodus. "And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses. And they asked for articles of silver, and articles of gold, and clothing from the Egyptians. And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, and they granted their request, and **they stripped the Egyptians**" (Ex. 12:35-36). It must have taken most of the daylight portion of the 14th for the children of Israel to assemble at Rameses. The Exodus then began at sunset, which ended the 14th and began the 15th day of the month—the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

God directed the children of Israel to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days, beginning on the 15th day of the first month: "You shall eat unleavened *bread* seven days; even the first day you shall *have* put away leaven out of your houses; for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. **And in the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you**. No manner of work shall

be done in them, except that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you. And you shall keep the *Feast of* Unleavened Bread, **for in this very same day** [that night] **I have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt**. Therefore you shall keep this day in your generations as a law forever…. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, the men being about six hundred thousand on foot, apart from little ones" (verses 15-17, 37).

"And they set out from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month. On the *next* day after the Passover *day,* the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians " (Num. 33:3). Therefore, the children of Israel left Egypt by night: "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the LORD your God [on the 14th]. For in the month of Abib, the LORD your God brought you forth out of Egypt by night [on the 15th]" (Deut. 16:1).

The Night to be Much Observed: The Exodus actually commenced as the sun was setting on the 14th and the 15th was beginning. (Remember, God reckons each day from sunset to sunset.) God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt by night—the night of the 15th—which is a special night to be "much observed to the Lord" as the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins. "And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, it was even on that very same day, all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. **It *is* a night to be much observed to the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt. This *is* that night of the LORD to be observed by all the children of Israel in their generations**" (Ex. 12:41-42).

The "Night to Be Much Observed" also commemorates another immortalized event that happened on the same night 430 years earlier. By a special covenant oath, the Lord God confirmed His promises to Abraham that He would indeed bring the children of Israel out of captivity in Egypt on **this particular night**—the night of the 15th. (This special covenant that God made with Abraham took place over a two-day period, the 14th and 15th—and is actually the origin of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread for both the Old and New Testaments. In *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter, a detailed explanation of the significance of God's special covenant with Abraham is found on pp. 266-298.)

The First Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Moses explained the purpose of the first holy day: "And Moses said to the people, '**Remember this day *in* which you came out of Egypt**, out of the house of bondage; for the LORD brought you out from this place by the strength of His hand. There shall be no leavened bread eaten. On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. And it shall be when the LORD shall bring you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. You shall eat unleavened bread seven days, and in the seventh day there *shall be* a feast to the LORD.

" 'Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And there shall be no leavened bread seen with you, nor shall there be leaven seen with you in all your borders. And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, "This is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out from Egypt." And it shall be **a sign** [Gen. 1:14, Ex. 31:13; the keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a sign] to you upon your hand, and for a memorial between your eyes, **that the LORD'S law may be in your mouth**, for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this law in its season from year to year ' " (Ex. 13:3-10).

One final, important note: Beginning the night of the Exodus, God provided a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud cover by day (verses 21-22).

God had revealed that the purpose of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was: 1) to teach Israel that only God could deliver them from bondage in Egypt and bring them to the Promised Land; and 2) to be a sign "that the Lord's law may be in your mouth."

The Seventh Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: The chronology of the Exodus shows that the children of Israel had arrived at the Red Sea by the sixth day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Meanwhile, Pharaoh had already gathered his army—all the chariots of Egypt, plus six hundred chosen chariots—and was in pursuit. The Egyptian army caught up with the Israelites as they camped along the shore of the Red Sea. At first the people were afraid and complained to Moses, but he told them: "Fear not! Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD which He will work for you today, for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall never see them again! **The LORD shall fight for you, and you shall be still**" (Ex. 14:13-14).

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'Why do you cry to Me? Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward. And you—lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And behold, I *am* about to harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. And I will get honor for Myself upon Pharaoh, and over all his army, over his chariots and over his horsemen' " (verses 15-17).

That night God miraculously parted the waters of the Red Sea with a strong east wind. In the early dawn hours of the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the children of Israel walked across the dry floor of the sea and made it safely to the other side. When the Egyptians saw this, they pursued headlong into the Red Sea after the children of Israel—in a final, futile attempt to bring them back to Egypt and enslave them again. But God powerfully intervened and rescued the children of Israel from the Egyptians: "And the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.' And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea. And the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared. And the Egyptians tried to flee from it. **And the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the**

middle of the sea. And the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. There did not remain so much as one of them.

"But the children of Israel walked upon dry land through the middle of the sea. And the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. **So the LORD saved Israel** that day out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians. And the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses" (Ex. 14:26-31).

God used the Passover day and the Feast of Unleavened Bread to fulfill His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the children of Israel. Not only do these days picture momentous events that God has performed for Israel, they also contain vital lessons for us today. In keeping these days, the children of Israel were to remember always that the blood of the Passover lamb **spared their firstborn**. As well, they were to keep the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in remembrance of their **release from bondage** and their Exodus from Egypt. The significance of the seventh day of the feast is to be found in the account of Israel's crossing of the Red Sea: 1) We are not to be afraid or complain, because **God will fight our battles** for us; and 2) It takes the **power of God to rescue us from Satan** the devil and his legions of demons, as symbolized by Pharaoh and his armies who were drowned in the Red Sea.

Throughout the Bible God shows that Egypt is a type of sin, as well as a type of man's satanic, sinful societies. Once the children of Israel had kept the Passover, they had to leave Egypt and their way of life as slaves and servants of the Egyptians. Thus, in keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread today, we learn a great spiritual lesson: Only God can release us from the bondage of sin, grant us salvation and lead us in His way.

Passover and Unleavened Bread Under Hezekiah: We find that when the children of Israel obeyed God and kept His Sabbath, feasts and holy days, He richly blessed them. However, in their many rebellions and sins against the Lord, the children of Israel and Judah also suffered curses under the corrective hand of God.

In the days of King Ahaz, God's people rejected Him and worshiped various false gods. Ahaz walked in the ways of Jeroboam and the kings of Israel, causing the people of Judah to sin greatly—in sacrificing to other gods, erecting molten images of Baal (the sun god), and burning children in the fire to Moloch. "And in the time of his distress he trespassed even more against the LORD, this same King Ahaz, for he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus who struck him. And he said, 'Because the gods of the kings of Syria helped them, I will sacrifice to them so that they may help me.' But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel.

"**And Ahaz gathered the vessels of the house of God and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD. And *he* made himself altars in every corner of**

Jerusalem. And in each separate city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods and provoked the LORD God of his fathers to anger" (II Chron. 28:22-25).

Again, we see the illogical pattern of sin, rebellion and the worship of false gods by the kings and people of Israel and Judah. However, because God is merciful, whenever the children of Israel would repent of their sins and apostasy and of serving false gods, He would forgive them. Then, for a time, Israel would return to God and keep His commandments, the Passover and holy days.

Ahaz died in 723 BC, and his son Hezekiah became king. Hezekiah instituted a great reformation and led Judah back to serving and worshiping the true God. Ahaz had brazenly desecrated the Temple to such an extent that—when Hezekiah began his revival—the priests and Levites could not cleanse it in time to keep the Passover in the first month. Consequently, Hezekiah made a decree throughout all the land that Judah and Israel would celebrate the Passover on the 14th day of the *second* month, just as God had provided for in Numbers Chapter Nine (II Chron. 30:1-6).

"And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the [Passover and the] **Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days** with great gladness. And the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day with loud instruments to the LORD. And Hezekiah spoke comfortably to all the Levites who taught the good knowledge of the LORD. And they ate the appointed things seven days, offering peace offerings and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers. And the whole assembly took counsel to keep another seven days. And they kept *another* seven days with gladness…. And there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon the son of David, the king of Israel, *there was* nothing like this [festival observance] in Jerusalem. Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people. And their voice was heard, **and their prayer came to His holy dwelling place, even unto heaven**" (II Chron. 30:21-23, 26-27).

King Hezekiah and the people then continued to carry out their reformation by destroying all idols, occult images and groves. "And when all this was finished [the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread], all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, also in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, each to his possession, into their own cities" (II Chron. 31:1).

After Hezekiah had reigned for 29 years, his twelve-year-old son Manasseh was anointed king. Throughout most of his 55-year reign, Manasseh led the children of Judah into apostasy—causing them to reject God and instead serve false gods, as well as to observe satanic occult holidays. One of the most wicked kings of Judah, Manasseh completely desecrated the temple of God, rededicating it to Baal. After his death, his son Amon reigned for only two years—and he sinned far greater than his father. As a result, he was killed at the hands of his own servants (II Chron. 33:21-25).

Then, Amon's eight-year-old son, Josiah, became king.

Passover and Unleavened Bread Under Josiah: When Josiah was twenty-six, he began to restore Judah's relationship with God. While cleansing the temple from Manasseh and Amon's abominations, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law written by the hand of Moses. Shaphan the scribe brought the book to Josiah and read it to him. Upon hearing the warnings of God's judgment for sin and rebellion—and because he knew of the sins and wickedness of the people—Josiah personally repented and led the children of Judah into a special covenant of repentance and return to God. "And the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the people of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people from the great to *the* small. And he read in their ears all the words of the Book of the Covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.

"**And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD to walk after the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book**. And he caused all who were found in Jerusalem and in Benjamin, and the people of Jerusalem, to stand *to it* according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the territories that *belonged* to the children of Israel. And he made all that were present in Israel to serve, *even* to serve the LORD their God. All his days they did not depart from following the LORD, the God of their fathers" (II Chron. 34:29-33).

"And Josiah **kept a Passover to the LORD** in Jerusalem. And they killed the Passover lamb on **the fourteenth *day* of the first month**…. **And the children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time and the Feast of Unleavened *Bread* for seven days**. And there was no Passover like that kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. Yea, none of the kings of Israel kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel who were present, and the people of Jerusalem. This Passover was kept in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah" (II Chron. 35:1, 17-19).

After Josiah's reformation, he reigned only twelve more years and was killed in 607 BC in a battle against Necho, king of Egypt. Soon afterward, the nation of Judah once again fell into apostasy. A mere eighteen years after Josiah's death—through the course of three invasions by king Nebuchadnezzar's armies—the Jews were finally carried off to Babylon, to be held captive for 70 years, from 585 to 515 BC.

The Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread After Babylon: A pitiful remnant of the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon to rebuild the small Jewish kingdom within the Persian Empire. They were allowed to rebuild their temple, have freedom of religion and be self-governing—but they no longer had a king. With only a governor (appointed by the king of

Persia), they too were subject to the laws of the Persian Empire.

During the days of Ezra, the priest, and Nehemiah, the governor, the city and temple were rebuilt in troublesome times (see the books of Ezra and Nehemiah). Historically, a great religious renewal began when the temple was finished and dedicated. As in the reformations of Hezekiah and Josiah, the people again kept the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. "And the children of the captivity **kept the Passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month**. The priests and the Levites *were* purified together, all of them pure. And they killed the Passover *lamb* for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. And the children of Israel ate *the Passover lamb*, all who had come again out of exile, and all such as had separated themselves to them from the uncleanness of the nations of the land in order to seek the LORD God of Israel. And ***they* kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had made them joyful**…" (Ezra 6:19-22).

In order to ensure that the new reforms would last, Ezra and Nehemiah led the Jews into a special covenant, known as the covenant of the Great Synagogue. Consisting first of 120 members, the Great Synagogue was later reduced to 70. Representing the nation, it was made up of five divisions: 1) the chief priests; 2) the chief Levites; 3) the chiefs of the people; 4) the representatives of the cities; and 5) the doctors of the law. The Great Synagogue lasted for 210 years, from 515 to 305 BC—down to the time of the high priest Simon the Just.

As one can see, there are many passages in the Old Testament concerning the keeping of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread—all of which demonstrate how important these feasts are to God.

The Feast of Firstfruits—Pentecost: After Israel crossed the Red Sea, they journeyed six more weeks into the wilderness until they came to Mount Sinai—three days before God spoke the Ten Commandments. On the day of their arrival, God revealed to Moses His awesome purpose for the nation of Israel—they were to represent Him to all the nations of the world. "And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel, "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. And **you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation**." These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel' " (Ex. 19:3-6).

God said, "Israel *was* holiness to the LORD, and **the firstfruits** of His increase…" (Jer. 2:3). As the firstfruits of the nations of the world, it was fitting that they received the Ten Commandments, spoken by God Himself, on the Feast of Firstfruits—the Day of Pentecost. From the book of Jasher—a non-canonical, secondary history of the children of Israel, which is mentioned in Joshua 10:13 and II Samuel 1:18—we read: "And in the third month from the children of Israel's departure, on the sixth day thereof,

the Lord gave to Israel the ten commandments on Mount Sinai" (Jasher 82:6). The sixth day of the third month is a traditional Jewish date for Pentecost. Undoubtedly, this account is the basis for the Hebrew tradition that God gave the Ten Commandments to Israel, His firstfruit nation, on the Feast of Firstfruits, or Pentecost.

In Deuteronomy, Moses reiterated Israel's purpose as the firstfruit nation chosen by God to represent Him to the nations of the world: "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you should do so in the land where you go to possess it. **And you shall keep and do *them*, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.' For what nation is so great whose God *is* so near to them**, as the LORD our God *is*, whenever we call upon Him? **And what great nation has statutes and judgments that *are so* righteous** as all this law which I set before you today?" (Deut. 4:5-8). As a nation, the twelve tribes of Israel were to share God's laws, commandments, statutes and judgments with the nations of the world.

Unfortunately, the only time Israel even partially fulfilled its purpose as God's representative firstfruit nation was during the first half of Solomon's reign. "And King Solomon was greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom that God had put in his heart " (II Chron. 9:22-23). When Solomon and the people apostatized and began to serve false gods, Israel ceased to represent God as a kingdom of priests to the rest of the world.

Pentecost Under Hezekiah: After Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (kept in the second month), King Hezekiah continued in his zealous reforms, inspiring the people to observe the remainder of God's feasts—Pentecost, in the third month, and the fall festival season in the seventh month. "And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites according to their courses, each according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister and to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the tents of the LORD. *He appointed* also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, *even for* the morning and the evening and the burnt offerings for **the Sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as *it is* written in the law of the LORD**.

"Moreover, he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites so that they might be strong in the law of the LORD. And as soon as the commandment spread abroad, the children of Israel brought plentifully of the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field. And the tithe of all *things* they brought in abundance. And the children of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the LORD

their God, and laid it up by heaps. In the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps and finished *them* in the seventh month" (II Chron. 31:2-7).

From the context of these verses, it is clear that under Hezekiah the Jews kept the Feast of Firstfruits as well as the feasts and holy days of the seventh month.

The Feast of Trumpets and War: The Feast of Trumpets was a memorial of the blowing of trumpets, because trumpets were blown throughout the day. We can learn much about the meaning of the Feast of Trumpets by looking at God's commands regarding the use of silver trumpets. As found in Numbers 10:1-10, the priests were to blow trumpets on the following occasions:

- The calling for assembly and for journeying
- To sound an alarm
- To go to war against an enemy
- In the day of gladness or on solemn days (i.e., holy days)
- To announce the beginning of months
- For holy day and new moon sacrifices

The predominant use of the trumpet was as an alarm for war. When God commanded Joshua to take the city of Jericho, He instructed him to have the priests (with the ark) march with the soldiers as they circled the city for seven days. The priest's were to blow trumpets the entire time (Joshua 6).

In I Samuel Three and Four, we see another example (albeit tragic) of the use of trumpets during war. Eli the priest's corrupt sons Hophni and Phineas led Israel in a fight against the Philistines while blowing trumpets. Defeat was inevitable, however, because this time God was not with Israel.

The Feast of Trumpets and the Dedication of Solomon's Temple: When Solomon's temple was completed, a feast of dedication was held for seven days beginning on the Feast of Trumpets. The priests brought the ark of the covenant from the city of David to the temple (I Kings 8:1-3, 65), where they placed it in the Holy of Holies. A special ceremony was held during which Solomon delivered a special prayer of dedication. After Solomon finished his prayer, the Lord established His presence in the Holy of Holies as demonstrated by a great white cloud that filled the temple. "And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy *place* (for all the priests present were sanctified, and did not wait by course), and the **Levitical singers**—all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, ***being*** **clothed in white linen, and having cymbals and with harps and lyres—stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with silver trumpets**, it came to pass, as the trumpeters and the singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up *their* voice with the silver trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying*, 'For He is good, for His steadfast love *endures* forever,' that **the house was filled with a**

cloud, *even* the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God!" (II Chron. 5:11-14).

This spectacular display of God's power and presence gave visual meaning to the Feast of Trumpets. As we will later see, this awesome event was a foreshadowing of the second coming of Jesus Christ and His literal return to the earth.

The Feast of Trumpets Under Ezra and Nehemiah: As we have observed, Ezra and Nehemiah initiated an immense reformation that truly brought the people back to God. After faithfully observing the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Jews went on to keep the remainder of God's feasts, including the Feast of Trumpets: "And all the people gathered themselves as one man into the street before the Water Gate. And they spoke to Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, **upon the first day of the seventh month**. And he read from it in the open square in front of the Water Gate from the morning until noon in front of the men and the women, and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people *were attentive* to the Book of the Law" (Neh. 8:1-3).

Ezra established the standard of how services for the Sabbath and holy days would be conducted from that time forward. Ezra's method of reading the law, the prophets and the writings—combined with teaching from God's Word—became the format for services in all Jewish synagogues in Judea and the Diaspora.

The Day of Atonement: The Day of Atonement is the tenth day of the seventh month. It is a day of fasting (abstaining from food or water). For Israel, Atonement was unique because on this day *only*, the high priest was allowed to enter the holy of holies to make atonement for himself, the priesthood and all the children of Israel (Lev. 16).

After the high priest had made an atonement for himself with the blood of animal sacrifices, he was to stand at the entrance of the temple with two identical goats. The priest drew lots over the goats to determine which would be "for the Lord," and which would be for Satan. The goat designated "for the Lord" was sacrificed as a sin offering (obviously picturing Christ's future sacrifice). The priest took its blood and sprinkled it before the Lord on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies to make atonement for all the sins, trespasses and uncleanness of the children of Israel. Afterwards its carcass was carried outside the camp to be wholly burned (where all sin offerings were burned).

The second goat represented Satan—"Azazel" (or, as the King James Version reads, "scapegoat"). However, the goat for Azazel was to remain alive and not be sacrificed. Before the entrance of the temple, the priest laid his hands upon the head of the live goat (for Azazel) and confessed upon it all the sins and transgressions of the children of Israel. This goat was then led by the hand of a "fit man" into the wilderness (where demons were

known to dwell) and released. This completed the annual atonement for all the sins, iniquities, transgressions and uncleanness of the children of Israel (Lev. 16:5-34). The lessons of the Day of Atonement are twofold: 1) Only God can forgive sin, and 2) Satan will ultimately bear the responsibility for seducing the children of Israel and hence all mankind to sin against God; and be removed forever.

The Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day: In God's instructions concerning the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day (the eighth day), He gives the children of Israel insight into a particularly important aspect of the festival. "Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days. On **the first day *shall be* a Sabbath, and on the eighth day *shall be* a Sabbath**. And you shall take the boughs of beautiful trees for yourselves on the first day, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook. And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. And you shall keep it a feast to the LORD seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations. You shall keep it in the seventh month. **You shall dwell in booths seven days**. All that are born Israelites shall dwell in booths, **so that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt**. I *am* the LORD your God" (Lev. 23:39-43).

God commanded the Israelites to dwell in booths or tents during the Feast of Tabernacles to commemorate their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. After the Lord blessed them in the land (because of His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), the children of Israel were to never forget that God Himself had blessed them and given them their land and wealth (Deut. 8).

Meaning of Tabernacles for God: The Lord God made it clear that there was significant meaning as well for Himself in the Feast of Tabernacles—centering around the very purpose for the tabernacle/temple itself. "And let them make Me a sanctuary, so **that I may dwell among them**" (Ex. 25:8). The tabernacle and sanctuary of God was a special place of worship and sacrifice for the Israelites. God would dwell with them by establishing His presence in the Holy of Holies (Ex. 40:34-38). God was to dwell with His people, be their God and bless them—if they would, in turn, obey Him and keep His commandments.

When David desired to build a temple for God, Nathan the prophet gave him God's answer: "And it came to pass that night the Word of the LORD came to Nathan saying, 'Go and tell My servant David, "Thus says the LORD, 'Shall you build Me a house for My dwelling? **For I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up the children out of Egypt until this day, but have walked in a tent, and in a tabernacle**' " ' " (II Sam. 7:4-6).

God did not permit David to build the temple, because he was a bloody man of war. However, He did give all the plans for building the temple to David, who in turn gave them to Solomon, because God had chosen Solomon to build His temple (I Chron. 28-29). Witnessing the

dedication of the temple, God blessed Solomon and the children of Israel with His presence in a majestic display of glory, as a brilliant cloud filled the temple. Affirming Solomon's prayer, the Lord again demonstrated his delight by consuming the burnt offerings with fire from heaven: "And when Solomon had made an end of praying, **fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices. And the glory of the LORD filled the house**. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed *their* faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, saying, 'For *He is* good, for His mercy *endures* forever' " (II Chron. 7:1-3).

After the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, Solomon led all the people in keeping a great Feast of Tabernacles: "And at the same time Solomon kept the feast [of Tabernacles] seven days [15th through the 21st of the 7th month], and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath to the river of Egypt. And in the eighth day [the 22nd] they made a solemn assembly, for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days [1st through the 7th day of the 7th month], and the feast [of Tabernacles] seven days. And on the twenty-third day of the seventh month [the day after the 8th day] he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shown to David, and to Solomon, and to Israel His people" (verses 8-10).

God's presence was now with the children of Israel in the temple at Jerusalem, rather than in the tabernacle. With the temple completed, Solomon instructed the priests to begin bringing offerings to God in accordance with the laws God had given to Moses. "And Solomon offered burnt offerings [through the priests] to the LORD upon the altar of the LORD which he had built before the porch, even as the duty of every day required, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on **the Sabbaths** and on **the new moons**, and on **the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the Feast of Unleavened *Bread*, and in the Feast of Weeks** [Pentecost], **and in the Feast of Tabernacles**" (II Chron. 8:12-13).

Feast of Tabernacles Under Ezra and Nehemiah: In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, faithful Jews again returned to God and kept His commanded feasts, including the Feast of Tabernacles: "And they found written in the law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month, and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, 'Go forth to the mountain and bring olive branches and pine branches and myrtle branches and palm branches, and branches of thick trees to make booths, as *it is* written.' And the people went out and brought *them* and made themselves booths, each one upon his roof, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the Water Gate, and in the street of the Gate of Ephraim. And all the congregation of those who had come again out of the captivity made booths and dwelt under the booths, for since the

days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day, the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness. Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read in the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth *was* an assembly, according to the ordinance" (Neh. 8:14-18; see Ezra 3:4).

As the biblical history of the children of Israel and Judah demonstrates, God blessed them when they faithfully kept His commandments, feasts and holy days. When they resumed their sinful ways, God sent prophets to warn them and call them to repentance. When Israel continued to transgress and, in rebellion, refused to repent—continuing to serve other gods, to worship the sun, moon and stars and to observe pagan occult holidays—God had no choice but to punish them and deliver them into the hands of their enemies. Thus, the repetitive cycle of apostasy and restoration continued even until the time of Jesus Christ.

This Old Testament overview of the feasts and holy days of God demonstrates that whenever the people of Israel and Judah **returned to God**—forsaking their idols and false gods—**they always kept God's Sabbath, His feasts and holy days** as He had commanded. In so doing, God blessed them for their repentance and obedience.

In Chapter Eleven, we will see how the New Testament illustrates that the feasts and holy days of God continue to unveil and magnify the plan of God for the Church, Israel and all mankind—beginning with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, "the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A Survey of God's Spring Feasts and Holy Days in the New Testament

A major key to understanding the New Testament is found in the knowledge of the feasts and holy days of God. Far from being abolished—as "Orthodox Christianity" would have us believe—the New Testament reveals deeper and greater meanings for God's holy days. Without an understanding of these all-important feast days, a person's comprehension of the New Testament will, in fact, be deficient and incomplete.

In this chapter we will examine how God is using His festivals and holy days to fulfill His plan, purpose and prophecies.

From Matthew to Revelation, it can be clearly established that Christ's disciples **did not** observe occult holidays. Rather, Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the Jewish and Gentile converts all observed the commanded feast days of God. True Christians always love God and keep His commandments (Rev. 14:12). In fact, the term "Christian" means a **follower of Jesus Christ—**one who exhibits the qualities demonstrated and taught by Jesus. A Christian follows Christ regardless of circumstances (Rev. 14:4), and has the testimony and the faith of Christ (Rev. 12:17; 14:12).

The apostle John summed up the conduct and way of life of a true Christian: "*If* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. **Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked**" (I John 2:5-6). And again, "For to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us **an example**, that **you should follow in His footsteps**" (I Pet. 2:21).

Therefore, we are to believe in Jesus Christ and to follow His example—to walk as He walked, for He (as God manifested in the flesh) is the only basis for true Christianity. "**For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ**" (I Cor. 3:11). Not only is He the foundation of our faith, He is also called "the Chief Cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20 and I Pet. 2:6-7). The entire New Testament is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. It is through **His** perfect life, **His** death for our sins, and **His** resurrection that we receive salvation. Truly, from Genesis to Revelation, the focus of the entire Bible is Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

Jesus Christ—Our Passover—Died on Passover Day

To grasp the deeper meaning of Passover, we must look to the beginning—as the first prophecy concerning the Messiah is found in Genesis Three. After Adam and Eve sinned, the Lord God Himself—the one Who later became Jesus Christ of the New Testament—prophesied of His future death as God manifested in the flesh. "And I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman, and between your seed [Satan and the demons] and her Seed [Jesus Christ]; He [Christ, as Savior] will bruise your [Satan's] head [destroy his dominion], and you [Satan] shall bruise His [Christ's] heel [through the crucifixion]" (Gen. 3:15).

However, even before the creation of Adam and Eve, God had made provision for the redemption of mankind through Jesus Christ—as He is "the Lamb [of God, as good as] slain from *the* foundation of *the* world" (Rev. 13:8).

From the time of the first Passover in Egypt to the time of Jesus Christ, the Passover commemorated the sparing of Israel's firstborn. The male lamb without blemish sacrificed in the observance of the Old Testament Passover was a *type* that pointed to Jesus Christ, the "Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, 36).

Paul wrote that the Father had set an "appointed time [in which] Christ died for *the* ungodly" (Rom. 5:6)—for the sins of the world. What was that "appointed time"? Does this refer to one of the "appointed feasts" of God? The answer is, "Yes!" Paul made this crystal clear when he wrote to the Gentile church in Corinth: "**For Christ our Passover [Lamb] was sacrificed for us**" (I Cor. 5:7).

As the Gospels narrate, Paul fully understood that Jesus Christ died on the appointed day, the Passover day, at the precise time that God had determined "before the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). The events recorded in the Scriptures concerning Jesus' last Passover—His betrayal, arrest, trials, beatings, the scourging, the crucifixion, His death and burial—all took place within one 24-hour day reckoned from sunset to sunset. That day was the Passover day in 30 AD, Nisan 14 on the Hebrew calendar, April 5 on the Julian Roman calendar. By virtue of these historical and spiritual facts, **the Passover day is the most important commanded feast of God—because Jesus Christ was crucified and died on that day!** Moreover, at least twenty-eight specific Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled on this appointed day (Fred R. Coulter, *The Day Jesus the Christ Died*, pp. 35-43).

As the supreme sacrifice of God the Father, Jesus Christ is indeed our Passover, Who died for us. He took upon Himself the full penalty of our sins to redeem and rescue us from the author of sin, Satan the devil.

Jesus Christ's Last Passover: The importance of Jesus Christ's last Passover is demonstrated in the fact that out of a total of eighty-nine chapters in the Gospels, thirty-two chapters (over one-third) are devoted to events just before and after Jesus' death. On the night of His last Passover, Jesus Christ instituted the **New Covenant Christian Passover**—a ceremony consisting of:

- Footwashing (John 13:2-17);
- Partaking of unleavened bread (Matt. 26:26; Luke 22:19; I Cor. 11:23-24);
- Partaking of wine (Matt. 26:27-29; Luke 22:18-20; I Cor. 11:25-29).

Jesus began the New Covenant Christian Passover service by instituting the ordinance of footwashing. In so doing, Jesus "rose from supper and laid aside *His* garments; and after taking a towel, He secured it around Himself. Next, He poured water into a washing basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel which He had secured…. [And] when He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, *and* had sat down again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me the Teacher and the Lord, and you speak rightly, because I am. **Therefore, if I, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also are duty-bound to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, *to show* that you also should do exactly as I have done to you**. Truly, truly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his lord, nor a messenger greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them' " (John 13:4-5, 12-17). Thus, through example, Jesus taught His disciples to wash one another's feet as part of the Christian Passover service.

Jesus then broke unleavened bread—symbolizing His broken body—and instructed His disciples to eat of it. Afterwards, He instructed them to drink of wine, symbolizing His shed blood. The Gospel of Mark reads: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread; *and* after blessing *it*, He broke *it* and gave *it* to them, and said, '**Take, eat; this is My body**.' And He took the cup; *and* after giving thanks, He gave *it* to them; and they all drank of it. And He said to them, '**This is My blood, the blood of the New Covenant**, which is poured out for many' " (Mark 14:22-24). Luke gives this account: "And He took bread; *and* after giving thanks, He broke *it* and gave *it* to them, saying, 'This is My body, which is given for you. **This do in the remembrance of Me**.' In like manner also, *He took* the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup *is* the New Covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you' " (Luke 22:19-20).

Though somewhat veiled, Jesus had earlier revealed to the Jews the meaning of the New Covenant Christian Passover: "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me shall never hunger; and the one who believes in Me shall never thirst at any time…. Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me has eternal life. **I am the bread of life**. Your fathers ate manna in the desert, but they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die. **I am the living bread, which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is even My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world**.' Because of this, the Jews were arguing with one another, saying, 'How is He able to give us *His* flesh to eat?'

"Therefore, Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you do not have life in yourselves. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day; for My flesh is truly food, and My blood is truly drink. **The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood is dwelling in Me, and I in him. As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father; so also the one who eats Me shall live by Me.** This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers ate manna, and died. The one who eats this bread shall live forever' " (John 6:35, 47-58).

In Psalm 34, David foretold of this very concept when He wrote: "**O taste and see that the LORD *is* good**: **blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in Him**" (verse 8). What David wrote is very similar to what Jesus said—that is, "trusting in the Lord" is essentially the same as "living by" the Lord. Just as David did not mean that one was to *literally* taste and eat the Lord, Jesus likewise did not mean that a person was to eat His literal flesh and drink His literal blood—both somehow supposedly transubstantiated in bread and wine taken at the command of a priest. The bread and wine are **symbolic of His flesh and blood**. As David wrote, the literal action of "trusting" in the Lord was symbolized by the idea of "tasting" the Lord. In a similar manner, **actively living by Jesus Christ** is symbolized by our eating of the bread and drinking of the wine of the Christian Passover—the symbolic flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.

As an annual event, the New Covenant Christian Passover is to be observed on the night of Nisan 14. The practice of those who partake of "communion," "the Lord's Supper," or the "Eucharist" is to observe such occasions several times a month or year. They are not, however, partaking of the *true* New Covenant Christian Passover as Jesus commanded His disciples. Rather, they are partaking of a Christianized, apostate, pagan counterfeit. (See Appendix J, "The Eucharist—Sacrifice of the Mass," p. 327.)

Paul Commanded Gentile Converts to Keep the Passover: The New Testament teaches that the Passover was not for the Jews only. After Jesus was resurrected, He commanded His apostles: " 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go *and* **make disciples in all nations**, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; **TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU**. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age' " (Matt. 28:18-20). Teaching disciples in all nations to observe the New Covenant Christian Passover is clearly part of "all things" commanded by Jesus. It is clearly evident that the observance of the Passover was not limited to Jews only.

In obedience to Jesus' command—some twenty-six years after His death and resurrection—the apostle Paul instructed Gentile converts to keep the Christian Passover as a yearly reminder of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He emphatically declared that he had received his instructions concerning Passover directly from the Lord. In the strongest terms possible He made it clear that when they kept the Passover, they were not to eat a supper with it,

nor were they to call it the "Lord's Supper" (which they had done). "Therefore, when you assemble together in one place, it is not to eat *the* Lord's supper. For in eating, everyone takes his own supper first; now on the one hand, someone goes hungry; but on the other hand, another becomes drunken. WHAT! Don't you have houses for eating and drinking? Or do you despise the church of God, and put to shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you*!… But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that *there will be* no *cause* for judgment *when* you assemble together" (I Cor. 11:20-22, 34).

Paul again gave them the Lord's instructions on when and how to properly partake of the bread and wine in renewing the New Covenant each year. "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that **the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed** [the Passover night, Nisan 14] took bread; and after giving thanks, He broke *it* and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body, which *is* being broken for you. This do in **the remembrance of Me**.' In like manner, *He* also *took* the cup after He had supped, saying, 'This is *the* cup *of* the New Covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in **the remembrance of Me**.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you *solemnly* proclaim **the death of the Lord** until He comes. For this reason, *if* anyone shall eat this bread or shall drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, he shall be guilty of the body and *the* blood of the Lord" (I Cor. 11:23-27).

In these verses we find four factors that clearly *limit* the partaking of the Passover to **once each year**, on Nisan 14. They are: 1) "i**n the night** in which He was betrayed," limits the observance to the Passover night only; 2) "**in the remembrance of Me**"—not "a remembrance" but, as the Greek reads, "**the** remembrance"—revealing that Passover is a specific, yearly memorial; 3) the phrase "as often as" cannot be taken to mean "as often as one desires" to partake of the bread and wine (the practice of Orthodox Christendom—daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly). Rather, this phrase means that as often as they partook of the Passover—year by year—they would remember and proclaim the Lord's death **until He would come**. (Remember, at this time the Church was expecting Christ's second coming to take place within a few years.) 4) The Greek syntax, not translatable into English, limits Passover to an annual observance (Fred R. Coulter, *The Christian Passover*, pp. 247-265).

[Editor's note: A complete, detailed study of the Old Testament and New Testament Passover is contained in the 500-page book, *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter. It is the most comprehensive book ever written on this vital biblical subject. The book may be ordered from York Publishing Company (see address in front of book) or from www.amazon.com.]

At midnight on the original Passover in Egypt, God passed over the blood-marked houses of the children of Israel and spared their firstborn. At midnight on Jesus' last Passover, God the Father did not pass over His Beloved Son—the firstborn of the virgin Mary. He did not spare His only begotten Son; rather, He delivered Jesus into the hands of His enemies—betrayed by

the kiss of a friend. At the time of His arrest, no one knew (except God the Father and Jesus Christ) that His passion, beating, scourging, crucifixion and death as the *true* Passover Lamb of God marked the beginning of the plan of salvation for the world.

In the most solemn way possible, God used the Passover day itself for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. It was God the Father's **appointed day** that He had specifically set aside to fulfill His will and the promise of a Savior—one Who would redeem us from our sins. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; *but* are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; *yes*, **to publicly declare His righteousness in the present time**, that He might be just, and the one Who justifies the one who *is* of *the* faith of Jesus" (Rom. 3:23-26). It is through Jesus Christ that we may receive eternal life, as the apostle John wrote: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Without the shedding of Jesus' blood, His death and His resurrection from the dead, there would be no forgiveness of sins or eternal salvation (I Cor. 15). Therefore, the Passover day—the remembrance of His death for our sins—is the most important feast of God for New Testament Christians. Those who have the Spirit of God and partake of the New Covenant Christian Passover on Nisan 14 each year are actually **renewing** their baptismal covenant of eternal life in Jesus Christ. This is accomplished through 1) footwashing—walking in God's way of service through Jesus Christ 2) partaking of the broken, unleavened bread—symbolizing Jesus' broken body for our healing and 3) partaking of the wine—symbolizing His shed blood for the forgiveness of our sins. As Jesus said, "**Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you do not have life in yourselves**. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day" (John 6:53-54).

The Gospels are the record of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as God manifested in the flesh, the Savior of the world. Jesus' death by crucifixion on the Passover day is the awesome fulfillment of the meaning of Passover—and is central to the gospel message and the convergence and fulfillment of hundreds of prophecies in the Old and New Testaments.

This is why true Christians are duty-bound by the command of the Lord Jesus Christ to observe the New Covenant Christian Passover on the night of Nisan 14—once a year and once a year only. **Any other practice is disobedience against the Word of God and makes a self-righteous mockery of the greatest act of love by God the Father and Jesus Christ—the sacrifice of our Savior**. All other practices have been derived, to one degree or another, from the occult practices of Babylon and Egypt and are not of God.

Jesus Was Placed in the Tomb as the Passover Day Was Ending: Jesus died on the cross at the ninth hour of the day, approximately 3 PM, on Nisan 14, after one of the Roman soldiers thrust a spear into His side (Matt. 27:46-51; Mark 15:34-38). The apostle John, an eyewitness to all the events of that Passover day, wrote this account of Jesus' death: "And so, when Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, 'It is finished.' And bowing His head, He yielded up *His* spirit. The Jews therefore, so that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, because it was a preparation *day* (for that Sabbath was a high day [the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a holy day that began at sunset]), requested of Pilate that their legs might be broken and *the bodies* be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first *one*, and *the legs* of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus *and* saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers had pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water had come out. And he who saw *this* has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that *what* he says *is* true, so that you may believe. For these things took place so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'Not a bone of Him shall be broken.' And again another scripture says, 'They shall look upon Him Whom they pierced' " (John 19:30-37).

Shortly afterward, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea removed Jesus' body from the cross and wrapped it with wide strips of linen cloth (with spices) according to the Jewish burial custom of the time. They placed His body in the garden tomb just as the sun was setting, ending Nisan 14 and beginning Nisan 15 (verses 38-42).

Through the Passover, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham made when He pledged His own death in the covenant promise of Genesis 15:17. Christ also fulfilled His own words to His disciples concerning His death (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22; also see *The Day Jesus the Christ Died*, pp. 2-43). Thus, Jesus, as God manifested in the flesh, began His three days and nights in the tomb, which was the only sign that He gave to the Jews and to the world that He was the true Messiah (Matt. 12:39-40).

The New Testament Meaning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

God commanded the children of Israel to remove all leaven from their houses prior to the Passover, which is also a separate day of eating unleavened bread (Ex. 12:8). They were to have put all leaven out of their houses before the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread began. The only bread they were to eat for the entire feast was unleavened bread (verses 15-20; 13:6-7; Lev. 23:6, etc.).

In the New Testament, we find that Paul taught the Gentiles to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the same way that God had commanded the children of Israel. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul **defined leaven as a symbol of sin and sinful human nature—**a nature that is "puffed up" with vanity and pride. The brethren in Corinth had been tolerating a gross sin of immorality—in which a man was having sexual relations with his

stepmother. Paul wrote: "Your glorying [in this] *is* not good. Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" (I Cor. 5:6.) Instead of abhorring such conduct, they were condoning it—even glorying over it. Paul had to correct them severely, because this individual's sin had begun to **leaven the whole congregation** with a sinful attitude, which would in turn lead to sinful conduct. He then commanded them to remove the individual from the congregation, just as they had removed leaven from their houses.

Paul had to remind them that just as they had unleavened their homes in preparation for keeping the feast, they were to also "unleaven" their spiritual lives from sin through Jesus Christ, our Passover. "Therefore, purge out the old leaven [of sin], so that you may become a new lump [sinless in Christ], *even* as you are unleavened [in your homes]. **For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us**. For this reason, **let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with *the* leaven of malice and wickedness, but with *the* unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth**" (verses 7-8).

Paul's statement, "Let us keep the feast," is quite emphatic—and should quiet those who falsely teach that Paul was busy abolishing God's feasts. Clearly, this is a direct command to New Testament Gentile converts to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread! Paul backs up his authority by stating: "If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things I write to you are *the* commandments of the Lord**" (I Cor. 14:37). This is what Paul taught in all the churches (I Cor. 7:17).

Paul again emphasized the spiritual meaning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread when he admonished the Colossians to forsake their sinful ways and nature and replace them with the character of Christ and His attributes of love and righteousness (Col. 3:1-17).

As Abraham's spiritual seed, baptized Christians are to put on Jesus Christ—to become like Him (Gal. 3:26-29). "Christ in you, [is] the hope of glory" for Christians (Col. 1:27). By observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Christians learn that through the power of the Holy Spirit they are to overcome sin, live by every Word of God, develop the character of Christ, walk in faith, believe in hope and live in the love of God.

The Night to Be Much Observed: This night, the night of Nisan 15, begins the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. The children of Israel were commanded to observe the Night to Be Much Observed in commemoration of their Exodus from Egypt, and their deliverance from the bondage of slavery (Ex. 12:40-42). It was also on the same night—the "self same day" of Nisan 15—430 years before when the Lord God promised in His covenant with Abraham to deliver his descendants from their slavery (Gen. 15:12-18).

For true Christians, the Night to be Much Observed has intense spiritual meaning. That very night Jesus Christ's dead body was lying in the tomb—beginning His three days and nights "in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). This night was a fulfillment of God's covenant promise to Abraham—in which God pledged to die in order to fulfill His spiritual contract. Jesus' death was confirmed when his dead body was placed in the tomb as

the Passover day was ending at sunset and the Night to Be Much Observed was beginning. Just as the children of Israel were to rejoice in that God had delivered them and released them from their Egyptian bondage, true Christians, the spiritual seed of Abraham, are to rejoice on this night because it is the beginning of their deliverance from the bondage of sin and their exodus from spiritual Egypt (Coulter, *The Christian Passover*, pp. 266-277).

"Ex" means "out" and "odus" means "way." Hence, the word "exodus" means, "the way out." The Exodus was Israel's "way out" of Egypt (symbolic of sin and bondage to sin). Likewise, for mankind the only "exodus" out of the bondage of sin is through Jesus Christ. At His Passover Jesus said, "I am the way"—Greek, οδος—the "way out," the exodus from sin. Our Christian walk with Jesus Christ begins after we have our sins forgiven through His shed blood as pictured by the Passover. We then begin our **journey out of sin** and a destructive way of life through love, faithful devotion and obedience to Jesus Christ—walking in the love and grace of God, living by every Word of God and keeping His commandments, as pictured by the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Jesus' Resurrection from the Dead: After being in the tomb exactly three days and three nights, Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of the Father as the regular weekly Sabbath, Nisan 17, was ending at sunset during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Coulter, *The Day Jesus the Christ Died*, pp. 71-81). He was *not* resurrected on a Sunday morning—*not* on Orthodox Christendom's so-called Easter Sunday. He was resurrected at the close of the weekly Sabbath at sunset, just before the first day of the week began.

In the early morning on the first day of the week, when Mary Magdalene and others came to the tomb, an angel specifically told them that Jesus had already risen, that He was not there (Mark 16:2-7; Luke 24:1-6; John 20:1 -10). A literal translation for "the first day of the week" is "the first of the weeks"—i.e., the first day of the seven week count to Pentecost. The Greek indicates that this "first day of the week" was the Wave Sheaf offering day.

The Wave Sheaf Offering Day: The offering of the first of the firstfruits is highly significant to God. Israel was instructed: "The **first of the firstfruits** of your land you shall bring *into* the house of the LORD your God " (Ex. 23:19). On this day, the first day of the week and the first day of the fifty-day count to Pentecost, the High Priest was to take a special, premier sheaf of the first of the firstfruits of the barley/wheat harvest and elevate or wave it before the Lord to be accepted by Him (Lev. 23:9-11). This incomparable ritual was **symbolic of Jesus Christ's ascension to the throne of God the Father** after He was resurrected from the dead—to be accepted as the first of the firstfruits of God.

The apostle John verified Jesus' ascension on this day: "But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white who were sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. And they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to

them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.'

"And after saying these things, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' Thinking that He was the gardener, she said to Him, 'Sir, if you have carried Him off, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' Turning around, she said to Him, 'Rabboni;' that is to say, 'Teacher.' Jesus said to her, '**Do not touch Me, because I have not yet ascended to My Father**. But go to My brethren and tell them that I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God' " (John 20:11-17).

Later that same day at evening, Jesus appeared to the disciples and showed them His wounds from the crucifixion: "Afterwards, **as evening was drawing near that day, the first *day* of the weeks**, and the doors were shut where the disciples had assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace *be* to you.' And after saying this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples rejoiced *because* they had seen the Lord" (John 20:19-20).

Paul confirmed that Jesus Christ was the "firstfruit" of the resurrection of the dead, the first of the spiritual harvest of God. At His return, at the time of the first resurrection, all those who are Christ's will be resurrected to eternal life: "But now Christ has been raised from *the* dead; He has become the firstfruit of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man *came* death, by man also *came the* resurrection of *the* dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: **Christ *the* firstfruit; then, those who are Christ's at His coming**" (I Cor. 15:20-23). (For more detail about the Wave Sheaf Offering Day, see *The Day Jesus the Christ Died*, pp. 83-93.)

Additional References to the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the Gospels: The Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread are two distinct feasts that fall on separate, yet consecutive, days—the 14th and the 15th. The two feasts have different, *but related*, meanings. Luke, however, records that it had become a common practice to refer to the entire eight-day festival season as "Passover." "Now the feast of unleavened *bread,* which *is* called Passover, was approaching" (Luke 22:1).

With this in mind we can better understand certain "difficult" references to the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread in the Gospel of John. "Now the **Passover of the Jews was near**…. Now when He was in Jerusalem **at the Passover, during the feast**, many believed on His name, as they observed the miracles that He was doing" (John 2:13, 23). "Now **the Passover, a feast of the Jews**, was near" (John 6:4). As the time of Jesus' last Passover approached, John wrote: "Now the **Passover of the Jews** was near" (John 11:55); "Six days before **the Passover**" (12:1); "Now before **the feast of the Passover**" (13:1).

In these and other passages John points to the importance of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. Few realize, however, that the

Gospel of John is structured on the framework of the feasts and holy days of God. This makes John's Gospel not only a record of Jesus' teachings, but a historical record as well.

- The harvest of Pentecost—John 4:35
- Feast of Trumpets—John 5:1
- Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day—John 7

Throughout the Gospels, the feasts and holy days of God provide the framework for the chronology of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Interestingly, however, **there are "zero" written testimonies indicating that the true apostolic Church ever sanctioned the holidays now observed by Orthodox Christendom**.

Other References to the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the New Testament: The book of Acts is a microcosm of the Church of God and the ministry of the apostle Paul from about 30 AD to 67 AD. When examined carefully, it becomes apparent that Luke chronicled events relative to the feasts and holy days. This means that the apostles were using the sacred, calculated Hebrew calendar to record the times of these events, rather than the Roman calendar. Writing about Peter's imprisonment in 44 AD, Luke records: "Now about that time, Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to persecute some of those of the church; and he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take Peter also. (**Now those were *the* days of unleavened bread**.) And after arresting him, he put *him* in prison, delivering *him* to four sets of four soldiers to guard him with the intent of bringing him out to the people **after the Passover *season***" (Acts 12:1-4).

In a deceitful attempt to give the appearance that the apostolic Church observed Easter, the translators of the King James Version incorrectly translated the Greek word for Passover (πασχα, *pascha*) in Acts 12:4 as "Easter." In all other places they correctly translated *pascha* as "Passover." However, as we have seen, "Passover" was also used in reference to the entire eight days of Passover and Unleavened Bread, which should be properly translated as "Passover *season*"—and never "Easter."

The Seventh Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: Undoubtedly, Jesus Christ, the apostles and the early New Testament Church observed all seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Although we do not find a specific reference to the seventh day of the feast, Luke's account of Paul's journeys in 58 AD demonstrates that he kept the full seven-day feast with Gentiles in northern Greece. "But we sailed away from Philippi **after the Days of Unleavened Bread**; and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed *for* seven days" (Acts 20:6). This clearly indicates that Paul and his party observed the entire feast, including the seventh day.

In the account of the Exodus, God rescued the children of Israel from Pharaoh and his armies on the seventh day of the feast by bringing them safely through the Red Sea on dry ground. When the Egyptians followed them into the sea, God released the waters, destroying Pharaoh and his army.

As a nation steeped in the satanic occult worship of the sun and other false gods, Egypt is depicted in Scripture as a symbol of sin. Pharaoh was a type of Satan and his army symbolized evil demonic spirits. Just as Pharaoh and his armies pursued the children of Israel after God had rescued them from Egypt, so Satan and his demons can (and do) bring spiritual attacks upon converted Christians, God's spiritual children, attempting to enslave them again in the bondage of sin.

Thus we can see that, in the New Testament, the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures how God, through Jesus Christ, has rescued us from the power of Satan. "Being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light; **Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness and has transferred *us* unto the kingdom of the Son of His love**; in Whom we have redemption through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins" (Col. 1:11-14).

When Jesus called Saul to become Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, He told him why he was chosen: "Now arise, and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose: to appoint you *as* a minister and a witness both of what you have seen and what I shall reveal to you. I am personally selecting you from among the people and the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, **to open their eyes, that *they* may turn from darkness to light, and *from* the authority of Satan to God**, so that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified through faith in Me' " (Acts 26:16-18).

As the "god of this world," Satan blinds the minds of those he has deceived (II Cor. 4:4). He is also called the "prince of the power of the air," who leads those of this world into living lives of sin and disobedience: "Now you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to **the prince of the power of the air**, **the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience**; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest *of the world*" (Eph. 2:1-3).

Paul went on to instruct them on how to fight their spiritual battles against Satan the devil and to overcome him through the power of God and the blood of Jesus Christ: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord, and in the might of His strength. Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to **stand against the wiles of the devil**, because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand.

"Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with truth, and wearing the breastplate of righteousness, and having your feet shod with *the*

preparation of the gospel of peace. Besides all *these*, **take up the shield of the faith, with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one**; and put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the* Spirit" (Eph. 6:10-18).

Christians are to overcome Satan and resist his attacks through the blood of the Lamb, even if it costs them their physical lives: "And the great dragon was cast out, **the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan**, who is deceiving the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven say, 'Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them day and night before our God. **But they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb, and through the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death**' " (Rev. 12:9-11).

Jesus prayed to the Father that His people would be delivered from "the evil one"—Satan (John 17:15). He also told us we are to pray and entreat God daily that He would rescue us from the evil one (Matt. 6:13). There are many passages in the New Testament that show how God rescues us from sin and Satan. This ongoing spiritual battle—of overcoming sin, Satan and the world—reflects the special meaning of the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the New Testament.

Pentecost in the New Testament

Typically, God uses His feasts and holy days as benchmarks as He fulfills His will and purpose—often involving powerful historical events as well as spiritual events. For example, after God led the children of Israel to Mount Sinai, He personally spoke the Ten Commandments to them from the top of the mount in an awesome display of power and glory **on the day of Pentecost** (Ex. 20:1-17). As the New Testament shows, God again **used the day of Pentecost** in a wondrous demonstration of the power of His Holy Spirit—as He initially granted His Spirit to His Church.

In 30 AD, after Jesus was seen by His apostles and disciples for forty days, He instructed them to go to Jerusalem and wait until they had received the power of the Holy Spirit. "And while *they* were assembled with *Him*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to 'await the promise of the Father, which,' *He said*, 'you have heard of Me. For John indeed baptized with water, but **you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit after not many days**…. But you yourselves **shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you**, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto *the* ends of the earth' " (Acts 1:4-5, 8). Jesus then ascended into heaven and disappeared out of sight.

Ten days later, when the apostles and disciples were assembled together in a meeting room on the temple grounds to observe the day of Pentecost,

God sent the Holy Spirit upon them in a unique display of His spiritual power. "And when the day *of Pentecost*, the fiftieth day, was being fulfilled, they were all with one accord in the same place. And suddenly *there* came from heaven a sound like *the* rushing of a powerful wind, and filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with *the* Holy Spirit; and they began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them *the words* to proclaim.

"Now *there* were *many* Jews who were sojourning in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when word of this went out, the multitude came together and were confounded, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marveled, saying to one another, 'Behold, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it *that* we hear each one in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and those who inhabit Mesopotamia, and Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, both Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya which *are* near Cyrene, and the Romans who are sojourning *here*, both Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians; we hear them speaking in our own languages the great things of God.' And they were all amazed and greatly perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' " (Acts 2:1-12).

By the power of His Holy Spirit, God miraculously caused the apostles to speak simultaneously in a multitude of languages. Thousands of Jews and proselytes from all over the world heard the apostles powerfully preach the message of God about the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ in their own languages.

Because God had placed His name and presence in the Temple in Jerusalem, He likewise began the Church there. This was the reason He sent the Holy Spirit in the way that He did on this particular holy day. Had it been done in any other location, no one would have believed that this was an act of God. However, the manner in which God poured out His Spirit—in the presence of multiple thousands of Jews assembled at the temple observing Pentecost—left no doubt that this was a powerful act of God. It was clearly His personal, divine intervention—not the work of men. This amazing display of God's power also provided the spiritual seal of authority confirming the apostles as His called and chosen witnesses (Luke 24:43-49).

Silencing the few detractors, Peter stood up to preach a dynamic message about the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ to the thousands gathered at the temple. After convicting them in conscience, he called on them to repent to God for their sins which killed Christ: " 'Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, '**Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy**

Spirit' " (Acts 2:36-38). As a result, three thousand were baptized and added to the Church on that momentous day of Pentecost in 30 AD—the day the true Church of God began.

Few Are Chosen Because Few Repent: With the beginning of the Church on Pentecost, God revealed that He was selecting only those few who repent and accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Continuing in Acts Two: " 'For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those who are afar off, **as many as *the* Lord our God may call**.' And with many other words he earnestly testified and exhorted, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.' **Then those who joyfully received his message were baptized**; and about three thousand souls were added that day. And they steadfastly continued in the teachings of the apostles and in fellowship, and *in* the breaking of bread and *in* prayers" (verses 39-42). While there were thousands of Jews at the temple on Pentecost, only 3,000 repented and were baptized because they were the **only ones who answered God's call**. God gave His Holy Spirit *only* to those individuals—*not* to the other thousands who did not repent. This confirms the truth that God only gives the Holy Spirit to the few who answer His call, repent of their sins and are baptized. From the time of Jesus' ministry until His second coming, God the Father and Jesus Christ are choosing only the ones who **answer** God's call. As Jesus said, "For many are called, but few *are* chosen"—because few repent (Matt. 22:14, Luke 13:1-5).

Because they refuse to repent, the vast majority have not been chosen by God at this time. Instead of believing God, people tend to believe in traditional religions—and many indeed claim that they are "Christian" because they "preach Christ's name." Typically, however, they reject God's commands concerning the weekly Sabbath and holy days.

But Jesus emphasized that professing His name is not enough: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; **but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven**. Many will say to Me in that day [of judgment], 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?' And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness' " (Matt. 7:21-23).

Without **genuine belief** in the teachings of God the Father and Jesus Christ, such people become blinded and deceived: "And His disciples came to Him and asked, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?' And He answered *and* said to them, 'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has *understanding*, to him more shall be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have *understanding*, even what he has shall be taken away from him. For this *reason* I speak to them in parables, because seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, "**In hearing you shall hear, and in no way understand; and *in* seeing you**

shall see, and in no way perceive; for the heart of this people has grown fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and should hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them." But blessed *are* your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear' " (Matt. 13:10-16). (As we will see later, because God has blinded them at this time, their opportunity for salvation will come after the Millennium is over. We will thoroughly cover this vital truth when we come to the meaning of the Last Great Day.)

Indeed, at this present time very few are called and chosen, because very few actually believe God or Jesus Christ—or believe Their Word, the Bible. Few are willing to repent, be baptized, obey God and strive to live by every Word of God (Matt. 4:4; John 14:20-24; Acts 4:10-12, 19-20; 5:29-32).

It Is God the Father and Jesus Christ Who Do the Choosing: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ; according as **He has personally chosen us for Himself**" (Eph. 1:3-4). Jesus told His disciples: "You yourselves did not choose Me, but **I have personally chosen you**, and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you" (John 15:16). This is why Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; **no one comes to the Father except through Me**" (John 14:6) and "**No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him**" (John 6:44). In these two verses Jesus clearly shows that this special calling is a *joint act* on the part of God the Father and Jesus Christ. It is simply not a matter of human determination or effort—but of God's choosing.

The Meaning of Pentecost. God's unique use of the day of Pentecost in the past has magnified and added to its meaning. Today, when we observe Pentecost, we may recall the lessons of this feast in both the Old and New Testaments:

1) God gave the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel (Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:7-21).
2) Israel celebrated the completed wheat and barley harvest of the firstfruits (Ex. 23:16).
3) God sent the Holy Spirit to begin His Church.
4) After our repentance and conversion, with the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, God begins to write His laws and commandments in our hearts and minds (Heb. 10:16).
5) The apostles' miraculous preaching in many languages fulfilled, in part, Christ's command that the Gospel be preached in all the world, to all nations (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-47).
6) By sending the Holy Spirit, God signaled that He was going to reject and ultimately destroy the temple and its system of worship, as prophesied (Isa. 66:1-5; Matt. 22:1-7; Acts 7:44-50).

7) All who desire to worship God the Father could now do so in spirit and in truth—from any location, not just at the Temple in Jerusalem (John 4:20-24; Heb. 10:16-22).

There is also a prophetic aspect to the Feast of Pentecost, in which God will again use this feast to fulfill His will and purpose. Christians are called spiritual "firstfruits" (James 1:18), and the harvest of the spiritual firstfruits is at the end of this age (Matt. 13:18-43; Rev. 14:14-16). This spiritual harvest, as pictured by Pentecost, will be a resurrection to eternal life for all who are called and chosen. This is the first resurrection at Jesus' coming (I Cor. 15:20-23; Rev. 20:6).

Visualize the blowing of a trumpet on the day of Pentecost. The children of Israel were assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments spoken by God: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning [Pentecost] that there *were* thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain. And **the sound of the trumpet was exceedingly loud** so that all the people in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God. And they stood at the base of the mountain. And Mount Sinai was smoking, all of it because the LORD came down upon it in fire. And the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. **And when the sound of the trumpet sounded long, and became very strong**, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice" (Ex. 19:16-19).

In Numbers 10:10, we read that the trumpet was to be blown on each holy day, including the Feast of Pentecost. This served to remind the children of Israel of the Pentecost at Sinai on which they received the Ten Commandments.

The apostle Paul draws a special comparison between the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai and the assembling of the resurrected saints as they meet Jesus Christ. He emphasizes how much greater this event will be when compared to what the children of Israel had experienced: "For you [the Church] have not come to *the* mount [Sinai] that could be touched and that burned with fire, nor to gloominess, and fearful darkness, and *the* whirlwind; and to ***the*** **sound of *the* trumpet**, and to *the* voice of *the* words, which those who heard *begged* that *the* word not be spoken *directly* to them. (For they could not endure what was being commanded: 'And if even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned, or shot through with an arrow'; and so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, 'I am greatly afraid and trembling.')

"But you [the Church] have come to [spiritual] Mount Sion, and to *the* city of *the* living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; ***to the*** **joyous festival gathering** [Pentecost resurrection]; and to *the* church of *the* firstborn [the firstfruits of God], registered *in the book of life* in heaven; and to God, *the* Judge of all; and to *the* spirits of the just who have been perfected; and to Jesus, *the* Mediator of *the* New Covenant; and to sprinkling of *the* blood of *ratification*, proclaiming superior things than *that of* Abel" (Heb. 12:18-24).

The prophetic significance of the trumpet blown on Pentecost is that it pictures the "last trumpet"—blown at the time of the resurrection of the saints. Jesus Himself foretold this: "But immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And **He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet**; and **they shall gather together His elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to *the* other" (Matt. 24:29-31).

The apostle Paul also declared that the first resurrection to eternal life would occur at the **last trump**: "And as we have borne the image of the *one* made of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *one*. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit *the* kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all fall asleep, but **we shall all be changed, in an instant, in *the* twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed**. For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal must put on immortality. Now when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory' " (I Cor. 15:49-54).

In Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians, he wrote that the first resurrection takes place at the last trumpet: "But I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, that you be not grieved, even as others, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in exactly the same way also, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say to you by *the* Word of *the* Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede those who have fallen asleep because **the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with *a* shout of command, with *the* voice of an archangel and with *the* trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first**; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in *the* clouds for *the* meeting with the Lord in *the* air; and so shall we always be with *the* Lord" (I Thess. 4:13-17).

The book of Revelation confirms that the last trump is the seventh trumpet—when the first resurrection takes place: "**Then the seventh angel sounded *his* trumpet**; and *there* were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign into the ages of eternity.' And the twenty-four elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, 'We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come; for You have taken *to Yourself* Your great power, and have reigned. For the nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and **the time for the dead to be judged, and to give reward to Your servants the proph-**

ets, and to the saints, and to *all* those who fear Your name, the small and the great; and to destroy those who destroy the earth' " (Rev. 11:15-18).

When the first resurrection takes place, **angels will carry the saints** to a gigantic sea of glass in the clouds (conceivably over Jerusalem) to meet Christ. "And I saw a **sea of glass** mingled with fire, and those who had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, **standing on the sea of glass**, having *the* harps of God. And they were singing the song of Moses, *the* servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, 'Great and awesome *are* Your works, Lord God Almighty; righteous and true *are* Your ways, King of the saints. Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For *You* only *are* holy; and all the nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been revealed' " (Rev. 15:2-4).

Several things will take place on this sea of glass before Christ and the saints return to the earth to establish the Kingdom of God on earth:

1) The saints will receive their new names (Rev. 2:17).
2) The saints are given their rewards (I Cor. 3:8; Rev. 11:18; 22:12; II John 8).
3) The saints will receive their assignments as kings or priests (Rev. 20:6).
4) The marriage of the Lamb and His bride will take place (Rev. 19:6-8).
5) The marriage supper will take place (Rev. 19:9; Matt. 22:1-13).
6) The saints will witness the seven last plagues poured out—the vengeance of God (Rev. 15:5-8; 16:1-21; Psa. 149:4-9). The seventh plague will be the Battle of Armageddon.
7) They will be gathered into God's army and will fight with Christ as they return to the earth with Jesus to establish the Kingdom and government of God on the earth (Rev. 19:11-21; Zech. 14:1-9).

It will take time for all these things to transpire, undoubtedly extending from the day of Pentecost unto the Feast of Trumpets, about four months, thus fulfilling the events of Revelation Chapters 15-16 and 18-19.

Thus, the Word of God reveals that just as God began the Church on Pentecost by sending the Holy Spirit, He will complete the harvest of His Church—the spiritual firstfruits—on Pentecost. On that day God will resurrect from the dead all the righteous saints—from Abel, the first martyr, to the two witnesses, the final martyrs. In the resurrection they will all be changed in a twinkling of an eye and given glorious, immortal bodies as the spiritual sons and daughters of God the Father. "[W]e are waiting for *the* Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ; **Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body**, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21). As glorified spirit beings, they will shine as the stars of heaven (Dan. 12:1-3; Matt. 13:43).

They will share the same eternal existence and glory as Jesus Christ: "The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, **heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ**—if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that **we may also be glorified together with Him**" (Rom. 8:16-17). This is why Paul calls the first resurrection a superior resurrection (Heb. 11:35-40). Finally, John writes: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God…. [And] we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is" (I John 3:1-2).

The book of Revelation proclaims: "Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power" (Rev. 20:6). As pictured by the Feast of Pentecost, Christians look forward to receiving eternal life and glory in the first resurrection (Rom. 8:14-18; I John 3:1-3).

Other References to Pentecost: There are two other references showing that Paul kept the Feast of Pentecost. As we have clearly seen, Paul continually taught the Gentile converts to keep the feasts and holy days of God, which included the Feast of Pentecost.

- Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus of his intentions to visit and stay with them. However, he let them know that he would remain in Ephesus until Pentecost. This means that **he and all the brethren in Ephesus kept the Feast of Pentecost**. "But I will come to you after I pass through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia. It may be *that* I shall stay with you, or *that* I may even winter *there*, so that you may send me forth *on my journey* wherever I may go. For *at this time* I will not *stop* to see you, but I hope at some *future* time to stay with you, if the Lord permits. But **I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost**. For a great and effective door has been opened to me, and there *are* many adversaries" (I Cor. 16:5-9).
- On another occasion, Paul was journeying to Jerusalem and intended to keep Pentecost there: "For Paul had decided to sail by Ephesus, because he did not want to spend time in Asia; for he hastened in order to be in Jerusalem **on the day of Pentecost**, if possible" (Acts 20:16).
- In the Gospel of John, Jesus points out the ripening harvest to His disciples, which apparently is a direct reference to Pentecost: "Do not say that there are yet **four months, and *then* the harvest comes**. I say to you, look around. Lift up your eyes and see the fields, for they are already **white to harvest**" (John 4:35). From Pentecost until the fall harvest season and the fall festivals and holy days is four months—so Christ must have been referring to the time of Pentecost. As we have seen, 3,000 new converts were added to the Church on Pentecost in 30 AD.

In this chapter, we have taken a broad overview of the spring feasts and holy days of God in the New Testament—where we find overwhelming evidence that the apostolic New Testament Church kept and revered these days. The "God-breathed" beautiful writings of the apostles truly expand the scope and spiritual significance of God's feasts and holy days. Far from being abolished by Jesus Christ and His true apostles, these days continue to foreshadow and crystallize God's purpose and plan for us all.

In the next chapter, we will learn how the fall feasts and holy days continue to reveal God's prophetic master plan, outlining His loving purpose for all of humanity.

CHAPTER TWELVE

A Survey of God's Fall Feasts and Holy Days in the New Testament

Occurring in the seventh month of the sacred calendar, the fall feasts and holy days portray the future fulfillment of God's plan for all mankind. These vital days foretell *how* and approximately *when* end time events prophesied in the Old and New Testaments will unfold.

We will begin our survey of the fall holy days by focusing on the Feast of Trumpets—which falls on the first day of the seventh month (Lev. 23:23-25). Trumpets is the fourth (or "middle") of God's seven annual holy days, and indeed functions much like a *fulcrum* or a "tipping point" in the history of the world. Why? Because Trumpets pictures God's direct, climactic intervention in the affairs of man—leading directly to the literal return of Jesus Christ and all the resurrected saints with Him to establish the Kingdom of God on earth—on this very day.

Historically, God required the priests and Levites to blow silver trumpets as a memorial throughout the day of Trumpets (Psa. 81:3; Lev. 23:23-24). They also blew hundreds of *shofars*, which were trumpets made from rams' horns, used primarily in time of war. During such times, God would lead Israel into battle as the priests carried the Ark of the Covenant—while blowing trumpets (Josh. 6:1-16; Judges 7:8, 16-18). If the people had been obedient to God and faithful to His covenant, He would fight for them and give them victory over their enemies (Deut. 28:7; Lev. 26:7-8).

In addition, guards who watched over the cities and villages of Israel were to blow the *shofar* if an enemy attack was imminent (Ezek. 33:1-6; Joel 2:1, 15).

The Feast of Trumpets in the New Testament

There is not a direct reference (by name) to the Feast of Trumpets in the New Testament. However, based on the chronological structure of John's Gospel, we can surmise that the feast mentioned in John 5:1 was probably the Feast of Trumpets. John's framework for his Gospel is: Passover, John 2; Pentecost, John 4; a feast of the Jews, John 5; Passover, John 6; Tabernacles and Last Great Day, John 7 and 8; and Passover, John 12-19. Based on the seasons, John has the following sequence: spring, fall, spring, fall, and spring.

Since the feast in John 5:1 was *after* Jesus' reference to Pentecost in John 4, it must have been a fall feast. (If it had been the Feast of Tabernacles, it is likely that John would have mentioned it, as he did in chapter

seven. If it had been the Day of Atonement—a fast day characterized by absolutely no work whatsoever—the Jews would have been even more vehement against Jesus for healing a man and telling him to pick up his bedroll and walk.) We can conclude, therefore, that the feast mentioned in John 5:1 was probably the Feast of Trumpets.

The Birth of Jesus Christ and the Feast of Trumpets: As the Word of God demonstrates, God has always used His feasts and holy days to fulfill His will as well as certain major prophesies. We have already seen that the "appointed time" for Jesus to die was the Passover day in 30 AD, which God had set "before the foundation of the world." But what about Jesus' birth—was it likewise predetermined "before the foundation of the world" to occur on a particular day? Was that day a holy day? And if so, which holy day? What do the Scriptures and history reveal about Jesus' birth?

Paul confirms that Jesus was born at the precise time appointed by God: "But when the [appointed] time for the fulfillment came, God sent forth His own Son, born of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). This indicates that the time of Jesus' birth was predetermined. While the Gospels do not announce the specific day of Jesus' birth, He was clearly **born at a particular time preordained by God** to fulfill His will and prophetic plan.

There is a preponderance of evidence found in the New Testament, the writings of Josephus, and other historical sources, as well as information relating to the calculated Hebrew calendar and specific astronomical events, from which we are able to determine approximately when Jesus was born—perhaps even the exact day. A chronicle of pertinent information documenting when Jesus was born is, unfortunately, too expansive to be included in this book. Such details, however, are carefully documented in two books: *A Harmony of the Gospels in Modern English—the Life of Jesus Christ* and *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order—a Faithful Version with Commentary,* both by Fred R. Coulter. It is sufficient to mention that the complex scriptural and historical evidence systematically compiled in these books supports the Feast of Trumpets in 5 BC as the most probable date of Jesus' birth. These books may be obtained from York Publishing (see address in the front of this book) or from www.amazon.com.

The Prophetic Meaning of the Feast of Trumpets: The book of Revelation unveils the prophetic meaning of the Feast of Trumpets, as the book depicts the "day of the Lord" described in several Old Testament prophecies. These prophecies give us many details regarding the day of the Lord—the time of God's direct intervention in the affairs of man, when Jesus Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords, to take control of this world (Rev. 11:15; 19:11-21). The Bible informs us that often a *day* in prophecy is a *year* in actual fulfillment (Num. 14:34, Ezek. 4:6). Isaiah 34:8 describes it as a "*day* of vengeance" and a "*year* of recompenses." Therefore, reckoned from Trumpets to Trumpets, the "day" of the Lord is the final *year* leading up to and including Jesus Christ's return to earth.

This coming day of the Lord is a time of disaster, famine, pestilence

and war with death and destruction unparalleled in all of human history. The prophet Jeremiah indicates that ultimately **all nations will be involved** in the end time day of the Lord (Jer. 25:15-17, 26-27). God will intervene powerfully from heaven against all the nations of the world—none shall escape (verses 30-33). In fact, when Jesus Christ intervenes mightily in this world, He is going to shake the earth so violently that it will be nearly thrust out of its orbit (Isa. 13:6-13; also see Hag. 2:6-7). The prophet Isaiah describes the awesome power of God when He "arises to shake terribly the earth" and begins to make Himself known to the world. There will be no doubt that such events are from the hand of God (see Isa. 2:10-12, 18-21).

God gave Daniel a vision of this time, saying, "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (Dan. 12:1). Jesus described for His disciples a time of tribulation coming at the end of the age—a time so devastating and destructive that if He did not intervene to limit those days, no flesh would be saved alive. "For then shall there be great tribulation, **such as has not been from *the* beginning of *the* world until this time, nor ever shall be *again***. And if those days were not limited, there would no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be limited" (Matt. 24:21-22).

Throughout history mankind has suffered greatly from war, famine, pestilence and natural disasters. But nothing will compare to the day of the Lord: "**The great day of the LORD *is* near; *it is* near and comes swiftly**, the sound of the day of the LORD. The mighty man shall cry bitterly there. **That day *is* a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the ram's horn and alarm** against the fortified cities, and against the high towers. 'And I will bring distress on men, so that they shall walk as the blind because they have sinned against the LORD. **And their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung**.' Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole earth shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, for He shall make even a full end, yea, a terrible end of all who dwell upon the earth" (Zeph. 1:14-18).

The book of Revelation documents the fulfillment of such prophecies—describing an electrifying demonstration of power as Jesus Christ directly intervenes and personally manifests Himself. The opening of the sixth seal sets the stage for the day of the Lord to begin: "And when He [Jesus Christ] opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as *the* hair *of* sackcloth, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its untimely figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. **Then *the* heaven departed like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place**. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the powerful men, and every bondman, and every free *man* **hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains**; and they said to the mountains and to the

rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from *the* face of Him Who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb because **the great day of His wrath has come**, and who has the power to stand?' " (Rev. 6:12-17).

Trumpets and the Day of the Lord: The day of the Lord actually begins with the opening of the seventh seal—in which seven angels successively sound their trumpets, signaling various phases of God's direct intervention signaling the last year of human rule under the sway of Satan the devil. Ultimately, this great "day" will climax in angelic war from heaven against the united armies of men and demons on the earth.

John describes what he saw in vision regarding the seven trumpet plagues sent from God by the hands of angels: "Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar; and much incense was given to him, so that he might offer *it* with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that *was* before the throne. And the smoke of the incense went up before God from *the* hand of the angel, ascending with the prayers of the saints. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire from the altar, and cast *it* into the earth; and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

"Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound *their* trumpets. And **the first angel sounded *his* trumpet**; and there was hail and fire mingled with blood, and it was cast upon the earth; and a third of the trees were burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. Then **the second angel sounded *his* trumpet**; and *there* was cast into the sea as *it were* a great mountain burning with fire, and a third of the sea became blood; and a third of the living creatures that *were* in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. And **the third angel sounded *his* trumpet**; and *there* fell out of heaven a great star, burning like a lamp; and it fell on a third of the rivers, and on the fountains of waters. Now the name of the star is Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood; and many men died from *drinking* the waters because they were made bitter. Then **the fourth angel sounded *his* trumpet**; and a third of the sun was smitten, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars; so that a third of them were darkened; and a third part of the day did not shine, and likewise *a third part of* the night. And I looked; and I heard an angel flying in the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, '**Woe, woe, woe to those who are dwelling on the earth, because of the voices of the remaining trumpets of the three angels who *are* about to sound *their* trumpets**' " (Rev. 8:2-13).

When the fifth angel sounds his trumpet, hordes of demons will be released from an abyss to join human armies using futuristic weapons: "And **the fifth angel sounded *his* trumpet**; and I saw a star *that* had fallen from heaven to the earth, and there was given to him the key to the bottomless abyss. And he opened the bottomless abyss [to release the imprisoned demons]; and there went up smoke from the pit, like *the* smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke from the pit.

Then locusts [demons] came onto the earth from the smoke; and power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was said to them that they should not damage the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only the men who did not have the seal of God in their foreheads. And it was given to them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment *was* like *the* torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. And in those days men will seek death but will not find it; and they will desire to die, but death will flee from them.

"And the appearance of the locusts *was* like horses prepared for war; and on their heads *were* crowns like *those* of gold; and their faces *were* like *the* faces of men; and they had hair like women's hair; and their teeth were like *those* of lions. And they had breastplates like iron breastplates; and the sound of their wings *was* like *the* sound of chariots *drawn* by many horses running to war; and they had tails like scorpions, and stingers; and they were *given* power to injure men with their tails *for* five months. And they have over them a king, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew *is* Abaddon, but *the* name he has in Greek *is* Apollyon [Satan the devil]. **The first woe is past**. Behold, after these things two more woes are still to come" (Rev. 9:1-12). John is no doubt graphically describing futuristic weapons to be used by human armies and demons. This fifth trumpet represents the aggressive attack by the prophetic "beast" of Revelation 13 against nations north and east of Jerusalem (Dan. 11:44).

After the five months, a coalition of kings from the east will retaliate against the "beast" with the largest army ever amassed in the history of the world. This massive, 200-million-man force will be armed with powerful, sophisticated weapons—and backed by the supernatural strength of hordes of demons. "**And the sixth angel sounded *his* trumpet**; and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar that *is* before God; *and* it said to the sixth angel, who had the trumpet, 'Loose the four angels who are bound in the great river Euphrates.' Then the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were loosed, so that they might kill a third of men; and the number of *the* armies of the horsemen *was* two hundred thousand thousand; and I heard the number of them.

"And so I saw the horses in the vision, and those sitting on them, who had fiery breastplates, even like jacinth and brimstone. And the heads of the horses *were* like heads of lions, and fire and smoke and brimstone shoot out of their mouths. **By these three, a third of men were killed: by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone that shoot out of their mouths**. For their power is in their mouths; for their tails *are* like serpents, *and* have heads, and with them they inflict wounds. But the rest of the men who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the works of their hands, that they might not worship demons, and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which do not have the power to see, nor to hear, nor to walk. **And they did not repent of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thievery**" (Rev. 9:13-21).

The prophet Joel describes this battle that takes place between the armies of the fifth and sixth trumpets: " '**Blow the ram's horn in Zion**, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain!' Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, **for the day of the LORD comes**, for *it is* near at hand—a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness. As the morning *is* spread across the mountains, ***so comes* a great people and a mighty people; there has never been the like, nor shall there ever be again**, even to the years of many generations.

"A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land *is* as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness—and nothing shall escape them. Their appearance *is* as the appearance of horses; and as war horses, so they run. They shall leap with the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains, with the noise of a flame of fire that devours the stubble, like a mighty people set in battle array. In their presence the people shall *greatly* tremble; all faces shall grow pale. **They shall run like mighty men**. They shall climb the wall like men of war, and they shall march each one in his path, and they shall not break their ranks. And each one shall not crowd another; they go every one in his *own* path. And **when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded**. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall; they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. **The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble. The sun and the moon shall grow dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining**. And the LORD shall utter His voice before His army; for His camp *is* exceedingly great; for powerful *is He* who executes His Word, **for the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; and who can endure it?**" (Joel 2:1-11).

These wars of vast destruction will envelop the entirety of the Middle East—as well as extend from the western seat of the "beast" into the lands of the Far East, the origin of the kings of the east. Once these armies have fought to a standstill, **the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, and the first resurrection takes place on Pentecost** (Rev. 11:15-19).

The time from Pentecost to Trumpets is approximately four months. During this time, another seven angels will pour out the seven last plagues. The final, seventh plague will culminate in the battle of Armageddon. This colossal, epoch-ending war will pit God and His angels against the "beast," the "false prophet," and armies from all nations of the world—as well as against Satan himself, with his demons. "And after these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. And the seven angels who had the seven *last* plagues came out of the temple; they were clothed in linen, pure and bright, and girded about the chest with golden breastplates. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, Who lives into the ages of eternity. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no one was able to enter inside the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled" (Rev. 15:5-8).

"Then I heard a loud voice from the temple say to the seven angels, '**Go and pour out the vials of the wrath of God onto the earth**.' And the **first *angel*** went and poured out his vial onto the earth; and an evil and grievous sore fell upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and upon those who were worshiping his image. And the **second angel** *went and* poured out his vial into the sea; and it became blood, like *that* of a dead *man*; and every living soul in the sea died. And the **third angel** poured out his vial upon the rivers, and into the fountains of waters; and they became blood.

"Then I heard the angel of the waters say, 'You are righteous, O Lord, Who are, and Who was, even the Holy One, in that You have executed this judgment. For they have poured out *the* blood of saints and of prophets, and You have given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.' And I heard another *voice* from the altar say, 'Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* Your judgments.'

"And the **fourth angel** poured out his vial upon the sun; and *power* was given to it to scorch men with fire. Then men were scorched with great heat; and they blasphemed the name of God, Who has authority over these plagues, and did not repent to give Him glory. And the **fifth angel** poured out his vial upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; yet they did not repent of their works. And the **sixth angel** poured out his vial into the great river Euphrates; and its waters were dried up, so that the way of the kings from the rising of *the* sun might be prepared. Then I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet; for they are spirits of demons working miracles, going forth to the kings of the earth, even of the whole world, to gather them together to *the* battle of that great day of the Almighty God.

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* the one who is watching and is keeping his garments, so that he may not walk naked and they *may not* see his shame. And he gathered them together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. Then the **seventh angel** poured out his vial into the air; and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, 'IT IS FINISHED.'

"And there were voices and thunders and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were on the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great. And the great city was divided into three parts; and the cities of the nations fell; and Babylon the Great was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the fury of His wrath. And every island disappeared, and no mountains were found; and great hail, *each stone* the weight of a talent [180 lbs], fell down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, for the plague was exceedingly great" (Rev. 16:1-21).

After the last of the seven plagues has been poured out, Jesus and the resurrected saints will descend to the earth from the sea of glass in a final battle against the beast, false prophet and their armies. As they are descending to the earth with clarity and singleness of purpose on this Feast of Trumpets, the seven angels will **continue blowing the trumpets of God mightily for all the earth to hear**. "And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war with Him Who sits on the horse, and with His army. And **the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet** who worked miracles in his presence, by which he had deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. **Those two were cast alive into the lake of fire**, which burns with brimstone; and the rest were killed by the sword of Him Who sits on the horse, *even the sword* that goes out of His mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh" (Rev. 19:19-21).

The prophecy of this climactic battle—as pictured by the Feast of Trumpets—is found in Zechariah: "And the LORD shall go out and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall split in two, from the east and to the west, and make a very great valley. And half of the mountain shall move toward the north, and half of it toward the south.... **And the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with You**…. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one LORD, and His name shall be one…. And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will smite all the people who have fought against Jerusalem. Their flesh shall consume away while they stand on their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets. And their tongue shall consume away in their mouth" (Zech. 14:3-5, 9, 12). Thus, the battle of Armageddon ends.

This overview summarizes the prophetic meaning of the Feast of Trumpets, with a focus on its final fulfillment when Jesus Christ and all the saints return to the earth. There are numerous additional prophecies in the Bible that magnify the meaning of this pivotal "day of the Lord"—the *fulcrum* or "tipping point" in the history of humanity. The reader is encouraged to thoroughly study the Word of God—Old and New Testaments—for a more complete understanding of these events. The time is *at hand*. The prophesied events of the last days and the return of Jesus Christ *are near*.

The Day of Atonement

The tenth day of the seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It is a special fast day—with no food or water for the entire day—as reckoned from sunset to sunset (Lev. 23:26-32). As recorded in Leviticus 16, special sacrifices were offered on Atonement.

In the Old Testament, on this day, the high priest was first required to make special sacrifices for himself and his house. Atonement was the only day of the year the high priest was allowed entry into the "holy of holies"—to

access the "mercy seat," a type of God's throne in heaven (Heb. 9:24). (The mercy seat is also known as the "Ark of the Covenant," as it contained the two tables of stone.) Thus, he entered the holy of holies and ceremoniously sprinkled the blood of a bullock on the mercy seat to make an "atonement" for himself and his family. Having done so, he was then allowed to perform "atonement" sacrifices for the people of Israel.

Next, he presented two identical live goats before the Lord and drew lots wherein God Himself selected one goat for a sin offering and the other for Azazel (*KJV*, "scapegoat").

The goat for the sin offering was then sacrificed and its blood sprinkled upon the mercy seat to make atonement for all the sins, transgressions and uncleanness of the children of Israel. The goat for Azazel was not sacrificed, but was presented alive before the Lord. The priest laid his hands upon the live goat's head, confessing over it all of Israel's iniquities and transgressions. Finally, the goat was led by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness and released.

The New Testament Meaning of the Goat Sacrificed for Sin: The symbolic meaning of this unique ritual involving the two goats could not be fully understood until the apostle John had written the book of Revelation and canonized the New Testament. With the books of Hebrews and Revelation, however, the meaning becomes clear. It is generally recognized that the sacrifice of the one goat and the sprinkling of its blood upon the mercy seat was symbolic of the sacrifice and shed blood of Jesus Christ for sin. The high priest represented Jesus Christ Himself, our High Priest. In the book of Hebrews, the apostle Paul gives the interpretation of the Atonement goat sacrificed for sin and the high priest of Leviticus 16. "But **Christ has become *the* High Priest** of the coming good things, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by *human* hands (that is, not of this *present physical* creation). Not by *the* blood of goats and calves, but **by the means of His own blood, He entered once for all into the holiest** [holy of holies], having *by* Himself secured everlasting redemption *for us*…. But now, once and for all, in *the* consummation of the ages, **He has been manifested for *the* purpose of removing sin through His sacrifice *of Himself***" (Heb. 9:11-12, 26).

Paul adds that, unlike the temporary purpose of the sacrificed goat, Christ's sacrifice is **once for all time**, and thus supersedes all temple rituals and sacrifices. "For the law, having *only* a shadow of the good things that are coming, *and* not the image of those things, with the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, is never able to make perfect those who come *to worship*…. Because *it is* impossible *for the* blood of bulls and goats to take away sins…. Then He said, 'Lo, I come to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first *covenant* in order that He may establish the second *covenant*; **by Whose will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**…. But He, after offering **one sacrifice for sins for ever**, sat down at *the* right hand of God. Since

that time, He is waiting until His enemies are placed *as* a footstool for His feet. For **by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified**" (Heb. 10:1, 4, 9-10, 12-14).

The Meaning of the Goat for Azazel: First, we need to realize that "Azazel" is another name for Satan the devil. Beginning with Adam and Eve unto this day, Satan and his demons have led all human beings into sin. He is a liar and the author of sin (John 8:44), as well as the "god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4). Although it is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we have our sins forgiven, **Satan, as the originator of sin, must be removed** in order to fulfill God's plan for mankind. Through His sacrificial death and His resurrection, the living Jesus Christ has triumphed over Satan, his demons and their power: "After stripping the principalities and the powers, He made a public spectacle of them, *and* has triumphed over them **in it** [that is, through His life, death and resurrection]" (Col. 2:15).

Clearly, at the cross, Jesus triumphed over Satan and the demons—but they have not yet been removed. Until they are put away and prevented from influencing and deceiving human beings, there will never be an end to human sin (Rev. 12:9; Eph. 2:1-3; 6:10-17). Because **Satan is the author of all sin**, the high priest was to confess the sins of the children of Israel upon the head of the live goat, Azazel. The Azazel goat was not sacrificed because Satan and the demons are spirit beings and cannot die. Rather, they must bear their own sins, for there is no atonement for them.

The book of Revelation completes the picture—showing that the removal of the live goat into the wilderness by the hand of a fit man **symbolizes the removal of Satan the devil** just prior to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth. "Then I saw an angel [symbolized by the *fit man* of Leviticus 16] descending from heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a great chain in his hand. And he took hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him *for* a thousand years. Then he cast him into the abyss [symbolized by the *wilderness* of Leviticus 16], and locked him *up*, and sealed *the abyss* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were fulfilled; and after that it is ordained that he be loosed *for* a short time" (Rev. 20:1-3).

During the final generation of the Millennium, God will exile the incorrigibly wicked—those who refuse His salvation—to the geographical area of Gog and Magog. At the conclusion of the Millennium, Satan and his demons are released from the abyss for a short time—with one, final mission: to go out and deceive the wicked into gathering themselves to battle against Jerusalem. When they attack the holy city, however, fire comes down out of heaven from God and consumes them—which is their first death (verses 7-9).

The final judgment and second death of all the incorrigibly wicked from the creation of Adam and Eve will take place at a later time (Rev. 20:14-15).

The ultimate fulfillment of the Day of Atonement will include the

final judgment of Satan and the demons: "And the Devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *had been cast*; and they, *Satan and the demons*, shall be tormented day and night into the ages of eternity" (Rev. 20:10).

While Satan and the demons will be tormented day and night forever, apparently the lake of fire will not continue into eternity. Rather, their torment will be to live in the blackness of darkness forever: "*They are* clouds without water [the incorrigibly wicked], being driven by the winds; trees of late autumn, without *any* fruit, uprooted, twice dead [the second death in the lake of fire]; raging waves of *the* sea, casting up like foam their own *ignominious* shame; **wandering stars** [Satan and the fallen angels], **for whom has been reserved the blackest darkness forever**!" (Jude 12-13).

Becoming "At One" with God: An understanding of the term "atonement" leads to a deeper spiritual meaning of the Day of Atonement for true Christians. The word is made up of three parts—"at-one-ment"—meaning, "to be **at one** with God." When we fast (with no food or water), we become acutely aware of how utterly dependent we are on God for life, breath, food and water. We realize that God created everything to sustain our temporary physical lives, which are subject to death. We understand that we have no capacity within ourselves to live forever. The gift of eternal life can come *only* from God the Father through Jesus Christ—by His love, grace and mercy.

During one of David's fasts, he wrote these moving words, describing how he desired to be at one with God: "My soul longs, yea, even faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God…. O God, You are my God, **early I will seek You! My soul thirsts for You. My flesh longs for You, as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, to see Your power and Your glory—as I have seen You in the sanctuary. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You**.

"Thus I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips when I remember You upon my bed and meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows hard after You; Your right hand upholds me" (Psa. 84:2; 63:1-8).

When Jesus faced the agony of His torture and crucifixion, He kept His mind **fixed** on the Father's **promise** that His flesh would not see corruption—that He would be resurrected back to eternal life and be with the Father once again. "I have set the LORD always before Me because He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoices; My flesh also shall rest in hope, **for You will not abandon My soul to the grave; neither will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption**. You will make known to Me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore…. **As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be**

satisfied with Your likeness" (Psa. 16:8-11; 17:15).

In Jesus' passionate, agonizing prayer to the Father just before He was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, He epitomized the whole purpose of God for all who will receive **eternal life and be at one with God the Father and Himself** in the first resurrection: "Jesus spoke these words, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify Your own Son, so that Your Son may also glorify You; since You have given Him authority over all flesh, in order that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. **For this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You did send**.

" 'I have glorified You on the earth. **I have finished the work that You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me with Your own self, with the glory that I had with You before the world existed**. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You have given them to Me, and they have kept Your Word. Now they have known that all things that You have given Me are from You. For I have given them the words that You gave to Me; and they have received *them* and truly have known that I came from You; and they have believed that You did send Me. I am praying for them; **I am not praying for the world**, but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. All Mine are Yours, and all Yours *are* Mine; and I have been glorified in them.

" 'And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, those whom You have given Me, so that they may be one, even as We *are one.* When I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. I protected those whom You have given Me, and not one of them has perished except the son of perdition, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You; and these things I am speaking *while yet* in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in them.

" 'I have given them Your words, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them from the evil one. **They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in Your truth; Your Word is the truth**. Even as You did send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they also may be sanctified in *Your* truth.

" 'I do not pray for these only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word; **that they all may be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us**, in order that the world may believe that You did send Me. And I have given them the glory that You gave *to* Me, in order **that they be may one, in the same way *that* We are one: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one**; and that the world may know that You did send Me, and have loved

them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that those whom You have given Me may also be with Me where I am, so that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me; because You did love Me before *the* foundation of *the* world. Righteous Father, the world has not known You; but I have known You, and these have known that You did send Me. And I have made known Your name to them, and will make *it* known; **so that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them**' " (John 17:1-26).

In this beautiful and loving prayer, Jesus begins to reveal what it truly means to be "at one" with God and Jesus Christ for all eternity. In the last chapter of Revelation, the apostle John saw in vision how all those who receive eternal life will be "at one" with the Father and Christ for all eternity in the New Jerusalem. "And there shall be no more curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it [New Jerusalem]; and **His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face; and His name *is* in their foreheads**. And there shall be no night there; for they have no need of a lamp or *the* light of *the* sun, because *the* Lord God enlightens them; and they shall reign into the ages of eternity. And he said to me, 'These words *are* faithful and true; and *the* Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things that must shortly come to pass.' 'Behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed *is* the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book' " (Rev. 22:3-7).

This is the glorious meaning of the Day of Atonement for all true Christians who love and obey God the Father and Jesus Christ. Observing this special fast day in spirit and in truth brings us into the awesome reality of being "at one with God."

The Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles is a seven-day festival beginning on the fifteenth day and continuing through the twenty-first day of the seventh month (Lev. 23:34). Also called the "Feast of Ingathering," this festival **celebrates the completed harvest** of all the abundant blessings of God (Ex. 23:16; 34:22). Additionally, God commanded the children of Israel to **dwell in booths for the seven days of the feast** to remind them that they dwelt in booths, or tents, when God brought them out of the land of Egypt (Lev. 23:39-43).

This feast also commemorates God Himself dwelling with Israel by placing His presence in the tabernacle (Ex. 25:8) and later the Temple (II Chron. 5:11-14). For Israel, this feast also pictured the time when God had given them rest from their enemies after they settled in the Promised Land during Joshua's time (Josh. 21:43-44).

The primary Old Testament fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles occurred during Solomon's reign when all twelve tribes of the children of Israel were settled in the kingdom. At that time, they celebrated a seven-day feast to dedicate the temple, after which they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles (II Chron. 7:8-11). For a brief time, Israel was the model nation God

had intended them to be, representing Him to all the world. Thus, they were in the Promised Land; they had rest from their enemies, plus the abundant blessings of God; and He was dwelling among them with His presence in the temple—all a type of the coming Kingdom of God under Jesus Christ.

The New Testament Is the Key to Understanding: When Jesus first appeared to the disciples after His resurrection, He gave them clear discernment of the Scriptures: "And He said to them, 'These *are* the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all *the* things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and *in the* Prophets and *in the* Psalms must be fulfilled.' Then **He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures**" (Luke 24:44-45).

From Luke's account, we recognize that Jesus is the one Who unlocks the hidden meanings of Old Testament teachings and prophecies. After all, as God of the Old Testament, Christ was the one Who inspired the Old Testament writers; He was also the one Who inspired the apostles to write the words of the New Testament (II Tim. 3:15-17). **Thus, the New Testament interprets the Old Testament**.

Likewise, it is the New Testament that interprets the meaning of all of God's feasts and holy days—providing insight into the little-understood plan of God (Eph. 1:8-10; 3:1-5), and opening our understanding of the Word of God.

What follows is a short summary of the Feast of Tabernacles, viewed through the perspective of the New Testament.

The Meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles in the New Testament: The Scriptures teach that the Feast of Tabernacles held a special meaning for Jesus Christ during His fleshly life—because He was literally God in a human "tabernacle," dwelling with men. The apostle John concisely authenticates Who Jesus was, and why He came in the flesh: "In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him…. **And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us** (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and truth…. Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:1-3, 14, 29).

In John chapter seven, we find Jesus preparing to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. At that time, because the Jews sought to kill Him, He instructed His mother and brothers to go on ahead of Him to Jerusalem. Thus, Jesus traveled in secret, and did not reveal His presence until the middle of the feast when He began to teach the people. On this occasion, He revealed the profound truth that **all of His teachings were from the Father**: "But then, about the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and was teaching. And the Jews were amazed, saying, 'How does this man know letters, having never been schooled?' [He was taught by the Father, not in rabbinical schools.] Jesus answered them and said, 'My

doctrine is not Mine, but His Who sent Me. **If anyone desires to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is from God, or *whether* I speak from My own self**. The one who speaks of himself is seeking his own glory; but He Who seeks the glory of Him Who sent Him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him' " (John 7:14-18).

Jesus emphasized that He had come from God the Father in heaven: "Then Jesus spoke out, teaching in the temple and saying, '**You know Me, and you also know where I come from; yet I have not come of Myself; but He Who sent Me is true, Whom you do not know. But I know Him because I am from Him, and He sent Me**.' Because of this *saying*, they were looking *for a way* to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him because His time had not yet come. Then many of the people believed in Him, saying, 'When the Christ comes, will He do more miracles than those that this *man* has done?' The Pharisees heard the crowds debating these things about Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to arrest Him" (verses 28-32).

Following this encounter with the Jews and Pharisees, Jesus declared that He would be with them only a while longer, confirming that He was "tabernacling" among them. "Then Jesus said to them, 'I am with you yet a little while, and *then* I go to Him Who sent Me. You shall seek Me, but shall not find *Me*; and where I am *going*, you are not able to come' " (verses 33-34).

As Jesus told the Jews during the Feast of Tabernacles, He was God "manifested in the flesh" (I Tim. 3:16)—temporarily dwelling among men (or as John wrote, He "tabernacled among us"), teaching the Word of God, and ultimately destined to give His life to save mankind from sin and Satan. *Then* after His resurrection He would return to God the Father in heaven.

As the Lord God of the Old Testament, Jesus created Adam and Eve, and they dwelt in the Garden of Eden with Him. After they had sinned, however, they were driven from His presence and no longer allowed to dwell with Him. Later, God dwelt among the children of Israel by placing His presence in the holy of holies in the tabernacle or temple. In the end, however, that too proved unworkable, as the temples were all destroyed because of sin.

But since Pentecost, 30 AD, God has begun to dwell—*to tabernacle*—through the Holy Spirit in each truly converted Christian.

True Christians Are a Tabernacle or Dwelling Place for God: For converted members of the body of Christ—who have the indwelling of God's Spirit—the Feast of Tabernacles also has a special, personal meaning. There exists a unique, spiritual relationship between true believers, God the Father and Jesus Christ—by and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Upon conversion, when we receive the begettal of the Holy Spirit of God, we **become a special dwelling place for God**—a tabernacle or temple of God! As Paul writes, "Don't you understand that you are God's temple, and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling in you? If anyone defiles the temple of

God, God shall destroy him because the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (I Cor. 3:16-17).

Today, God no longer dwells in a physical tabernacle or temple made by human hands—He dwells in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. In fact, Jesus promised: "**If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him**. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me" (John 14:23 -24). And again, "Dwell in Me, and I in you" (John 15:4). Also see Galatians 2:20.

In his first general epistle, John wrote concerning this special indwelling of the Holy Spirit: "No one has seen God at any time. *Yet*, if we love one another, **God dwells in us**, and His own love is perfected in us. By this *standard* **we know that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us**…. And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. **God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him**. **By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love *of God* is perfected within us**, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world" (I John 4:12-13, 16-17).

At the present time, our fleshly bodies are likened to a temporary tabernacle. However, in order to live with God forever, we need to be clothed with eternal life—changed from fleshly beings to spirit beings. "For we who are in *this* tabernacle [this fleshly body] truly do groan, being burdened; not that we wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon so that the mortal *flesh* may be swallowed up by life [in the resurrection (I Cor. 15:49-50)]. Now He Who is working out this very thing for us *is* God, Who has also given us the earnest of the Spirit" (II Cor. 5:4-5).

In addition, although we live *in* this world (society), Jesus said that we are **not *of* this world** (John 17:14-15). Likewise, as Paul admonished the Corinthians, we are to be separate from the world and its ways: "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common? And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness? And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols? **For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: 'I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people**. Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,' says *the* Lord, 'and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; and I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,' says *the* Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:14-18).

It is through the indwelling of the Spirit of God that we receive the power to overcome sin and to develop the character of God for eternal life. Paul emphasizes the central importance of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to overcome the pulls of the flesh and human nature; to develop

godly character and receive eternal life at the first resurrection: "However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, **if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you**. But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. Now if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, **the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness**.

"Now if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you. So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to *the* flesh; because if you are living according to *the* flesh, you shall die; but **if by *the* Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live**. For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God. Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him" (Rom. 8:9-17). In the resurrection, we will each be glorified with a new, *spiritual*, **permanent dwelling** as it were—with an immortal, incorruptible, eternal spirit body and mind (I Cor. 15:35-55). With this glory, we will shine like the stars of heaven (Dan. 12:2-3; Matt. 13:43; Gen. 15:5).

Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, we become special, *temporary* tabernacles or temples for God's abode—until the resurrection, when we receive the fullness of our inheritance. "In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:13-14).

While we now enjoy this special relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, we are looking forward to **dwelling with Them in the New Jerusalem**—and with all the spiritual family of God in the Kingdom of God for all eternity. "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is" (I John 3:1-2).

This confirms another promise Jesus made to His disciples—that He would prepare a special dwelling place for them in the New Jerusalem. On the night of His last Passover Jesus told His disciples: "In My Father's house [the New Jerusalem] are many [permanent, eternal] dwelling places; if it were otherwise, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; so that where I am, you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

This then is the *unique*, spiritual meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles for all true Christians—a dwelling place with God, *now* and **for all eternity**.

The Prophetic Fulfillment of Tabernacles for All Nations

As with the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement, the book of Revelation is the key that unlocks the prophetic meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles. After Jesus Christ and the resurrected saints return to the earth from the sea of glass, the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire and their armies are destroyed, as pictured by the Feast of Trumpets (Rev. 19:11-21). Then, Satan and the demons are bound in the abyss, as portrayed by Atonement (Rev. 20:1-3).

What follows these two climactic events epitomizes the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles: Jesus Christ and the saints **establish the Kingdom of God** and rule the world for a thousand years. "And I saw thrones; and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and those who did not worship the beast, or his image, and did not receive the mark in their foreheads or in their hands; **and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years**…. This *is* the first resurrection. **Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection**; over these the second death has no power. But **they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years**" (Rev. 20:4-6).

Jesus Christ as King of the World: Before Christ's crucifixion, Pilate interrogated Him, asking if He was "the King of the Jews." Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, so that I might not be delivered up to the Jews. However, My kingdom is not of this world." Pilate then asked, "Then You are a king?" Again, Jesus replied, "*As* you say, I am a king. **For this *purpose* I was born, and for this *reason* I came into the world**, that I may bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." (See John 18:33, 36-37.)

With His answer, Jesus laid bare the *truth* that He had indeed fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says, "**For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government** [of the Kingdom of God] **shall be upon His shoulder**; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. **Of the increase of *His* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and over His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with** judgment and with righteousness from henceforth, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this" (Isa. 9:6-7). "**And the LORD shall be King over all the earth**" (Zech. 14:9).

The millennial reign of Jesus Christ as King will bring a righteous world government over all nations. The heavens and earth will rejoice: "Say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns, and the world shall be established; it shall not be moved; He shall judge the people with righteousness.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness of it. Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it; then shall all the trees of the forest rejoice before the LORD; for He comes, **for He comes to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with His truth**' " (Psa. 96:10-13).

When Jesus establishes the Kingdom of God on earth, His capital city will be Jerusalem. All wars will cease. There will be universal peace, and man will rebuild the desolate cities: "And it shall come to pass, in the last days the mountain [kingdom] of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains [kingdoms], and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more…. And they will build the old wastes, they will raise up the desolations of former times. And they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations" (Isa. 2:2-4; 61:4).

God will even change mankind's nature—from its present carnal hostility toward Him and His righteous, perfect laws, to a nature of obedience and love. All people will be offered the opportunity for salvation and eternal life. "And I will sprinkle clean waters upon you, and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from your idols. **And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh**, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My ordinances and do *them*. And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers. And you shall be My people, and I will be your God" (Ezek. 36:25-28).

The knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the seas do today. People will enjoy unbelievable wealth and the private ownership of land. "And there shall come forth a shoot out from the stump of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. And His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. And He shall not judge according to the sight of His eyes, nor after the hearing of His ears. But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins.

"Also the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the cub lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the viper's den. **They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea**…. For bronze **I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver; and for wood I will bring bronze, and for stones, iron**…. **Violence will no more be heard in your land**, *neither* wasting nor ruin within your borders; but you will call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise" (Isa. 11:1-9; 60:17-18). Also, "they shall sit each one under his *own* vine and under his *own* fig tree; and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken" (Micah 4:4).

All nations will keep the Sabbath and holy days of God: " 'And it shall come to pass, that from one month to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me,' says the LORD" (Isa. 66:23). "And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came up against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16).

As the Feast of Tabernacles pictured the great ingathering harvest for Israel, the coming millennial reign of Jesus Christ and the saints (as kings and priests) will be a great spiritual harvest of God. During this one-thousand-year period, literally billions of people will be converted—and at the end of their lives, they will receive immortality as they enter the spiritual Kingdom of God for all eternity. "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, *the* new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from heaven say, '**Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men; and He shall 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 every tear from their eyes; and *there* shall be no more death, or sorrow, or crying; neither shall *there* be any more pain, because the former things have passed away**.' And He Who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' Then He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful' " (Rev. 21:1-5).

From the beginning of creation, the whole plan and purpose of God has been simply to dwell with His people—His spiritual family—for all eternity. It is the desire of God the Father and Jesus Christ to unselfishly share the endless wealth of the universe with their family. Thus, the Feast of Tabernacles pictures **a major stage in the fulfillment of God's master plan**.

However, the Feast of Tabernacles does not *complete* God's plan. There is one more holy day—the "**eighth day**" following the Feast of Tabernacles—which will consummate the awesome plan of God. In Chapter Thirteen we will examine the scriptures that fully explain the meaning of this little-understood **eighth day**, called the "Last Great Day" (John 7:37).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

God's Greatest Mystery of the Ages Revealed in the Eighth Day— the Last Great Day

When viewing the panorama of human history—from individuals to great civilizations, from the forgotten, unwanted and rejected to the famous, idolized and celebrated—one is compelled to ask, "Why is there life and death, good and evil? Why does God allow and/or cause disasters, floods, tidal waves, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, destruction, war, famine, pestilence, sickness, disease, pain and suffering, violence and death to befall all mankind throughout every generation and civilization?"

If God is a God of love, why does He not stop or prevent the wretchedness and misery of human suffering and accidental death—especially of innocent children and babies—and the abortion of the unborn? Why does God allow rape, murder, sadistic torture and cruelties of man against man—the strong against the weak, the wicked against the righteous? If God really hears the mournful cries of desperate humans suffering such horrific tragedies, disasters, sicknesses and death, why does He not intervene?

Throughout the ages, questions of life and death have haunted mankind—especially religionists and philosophers. Attempting to find answers to these mysterious realities of human life and death, men often find themselves separated from the true knowledge of God. As a result, men have cultivated countless theories and religious philosophies about the nature of God—as well as about the origin and purpose of life, the immortal soul, heaven, hell, purgatory and reincarnation. In the final analysis, however, they all admit that they simply do not have the answers to these seemingly inexplicable mysteries of life and death—and in particular, the ultimate mystery of all—*why death?*

Why Do Human Beings Die?

When a person dies, we are at once confronted with the ultimate weakness and the absolute helplessness of being human. Death brings us face-to-face with the stark reality that human life is temporary, and that no person has the power to escape death. Why does an immortal, eternal God of love consign the apex of His creation—man and woman made in His image and likeness—to death? Before we can appreciate the biblical answer, we need to understand why people die.

In the beginning, when He created Adam and Eve, "And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them

have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that crawls upon the earth.' And God created man in His *own* image, in the image of God He created him. He created them **male** and **female**. And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'… And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, *it was exceedingly* good" (Gen. 1:26-28, 31). Everything that God created on the earth had been given to man to be used for his benefit. What a tremendous blessing God gave to mankind—dominion over the entire world!

Subsequent details regarding the creation of Adam and Eve are described in Genesis Two. As the account shows, Adam was created first: "Then the LORD God formed man *of the* dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7). God then created Eve, his wife, from one of Adam's ribs. He also gave them minds with full intelligence, freedom of choice and a fully functioning language (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:2-3).

God made man in His image and likeness, but of an inferior nature. Of all the creatures created to dwell on earth, only man has been given the attributes of God—including the mental ability to think and reason, to speak, write, plan, create, build, teach, learn, judge and rule. God gave human beings the capacity to love, hate, laugh, cry, forgive, repent and experience every type of emotion. All of these are godlike characteristics which humanity is privileged to possess, howbeit inferior to God.

Man is able to exercise these godlike attributes because he has been given a unique spiritual dimension that God did not give to the rest of His earthly creation. Every human being has this quality, which makes each one "a little lower than God" (Psa. 8:1-5). The Bible describes this spiritual aspect as the "spirit of man," **which is not an immortal soul**. It is this spiritual dimension of the mind that imparts human life and intelligence (Job 32:8, 18; 33:4; Zech. 12:1; I Cor. 2:11 and James 2:26). (See Appendix K, "What Happens to the Dead?," page 334.)

Though they were made of the dust of the earth, both Adam and Eve were created in a state of innocence—sinless and blameless before God. They were not yet subject to the penalty of death, because they had not sinned (Gen. 2:25). In contrast, neither did they yet possess eternal life, because they had not eaten of the tree of life.

Adam and Eve—Free Moral Agents with the Power to Choose

God created Adam and Eve as free moral agents—with the power of intelligence, independent thought and personal choice. He has since given the same to every human being. The ultimate choice that each must decide is whether to love and obey God. As Creator and Lawgiver, God has decreed

that the penalty for disobedience to His commands is death. However, through faith, love and obedience, God grants the gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23). When God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden, He gave him clear instructions. He also gave Adam distinct choices as depicted by the two trees. "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. **The tree of life also was in the middle of the garden, and the tree of *the* knowledge of good and evil**.… And the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it" (Gen. 2:8-9, 15). The tree of life represented the way of God that leads to eternal life. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil symbolized the way of sin, disobedience and death.

God warned Adam that the consequences of making the wrong choice would be death. "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree in the garden, but you shall not eat of the tree of *the* knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat of it in dying you shall surely die' " (Gen. 2:16-17).

Enter Satan, Sin and Death: God must have thoroughly instructed Adam and Eve about His laws and commandments and the path to eternal life before allowing Satan the devil, in the form of a serpent, to tempt them. They were acutely aware that if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would be subject to death (Gen. 3:3).

When the serpent entered the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had to determine who they would believe and obey—God or Satan. They had to decide between the commandments of God or the blatant lies of Satan. It was their decision. Would they trust in God and choose His way—the way of life? Or would they believe Satan and choose the way that seemed right to them—the way of sin and death? (See Prov. 14:12; 16:25.)

The Bible records that Adam and Eve elected to believe Satan. Had they believed God, they could have rejected Satan's lying temptations. Believing Satan's lies, they chose to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "And the serpent said to the woman, 'In dying, you shall not surely die! For God knows that in the day you eat of it, then **your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, deciding good and evil**.' And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it was pleasing to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. And the eyes of both of them were opened" (Gen. 3:4-7).

The Consequences of Adam and Eve's Sin: First, their sin brought God's judgment upon the serpent—Satan (Gen. 3:14). The Lord God then promised a future Savior to die for the sins of Adam and Eve, as well as the sins of their offspring (verse 15). Finally, He pronounced His judgment against Adam and Eve: "To the woman He said, 'I will greatly increase your sorrow and your conception—in sorrow shall you bring forth children. Your desire shall be toward your husband, and he shall rule over you.' And to

Adam He said, 'Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree—of which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat *of* it!"—the ground *is* cursed for your sake. In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life. It shall also bring forth thorns and thistles to you, and *thus* you shall eat the herbs of the field; in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread **until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return**' " (verses 16-19).

When their eyes were opened to "decide" good and evil for themselves what was good and evil, their eyes became closed to the way of God and His righteousness—not only for themselves, but also for all their progeny. Moreover, Adam and Eve were denied access to the tree of life. "And the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to decide [what is] good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever—' Therefore, **the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden** to till the ground from which he had been taken. And He drove out the man, and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life" (verses 22-24).

With Adam and Eve's first acts of disobedience, sin entered the world. Primarily, they lost their innocence and their human nature was changed to a nature of sin and death. As Paul explains, this nature of sin and death became an inherent part of their very being, and through heredity has passed on to all mankind. "Therefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and by means of sin *came* death; and in this way, death passed into all mankind [as part of their heredity]; *and it is* for this reason that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

Using himself as an example, Paul described man's sinful nature as the "sin *that is* dwelling within me … **a law within my own members**, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to **the law of sin that is within my own members**" (Rom. 7:17, 23). Though he could know and do good, sin was always present to defeat the good that he desired to do: "Consequently, I find this law *in my members*, that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me" (Rom. 7:21).

Paul further characterizes carnal human nature as irrevocably subject to "the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). Consequently, all humans are naturally hostile to the laws of God: "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can *it be*. But those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God" (verses 7-8).

This is the reason all human beings sin and die: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23) —and, "in Adam all die" (I Cor. 15:22).

In the final analysis, our inherited human nature is a mixture of good and evil with the downward pull of the "law of sin and death." Because of the deceitfulness of the human heart and mind (Jer. 17:9), very few people would be willing to admit that humans are basically evil. Instead, the average person feels that he or she is essentially good and only tends to look at

the apparent good of their behavior. As humans, we are inclined to excuse our sinfulness and inner evil thoughts, and to justify ourselves as good. "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirits" (Prov. 16:2).

As a result, people view mankind as a whole as good, sincere, loving and mostly law-abiding. Indeed, those who practice good and help the needy and destitute with acts of kindness and mercy are genuine in their endeavors. These are the "good, sincere people" of the world who actually live by basic principles and have a sense of morality. Any good that they do can always be traced back to some form of the laws and commandments of God, as found in the Holy Bible. However, that does not mean they are called of God the Father and Jesus Christ unto salvation—though they may profess a form of Christianity and even attend church. From a human perspective, the observation and experience that humans are fundamentally good appears to be valid—especially when compared to the evil and wickedness of those who commit heinous crimes.

Paradoxically, the Bible portrays human nature much differently: "For we have already charged both Jews and Gentiles—ALL—*with* being under sin … for there is not a righteous one—not even one! There is not one who understands; there is not one who seeks after God.… For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:9-11, 23).

God's perspective of mankind differs from the way we look at ourselves in that God looks primarily at the human spirit. God judges man's behavior by the **intents of the heart**—and thus weighs our "heart" against the spirit-of-the-law requirements of His holy, righteous laws and commandments. People, however, tend to look only at exterior behavior, which on the surface appears good or actually is good. Such manifest good behavior does not erase the inherent evil nature of one's mind and heart. However, although a person may be righteous in their outward behavior—doing good as they see it, as did Job (Job 1:8)—they must come to repent deeply of their sins as he did (Job 42:1-6).

Because we all die in Adam, even those who are redeemed, converted and receive God's salvation in this life must still die and await the resurrection at Jesus' second coming. (See Appendix K, "What Happens to the Dead?" p. 334.)

Salvation from Adam to Jesus' Second Coming

After Adam and Eve sinned, God promised a Redeemer would come to save mankind from their sins. He then drove them from the Garden of Eden and cut off access to the tree of life—showing that salvation for mankind in general was withheld until a future time when the Savior would come (Gen. 3:24). At that point God determined that He would call only a select few to receive salvation—only those who would truly love and obey Him—from that time forward until the prophesied death of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, in 30 AD.

The Bible lists a few righteous men who lived prior to the flood who will be resurrected to eternal life with the saints at Jesus' return. They are Abel, Enoch and Noah (Heb. 11:4-7), and some of the other patriarchs listed in Genesis 5. God turned the rest of humanity over to their own devices to learn the lesson that the consequences of man's way without God, in rebellion against Him, results in misery, suffering and death (Prov. 14:12).

Irresponsibly, they choose to follow the way of Cain. The generation preceding the flood was exceedingly evil, wicked and sinful: "And the LORD saw that the **wickedness of man *was* great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually**. And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved in His heart. And the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the crawling thing, and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them.'... **Now the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence**. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt—**for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth**. And God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them. And, behold, I will destroy them *with* the earth' " (Gen. 6:5-7, 11-13).

Because Noah found grace in the sight of God, He spared Noah, his wife, and their three sons with their wives, from the flood—as well as various animals and living creatures that God sent to Noah to put into the ark. Approximately 1656 years after God created Adam and Eve, He destroyed all life with the universal deluge (Gen. 6:14-8:13). With the exception of a few righteous men from Adam to Noah, God deliberately withheld salvation from mankind. **They all lived and died without an opportunity for salvation. Are these lost forever or will God yet give them an opportunity for salvation? If so, how and when will He do it? As we will discover, the answers are found in the meaning of the Last Great Day**.

After the Flood: In God's covenant with Noah and his descendents, He promised that although man's heart was evil from his youth onward, He would never again severely curse the ground nor destroy all life: "[T]he LORD said in His heart, 'I will not again curse the ground for man's sake—although **the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth**; and I will not again smite every living thing as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.' And God blessed Noah and his sons, and He said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth' " (Gen. 8:21-9:1).

While God did not offer spiritual salvation to the descendents of Noah's sons, He required that they obey Him and keep His laws and commandments in the letter of the law. However, because of human nature, it did not take long for mankind, under the sway of Satan and his demons, to once again rebel against God. In the third generation following the flood, Nimrod and his wife Semiramis led most of mankind into apostasy against God and promoted the worship of Satan as god. At the pinnacle of this rebellion, Nimrod's kingdom of Babel was established by ruthless conquest.

Genesis gives this account: "And Cush begat Nimrod. He began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter against the LORD. Therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod—the mighty hunter against the LORD.' And the beginning of his kingdom was **Babel** and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar" (Gen. 10:8-10).

To usurp God's authority and dominion, they sought to build a tower to reach into the heavens. "And the whole earth was of one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they traveled from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar. And they settled there. And they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, 'Come, let us build us a city and a tower, *with* its top reaching into the heavens. And let us establish a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth.'

"And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men had built. And the LORD said, 'Behold, **the people *are* one and they all have one language. And this *is only the beginning of* what they will do—now nothing which they have imagined to do will be restrained from them**. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they cannot understand one another's speech.' So the LORD scattered them abroad from that place upon the face of all the earth. And they quit building the city. Therefore the name of it is called Babel, because the LORD confused the language of all the earth there. And from there the LORD scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (Gen. 11:1-9).

Ancient secular history records that when God scattered the people around the entire world, they took with them their false gods, their religion and the government of Nimrod and Semiramis. In Alexander Hislop's epochal book, *The Two Babylons*, he meticulously documents from a myriad of ancient records that the biblical account in Genesis One through Eleven is accurate.

In spite of the evil and rebellion of mankind, God continued to manifest Himself to successive generations through His creation and His laws that govern the heavens and earth and the human physical environment. God further revealed Himself to men through His Word—His commandments and laws. But since men did not want to retain God in their knowledge, humanity became increasingly sinful. Ultimately, God gave them over to reprobate minds and abandoned them to their own lusts and idolatry, to learn the ultimate lesson that man's way leads to death and only God's way leads to life (Rom. 1:18-32). From the time of Adam and Eve to this day, God has left mankind to their own devices under the sway of Satan—to live and die, to develop their own societies, civilizations, religions and laws with Satan as their god (Rom. 1:18-32; Eph. 2:1-3; II Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9). The history of the Bible and the world verifies this to be true.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Israel: In 1940 BC, approximately 300 years after the flood, God called Abraham and established His covenant with him and his descendents Isaac and Jacob, also named Israel, who had

twelve sons from whom came the twelve tribes of Israel. Some 454 years later, in 1486 BC, God called Moses to lead the children of Israel out of their Egyptian slavery.

When God established His covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, He did not make the Holy Spirit available to them nor did this covenant include the promise of eternal life. Rather, God required that the children of Israel obey Him in the letter of the Law. Accordingly, they received physical blessings and national greatness for obedience and cursings for disobedience. Although worded differently, the choices God set before the twelve tribes of Israel were identical to the choices He set before Adam and Eve: "Behold, **I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil, in that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply. And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it**.

"But if your heart turn away so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. **I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live**, that you may love the LORD your God, *and* may obey His voice, and may cleave to Him; for He is your life and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give it to them" (Deut. 30:15-20).

This cycle of blessing and cursing continued with the children of Israel and the Jews until the promised Savior came. In Hebrews Chapter Eleven, the apostle Paul lists those few who received salvation and the promise of eternal life from the time of Abel to Jesus Christ's first coming. In addition, Peter informs us that the prophets of God were included among those God called in a special way to receive salvation unto eternal life (I Pet. 1:10-12). All of these will be in the first resurrection, along with all the New Covenant apostles and saints (Rev. 11:18).

What Is God Going to Do?

From the creation of Adam and Eve until the first coming of Jesus Christ, the vast majority of all mankind has lived and died without the knowledge of the true God. Selectively, from Jesus' first coming, some have been called to redemption and salvation. Relatively few, however, have truly repented and become converted (Matt. 7:13-14; 22:14). Historically, the majority of humanity has consistently refused to believe and obey God. Deliberately, God has given mankind over to unbelief—to their own devices under the sway of Satan (Deut. 5:29; 29:1-4; Eph. 2:1-3; II Cor. 4:3-4; II Thess. 2:11; Rev. 12:9).

As Jesus explained to His disciples, those who refused to hear or believe Him and His teachings would be blinded, kept from spiritual understanding and given over to unbelief. In addition, they would lose what little discernment they already had. However, Jesus told His disciples that they would be given an abundance of understanding: "For whoever has *understanding*, to him more shall be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have *understanding*, even what he has shall be taken away from him." He continued: "For this *reason* I speak to them in parables, because seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, 'In hearing you shall hear, and in no way understand; and *in* seeing you shall see, and in no way perceive; for the heart of this people has grown fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and should hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them' " (Matt. 13:12-15).

What Jesus declared was a mystery! He purposely blinded the unbelievers and closed their understanding so they could not be converted. Some might ask, "Doesn't it seem unfair that God would call some to salvation and exclude others?" From a raw human perspective, it does appear that God is unrighteous and partial if He only grants eternal life to the few He calls and rejects all others with no hope whatsoever of salvation. As Paul writes, "But Isaiah cried out concerning Israel, 'Although the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, **a remnant shall be saved**' " (Rom. 9:27).

What an incredible statement! What about the rest of Israel and the remaining nations of the world? Is God only going to save the remnant of Israel and those few that He has called to the exclusion of all others? By showing such partiality, is God unfair and unrighteous? Concerning these very questions, Paul declares, "What then shall we say? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? MAY IT NEVER BE!" (Rom. 9:14.)

Why then has God turned most of humankind over to spiritual blindness and unbelief? Paul gives an answer: "**For God has given them all over to unbelief in order that He might show mercy to all**" (Rom. 11:32). Down through the ages the billions of people that God has deliberately blinded and given over to unbelief have died. How, then, is it possible for God to show them mercy and offer them salvation?"

Does God Contradict Himself? Within the space of a few verses, Paul seems to contradict Jesus' statement that most have been blinded and given over to unbelief. He also seems to contradict his own account that only "a remnant will be saved." He declares, "**So all Israel shall be saved**" (Rom. 11:26). And again, "[God] Who **desires all men to be saved** and to come to *the* knowledge of *the* truth…. He is long-suffering toward us, **not desiring that anyone should perish**, but that **all should come to repentance**" (I Tim 2:4; II Pet. 3:9).

How is God going to resolve these apparent discrepancies? In one place, He says that only a remnant will be saved. In another, He asserts that

all Israel will be saved and that **He desires for all to come to repentance and have salvation**. Since God cannot lie, how is He going to accomplish this?

The answers are found in the meaning of the Last Great Day (John 7:37). The Last Great Day in the Old Testament is simply called "the eighth day … [a] holy convocation … a Sabbath"—following the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:36, 39; II Chron. 7:8-10). It is the least mentioned (and consequently the least understood) of all the feasts and holy days of God. Yet, with God, that "which is least of all shall become great" (Luke 9:48; Matt. 13:32). More than any other holy day, this seemingly obscure "eighth day" has perhaps the greatest meaning for all of mankind.

As with the other fall festivals and holy days, the meaning of the Last Great Day could not be fully understood without Revelation 20. We saw earlier that Revelation 20 brings out the fact that the Feast of Tabernacles portrays the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Tabernacles pictures the unique, 1000-year period (often called the Millennium) which will offer universal salvation for all peoples and nations—with Christ as King and those of the first resurrection serving as kings and priests (Rev. 20:6).

At the beginning of the 1000-year period, Satan and his demons are to be locked into the abyss, a prison. At the conclusion of the Millennium, God's final judgment is executed against Satan and his angels—casting them into the lake of fire and sentencing them to the blackness of darkness forever, never again to be free (Rev. 20:10; Matt. 25:41; Jude 12-13).

However, the plan of God is not yet finished. Revelation Twenty depicts another final age of universal salvation portrayed by the eighth day—the Last Great Day. In biblical numerology, the number eight signifies a "new beginning" or a "new order of things … and thus [eight] stands for the NEW in contrast to the old" (Vallowe, *Biblical Mathematics*, p. 85). The meaning of this "eighth day" reveals a fantastic, yet little realized or understood aspect of God's magnificent plan of salvation for mankind. Indeed, it is a "new beginning" for the rest of the dead.

The Rest of the Dead Will Live Again—The Second Resurrection

It is by Jesus Christ that all will be resurrected back to life: "For as in Adam all die, so also **in Christ shall ALL BE MADE ALIVE**" (I Cor. 15:22). But each in his own order (verse 23). In addition to the first resurrection, Revelation 20:5 reveals that all the rest of the dead (who were not in the first resurrection) are also to live again: "But **the rest of the dead** did not **live again** until the thousand years were completed…."

This verse answers what has been a mystery to mankind—**the question of life after death**. What John was inspired to write in Revelation 20 confirms Jesus' declaration concerning the dead: "Truly, truly I say to you, *the* hour is coming, and now is, when **the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live**. For even as the Father has life in Himself, so also has He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and

has also given Him authority to execute judgment because He is *the* Son of man. Do not wonder at this, **for *the* hour is coming in which ALL WHO ARE IN THE GRAVES** [meaning all who have died regardless of circumstances] **shall hear His voice** and shall come forth: those who have practiced good unto a resurrection of life, and those who have practiced evil unto a resurrection of judgment" (John 5:25-29). In this passage, Jesus speaks of **two separate resurrections**, just as John describes in Revelation 20.

"The resurrection to life" is the first resurrection to eternal life as depicted by the firstfruit harvest of Pentecost. As immortal spirit beings, those of the first resurrection will not be subject to death: "Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection; over these **the second death has no power**" (Rev. 20:6).

The Second Resurrection—to Judgment: Revelation 20 shows that the resurrection to judgment—which Jesus spoke of in John 5:29—occurs a thousand years after the first resurrection. Rightfully, it can be designated as **the second resurrection**. It is also referred to as "The Great White Throne Judgment" (Rev. 20:11-12). Those in this resurrection will not be raised as spirit beings, with eternal life. Rather, they will be raised to a second life in the flesh—subject to death. God separates those in this resurrection into two distinct classes:

> **1)** From the creation of Adam and Eve to Christ's return—**all** who God did not call during their first lifetime, because God deliberately bound them to a life of spiritual blindness and unbelief, they did not commit the unpardonable sin. In God's gracious generosity, He resurrects them to **a second life in the flesh** to have their **first opportunity for salvation**. This includes **all**, whether young or old, who died untimely deaths as a result of war, disease, natural disasters, accidents, murder, suicide—as well as those who died as newborns, those stillborn and even those who suffered death by abortion.
>
> **2)** All those who, in their first lifetime, rejected the salvation of God and blasphemed against the Holy Spirit. Having committed the unpardonable sin, they will be raised back to physical life for their final judgment, to be cast into the lake of fire and die the second death. (See Appendix L, "What is the Unpardonable Sin?" p. 342.)

Forgivable and Unforgivable Sin: Jesus explained there are two categories of sin against God—forgivable and unforgivable. "I say to you, **every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men** except the blasphemy against the *Holy* Spirit; *that* shall not be forgiven to men. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but **whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming *age***" (Matt. 12:31-32; Mark 3:28-29).

The coming age Jesus spoke of is the period of the resurrection to judgment that occurs after the thousand years are complete (John 5:29; Rev. 20:5). Those who have committed forgivable sins will include all who God

did not call and were given over to spiritual blindness and unbelief (Matt. 13:10-15; Mark 4:11-12). Paul writes that they were given over to unbelief in order that God might have mercy upon them in a **coming age** (Rom. 11:32). These will be resurrected in the **first phase** of the second resurrection and have an opportunity for repentance and salvation. Finally, those who committed unforgivable sins will be resurrected in the **second phase** of the second resurrection.

Jesus added that this general resurrection of "the rest of the dead" will include people from all nations who lived out their first lives at different times throughout history. In fact, those from different nations and times will be raised back to life at the same time as the unbelieving Jews (and others) of Christ's generation. "*The* men of Nineveh [800 BC] shall stand up [be raised from the dead] **in the judgment with this generation** [the Jews of 28 AD] and shall condemn it, because they [those of Nineveh] repented at the proclamation of Jonah; and behold, a greater [one] than Jonah is here. *The* queen of *the* south [1000 BC] shall rise up [be raised from the dead] **in the judgment with this generation** [the Jews of 28 AD] and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater [one] than Solomon *is* here" (Matt. 12:41-42). Clearly, Jesus is referring to the resurrection of judgment—"the coming age"—which is reserved for the rest of the dead as described in Revelation 20.

The Valley of Dry Bones—A Prophecy of the Second Resurrection: When Paul wrote to the believers in Rome, he maintained that during this present age only, "a remnant of Israel will be saved." He further elaborated that "all Israel shall be saved"—although he did not fully understand when that would occur.

Centuries prior to Paul, God gave the prophet Ezekiel a vision of the time when all the dead of Israel would be resurrected to a second physical life to have their first opportunity for salvation. "The hand of the LORD was on me, and brought me by the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in **the midst of a valley, and it *was* full of bones** [these human bones showed that they once lived and had died]. And He made me walk among them all around. And behold, very many *were* in the open valley. And lo, *they were* very dry. And He said to me, 'Son of man, **can these bones live**?' And I answered, 'O Lord GOD, You know.'

"Again He said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, "O dry bones, hear the Word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones, '**Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews on you, and will bring up flesh on you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live. And you shall know that I *am* the LORD**.' " ' So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a noise. And behold, a shaking! And the bones came together, a bone to its bone. And as I watched, behold **the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them** above. But *there was* no breath in them.

"And He said to me, 'Prophesy to the wind, prophesy, son of man,

and say to the wind, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain that they may live.' " ' So I prophesied as He commanded me, and **the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army**. And He said to me, 'Son of man, **these bones are the whole house of Israel** [all the twelve tribes of Israel from all ages of time]. Behold, they say, "Our bones *are* dried and our hope is lost; we ourselves are completely cut off [for sins and transgressions]" ' " (Ezek. 37:1-11).

God instructed Ezekiel to continue prophesying: "Therefore prophesy and say unto them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, O My people, **I will open your graves** and cause you to come up out of your graves [a resurrection to a second life in the flesh], and will bring you into the land of Israel. **And you shall know that I *am* the LORD when I have opened your graves, O My people, and have brought you up out of your graves**. And I **shall put My Spirit** [of repentance, redemption and conversion] *in you*, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. And you shall know that I the LORD have spoken it and have done it," says the LORD' " (verses 12-14).

There can be no doubt that Ezekiel is graphically describing a resurrection to a second physical life, because the passage describes bones, sinew, flesh and breath—as well as refering to "graves" four times. These Scriptures emphasize the vital truth that the rest of house of Israel throughout history—which God had previously blinded because of unbelief—**will be resurrected to a second life in the flesh to be given their first opportunity for salvation**. It also confirms that in God's first covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, He did not offer them the Holy Spirit, salvation or eternal life (Deut. 5:29). However, because God purposely blinded them, they did not commit the unpardonable sin in their first lifetime. Therefore, upon repentance, God will forgive their sins.

When they do repent, God will give them His Holy Spirit. They will have their hearts changed, become converted and have a chance to receive eternal life. Notice: "And I will sprinkle clean waters upon you, and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from your idols. **And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you**. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My ordinances and do *them***" (Ezek. 36:25-27).

In these two phrases of Ezekiel 37:13-14—"you shall know that I *am* the LORD" and "I will put My Spirit within you"—God is demonstrating that these raised to life will receive their first opportunity for salvation and eternal life.

Jesus' statement about this resurrection to judgment—that "all who are in their graves" would hear His voice—is confirmed by Paul to also include Gentiles from all nations. "For as many as have sinned without law shall perish without law; and as many as have sinned within *the* law **shall be**

judged by *the* law" (Rom. 2:12). He adds that the Gentiles "which do not have *the* law, [yet] practice by nature the things contained in the law … are a law unto themselves" (verse 14). Thus, they too will be "judged by the law." When? Verse 16: "**In a day** [the second resurrection] **when God shall judge the secrets of men** by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." As with Israel, God has blinded all uncalled Gentiles and has chosen to not give them His Holy Spirit. Therefore, because they committed forgivable sins, God will likewise raise them back to a second physical life for an opportunity for salvation.

Why Resurrected to a Second Physical Life?

The billions of people who are raised back to physical life in the second resurrection will not have to contend with Satan the devil or his demonic angels. They will have already lived their first lives under the authority of the "god of this world." Revelation 20:10 shows that before the second resurrection occurs, Satan and his demons will have been judged, sentenced, cast into the lake of fire and, finally, consigned to the blackness of darkness forever (Jude 13).

Since the second resurrection period is the final age of salvation, those of that time will not reproduce because the cycle of human birth and death must come to an end. As we will see, however, there will be an innumerable number of children of all ages who will be raised in this resurrection who will grow up to be adults and qualify for salvation.

Those in the second resurrection will have new bodies and minds, but they will still have memories of their first lives. As prophesied in Ezekiel 37:11, when the Israelites are raised to physical life again, they will exclaim, "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts"—showing they understand that their first lives led them into spiritual blindness, lust and sin. But why is God going to raise them back to life as physical human beings again? What is the purpose of living a second life in the flesh?

All Must Qualify for Salvation or Reject It While Living in the Flesh: Because God created mankind in His image and likeness from the dust of the earth, it is His purpose that all must qualify for salvation (or reject it) while living in the flesh. As we have seen, however, because of sin, God has blinded the majority of mankind and cut them off from salvation—so that, in the end, He might have mercy upon them all. Since God is love and desires to grant salvation to all through Jesus Christ, He has determined that all those who committed forgivable sins in their first lives will be raised back to a second physical life for their **first and only opportunity for eternal life**. Down through history, the vast majority of people who have lived and died are in this category. Undoubtedly, there will be billions and billions of people in the first phase of the second resurrection. John writes: "Then I saw a great white throne and the one Who was sitting on it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and **no place was found for them**. And **I saw the dead** [the "rest of the dead" described in

verse 5], small and great, standing before God…" (Rev. 20:11-12).

During the final years of the Millennium the whole world will be prepared for the billions of people to be raised in the second resurrection. Those billions will immediately require housing, clothing, food, water, etc. In preparation, the whole earth will be transformed into a Garden of Eden—a fantastic utopia—ready and waiting to receive them.

When those of the judgment period are raised back to life, they **will repent** of their sins and God will forgive them. "And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers. And you shall be My people, and I will be your God. **I will also save you** from all your uncleannesses, and I will call for the grain, and will increase it, and will lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruits of the tree and the increase of the field, so that you shall never again receive the curse of famine among the nations. **And you shall remember your own evil ways, and your doings that *were* not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations**" (Ezek. 36:28-31).

With their sins forgiven, they will be begotten by God's Holy Spirit—the earnest of their salvation. Although they will be converted, they will still have human nature and be subject to sin. However, upon *true, heartfelt* repentance they will be forgiven (as long as they commit forgivable sins), and—because they will be living under the grace of God—the sacrifice of Jesus Christ will be a continual propitiation for their sins (Rom. 3:23-26; I John 1:7-10; 2:1-2). Furthermore, they will be given ample time to live in faith, hope, love and obedience to God the Father and Jesus Christ in order to qualify for eternal life.

How Long Will They Live? It takes time to overcome human nature, grow in spiritual knowledge, and develop faithful, godly character in order to qualify for eternal life. But how long will this take? How long will those in the judgment live? As we previously learned, people will live to be one hundred years old during the Millennium in order to prove whether they will faithfully live in love, devotion and obedience to God (Isa. 65:20). Based on this precedent, we can conclude that God will likewise grant those in the first phase of the second resurrection one hundred years in which to live their second life in the flesh. This will allow ample time to learn to love God the Father and Jesus Christ—to keep the laws and commandments of God, overcome human nature, build godly character and develop the deep abiding faith required for salvation—thereby qualifying for God's gracious gift of eternal life.

The Resurrection of Children, Infants and the Spirit of Man: The second resurrection will also include countless children of all ages who had their lives cut short by war, murder, sacrifice to satanic gods, violence, torture, rape, famine, disaster, disease or accident. In His great love and tender mercy, God will raise them all to a second physical life in which they will be able to enjoy their lives to the full, receive the salvation of God and qualify for eternal life. These innocent babies and children—who in their first life were often unloved, rejected, considered inconvenient, or "legally" mur-

dered—will become the loved, the accepted, the desired, and held and embraced in tender loving care.

What about babies that were aborted, miscarried, stillborn or died at birth—or newborn "throw-away" infants? The destruction of these innocent infants and the abortion of the unborn constitute one of the most heinous, fiendish works of Satan and his demons. What will God do for these most innocent ones? Are they lost forever? God the Father has promised that Jesus Christ will annul and completely undo all the works of Satan the devil (Heb. 2:14). Therefore, in His great love, tender mercy and forgiveness, God will raise them all back to a new physical life. Furthermore, **He will give them back** to their mothers and fathers in one of the most beautiful acts of redemption and reconciliation God could ever perform.

But, how will God raise the dead back to life? God is able to transform the dead back to physical life because, at conception, He gives to **each person** the "spirit of man"—which is also the spirit of life. This human spirit functions much like "spiritual DNA" in that it "records" everything that is unique about a person. In addition, this "spirit of man" is **permanently locked in at conception, thus no man can destroy it**.

This guarantees that from the instant of conception—the uniting of the father's sperm with the egg of the mother—the newly begotten human life has within itself everything he or she will need to become a living person. The spirit of man gives life and enables the physical development of a new human being in the mother's womb—directing the genes and chromosomes to form each boy or girl in a continuous process. Without this spirit of man there would be no life—or, as the apostle James writes, "[T]he body without *the* spirit is dead…" (Jas. 2:26).

When talking to Job, Elihu declared that he fully understood he was made by the spiritual power of God. "The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4). The prophet Zechariah tells us that God "forms the spirit of man within him" (Zech. 12:1).

While David was praying and meditating on how God created him in his mother's womb, he wrote, "For You have possessed my reins; **You have knit me together in my mother's womb**. I will praise You, for I am awesomely and wonderfully made; Your works are marvelous and my soul knows it very well. **My substance was not hidden from You when I was made in secret**…. **Your eyes did see my substance, yet being unformed; and in Your book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them**" (Psa. 139:13-16). The word "substance"—used by David to describe himself after he was conceived—is the identical word used today by so-called "modern science" to describe the initial mass of cells that begin developing immediately following conception.

More on the Spirit of Man: Since the spirit of man contains the complete master "genetic blueprint" of every individual from conception,

the only difference between a newly conceived person and a full grown man or woman is development and growth. Consequently, when the aborted and stillborn are raised to life, they will probably be resurrected as full term babies and given to their mothers and fathers, who will then lovingly care for them. They will grow up, live their lives to the full, and have an opportunity to be converted and qualify for eternal life.

However, the spirit of man is **not** an immortal soul. Neither does it have consciousness outside of a human brain. In order for it to function, the spirit of man must be united with the human brain. When a person dies, the thought process stops (Psa. 146:4), the spirit of man returns to God, and the body returns to dust. "Then [at death] the dust [from which man is made] shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). When Jesus died on the cross, His last words were, "Father into your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46; Matt. 27:50; John 19:30). (See Appendix K, "What Happens to the Dead?" p. 334.) The apostle Paul writes that after death the "spirit of man" is stored with God in heaven until the time of the resurrection (Heb. 12:23).

Through conversion, this human spirit is perfected by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit during the Christian's physical lifetime. For the dead who qualify for salvation in this age, God will use the perfected "spirit of man" to transform each resurrected saint into a glorious, spiritual, immortal body and mind, through the power of His Holy Spirit. (See Rom. 8:14-17; Phil. 3:20-21; I John 3:1-2.)

Likewise, Ezekiel 37 describes the second resurrection in which the entire house of Israel will be raised to a second physical life. Each will at that time be given a new physical body and a new mind reconstructed from the dust of the earth according to their unique "human spirit."

What Kind of Judgment Will They Receive? Before this question can be answered, we need to emphasize that today, during this age, true Christians are being judged by God according to their spiritual works only after they have repented of their sins, been baptized and received the Holy Spirit. Such are saved by the grace of God through faith: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, so that no one may boast. **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them**" (Eph. 2:8-10).

Consequently, once a person has been converted, they are to conduct their lives by walking in the good works of God—His laws and commandments. Through daily prayer and study, they are to spend the rest of their lives growing in grace and knowledge, and overcoming human nature and sin by the power of God's Holy Spirit in them. This is how a Christian develops godly character (II Pet. 1:3-11), loves God with all his or her heart, mind and strength, and qualifies for eternal life through the grace of God.

Although true Christians live in the love of God and stand in His grace, God judges them according to their spiritual works of faith, hope and

love. The apostle Peter writes that this judgment for eternal life is now on the people of God: "For the time *has come for* judgment [for eternal life] to begin with the household of God…" (I Pet. 4:17). Jesus also said, "The one who endures to *the* end, that one will be saved" (Matt. 24:13). In Jesus' messages to the seven churches, He repeatedly declares that everyone who is called to the first resurrection is being judged according to their works. Where their works are deficient or sinful, He calls them to repentance (Rev. 2-3).

Since God is not a respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11), those in the second resurrection will receive the same opportunity for salvation and eternal life. Christians in this age are continuously under God's judgment from the time of their conversion until they die in the faith. Likewise, God's judgment for eternal life of those of the second resurrection will not begin until they too repent of their sins, are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. They will then have to grow in grace and knowledge, develop godly character and be faithful for one hundred years—the end of their second life in the flesh.

Although eternal life is the gracious gift of God, each will be judged according to the spiritual works of his or her second physical life, not the sinful works of their first life. As John writes, "[*T*]*he* books [the books of the Word of God] were opened [to their understanding]; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life [an opportunity for salvation]. And the dead were judged [after their resurrection] out of the things written in the books [the Word of God], according to their works [in their second physical lives]. And the sea gave up the dead *that were* in it, and death and *the* grave gave up the dead *that were* in them; and they were judged individually, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12-13).

At the end of the one-hundred-year period, all that have qualified for eternal life will be instantaneously changed from flesh to spirit. They will enter the spiritual Kingdom of God as part of God's extended family—which by then will have expanded greatly, becoming "the nations which are saved" (Rev. 21-22). Jesus proclaims, "Blessed *are* those who keep His commandments, that they may have the right to eat *of* the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city [New Jerusalem]" (Rev. 22:14).

The Second Phase of the Second Resurrection and the Lake of Fire: While the vast majority of those in the first phase of the second resurrection will attain eternal life, there will be **some who will refuse** God's gracious gift of immortality. In so doing, they will have committed the unforgivable sin—blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of God the Father. At the end of the one hundred years, these will remain alive in the flesh for a while longer—until the rest of the dead who had previously committed the unpardonable sin will be resurrected. This second phase of the second resurrection will include all who had committed the unpardonable sin from Adam's time to the return of Jesus Christ and during the Millennium. They will be raised briefly to life in the flesh in order to receive their final judgment with all of the other incorrigibly wicked. (See Appendix L, "What is the Unpardonable Sin?" p. 342.)

Jesus sternly warned those who had received the Holy Spirit that if they did not have the godly, righteous works of love and obedience required for salvation, they would not receive eternal life. He warned that if anyone rejected God's salvation and blasphemed against the Holy Spirit of God, they would be rejected, accursed and cast into the lake of fire—the same fate that awaits Satan and his demons. "Then shall He also say to those on the left, 'Depart from Me, *you* cursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels' " (Matt. 25:41).

All those who have committed the unforgivable sin will not have their names written in the book of life—and will be cast into the lake of fire to die the second death. "And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was **cast into the lake of fire**" (Rev. 20:15). Verse 14: "And death and *the* grave were **cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death**." And again, "But *the* cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in **the lake that burns with fire and brimstone**; which is ***the* second death**… And nothing that defiles shall ever enter into it [the New Jerusalem], nor shall *anyone* who practices *an* abomination or *devises* a lie; but ***only* those who are written in the Lamb's book of life**" (Rev. 21:8, 27).

After the incorrigibly wicked are cast into the lake of fire, the fire will then expand to encompass the whole earth and its atmosphere. The apostle Peter writes: "However, the day of *the* Lord [for those who face the second death] shall come as a thief in *the* night in which heaven itself shall disappear with a mighty roar, and *the* elements shall pass away, **burning with intense heat, and *the* earth and the works in it shall be burned up**" (II Pet. 3:10). At that time, Peter adds, "*the* **heavens, being on fire, shall be destroyed, and *the* elements, burning with intense heat, shall melt**" (verse 12). Thus, the wicked will be consumed in the lake of fire.

The New Heaven and New Earth— The Final Fulfillment of the Last Great Day

Peter also writes that the earth and its atmosphere are to be burned up in preparation for a new heaven and a new earth: "But according to His promise, we look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (II Pet. 3:13).

Jesus Christ gave the apostle John a vision of the new heaven and new earth: "Then 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, *the* new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from heaven say, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men; and He shall 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 every tear from their eyes; and *there* shall be no more death, or sorrow, or crying; neither

shall *there* be any more pain, because the former things have passed away.' And He Who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' Then He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, 'It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the one who thirsts, I will give freely of the fountain of the water of life. **The one who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son**' " (Rev. 21:1-7).

The climactic fulfillment of the Last Great Day is the ushering in of the new heaven and earth. Thus, the "eighth day" (as the number eight signifies) is a "new beginning" in the plan of God—an open door to eternity. God then brings the New Jerusalem to the earth—to be the home of God the Father and Jesus Christ, His bride and all the saints in the first resurrection. This is the place Jesus told His disciples He would prepare for them (John 14:2).

Notice its glorious description: "And one of the seven angels that had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, 'Come here, *and* I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.' And he carried me away in *the* Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, holy Jerusalem [which is not the bride, but where the bride will dwell], descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. And her radiance *was* like a most precious stone, as crystal-clear *as* jasper stone. And *the* city also had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and inscribed on *the gates* were *the* names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On *the* east *were* three gates; on *the* north *were* three gates; on *the* south *were* three gates; on *the* west *were* three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and written on them *were the* names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

"And the one who was speaking with me had a golden measuring rod, so that he might measure the city, and its gates and its wall. And the city lies foursquare, for its length is as long as its breadth. And he measured the city with the rod, twelve thousand furlongs; the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured its wall, one hundred *and* forty-four cubits; *the* angel's measure *was according to* a man's. And the structure of its wall was jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like pure glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprasus; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; each of the gates respectively was a single pearl; and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as transparent *as* glass" (Rev. 21:9-21).

New Jerusalem will also be the ultimate fulfillment of the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles. God the Father and Jesus Christ will personally dwell with their spiritual family and, from this time on, there will be no temple: "And I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city has no need of the sun, or of the

moon, that they should shine in it; because the glory of God enlightens it, and the light of it *is* the Lamb. And the nations that are saved shall walk in its light; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor into it. And its gates shall never be shut by day; for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it" (Rev. 21:22-26).

New Jerusalem will become the capital city and center of the universe. It will always be filled with righteousness and the Holy Spirit of God, as John's final vision reveals: "Then he showed me a pure river of *the* water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb. *And* in the middle of *the* street, and on this side and that side of the river, *was the* tree of life, producing twelve *manner of* fruits, each month yielding its fruit; and the leaves of the tree *are* for *the* healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; **and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face; and His name is in their foreheads**.

"And there shall be no night there; for they have no need of a lamp or *the* light of *the* sun, because *the* Lord God enlightens them; and **they shall reign into the ages of eternity**. And he said to me, 'These words *are* faithful and true; and *the* Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things that must shortly come to pass. Behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed *is* the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book' " (Rev. 22:1-7).

God the Father and Jesus Christ plan to share the never-ending vastness of the universe with the immortal, spirit Family of God—in fulfillment of God's purpose for the majestic heavens He created (Rom. 8:17-18; Heb. 1:2-3). Indeed, the Last Great Day pictures a new beginning—an open door to eternity! AMEN

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Conclusion

In ***Part One*** of this book, we provided a well-documented, historical account of the major occult holidays observed around the world—as well as concerning the practice of Sunday-keeping by mainstream Orthodox Christendom. The evidence conclusively demonstrates that such days are entrenched in ancient **pagan sun worship**.

The majority of professing "Christianity"—*led astray in ignorance*—has simply accepted the observance of these days as part of the "Christian" liturgy. With sleight of hand and sanctimonious falsehoods, religious and authority figures have assured their followers that because these formerly pagan festivals have been officially "Christianized" by the church, they are free to celebrate them as acceptable "Christian" holidays.

In ***Part Two***, we analyzed the biblical perspective concerning occult holidays and Sunday-keeping, noting that **God absolutely condemns the observance of such days** and the false gods they actually represent. As the profound example of the children of ancient Israel and Judah illustrates—as well as in the case of professing "Christians" today—all must come to understand that it is *impossible* to worship the God of Truth with religious lies and myths rooted in occultism and the worship of Satan the devil.

In ***Part Three***, we surveyed the biblical, seventh-day Sabbath, holy days and feasts of God. As emphasized in *both* the Old and New Testaments, God has consistently commanded His people to obediently observe His seventh-day Sabbath, holy days and festivals. As we learned, God reveals His plan and purpose for mankind through the meaning of these days. **God gives this understanding to those who love Him** and obey His commandments—and who keep His feasts and holy days. This—*obedience to God's way of life*—is how true Christians are to worship God the Father and Jesus Christ in "spirit and truth."

Today, we are living in the "last days"—and will soon come face-to-face with the impending "crisis at the close of the age." The inconspicuous rise of the *final* world empire is already well under way—which will envelop all mankind into an evil New World Order. Numerous biblical prophecies depict just such a world-ruling system—led by the "Antichrist," a *false* Messiah—coupled with an amalgamation of the world's religions into a universal religion, all under the sway of a great "False Prophet."

Warning!
Open Satan Worship Will Sweep the World and Usher in the Antichrist!

Historically, Satan has cleverly manipulated false religion, occult practices and witchcraft in order to deceive and corrupt all civilizations. He continues, today, to **deceive the whole world** (Rev. 12:9) into following him and his way of evil as the undisputed god of this present age (II Cor. 4:4).

However, **Satan's final and greatest deception** is rapidly developing. Once reaching its zenith of satanic power, it will sweep all peoples and nations into blatant Satan worship—replete with false signs, miracles and lying wonders—all designed to usher in the Antichrist. Empowered by Satan himself, the False Prophet will call down fire from heaven, proclaiming the Antichrist as the savior of the world. With the exception of *true* Christians who have the Holy Spirit of God, **all the world will be utterly deceived** into believing that the Antichrist is indeed the manifestation of God in the flesh—the long-awaited Messiah.

The prophecies of the New Testament clearly show that this Antichrist will arise out of the world's extant political and religious system referred to in Scripture as the "mystery of lawlessness." The coming of the Antichrist will be a *spectacular* event. The apostle Paul warned of his coming: "Now we beseech you, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken in mind, nor be troubled—neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by epistle, as if from us, *saying* that the day of Christ is present. **Do not let anyone deceive you by any means because *that day will not* come unless the apostasy shall come first, and the man of sin shall be revealed—the son of perdition**, the one who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is an object of worship; so that he comes into the temple of God and sits down as God, proclaiming that he himself is God" (II Thess. 2:1-4).

Thus, the "man of sin" will be revealed "in his time," appearing just before Jesus Christ's second coming. "Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things? And now you understand what is holding *him* [the Antichrist] back **in order for him to be revealed in his own set time**. **For the mystery of lawlessness is already working**; only *there is* one Who is restraining at the present *time* until it arises out of *the* midst. And then the lawless one [the Antichrist] will be revealed (whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of His coming)" (verses 5-8).

It will be Satan's grand finale at the close of the age: "***Even* the one whose coming is according to *the* inner working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are perishing because they did not receive the love of the truth, so that they might be saved. And for this cause, God will send upon them a powerful deception that will cause them to believe *the***

lie, so that all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but who took pleasure in unrighteousness" (verses 9-12).

Confirming what Paul wrote, Jesus Christ gave the apostle John a startling vision (recorded in the book of Revelation) of the coming New World Order and of the Antichrist who will arise out of that system. John depicted this **political system** as a "beast" with "seven heads and ten horns" (Rev. 13:1-9). A second "beast"—Satan's unified, worldwide **religious system—**is described as having two horns "like a lamb;" it speaks, however, "like a dragon" and performs "great wonders" (verses 11-13).

***The Beast with Seven Heads and Ten Horns*.** One of the political beast's "seven heads," the coming Antichrist, is to receive a "deadly wound." Once revived, however, he becomes the "man of sin," the "son of perdition" of II Thessalonians Two: "[T]he dragon [Satan the devil, Rev. 12:3, 9] **gave him his power, and his throne and great authority**. And I saw one of his heads as *if it were* slain to death, but **his deadly wound was healed**; and THE WHOLE WORLD WAS AMAZED AND FOLLOWED THE BEAST. **And they worshiped the dragon**, **who gave *his* authority to the beast**. **And they worshiped the beast**, saying, 'Who *is* like the beast? Who has the power to make war against him?' **And a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies was given to him; and authority was given to him to continue *for* forty-two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And he was given *power* to make war against the saints, and to overcome them; and he was given authority over every tribe and language and nation. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from *the* foundation of *the* world**" (Rev. 13:2-8).

Not only will *Satan himself be worshiped*, but the Antichrist will be *revered as very God!* This **worldwide manifestation of Satan the devil** will be the total fulfillment of all occult agendas—the **ultimate in occult worship** since the beginning of human history!

The Beast with Two Horns That Speaks as a Dragon: As world governments align themselves with the New World Order, there will also be a unified world religion. This **religious system** is portrayed by the second beast of Revelation 13, which features "two horns like a lamb," but speaks "like a dragon."

Because of its lamb-like horns, this second beast appears to be "Christian"—but will actually be personified by the False Prophet, the world leader of Satan's occult religions. "And I saw another beast rising out of the earth; **and he had two horns like a lamb, but spoke like a dragon**; and he exercises all the authority of the first beast before him; and he causes the earth and those who dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And **he performs great wonders, so that he even causes fire to come down to the earth from heaven in the sight of men**. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by means of the

wonders that were given to him to perform in the sight of the beast, saying to those who dwell on the earth that they should make an image for the beast, which had the wound by the sword, yet was alive" (Rev. 13:11-14).

Satan is preparing for his grand, worldwide finale by saturating every aspect of society with the occult. Satan, demon and goddess worship—the focal point of the occult—will be more fully brought out into the open. The Antichrist and the False Prophet will deceive all of mankind, uniting them in open rebellion against God! **Only the few true Christians will not be deceived!** Christians today are openly hated by this satanic, occult system. Once the Antichrist is in complete control of the world, however, the beast system will (again!) be given the power to martyr the saints (Rev. 13:7).

In Revelation 17, Christ gave John yet another vision of this evil **religious system**—this time symbolized by a *woman* "riding" the beast with the seven heads and ten horns (that is, the **political system** or New World Order). The "woman" is the great Babylonian harlot with her daughters—symbolizing all the occult religious systems of the world. "And one of the seven angels who had the seven vials came and spoke with me, saying to me, 'Come here; I will show you the judgment of the great whore who sits upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.' Then he carried me away in *the* spirit to a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast that had seven heads and ten horns, full of names of blasphemy. And the woman *was* clothed in purple and scarlet, and *was* adorned with gold and pearls and precious stones; *and* she had a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominations and *the* filthiness of her fornication; and across her forehead a name *was* written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And after seeing her, I wondered with great amazement…. Then he said to me, 'The waters that you saw, where the whore sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages…. And the woman whom you saw is the great city that has royal power over the kings of the earth' " (Rev. 17:1-6, 15 and 18).

The ten "horns" on the beast symbolize ten kings or nations that will receive power from the beast system—and will ultimately fight against Christ at His second coming. "And the beast that was, and is not, he is also the eighth, and is from the seven, and goes into perdition [led by the Antichrist, whom Paul called the "son of perdition"]. And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but shall receive authority as kings *for* one hour with the beast [the coming New World Order]. These *all* have one mind, and shall give up their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who *are* with Him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful…. For God has put into their

hearts to do His will, and to act with one accord, and to give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God have been fulfilled" (Rev. 17: 11-14, 17).

No human power will be able to stop this final, ultimate, satanic plot to be played out by the beasts of Revelation. Only the awesome dramatic return of Jesus Christ will bring it to an end: "And I saw heaven open; and behold, a white horse; and He Who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war. And His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns; *and* He had a name written that no one knows except Him. And *He was* clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is The Word of God. And the armies in heaven were following Him on white horses; *and* they were clothed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations; and He shall shepherd them with an iron rod; and He treads the winepress of the fury and the wrath of the Almighty God. And on *His* garment and on His thigh He has a name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.

"Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in *the* midst of heaven, 'Come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God so that you may eat *the* flesh of kings, and *the* flesh of chief captains, and *the* flesh of mighty *men*, and *the* flesh of horses, and of those who sit on them, and *the* flesh of all, free and bond, and small and great.' **And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war with Him Who sits on the horse, and with His army. And the beast** [the Antichrist] **was taken, and with him the false prophet who worked miracles in his presence**, by which he had deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. **Those two were cast alive into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone**; and the rest were killed by the sword of Him Who sits on the horse, *even the sword* that goes out of His mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh" (Rev. 19:11-21).

God's Call to Repentance

Each of us must "weigh in the balance" our own beliefs to see how they compare to the teachings of the Bible and those of the true Savior of mankind, Jesus Christ. We each must ask, and answer, "**Will I believe God, the Word of God, Jesus Christ and His teachings—will I love the truth? Or, will I believe the teachings and doctrines of men, and continue to follow the teachings of Satan the devil?**"

There can be *no* middle ground. God will never compromise with evil, and God does not accept lying, satanic myths. If we *reject* the truth of God when shown to us, He will send a powerful delusion—and we will end up believing fully in Satan's lies.

God calls upon *you* to **repent of your sins**—to turn from the way that seems right to men and to come out of this modern "Babylon the Great"—out of its corrupt governments and religions. "And after these

things I saw an angel descending from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried out mightily with a loud voice, saying, '**Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen**, and has become a habitation of demons, and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hated bird; because **all nations have drunk of the wine of the fury of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the power of her luxury**.'

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, 'COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, **so that you do not take part in her sins, and that you do not receive of her plagues**, for her sins have reached as far as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her as she has rendered to you; and give to her double, even according to her works. In the cup that she mixed, give her back double. To the degree that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, give to her as much torment and sorrow. For she says in her heart, "I sit a queen enthroned, and am not a widow; and in no way shall I experience sorrow." **For this very reason, her plagues shall come in one day—death and sorrow and famine; and she shall be burned with fire; for *the* Lord God, Who executes judgment upon her, *is* powerful**' " (Rev. 18:1-8).

When He returns, Jesus Christ will *destroy* this entire world system—a system based on witchcraft and the occult, and empowered by Satan and his demons! "Then one strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and cast *it* into the sea, saying, 'In this same way shall the great city Babylon be thrown down with violence, and shall never again be found; and never again shall *the* sound of harpers and musicians and flute players and trumpeters be heard in you; and never again shall any craftsman of any craft be found in you; and never again shall *the* sound of a millstone be heard in you; and never again shall *the* light of a lamp shine in you; and never again shall *the* voices of bridegroom and bride be heard in you; **for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and by your sorcery all nations were deceived**" (Rev. 18:21-24).

Personal Repentance

God the Father and Jesus Christ directly **hold each one of us responsible** to repent and forsake this great Babylonian system! All religious practices of this world and all "traditions of men" are inspired by Satan and his demons—they are not from God! Halloween, Christmas, New Year's, Easter, Good Friday and Lent have all been reconfigured and "Christianized" in order to **deceive the masses**—as part of a system designed to hold people in bondage and in ongoing sin against God!

We are to repent of our sins before God the Father, asking Him to forgive us through the blood of Jesus Christ. When He began His ministry in Galilee, Jesus commanded the people to repent! "The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near; **repent, and believe in the gospel**" (Mark 1:15).

After Jesus' resurrection, He commissioned the apostles to preach the gospel in all the world and commanded them to preach repentance and remission of sins to all nations: "According as it is written, it was necessary for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from *the* dead the third day. And in His name, **repentance and remission of sins** should be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47).

On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter preached a powerful message proving that it was the sins of the leaders *and* the sins of the people that resulted in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Once convicted in both heart and mind, Peter instructed them to **repent of their sins** and to be baptized: " 'Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, '**Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**' " (Acts 2:36-38).

Several days later—when Peter and John had healed a man through Jesus' name—Peter again called on the people to repent: "The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Son Jesus, Whom you delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, after he had judged to release *Him.* But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and requested that a man *who was* a murderer be granted to you; **and you killed the Author of life Whom God has raised from *the* dead**, whereof we are witnesses. And through faith in His name, this *man* whom you see and know was made strong in His name; and the faith that *is* through Him gave this complete soundness to him in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I realize that you acted in ignorance, as *did* your rulers also; but what God had before announced by *the* mouth of all His prophets, *that* Christ should suffer, He has accordingly fulfilled. **Therefore, repent and be converted in order that your sins may be blotted out**, so that *the* times of refreshing may come from *the* presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:13-19).

Witnessing to the deceived, elite philosophers and pagan religionists in Athens, Greece, the apostle Paul declared to them that in times past they were, in *ignorance*, devoted to false deities. Now, however, God commands that all repent of such idolatry: "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we should not think that the Godhead *is* like that which *is made* of gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art *devised by the* imagination of man; For *although* God has indeed **overlooked the times of this ignorance**, He now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:29-30).

As was true of the ancient Greeks, nearly all of Orthodox Christianity has been blindly and ignorantly worshiping the "unknown God" (verse 23). Today's religious leaders have pushed aside the truth of God's Word—His Sabbath, feasts and holy days—and replaced them with their own traditions, religious practices and observances. Under the guise of grace, liberty and church authority, those who have accepted such teachings have been

ignorantly led into sin against God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote: "For all have sinned and have come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Sin is the transgression of the laws and commandments of God (I John 3:4)—and all sin is lawlessness! The religious practices of this world have been shown clearly to be *sin*. Many are clever counterfeits, and they may *seem* right—but they are all *sin*.

Yes, it is true that **Jesus Christ died for your sins**—but *you* must **repent and stop living in sin**—and *then* be baptized. You must repent not only of your personal sins, but repent also of the sins of observing Sunday and the holidays of this world—the "sanitized" occult holidays of Satan the devil.

You need to repent of *all* sin, and have such sins "covered" by the blood of Jesus Christ. **You will be forgiven—as God has promised!** "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the truth. However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from every sin. If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**" (I John 1:6-9).

God calls *you* to repentance. We must follow the example of King David, who, when he sinned against God, cried out for forgiveness: "Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You daily…. **For You, LORD, are good, and ready to forgive; and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You**" (Psa. 86:3, 5).

Now that **you know the truth** about Satan's occult holidays, and the truth about God's Sabbath and holy days, **what will you do?** Will you be convicted of your sins, repent and forsake your past, and turn to God the Father and Jesus Christ with all your heart? Will you, like David, pour out your heart to Him, confessing your sins? You have God's sure promise that He will forgive you all your sins. Then will you do as Jesus commanded—"go and sin no more"?

May God the Father and Jesus Christ lead you to understanding and repentance!

Please visit our Web sites, www.cbcg.org, www.biblicaltruthministries.org, and www.churchathome.org, where you will find numerous articles available on God's way of life. We also have downloadable sermons on repentance, water baptism, how to keep the Sabbath and holy days—and much more. Be sure to download the nine-part series entitled, "Why God Hates Religion!"

PART FOUR

Appendices

Appendix A

Understanding Paul's Difficult Scriptures Concerning the Law and Commandments of God

A foundational doctrine of modern Evangelical Protestantism is that a "born-again" Christian is not required to keep the law of God—especially the Sabbath and holy days as found in both the Old and New Testaments. Citing numerous "difficult-to-understand" passages from his epistles, they claim that the apostle Paul received a "superior revelation" that supersedes even the teachings of Jesus, and which gave him the authority to do away with the requirement that a Christian is to keep the laws and commandments of God—which in some cases even extends to repentance and baptism. How can that be?

In his book, *Sunday Fact & Sabbath Fiction*, Dr. Russell Tardo boldly declares, "Every bit of the law was nailed to Calvary's cross, having been completed and fulfilled in the person and life of Jesus Christ" (p. 43). Sadly, this broad assertion is widely believed by the majority of Protestants today. Pointing to Colossians 2:14-16 and similar passages, they attempt to use Scripture to justify their belief that *all* Old Testament laws were nailed to the cross—especially the Sabbath and annual festivals, and the laws of clean and unclean meats.

Because of false, convoluted misinterpretations, coupled with poor or inadequate translations of the original Greek texts of the apostle Paul's "hard-to-understand" writings—primarily those in Romans, Galatians and Colossians—Protestants typically believe that the laws and commandments of God are a curse, and unnecessary for salvation. It is claimed, therefore, that such laws were abolished by Jesus Christ—through His life, crucifixion and resurrection. But is that true? What are the correct explanations and correct translations of such difficult biblical passages?

Admittedly, some of Paul's writings are complicated and difficult to understand. Peter himself said as much. But as we will see, the problem is *not* with Paul's writings at all; the difficulty arises because some handle the Scriptures deceitfully (II Cor. 4:2), thus wrongly "dividing" the Word of God (II Tim. 2:15). Notice what Peter wrote: "And bear in mind that the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation, exactly as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has also written to you; as *he has* also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them concerning these things; in which are **some things *that are* difficult to understand, which the ignorant and unstable are twisting *and distorting*, as *they* also *twist and distort* the rest**

of the Scriptures, to their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:15-16).

Unfortunately, millions choose to believe the numerous "holier than thou" experts who twist and distort Paul's writings. Thus, they fulfill Isaiah's prophecy: "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!… Who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!" (Isa. 5:21, 23).

Does this not describe the state of government and religion today? God warns that judgment will come as a result of casting aside the law of God and replacing it with false interpretations and beliefs. Isaiah further proclaims: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!… Therefore as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame burns up the chaff, their root shall be like rottenness, and their blossoms shall go up like dust **because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel**" (Isa. 5:20, 24).

Peter further warned that such teachers would deliberately blaspheme God and cast away the law of the Lord through their false teachings: "But there were also false prophets among the people [of Israel], as indeed **there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies**, personally denying *the* Lord who bought them, and bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And **many people will follow *as authoritative* their destructive ways; *and* because of them, the way of the truth will be blasphemed**. Also, through insatiable greed they will with enticing messages exploit you for gain; for whom the judgment of old is in *full* force, and their destruction is *ever* watching" (II Pet. 2:1-3).

Is the Law of God a Curse?

This devious approach described by Isaiah causes most Protestants to completely misunderstand such critical passages as Galatians 3:13: "**Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law**, having become a curse for us [to save us from our sins] (for it is written, 'Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree')." Typically, they violate this verse, **misreading** it as if it meant, "Christ has redeemed us from the law which is a curse." **Such an absurd reading is completely incorrect and without foundation—because THE LAW OF GOD IS NOT A CURSE!**

The truth is that **the perfect law of God is a wonderful blessing—not a curse!** Sin is the curse! Obedience to the laws and commandments of God results in numerous blessings (Deut. 28:1-14; Lev. 26:1-13). Sin—the transgression of the law (I John 3:4)—**results** in curses (Deut. 28:15-68; Lev. 26:13-45). Christ has redeemed us not from the law itself, but from the ***curse of breaking the law***—the very curse we brought on ourselves because of our sins. He provides forgiveness and redemption through His perfect sacrifice and shed blood—redeeming us from the *death penalty*, which is the *curse* of breaking the law. **He has not redeemed us from *keeping* the law**

of God—as if one no longer has an obligation to keep the laws and commandments of God.

***The Purpose of God's Laws and Commandments*:** Before we can grasp what Paul actually wrote, we need to understand God's view of His own law and why He gave it to Israel and mankind. After wandering in the wilderness for forty years—because of Israel's lack of faith and their sin against God—Moses was inspired by God to write this concerning the law: "And now, O Israel, hearken to the statutes and to the judgments which I teach you, in order to **do them, so that you may live** and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers gives to you. **You shall not add to the word which I command you; neither shall you take away from it, so that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you**" (Deut. 4:1-2).

The children of Israel were to keep the commandments of God so that they might *live* with God's blessings. Thus, God's laws are obviously not a curse. How can Protestants possibly believe that Jesus abolished the entire law—"nailing it to the cross"—when God commanded the children of Israel not to *add* to it or *diminish* anything from it? (Also see Deuteronomy 12:32 and similar references.)

God is a God of love. He gave His laws and commandments to be a *blessing* for Israel and a *benefit* to all mankind. "Therefore, know this day and fix it in your heart that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath. There is none other. Therefore, you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you this day, so **that it may go well with you** and with your children after you, and so **that you may prolong your days upon the earth**, which the LORD your God gives you forever…. And you shall be **careful** to do as the LORD your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you **so that you may live** and that **it may be well with you**, and **you may prolong your days** in the land which you shall possess.

Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God commanded to teach you so that you might do them in the land where you go to possess it, that you might fear the LORD your God, to **keep all His statutes and His commandments** which I command you, you, and your son, and your son's son, **all the days of your life**, and **so that your days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be diligent to observe it, so that it may be well with you**, and that you may greatly multiply, as the LORD God of our fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey" (Deut. 4:39-40; 5:32-33; 6:1-3).

With these scriptures in mind, we need to ask: What is a converted person's attitude toward the laws and commandments of God? Does the Lawgiver reject, despise and ridicule His own laws? Absolutely not! Since truly converted people have the laws and commandments written in their hearts and minds (Heb. 10:16), they will love them, think on them and live

by them in the spirit of the law (Rom. 7:6), as did King David. Notice his attitude toward the laws and commandments of God which he exalted and praised as perfect: "**The law of the LORD is perfect**, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: **the commandments of the LORD are pure**, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired than gold, yea, much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

"**Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward**. Who can understand his errors? Oh, cleanse me from my secret faults; and keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; do not let them rule over me; then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression" (Psa. 19:7-13).

David never once called the law a curse! He fully understood that God gave His laws to mankind to **define** righteousness and sin. If we obey, the law is not a curse, but a blessing. If we disobey, we bring the curse of the law for disobedience upon ourselves.

We also find much spiritual understanding about God's laws and commandments in Psalm 119. Notice the following key verses:

Psa. 119:142	"Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and **Your law is the truth**."
Psa. 119:151	"**All Your commandments are truth**."
Psa. 119:160	"**Your word is true** from the beginning."
Psa. 119:172	"**All Your commandments are righteousness**."
Psa. 119:97	"**O how love I Your law**! It is my meditation all the day."
Psa. 119:113	"I hate those who are double-minded, but **Your law do I love**."
Psa. 119:119	"You destroy all the wicked of the earth like dross; therefore **I love Your testimonies**.
Psa. 119:127	"Therefore **I love Your commandments above gold—**yea, above fine gold.
Psa. 119:140	"**Your word is very pure; therefore Your servant loves it**."
Psa. 119:159	"Consider how **I love Your precepts**; O Lord, according to Your lovingkindness give me life."
Psa. 119:163	"I hate and despise lying, **but I love Your law**."
Psa. 119:167	"My soul has kept Your testimonies, and **I love them exceedingly**."

David's solemn, converted attitude of love toward God and His laws—as evidenced throughout Psalm 119—is undoubtedly prophetic of Jesus Christ's attitude and **love** of God's laws and commandments which He had during His ministry in the flesh when He "magnified the law and made

it glorious" (see Isaiah 42:21) revealing its spiritual intent and purpose. An in-depth study of the entirety of Psalm 119 should be undertaken by the reader for a more comprehensive understanding of the laws and commandments of God.

Quoting Scripture, Jesus expounded on the greatest commandment of all: " 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' **This is *the* first and greatest commandment**; and *the* second *one is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets**" (Matt. 22:37-40). Reflecting on what Jesus said, the apostle John wrote that love and commandment-keeping go together like a hand and glove: "By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (I John 5:2-3).

Jesus Christ Did Not Abolish the Law

Why do so many people—especially religious leaders—have so much defiant contempt for the laws and commandments of God? Paul gives the answer: "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*" (Rom. 8:7). Lawless minds do not like to be constricted or constrained by "law." It "cramps" their style of living, exactly as Proverbs says: "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes…. **There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the way of death**" (Prov. 16:2, 25). Satan desires that "his children" be "happy" in their rebellious behavior—hence, lawless generations.

On the other hand, when we understand these scriptures and the fact that "all the Law and the Prophets" are under-girded by the love of God, how can anyone possibly believe that Jesus came to abolish the law? What did Jesus Himself proclaim concerning "the Law and the Prophets"? He emphatically declared, "**Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets**; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, **until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law** until everything has been fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17-18).

As Jesus said, we are not even to think, or suppose—let alone teach in His name—that He came to abolish the Law or the Prophets! Furthermore, He established the heavens and earth as perpetual witnesses that the laws of God will not pass away—not even one seemingly insignificant *jot* or *tittle*! **Therefore, since heaven and earth still exist, Jesus has not abolished the Law or the Prophets**! Perfection is timeless.

Before Jesus came in the flesh, born of the virgin Mary, He was the Lord God of the Old Testament. He was the One Who spoke the Ten Commandments to Israel. Jesus is the Lawgiver in both the Old and New Testaments.

Indeed, when Jesus defeated Satan the devil during His temptation in the wilderness, He clearly stated, "It is written [in the Law], 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but **by every word** that proceeds out of *the* mouth of God' " (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4; Deut. 8:3).

Compare those words of Jesus to this ignorant statement: "The law is a unit of 613 commandments and all of it has been invalidated…. It has ceased to function as an authority over individuals" (Tardo, p. 31).

If the law was abolished, there would be no sin, because as Paul wrote, "[W]here no law is, *there is* no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). Likewise, if there is no transgression, the penalty for sin or the need for forgiveness vanishes. Consequently, there would be no need for a Savior, and Jesus would have died in vain. Ultimately, such anti-law reasoning leads to the conclusion that man is completely sufficient unto himself, which is nothing less than satanic humanism—the end result of *lawless* grace.

Notice what Jesus said about those who teach others to break even the "least" of God's commandments: "Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, **and shall teach men so**, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19).

Christ continued: "For I say to you, unless your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way *that* you shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (verse 20). Jesus' statement here is enigmatic to say the least, since the scribes and Pharisees were well known for their "righteousness." Indeed, how could one's righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees?

The answer to this question is found in how Christ "fulfilled" the law (Matt. 5:17). To "fulfill" means "to fill to the full" or "to make complete." That is quite the *opposite* of abolishing the law. **Indeed, Jesus "fulfilled" the law by revealing its spiritual meaning and application in human behavior**—in how humans relate to one another and to God the Father and Jesus Christ. The scribes and Pharisees thought they were quite adept at keeping the letter of the law—but in their corrupt hypocrisy they completely missed the spirit and intent of the law. (See Appendix B, "How Did Jesus Christ Fulfill the Law and the Prophets?", p. 279.)

The Gospels reveal that Jesus focused on the spirit of the law throughout His ministry. As evidenced in Matthew 5-7, Jesus specifically established this new spiritual standard of the application of the spirit of the law for New Testament Christians, as compared to the letter of the law required under the Old Testament.

Two examples are sufficient to show how Jesus "fulfilled" the law by revealing its deep spiritual meaning: "You have heard that it was said to those *in* ancient *times*, 'You shall not commit murder; but whoever commits murder shall be subject to judgment.' But I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother without cause shall be subject to judgment. Now *you have heard it said*, 'Whoever shall say to his brother, "Raca," shall be

subject to *the judgment of* the council.' But *I say to you*, whoever shall say, '*You* fool,' shall be subject to the fire of Gehenna" (Matt. 5:21-22).

"You have heard that it was said to those *in* ancient *times*, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you, everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. 5:27-28).

These examples clearly illustrate the spiritual application of the laws and commandments of God as taught by Jesus Christ and found throughout the New Testament.

Over ten years after Jesus' death and resurrection, the apostle James, the "brother of the Lord," defined the true Christian approach to the law of God, which he calls the "**Royal Law**." Notice how his writings agree exactly with Jesus' teachings in Matthew 5-7: "If you are truly keeping *the* Royal Law according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well. But if you have respect of persons, you are practicing sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors; **for *if* anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one *aspect*, he becomes guilty of all**.

"For He Who said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' also said, 'You shall not commit murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of *the* law. In this manner speak and in this manner behave: as those who are about to be judged by *the* law of freedom" (James 2:8-12).

Finally, notice how God praised Abraham's faithful obedience when He passed the covenant promises on to Isaac: "And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because **Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws**" (Gen. 26:4-5). Abraham is not only the father of Isaac and Jacob and the children of Israel in the Old Testament, He is also called the father of the New Testament faithful: "And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to *the* promise" (Gal. 2:29). This means that if we are truly Christ's, then we will do as Abraham did. We will obey the voice of God, keep His charge, His commandments, His statutes and His laws. We will never believe that Jesus did away with the law—or called the law a curse. With this foundational knowledge concerning the laws and commandments of God, we will be able to understand even the most difficult scriptures written by the apostle Paul.

Paul's Easy-to-Understand Scriptures

Before going on to examine Paul's more difficult writings, it is prudent that we first look at his easy-to-understand scriptures—which unmistakably demonstrate Paul's attitude toward the law of God. For example, he wrote the following to the Corinthians: "*For* circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; rather, **the keeping of God's commandments *is***

essential" (I Cor. 7:19). He further explained how he reached out to everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, in preaching the gospel. **But never at any time did he proclaim that the laws and commandments of God were no longer in effect for himself or the believer**: "Now to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain *the* Jews; to those who are under law, as under law, that I might gain those who are under law; to those who are without law, as without law (**not being without law to God, but within law to Christ**), that I might gain those who are without law" (I Cor. 9:20-21).

Later, after Paul was brought from Jerusalem to Caesarea to stand trial, he stood and defended himself before the Jewish authorities and Felix the governor emphatically declaring that as an apostle of Jesus Christ he believed *all things* written in the Law and the Prophets: "Neither can they prove *the things* of which they now accuse me [abolishing the laws and commandments of God]. But I confess to you that according to the way which they call heresy [his teachings that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior of mankind], **so serve I the God of my fathers, believing all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets**" (Acts 24:13-14). Paul also declared, "Therefore, the law *is* indeed holy, and the commandment holy and righteous and good" (Rom. 7:12).

Because a true believer is indeed justified by faith, Paul also answered those who believed in a "lawless grace" and claimed that justification through Christ's sacrifice eliminated the need to keep the laws and commandments of God. Notice what Paul wrote: "Since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith. Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, **we are establishing law**" (Rom. 3:30-31).

Far from having received some "greater revelation" that supersedes Christ's teachings, Paul's statement here is in full harmony with what Jesus taught: "**Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets**." Under the New Covenant, true believers will lovingly obey Jesus Christ and God the Father from the heart. Notice Jesus' teachings concerning commandment-keeping—teachings which Evangelical Protestantism conveniently ignores: "**If you love Me, keep the commandments**—namely, My commandments…. The one who has My commandments and **is keeping them**, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him…. If anyone loves Me, he will **keep My word**; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. **The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me**" (John 14:15, 21, 23-24). Notice that Jesus does not say that commandment-keeping is for the Jews only—but that it is required of everyone.

Through the Holy Spirit of God—which God gives to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32)—the law is not abolished, but *established* by love and grace so that the laws and commandments can be written into one's heart

and mind. The New Covenant is not for Israel and Judah alone, but is for all converts: " 'This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,' says *the* Lord: 'I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds; and their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again.' Now where remission of these *is*, *it is* no longer *necessary to offer* [animal] sacrifices [at the temple] for [the justification of] sin" (Heb. 10:16-18). As we will see, at the heart of the controversy over the law is this: **Does justification come by rituals and works, or by faith through grace**?

Christ was raised from the dead so that we may be justified by faith through grace and put into **right standing** with God the Father. Paul shows that faith *and* belief are required for God to impute righteousness to us: "And he [Abraham] was fully persuaded that what He had promised, He is also able to do. As a result, **it was also imputed to him for righteousness**. But it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; rather, *it was* also *written* for our sake, to whom it shall be imputed**—to those who believe in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, Who was delivered for our offenses, and WAS RAISED FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION**" (Rom. 4:21-25).

Once we have been justified to God the Father—through the death and resurrection of Christ, having our sins forgiven by faith in Jesus—we are under the grace of God. Let us understand the true meaning of "grace."

Grace as defined in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *charis*, which means "favor, grace, gracious help or care, goodwill, the gracious intention of God or gift; the practical application of goodwill, a favor, gracious deed or benefaction, a store of grace, a state of grace, a deed of grace and a work of grace; to be grateful, gratitude or thanks." Moreover, grace denotes **the state of the relationship** between God and the believer through Jesus Christ. When Paul uses the word "grace" as part of an opening greeting or closing salutation, it is used to confer "divine grace" upon the one who is reading the epistle.

Grace is the free and undeserved gift of God the Father through Jesus Christ. The grace of God is the greatest expression of God the Father's love and all-encompassing mercy. Grace is more than the forgiveness of sins. To be "**under grace**" means to *continually* be receiving God's divine love, favor, blessing, gracious care, help, goodwill, benefits, gifts and goodness. God the Father is the source from which grace comes to the believer. Furthermore, the ONLY MEANS by which grace is granted to the believer is through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice of God the Father. The believer enters into the grace of God through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his or her sins. God the Father grants His grace to each believer upon repentance of sins and baptism by immersion, which is our "covenant death" into Christ's death and is the outward manifestation of our repentance. Through grace, the believer's sins are forgiven and the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to him or her.

Grace establishes a **new spiritual relationship** between the believer and God the Father and Jesus Christ. Through the unearned and unmerited gift of grace, the believer is not only called, chosen, forgiven and accepted by God the Father through His Beloved, but is also begotten with the Holy Spirit, making him or her a child of God and an heir of eternal life. From this point forward, the spiritually begotten believer begins a new life under grace. As the Scriptures reveal, living under grace requires the believer to **live by every word of God** with complete love and devotion to God the Father and Jesus Christ. **Grace does not grant one license to practice sin by ignoring or rejecting the commandments of God**. Only those who keep His commandments can abide in His love and remain under His grace.

Every believer who receives the grace of God has a personal obligation to God the Father and Jesus Christ to forsake his or her old, sinful thoughts and practices and to **live a new life, daily growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ**. For every believer who lives under grace, Jesus Christ acts as Redeemer, High Priest and Advocate. If a Christian commits a sin, then Jesus—upon the believer's repentance—intercedes before the Father to obtain His mercy and grace, thus becoming the propitiation for such sins.

Far from abolishing the laws and commandments of God, this personal relationship between God the Father, Jesus Christ and the true believer *establishes* the law through love and obedience.

With this background we can now begin to understand the true meaning of Paul's difficult scriptures. We will first examine the seventh-day Sabbath question, because it is at the heart and core of the dilemma of understanding Paul's difficult passages. Our study will begin by looking at Paul's teaching concerning Sabbath-keeping in Hebrews 4:9.

The True Meaning of *Sabbatismos* in Hebrews 4:9

"There remaineth therefore a **rest** to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9, *King James Version*). As we will see, this is an incorrect translation, rooted in Orthodox bias against the holy Sabbath day of God.

Because of this erroneous translation—due largely to Protestant hostility against the seventh-day Sabbath and their preference for Sunday—this verse is almost universally misinterpreted and misunderstood. In fact, the true meaning of Hebrews 4:9 is the *very opposite* of the false interpretation assumed and taught by many churches, ministers and theologians.

Today, mainstream "Christianity" teaches that Christians are no longer required to observe the seventh-day Sabbath. They misconstrue Hebrews 4:9 to mean that Christ has given them "rest" (or, as some say, a "release") from commandment-keeping. This false claim feeds the premise that Jesus has "fulfilled the law" *for* them. As a result, people are told, the

Christian has entered into a "spiritual rest" from sin, and that Jesus Himself is their "spiritual Sabbath," because Jesus kept the Sabbath in their stead.

Such absurd reasoning is completely contrary to the Word of God. Jesus Himself said that He did not come to abolish or "do away with" the laws and commandments of God (Matt. 5:17-18). Nor did He fulfill any commandment in order to release Christians from their obligation to keep God's laws. Indeed, He set the perfect example for us to *free us* from committing sin, which is the transgression of the law (I Pet. 2:21-22; I John 3:4). Jesus did not come to keep the commandments *in our stead*. Years into his ministry, the apostle Paul said that he was still *zealous* for the laws of God (Acts 22:3)—which would certainly include the Sabbath commandment.

When we understand and absorb the full meaning of the Greek text of Hebrews 4:9, there is no question that the New Testament upholds the authority of the Fourth Commandment. The Greek word used here for "rest" is *sabbatismos*, which means "Sabbath rest, Sabbath observance" (Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*).

This definition is confirmed by other historical works: "The words 'sabbath rest' are from the [Greek] noun *sabbatismos*, [which is] a unique word in the NT. This term appears also in Plutarch (*Superset. 3 [Moralia 166a]*) for sabbath observance, and in four post-canonical Christian writings which are not dependent on Heb. 4:9" (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5, p. 856). This is historical evidence that *true* Christians continued observing the seventh-day Sabbath long after Emperor Constantine declared in 325 AD that Sunday was the "Christian" day of worship.

While *sabbatismos* is a noun, the verb form of the word is *sabbatizo*, which means, "to keep the Sabbath" (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*).

This definition of *sabbatizo* is confirmed by its use in the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testament dating from the third century BC. Jews used the Septuagint in synagogues throughout the Roman Empire; Greek-speaking Jewish and Gentile coverts to Christianity used this translation throughout the early New Testament period. This is why the apostle Paul quotes extensively from the Septuagint in his epistle to the Hebrews, which went to all the true churches of God—Jew and Gentile.

When Paul used *sabbatismos* in Hebrews 4:9, he did so knowing that its meaning was **well known** to the Greek-speaking believers of that day. After all, its verb form (*sabbatizo*) is widely employed in the Septuagint—which, as a translation, was as familiar to the Greek-speaking Jews and Gentiles of the early Church as the King James Bible is to Christians today.

For example, the use of the verb *sabbatizo* in Leviticus 23:32 in the Septuagint substantiates its meaning. *The Greek English Lexicon of the Septuagint* defines *sabbatizo* as "to keep [a] sabbath, to rest" (Lust, Eynikel, Hauspie). The English translation of this verse in the Septuagint reads: "It [the Day of Atonement] shall be a holy sabbath [literally, a Sabbath of Sabbaths] to you; and ye shall humble your souls, from the ninth day of the month:

from evening to evening **shall ye keep your sabbaths**" (*The Septuagint With the Apocrypha*, Brenton).

The phrase "shall ye keep your sabbaths" is translated from the Greek, *sabbatieite ta sabbata*—which literally means, "you shall **sabbathize** the Sabbaths." The form of the Greek verb *sabbatizo* is the second person plural *sabbatieite*, which means, "you **all** shall keep"—meaning *everyone* is to keep the Sabbath. Throughout the entire Septuagint, the verb *sabbatizo* is never used except in relation to Sabbath-keeping. Understanding this definition, the *KJV* translators translated *sabbatieite* as "shall ye celebrate your sabbath." However, they deliberately did not likewise translate *sabbatismos* in Hebrews 4:9—because of their Sunday-keeping bias in following the lead of the Roman Catholic Church, as "Rome's Challenge to the Protestants" so forcefully argues. (See Appendix F, p. 293.)

There is no question that the Greek verb *sabbatizo* in Leviticus 23:32 is specifically referring to Sabbath observance. This meaning equally applies to the noun form *sabbatismos* as used by Paul. Thus, the continuity of the Septuagint's use of *sabbatizo* and the use of *sabbatismos* in Hebrews 4:9 confirms that Paul was upholding the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath for all true Christians.

The use of *sabbatismos* in Hebrews 4:9 directly contradicts any false teaching that the Fourth Commandment has been abolished. As the context of Hebrews Four demonstrates, the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath as a day of rest and worship is as literally binding for the people of God today as it was since creation, or in the days of King David, or for Israel of old.

It becomes clear that Hebrews 4:9 does not mean that Christians have entered into some sort of "spiritual rest" which exempts them from their obligation to keep the Sabbath, or any other commandment of God. Rather, this verse must be taken as *instructive*—that Christians are indeed commanded to keep the Sabbath day. Consequently—in accordance with the original Greek—this verse should be translated: "**There remains, therefore, Sabbath-keeping for the people of God**"—Jew and Gentile alike.

The *true* meaning of Hebrews 4:9 is diametrically *opposite* the false misinterpretation of Orthodox Christendom. Paul is emphatically declaring that Sabbath-keeping—and this means the annual holy day Sabbaths as well—is *required* for true Christians. He is not "spiritualizing away" or eliminating the weekly Sabbath or the annual Sabbaths of God.

The True Meaning of Galatians 4:8-10— Did the Apostle Paul Abolish the Sabbath and Holy Days?

Orthodox Christianity views God's weekly Sabbath, annual feasts and holy days with hostile disdain, rejection and hatred. In their combative determination to retain their "Christianized" pagan Sunday and occult holiday worship, religious leaders, theologians and their followers have blindly and deliberately misinterpreted the writings of the apostle Paul to suit their

own agendas, rather than seeking the "Truth of God's Word." These intentionally, misleading interpretations are designed to give the impression that Paul had taught Gentile Christians to abandon the biblical Sabbath and holy days of God—to reject anything "Jewish." To such religious leaders and theologians, "Jewish" means the *entire* Old Testament, viewed as the embodiment of Judaism. According to their way of thinking, the Old Testament is to be fully rejected or dismissed as though it had been entirely fulfilled or abolished. As a result, millions of professing "Christians" assume that in Galatians 4:8-10 Paul denounced any observance of God's Sabbath and holy days as "heretical"!

There is no question that Paul taught both Jews and Gentiles to observe the weekly Sabbath, as evidenced by the correct translation of Hebrews 4:9: "There remains, therefore, Sabbath-keeping for the people of God." Furthermore, when we examine Paul's ministry to the Gentiles, we find that **he taught them on the Sabbath day**, not on Sunday. At the beginning of his first evangelistic tour, Paul and Barnabas began preaching to the Jews and the Gentile proselytes **on the Sabbath day** in a synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia, in Asia Minor. After preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, His resurrection and the forgiveness of sins, Paul warned his listeners not to reject the words of God: " 'Therefore, be it known to you, men *and* brethren, that through this man ***the*** **remission of sins** is preached to you. And in Him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

" 'Take heed, therefore, lest that which is spoken in the Prophets come upon you: "Behold, you despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work that you will in no way believe, *even* if one declares it to you." ' **And when the Jews had gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles entreated *him* that these words might be spoken to them on the next Sabbath**. Now after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and the [Gentile] proselytes who worshiped *there* followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, **persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And on the coming Sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of God**" (Acts 13:38-44).

From this account we learn several fundamental truths about Paul's teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1) If Paul's fundamental purpose was to teach Gentiles that they no longer needed to keep the laws and commandments of God—especially the Sabbath and holy days—why did he not simply encourage them to assemble on the next day, Sunday? Rather, **they assembled on the next Sabbath** to hear Paul and Barnabas preach the wonderful words of God.

2) Paul told them to "continue in the grace of God," which is not a repudiation of the laws and commandments of God. Grace is the

operation of God to forgive sins, and put one in right standing—justified—through the blood of Jesus Christ from **past** sins. On the other hand, sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4). Once forgiven and justified, one is to cease living in sin (John 5:14; 8:11; Rom. 6:1).

3) Faith in Jesus Christ and forgiveness of sin does not abolish the law. Paul wrote to the Romans, a Gentile church, "Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, **we are establishing law**" (Rom. 3:31; see Matt. 5:17). This is accomplished as true Christians have the laws and commandments written into their hearts and minds (Heb. 10:16-17). Paul also taught, "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! **We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein**?" (Rom. 6:1-2).

4) This is a perfect example of how Sabbath-keeping and the grace of God go hand-in-hand. They are not opposed to one another. The Gentiles continued in the grace of God and met on the next Sabbath.

***The Gospel of Paul and Galatians*:** The gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul taught to the Galatians included keeping the laws and commandments of God. Following Jesus' example and teachings, Paul never sanctioned or endorsed the religions or laws and commandments of men—Jewish or Gentile (Mark 7:1-13; Acts 17:22-31). Neither did he teach a lawless grace. Rather, he taught that *all* had to forsake their ways, repent of their sins and keep the laws and commandments of God, and worship Him in spirit and in truth (Acts 17:30; Rom. 7:6; John 4:23-24).

In combating those who were teaching a different gospel, Paul proclaimed in the opening of his epistle to the Galatians that He preached the *true* gospel of Jesus Christ—the same one that Jesus taught! Because of such false teachers, Paul emphatically wrote, "I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which *in reality* is not another *gospel*; but there are some **who are troubling you** and are desiring to pervert the gospel of Christ. But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you that is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!

"Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ. But I certify to you, brethren, that the gospel that was preached by me is not according to man; because neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught *it by man*; rather, *it was* by *the* revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:6-12). If Paul had preached a gospel as distorted by

theologians, past and present, he would have indeed been teaching *another* gospel.

In fact, the book of Galatians is one of the most universally misinterpreted and misconstrued books of the New Testament. While it is beyond the scope of this Appendix to give a complete commentary on Paul's epistle to the Galatians, there are four pressing problems in Galatians two and three which should be addressed:

First, the Jews had imposed specific circumcision requirements—before the advent of Christianity—upon Gentile proselytes in order for them to attend a synagogue. Jesus, however, revealed that *true* circumcision was spiritual, accomplished through conversion and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. This circumcision "of the heart" superseded the requirement for physical circumcision (Acts 15; Rom. 2:25-29). Therefore, physical circumcision was no longer a requirement imposed upon Gentile converts to Christianity.

Second, Paul's rebuke of Peter, Barnabas, and the circumcision party from Jerusalem centered around *traditional* laws of Judaism which forbade Jews from keeping company with or eating with Gentiles. This instance was not a question concerning God's laws and commandments, because the Old Testament never commanded such separation of Jews and Gentiles.

Third—in reference to "the law" in Galatians three—Paul was comparing God's covenant with Abraham and New Covenant justification by faith through grace *to* the "works of law" required under Judaism and its temple rituals.

Fourth, in Galatians three, most Protestants completely misunderstand verse 13, which reads, "**Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law**, having become a curse for us [to save us from our sins] (for it is written, 'Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree')." They *misread* it as follows: "**Christ has redeemed us from the law which is a curse**." **Such a reading is totally absurd and completely incorrect because THE LAW OF GOD IS NOT A CURSE!**

Without a thorough grounding in the Scriptures—Old and New Testament—the true laws and commandments of God, a knowledge of the oral traditional laws of Judaism, God's covenant with Abraham, God's covenant with Israel, and, finally, the New Covenant of the New Testament, it is not feasible to properly interpret Paul's epistle to the Galatians. This is why it is undoubtedly the most difficult book of the New Testament to comprehend.

As we have seen, the truth of the matter is that **the law of God is perfect—not a curse!** *Sin* is a curse! Obedience to the laws and commandments of God results in blessings! (Deut. 28:1-14; Lev. 26:1-13). Sin—the transgression of the law (I John 3:4)—*results* in curses (Deut. 28:15-68; Lev. 26:13-45).

How can a law that is perfect and righteous—given by a perfect, righteous God—be a curse? The point needs to be considered that *if* the law

is a curse, and the law has been abolished, then it would mean that God Himself is a curse and has abolished Himself. But such is not the case, because God is love, Lawgiver and Sustainer, and Jesus Christ is upholding the entirety of the universe through *law*—by the word of His power (Heb. 1:1-3). Indeed, such religious interpretations and fantasies have produced a lawless grace that pervades Evangelical Christianity today.

Finally, notice that God praised Abraham's faithful obedience when He passed the covenant promises on to Isaac: "And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws**" (Gen. 26:4-5). Abraham is the father of the New Testament faithful as well: "And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to *the* promise" (Gal. 2:29). This means that if we are truly Christ's, then we will obey the voice of God, keep His charge, His commandments, His statutes and His laws, as Abraham did. We will never believe that Jesus did away with the law, nor call the law a curse.

Galatians 4:8-10—The Background

In order to determine the correct meaning of Galatians 4:8-10, we need to realize first that the churches of Galatia were composed mainly of Gentile converts who, as former pagans, had served Greek and Asian gods and goddesses. They were not Jews, and had never followed the traditional practices of Judaism or the Old Testament Scriptures.

Moreover, Galatians four must be considered in the overall context of *all* of Paul's teachings in *all* of his fourteen epistles. Without a doubt, Paul taught all Gentile converts in every church he established to observe the same things (I Cor. 7:17). As we carefully examine what he wrote, it will become clear that Paul did not condemn the Galatians for observing the Sabbath and holy days of God as most theologians and Sunday churchgoers casually assume.

In Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, he made it crystal clear that the things he wrote to them were the commandments of the Lord: "WHAT? Did the Word of God originate with you? Or did it come only to you *and no one else*? **If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write to you are commandments of the Lord**. But if anyone *chooses* to be ignorant, let him be ignorant" (I Cor. 14:36-38).

What did Paul command them to observe? Was it Sunday and other pagan, occult holidays—or was it the Sabbath and God's Passover and feasts?

This is profoundly important because what Paul wrote were "the commandments of the Lord" for the New Testament Church—Jews and Gentiles. While Paul condemned their sins, he commanded the Corinthians—and thus

the entire Church—to **keep the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread** in the right spirit and attitude: "Your glorying [in sin] *is* not good. Don't you know that a little leaven [a type of sin] leavens the whole lump? Therefore, purge out the old leaven [the old sinful ways], so that you may become a new lump [truly converted in Christ], *even* as you are unleavened [in your homes]. **For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. For this reason, LET US KEEP THE FEAST**, not with old leaven, nor with *the* leaven of malice and wickedness, but with *the* unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:6-8).

The church in Corinth was also mostly Gentile. Paul would never have commanded them to observe Passover and Unleavened Bread and then condemn the churches of Galatia for observing God's Sabbath and feasts! That would only be construed as hypocrisy and create confusion. God is not hypercritical, nor is He the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33).

Those who accept the false premise that Paul taught *against* the Sabbath and holy days of God—and that he instead taught the churches to observe Christianized pagan Sunday and occult holidays in their place—fail to realize that before any of the Galatian Gentiles were converted, **they worshiped pagan gods and observed occult holidays** ("days, months, times and years"). However, **upon conversion, they repented of their sins and forsook all their pagan occult religious practices** (Acts 19:8-27).

Interwoven throughout the Scriptures, God condemns all pagan, occult practices. Notice particularly God's warnings in Deuteronomy: "**Be careful to observe and obey all these words which I command you, so that it may go well with you** and with your children after you forever when you do *that which is* good and right in the sight of the LORD your God. When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations before you, where you go to possess them, and you take their place and dwell in their land, **take heed to yourself that you do not become ensnared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods that I may also do likewise?' You shall not do so to the LORD your God, for every abomination to the** LORD**, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods. Whatsoever thing that I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it**" (Deut. 12:28-32).

God also commanded the children of Israel not to follow demonic, occult practices or observe pagan religious times: "[Y]ou shall not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses **divination**, or an **observer of times**, or a **fortuneteller**, or a **witch**, or a **charmer**, or a **consulter with familiar spirits**, or a **wizard**, or **one who seeks oracles** from the dead. For all that do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations, the LORD your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before

the LORD your God. For these nations whom you shall possess hearkened to observers of times and to diviners; but **as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so**" (Deut. 18:9-14). Since Paul believed all things in the Law and the Prophets, we can be sure that he would never allow the Galatians to observe such pagan customs and holidays.

Galatians 4:8-10 Correctly Explained

Interestingly, the question of Sabbath and holy day observance was not the real issue in Galatians Four. After their conversion, the Spirit of God led the Galatians to worshipping God in spirit and in truth—which included keeping the Sabbath and holy days. Paul wrote that they had become the children of God: "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.' So then, you are no longer a servant, but a son. And if a son, *you are* also an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:6-7).

Later, Paul reminds them of their pagan past and their former occult worship of demons. Notice the comparison: "Now on the one hand, **when you did not know God, you were in bondage to those who are not gods by nature** [the pagan deities and demons]" (verse 8). Their former pagan worship had nothing to do with the biblical Sabbath and holy days—or any other commandment or law of God!

In a severe admonition Paul warns them that they were in dire spiritual danger, because instead of obeying God, they were reverting back to their former pagan ways and blending their former pagan observances with their newly learned Christian way of life. In so doing, they were beginning to turn their backs on God the Father and Jesus Christ. Paul strongly rebukes them: "But on the other hand, after having known God—rather, after having been known by God—how *is it that* **you are turning again to the weak and impotent elements** [demon spirits of pagan religion], to which you again desire to be in bondage [to Satan the devil as in the past]? **You are *of* your own selves observing days, and months, and times and years**. I am afraid for you, lest somehow I have labored among you in vain" (verses 9-11). It is readily apparent that the problem was *not* that the Galatians were forsaking Sunday and holiday-keeping and reverting back to keeping the Sabbath and holy days, as Orthodox theologians and ministers claim. In fact, quite the opposite was happening, as we will see in the following analysis.

An Analysis of What Paul Wrote in Galatians 4:8-10

1) Paul speaks of the time *before* the Galatians were converted: "**Now on the one hand, when you did not know God, you were in bondage to those who are not gods by nature** [the pagan deities and demons]" (verse 8). Before they were converted they knew nothing

about the true God—the Father and Jesus Christ. Therefore, we can conclude that before they were converted, they did not observe God's Sabbath, feasts or holy days—**only after their conversion**.

2) Next, Paul speaks of their conversion and having come to know God: "…**after having known God—rather, after having been known by God**…" (verse 9). After they were converted, Paul taught them God's way of life in the grace of God, including the keeping of the Sabbath, feasts and holy days. Paul taught the observance of God's Sabbaths in *all* the churches.

3) Later—because they were beginning to accept a false gospel—the Galatians began leaving the true Christ and the true Gospel, and were returning to their former pagan religious practices and demon worship: "**How *is it that* you are turning again to the weak and impotent elements** [demon spirits of pagan religion]…" (verse 9).

4) In so doing, they were returning to the spiritual bondage of false, pagan gods and the accompanying religious days of worship: "…**to which YOU AGAIN DESIRE TO BE IN BONDAGE** [to Satan the devil as in the past]?" (verse 9).

5) Paul notes that rather than following the teachings of Jesus Christ, what they were doing was of their own choice and determination: "**You are *of* your own selves**…." Paul uses a special middle voice verb, *paratereithe*, which shows that they were acting of their *own* volition in making such decisions—and were not doing so because of Paul's teachings.

6) What were they reverting to? They were going *back* to "**observing** [for themselves] **days, and months, and times and years**" (verse 10). Again, before conversion they knew *nothing* of God, Jesus Christ or Christianity—or of the laws and commandments of God. Therefore it is not possible to take this phrase to mean that they were returning to the observance of God's Sabbath, feasts and holy days—or that they were following traditional Judaism. The phrase can **only refer to pagan days, months, times and years**, which they had formerly observed before they were converted.

Notice carefully that Paul did not use the words Sabbath, feasts or holy days in describing how the Galatians were reverting back to their former ways. If Paul was actually writing to them about the Sabbath, feasts or holy days of God, he would have used *those terms* instead of "days, months, times and years." Therefore, there is no real question that such "days, months, times and years" can only refer to pagan times of worship, not to

the biblically ordained and commanded days of worship.

This is why Paul finished his admonition to the Galatians with this warning: "I am afraid for you, lest somehow I have labored among you in vain" (Gal. 4:11).

As we have seen, Orthodox Christendom's interpretation and explanation of this complicated passage is entirely incorrect, and is only founded on bias and hostility against the Sabbath, feasts and holy days of God. Orthodoxy rejects the truth of God so that they may continue in their observance of a "Christianized" Sunday and the various occult holidays of this world.

Romans 14:1-6—Esteeming "One Day Above Another"

In the *KJV*, Romans 14:1-6 is poorly translated. The key passages universally misunderstood are verses five and six, which read: "**One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it**."

Unfortunately, for hundreds of years these verses have been used as justification for traditional Sunday-keeping and the rejection of the Sabbath and holy days of God. Protestantism boasts that these verses grant authority to observe Sunday. However, with a more accurate translation beginning with verse one, the context will show that the discussion is not about which day to keep as a day of religious observance. Rather, it has to do with vegetarianism versus eating meat, as well as the eating of meat on certain days.

"Receive the one who is weak in the faith, but not for divisive arguments. Now on the one hand, one believes he may eat all things *that are lawful*; but on the other hand, another one, who is weak, eats only vegetables. The one who eats *meat* should not despise the one who does not eat *it*. And the one who does not eat *meat* should not condemn the one who eats *it*, for God has received him. Who are you to be judging another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he shall be made to stand because God is able to make him stand.

"Again, on the one hand, someone may prefer one day above another day *for eating meat*; but on the other hand, another may hold every day *to be alike*. Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who regards the day *in his eating* is regarding *it* to *the* Lord; and the one who does not regard the day is not regarding *it* to *the* Lord. The one who eats *meat* is eating to *the* Lord because he gives thanks to God; and the one who does not eat *meat* is abstaining to *the* Lord, and is giving thanks to God" (Rom. 14:1-6).

To further substantiate that the problem was vegetarianism versus eating meat, Paul continued to explain: "But if, **because of meat**, your brother is offended, you are no longer walking according to love. **With your meat**, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died…. For the kingdom of

God is not a *matter of* eating and drinking; rather, *it is* righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because the one who serves Christ in these things *is* well pleasing to God and acceptable among men….

"**Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of meat**. All things *that are lawful are* indeed pure; but *it is* an evil thing for someone to cause an occasion of stumbling through his eating. ***It is* better not to eat meat, or drink wine, or *anything else* by which your brother stumbles, or is offended, or is made weak**. Do you have faith? Have *it* to yourself before God. Blessed *is* the one who does not condemn himself in what he approves" (verses 15, 17-18, 20-22).

***Romans 14:1-6 Divided Into an A and B Pattern*:** Paul wrote these verses in an "A and B" pattern. When analyzed, this pattern shows that Paul did not give people license to pretentiously choose any day of the week as a holy day of worship. That is God's prerogative alone—not man's. Rather, Paul is writing about those who eat meat and those who are vegetarians.

> **A.** "Receive the one who is weak in the faith, but not for divisive arguments. Now on the one hand, one believes he may eat all things *that are lawful*;
> **B.** "...but on the other hand, another one, who is weak, eats only vegetables.
>
> **A.** "The one who eats *meat* should not despise the one who does not eat *it*.
> **B.** "And the one who does not eat *meat* should not condemn the one who eats *it*, for God has received him.
>
> "Who are you to be judging another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he shall be made to stand because God is able to make him stand.
>
> **A.** "Again, on the one hand, someone may prefer one day above another day *for eating meat*;
> **B.** " but on the other hand, another may hold every day *to be alike*.
>
> "Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind.
>
> **A.** "The one who regards the day *in his eating* is regarding *it* to *the* Lord;
> **B.** "...and the one who does not regard the day is not regarding *it* to *the* Lord.
>
> **A.** "The one who eats *meat* is eating to *the* Lord because he gives thanks to God;
> **B.** "...and the one who does not eat *meat* is abstaining to *the* Lord, and is giving thanks to God" (Rom. 14:1-6).

There is not one word in these verses that can be used to justify Sunday-keeping, or any other day, as a day of worship. Throughout the Bible, God has always commanded and upheld the seventh-day Sabbath as the weekly day of worship, and His holy days as annual days of worship. Paul is simply writing about the problems between vegetarians and meat eaters—and the day on which some meat eaters chose to eat meat.

Colossians Two: Were the Ten Commandments Really Nailed to the Cross When Jesus Was Crucified?

Another example of misinterpreting Paul's writings is found in Colossians 2:14, 16-17, and stems from an extremely poor translation of the Greek text. Unfortunately, this particular misunderstanding has led millions to believe that all the laws and commandments were nailed to the cross when Jesus was crucified. As in the case of Galatians Four, we will notice that the Protestants' false interpretation is exactly the *opposite* of what Paul actually wrote and meant.

First, we will examine the *KJV* translation of each of these key passages, beginning with verse 14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

From this obscure translation, people presume that the phrase "handwriting of ordinances" constitutes the laws and commandments of God. Therefore, they assume incorrectly and conclude that the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross.

In the Greek, "handwriting of ordinances" is *chriographon tois dogmasin*—which literally means "handwriting in decrees or dogmas." In the New Testament, *dogma* always refers to "decrees" written by men (Luke 2:1; Acts 16:4; 17:7; Eph. 2:15). Nowhere in the entirety of the Bible does *dogma*, "decrees," refer to any part of the law of God. Therefore, this phrase in verse 14 has nothing to do with biblical law.

But what does the expression "handwriting of ordinances" actually mean? As we will see, the phrase refers to a *written account* of one's sins, called "a note of debt." In his epical book *The Two Babylons*, Alexander Hislop writes concerning this pagan, Greek religious practice, which the converts in Colosse had undoubtedly formerly practiced (the practice was also found in ancient Chinese religion): "A work of some note on morals, called *Merits and Demerits Examined*, [describes how] a man is directed to keep a [written] debtor and creditor account with himself of the acts of each day, and at the end of the year to wind it up [in summary]. If the balance is in his favor, it serves as the foundation of a stock of merits for the ensuing year; and if against him, it must be liquidated by future good deeds [justification by works]. Various lists and comparative tables are given of both good and bad actions in the several relations of life; and benevolence is strongly inculcated in regard first to man, and, secondly, to the brute

creation. To cause another's death is reckoned at one hundred on the side of demerit; while a single act of charitable relief counts as one on the other side" (page 147).

Thus, the phrase in Colossians 2:14 should be translated as "note of debt against us *with* the decrees *of our sins*"—or a symbolic listing of our sins against God. Our sins and the *debt* of our sins were nailed to the cross when Jesus Christ was crucified and died. Upon true repentance of sins to God the Father, Jesus Christ blots out the "note of debt" through the remission of our sins. Jesus Christ, Who knew no sin, was made sin for us. He was nailed to the cross as a sin offering for the sins of the whole world. **The "note of debt" of our sins was symbolically nailed to the cross, NOT the commandments of God which stand forever**.

When Col. 2:13 is included with the correct translation of verse 14, the true meaning of what Paul wrote becomes clear: "For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has *now* made alive with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses. He has **blotted out the note of debt against us *with* the decrees *of our sins***, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it away, having nailed it to the cross." Therefore, the actual meaning of these verses has nothing to do with nailing the law to the cross, as falsely believed by millions of professing Christians.

***The True Meaning of Colossians 2:16-17*:** The erroneous distortion of these two verses has caused Protestantism to denounce the observance of the biblical Sabbath, holy days and clean and unclean meats more than any other passage in the New Testament. Consequently, it has caused ministers and laymen alike to "rummage" through the New Testament in search of other scriptures to substantiate this misinterpretation—resulting in a myriad of additional false interpretations and beliefs that appear to bolster their practices of Sunday-keeping and observing occult holidays. When one *casually* reads these verses, it does give the *appearance* that such an interpretation may be correct—but such is not the case.

In the *KJV*, Colossians 2:16 reads: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*"—verse 17—"which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ."

To add further confusion to this doctrinal puzzle, the *New International Version* savaged verse 17 with the following deliberate mistranslation: "These are a shadow of things that **were to come**." In so doing, they reinforced the false idea that, since Christ has already come, the things that were "to come" have been fulfilled. Thus, they cling tenaciously to their mistaken belief that indeed "the life, death and resurrection terminated all these laws and commandments of God."

However, the Greek preposition the *NIV* translators mistranslated as the English past tense phrase "were to come" is actually a **present tense**, articular active plural participle, *toon mellontoon*, which is impossible to translate as a past tense completed action. An honest translation can only

reflect the present tense, continuous, ongoing meaning of "the things to come," or "the coming things"—which can only mean the continuous unfolding of prophecy and the plan of God.

Importantly, we know the Colossian church was composed entirely of Gentile converts. Paul preached "the mystery among the Gentiles" (Col. 1:27), and refers to their spiritual circumcision of the heart through Jesus Christ—their conversion—in contrast to their physical condition of "uncircumcision" of the flesh (Col. 2:13).

As we find in Acts 19, Gentile converts forsook their pagan religion and worship of Greek gods and goddesses, when they were met with resistance and ridicule. And in the case of Paul, he was threatened with death because he gave up Judaism. Likewise, when the Colossians were converted, their lives were completely changed. They abandoned their past pagan religious practices, forsook the idol temples, and ceased to participate in pagan religious festivals and days of worship. Instead, they observed the seventh-day weekly Sabbath; and as Paul taught in all the churches, they were faithful to the holy days and festivals of the true God.

This caused those *outside* the church to make judgments against the Colossian brethren for having abandoned their former religious philosophy and worship of angels. When we understand the circumstances with which Paul was dealing when he wrote Colossians 2:16-17, then the true meaning of the passage becomes clear.

An Analysis of Colossians 2:16-17

Here is an accurate translation of the original Greek:

Col. 2:16—"Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a festival, or new moon, or *the* Sabbaths"—verse 17—"which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the body of Christ."

1) The first phrase—"**Therefore, do not allow anyone to judge you**…"—means that because they were now converted and had changed their lives to believe and obey the gospel, and were now keeping the laws and commandments of God instead of their former pagan ways, **therefore**, they were not to let anyone ***outside*** the Church judge them because of their new way of life.

2) "…**in eating, or in drinking**…" When they were pagans they ate all meats—clean and unclean. After conversion they no longer ate unclean meats (I Tim. 4:1-5). Likewise, they no longer engaged in drunkenness as in the past, which was also part of their pagan religious practices. Now, because they had changed their ways, they were to ignore the judgments and criticisms of those outside the Church.

3) "…**with regard to a festival, or new moon, or *the* Sabbaths**…" Rather than showing that the Colossians were being judged for rejecting the festivals and Sabbaths of God, this phrase means the exact opposite. As in the case of the Galatians, as former pagans they had never observed any of the biblical festivals and Sabbaths before their conversion. Therefore, those outside the Church were not judging the Colossians because they were no longer keeping these things, rather they were judging them because after their conversion they were, indeed, keeping them. A word about "new moon." Since this is in the singular, it refers to the calculated Hebrew Calendar, and must be referring to the Feast of Trumpets, a holy day, because the first day of the seventh month (a new moon) is the beginning date for the calculations of the Hebrew Calendar.

4) "…**which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming**…" This important phrase shows that true Christians—those obeying God's way of life—will have an understanding of coming events in prophecy as the plan of God unfolds.

5) "…**but the body of Christ**." This phrase can reflect two meanings. First, since the Colossian brethren were being judged by those *outside* the church for their new, converted conduct, any judging concerning these matters should only be done in and by the Church, which is "the body of Christ." Second, this phrase can also mean that the *reality* of observing God's Sabbath and holy days can be found only in the "body of Christ"—the Church—not from *outside* the Church. In other words, the true knowledge and meaning of such days can be found only in the churches of God. As Jesus said, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them [outside the Body of Christ—outside the true Church of God] it has not been given…. But blessed *are* your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see what you see, and have not seen; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard" (Matt. 13:11, 16-17).

The entire chapter of Colossians Two is a contrast between the way of God through Jesus Christ and the way of pagans with their religious philosophies and worship of fallen angels. When the verses of this chapter are divided into these two contrasting elements, the true meaning and full intent of what Paul wrote becomes clear. Below, the verses of Colossians Two are divided into:

A. Things relating to Christ and God the Father and the Christian way of life.

B. Warnings against paganism, religious philosophy and the worship of fallen angels.

Colossians Two Divided into Elements A and B

A. "Now I want you to understand what great concern I have for you, and *for* those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in *the* flesh; that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love unto all riches of **the full assurance of understanding**, unto ***the*** **knowledge of the mystery of God**, and of *the* Father, and of Christ; **in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**" (verses 1-3).
B. "Now I say this so that **no one may deceive you by persuasive speech**" (verse 4).

A. "For though I am indeed absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, **as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him; being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught**, abounding in it with thanksgiving" (verses 4-7).
B. "Beware lest anyone takes you captive **through philosophy and vain deceit**, according to **the traditions of men**, according to the **elements of the world**, and not according to Christ" (verse 8).

A. "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and **you are complete in Him**, Who is the Head of all principality and power; in Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, by which you have also been raised with *Him* through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has *now* made alive with Him, **having forgiven all your trespasses. He has blotted out the note of debt against us *with* the decrees *of our sins***, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it away, having nailed it to the cross. After stripping the principalities and the powers, He made a public spectacle of them, *and* has triumphed over them in it [through His crucifixion and resurrection]" (verses 9-15).
B. "Therefore, **do not allow anyone to judge you** in eating or in drinking, or with regard to a festival, or new moon, or *the* Sabbaths, which are a foreshadow of the things that are coming, but the body of Christ. **Do not allow anyone to defraud you of the prize *by* doing *his* will in self-abasement and *the* worship of angels, intruding into things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his own carnal mind and not holding fast to the Head**…" (verses 16-19).

> **A.** "[T]he Head from Whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands, is increasing *with* the increase of God. Therefore, **if you have died together *with Christ* from the elements** [see Gal. 4:8-10] **of the world**…" (verses 19-20).
> **B.** "…**why are you subjecting yourselves to *the* decrees *of men* as if you were living in *the* world**? *They say*, 'You may not handle! You may not taste! You may not touch!' **The use of all such things leads to corruption. *It is* according to the commandments and doctrines of men**, which indeed have an outward appearance of wisdom **in voluntary worship *of angels*, and self-abasement, and unsparing treatment of *the* body**, not in any respect to the satisfying *of the needs* of the flesh" (verses 20-23).

When the chapter is taken as a whole—and one examines Paul's contrasting admonitions—it becomes obvious that Paul did not abolish the dietary laws of clean and unclean meats, the annual festivals or the weekly Sabbath, or adopt a pagan calendar system. Moreover, none of God's laws were nailed to the cross. Rather, Paul is clearly affirming that the Gentiles in Colosse were to continue to observe God's laws and commandments as they had been taught. Paul was instructing the Colossians to disregard the criticisms and harsh judgments of those *outside* the Church, because the observance of God's Sabbath and holy days are a continuous foreshadowing of events yet to occur in God's plan. By being faithful and keeping these commandments of God, they would always be worshiping the true God, be built up in Jesus Christ and never lose the understanding of God's plan. By true obedience to God the Father and Jesus Christ, they would never again be deceived by vain philosophies and decrees of men, nor would they be seduced into the worship of fallen angels—Satan and his demons.

This is the *true* meaning of Colossians Two!

Ephesians 2:15-16: Did Jesus Abolish the Commandments?

Now that we have a clear understanding of Colossians Two, it will not be difficult to realize what Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:15-16. In these verses the *KJV* reads: "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

The key phrase in this *inaccurate* translation—which has caused a great deal of confusion—is "abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances." What is the "law of commandments contained in ordinances"? Are these actually the commandments of God contained in the Old Testament, as most assume?

The word translated "ordinances" comes from the Greek *dogma* (Col. 2:14, 20), which always refers to "decrees, ordinances, decisions and

commands of men" (Arndt and Gingrich). Paul is not referring here to the commandments of God contained in the law of God. Moreover, not once in the New Testament is *dogma* used in reference to the laws and commandments of God.

To what decrees or dogmas of men is Paul referring? Notice, the context clearly reveals that he was writing about the *traditional* dogmas, decrees or commands of Judaism. The harsh traditional laws of Judaism created great hostility and enmity between Jews and Gentiles—as well as among the Jews themselves. Of these Jesus said, "For they bind heavy burdens and hard to bear, and lay *them* on the shoulders of men; but they will not move them with *one of* their own fingers" (Matt. 23:4).

In Mark Seven, Jesus Christ strongly rebuked the Jewish religious leaders for adhering to their traditional laws and rejecting the commandments of God: "[T]he Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, 'Why don't Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?' And He answered *and* said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. **But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men**." For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*.' Then He said to them, '**Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your *own* tradition**. For Moses said, "Honor your father and your mother"; and, "The one who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death." But you say, "If a man shall say to *his* father or mother, 'Whatever benefit you might receive from me *is* corban (that is, *set aside as* a gift to God),' he is not obligated to help his parents." And you excuse him from doing anything for his father or his mother, nullifying the authority of the Word of God by your tradition which you have passed down; and you practice many *traditions* such as this' " (Mark 7:5-13; also see Matt. 23).

Not only were the traditional decrees of Judaism contrary to the laws and commandments of God, they were so strange and harsh that they bred hostility and enmity among the Jewish people. Such traditions especially caused Jews to look down on Gentiles with contempt and disdain. In Ephesians 2:11-16, Paul describes this hostile relationship that existed between Jews and Gentiles before the coming of Christ and the preaching of the gospel of peace. He emphasizes that the enmity was primarily the result of the Jews' nonsensical traditions.

For example, a major "thorn in the flesh" between the two groups was the Jews' tradition—from their added oral law—that Jews were not to keep company with Gentiles, or even eat with them. This was most certainly not a law of God. In order to prevent this Jewish bias against Gentiles from becoming rooted in the Church, God revealed to the apostle Peter early

on that such traditions of Judaism were totally unacceptable—and that He was fully annulling those laws and decrees.

When God first began to call Gentiles, Peter was sent through a special vision from God to the house of Cornelius in Caesarea. Cornelius was a Roman Army Centurion who feared the true God and prayed to Him. Notice what Peter said to Cornelius: "**You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew** [who practiced Jewish traditional law] **to associate with or come near to anyone of another race**…" (Acts 10:28).

Peter explained to Cornelius and those gathered in his house that God had moved him through a vision to proclaim that such hateful Jewish decrees had been made null and void by God as contrary to His laws and commandments. Peter said, "But God has shown me *that* **no man should be called common or unclean**…. Of a truth I perceive that **God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation the one who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him**" (Acts 10:28, 34-35).

In order to demonstrate to Peter, and hence all the apostles, that God was calling the Gentiles to the same salvation that began with the Jews and Israelites at the temple on the Day of Pentecost in 30 AD, He supernaturally poured out the Holy Spirit upon the uncircumcised Gentiles gathered in Cornelius' house *before* they were baptized. Peter continued, " 'And He [Jesus] commanded us to preach to the people, and to fully testify that it is He Who has been appointed by God *to be* Judge of *the* living and *the* dead. To Him all the prophets bear witness, *that* everyone who believes in Him receives remission of sins through His name.' **While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all those who were listening to the message. And the believers from the circumcision were astonished**, as many as had come with Peter, **that upon the Gentiles also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out**; for they heard them speak in *other* languages and magnify God. Then Peter responded *by saying*, '**Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did*?**' And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they besought him to remain *for* a number of days" (Acts 10:42-48).

With this background—and an accurate translation of Ephesians 2:11-16—the true meaning of this difficult passage is crystal clear. We see that Paul was in no way abolishing the commandments of God—for no man can abolish the commandments God any more than a man can destroy the heavens and earth (Deut. 30:16-20; Matt. 5:17-18; Mark 13:31).

Rather, God annulled the ridiculous, hateful, traditional laws of Judaism that were against Gentiles, as they had no place in the Church of God. Notice what Paul wrote: "Therefore, remember that you were once Gentiles in *the* flesh, who are called uncircumcision by those who are called circumcision in *the* flesh made by hands; *and* that you were without Christ at that time, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, Who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition [created by Jewish traditional laws and decrees], **having annulled in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in *the* decrees *of men*, so that in Himself He might create both into one new man, making peace** [between Jews and Gentiles in the Church]; and *that* He might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, **having slain the enmity** by it" (Eph. 2:11-16).

Romans 7:1-6—Are Christians "Released from the Law"?

An improper interpretation of this passage gives the appearance that Christians have been "released" from any obligation whatsoever to keep the laws and commandments of God. However, such teachings are, in reality, rooted in carnal-minded lawlessness and enmity against the laws of God (Rom. 8:7; I John 3:4). Those who believe and promote such blatant misrepresentations are lacking in scriptural knowledge and are unskilled in dividing the Word of truth—and thus make Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul lawless ministers of sin!

"Are you ignorant, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know law), that the law rules over a man for as long a time as he may live? **For the woman who is married is bound by law to the husband as long as he is living; but if the husband should die, she is released from the law *that bound her* to the husband**.

"So then, if she should marry another man as long as the husband is living, she shall be called an adulteress; **but if the husband should die, she is free from the law *that bound her to the husband***, so that she is no longer an adulteress if she is married to another man. In the same way, my brethren, you also were made dead to the *marriage* law *of the Old Covenant* by the body of Christ in order for you to be married to another, Who was raised from *the* dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God. For as long as we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were through the law, were working within our own members to bring forth fruit unto death. **But now we have been released from the law because we have died *to that* in which we were held so that we might serve in newness of *the* spirit, and not in *the* oldness of *the* letter**" (Rom. 7:1-6).

Clearly, the context of this passage is the *marriage law* which binds a husband and wife together—until death terminates their marriage covenant. Based on this law, Paul makes a comparison—because the covenant between God and the children of Israel was a *marriage* covenant. The Lord God was likened to the Husband and Israel was likened to His wife. God confirmed this marital covenant relationship when He inspired Isaiah to write, "**For your Maker *is* your husband**; the LORD of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called" (Isa. 54:5).

This marriage covenant between God and ancient Israel was based on physical promises of territory, long life, abundant material blessings, national wealth and greatness, and God's protection in exchange for Israel's obedience in the letter of His laws and commandments. Yet Israel was an almost completely unfaithful wife.

Since marriage is binding by law until the death of either the husband or the wife, how could God terminate His marriage with Israel—apart from destroying every Israelite from all twelve tribes? Remember, God keeps His own laws, as they are a reflection of His inherent spiritual righteousness. Indeed, He was bound to Israel by His own immutable law.

However, the Lord God of the Old Covenant was the One Who became the Lord of the New Covenant—Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Lord God Who became Jesus Christ in the flesh was able to terminate the marriage covenant with Israel through His death on the cross. He could not enter into a *new* espousal covenant relationship with the Church until He had died. This was one of the key reasons He became God manifested in the flesh, so He could release Israel and Himself through His own death from their Old Covenant marriage.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, true Christians could then be espoused as chaste virgins to Jesus Christ as their future Husband (II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-33). The marriage of the Lamb, the Husband, and the Church, the wife, will take place shortly after the first resurrection (Rev. 19:7-9).

Consequently, the phrase "released from the law" means that through Jesus' death (and the believer's symbolic death by water baptism), Jewish Christians have been *released* from their marriage agreement that bound them to the Old Covenant. It does *not* mean that New Covenant Christians are released from the obligation to keep the commandments and laws of God (Matt. 5:17-20). Rather, they are to obey the laws and commandments of God in the **newness of the spirit** of the law, and not just in the letter of the law (verse 6).

"Justification by Faith"—
Is the Righteousness of God Without Law?

In order to determine the actual meaning of the apostle Paul's difficult passages concerning "law/the law" and "righteousness," we need to first understand how Paul used these particular terms.

Paul's Use of the Term "Law": The English word "law" is translated from the Greek word νομος, *nomos*, "law." Without the article it means "law" in general; an individual "law"; or the general principal of "law" or "a law." When Paul uses the word "law" *with* the definite article—ο νομος, *ho nomos*—it means in the strictest sense the Pentateuch. In some cases it may refer to God's covenant with Israel or to the Ten Commandments. In the book of Hebrews, "the law" can refer to ritual laws of the temple system. "The law," *ho nomos*, can also refer to a *specific* law other than "the law/s of God." For example:

- Romans 7:23—"the law of my mind" and "the law of sin"
- Romans 8:2—"the law of the Spirit of life" and "the law of sin and death"
- Galatians 6:2—"the law of Christ"

***"Law" Without the Definite Article*:** In more than half of the passages where Paul discusses "law," he uses the term *without* the definite article—a fact critical to understanding his writings. This is especially true where Paul refers to laws of Judaism and decrees of men. Numerous problems in interpreting and understanding Paul's epistles have resulted due to the *KJV* and other English translators *adding* the definite article "the" to nearly all of Paul's scriptures where he uses "law" (*nomos*) *without* the definite article. Moreover, the translators failed to indicate their insertions by italicizing the added definite article—i.e., "*the*." Thus, Orthodox Christendom has developed many false doctrines based upon misunderstandings caused by these additions.

However, in *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order—A Faithful Version*, when the definite article is *added* to the English translation of *nomos*, it is always noted by italicizing the article—as in, "*the* law." Thus, it is distinguished from *ho nomos*, where the definite article (*ho*) is actually translated from the Greek. In such cases the article is *not* italicized—"**the** law." Those who desire to undertake a more thorough study of this matter will find a Greek New Testament or a Greek-English Interlinear Bible quite helpful.

Below is a listing of the passages where Paul uses "law" and "the law" in his epistles.

1) There is *no* definite article in the Greek in these passages—simply *nomos*. If a definite article is *added*, it should be italicized—"*the* law." Rom. 2:12, 14, 23, 25, 27; 3:20, 21, 27, 28, 31; 4:12, 14, 15; 5:13, 20; 6: 14, 15. In Rom. 7:1-6, all uses of "law/the law" are referring to the principal of "law" and the "law" of marriage as it pertains to God's covenant with Israel. Rom. 7:7, 8, 9, 23, 25; 9:31, 32; 10:4; 13:10; I Cor. 9:9, 20; Gal. 2:16, 19, 21; 3:2, 5, 10, 11, 13, 18, 21, 23; 4:4, 5, 21; 5:4, 18, 23; 6:13; Phil. 3:5, 6, 9; I Tim. 1:9; Heb. 7:12, 16; 8:10; 9:19; 10:16

2) These passages already *include* the definite article as part of the original Greek—*ho nomos*. Thus they appear as "**the** law." Rom. 2:13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 23, 26, 27; 3:19, 21; 4:16; 7:12, 14, 16, 22, 23; 8:2, 3, 4, 7; 10:5; I Cor. 9:8, 9; 14:21, 34; 15:56; Gal. 3:10, 12, 13, 17, 19, 21, 24; 4:21; 5:3, 14; 6:2; I Tim. 1:8; Heb. 7:5, 19, 28; 8:4; 9:22; 10:1, 8

***Paul's Use of the Word "Righteousness"*:** In addition to Paul's use of "law/the law," we need to understand the meaning of the word "righteousness" and how he used it. In the New Testament, "righteousness" is translated from the Greek word *dikaisune* (δικαιοσυνη), which is used to bring out *nine* different aspects of "righteousness."

1) The **righteousness of the law** is obedience in the letter of the law (Deut. 4:1-8; Luke 1:6; Rom. 2:27; Phil. 3:6, 9).
2) The **righteousness of law** refers to receiving **justification** of one's sins through Old Covenant sacrifices, rituals, oblations and washings at the temple (Lev. 1-7; 12-15).
3) The **righteousness of law** refers to a work of law in obedience to the traditional laws of Judaism—including any law of another religion (Mark 7:1-13; Acts 10:28; 11:3; Gal. 2:11-16; Rom. 9:32; Gal. 2:16).
4) The **righteousness of God** means the personal righteousness of God the Father and Jesus Christ—the pure, holy, spiritual conduct of God.
5) The **righteousness of God** also refers to God's **justification** of a repentant sinner's past sins—which is a unilateral action of God through His grace that is separate from the Law and the Prophets (Rom. 2:21-24).
6) The **righteousness of faith** is faithful obedience to the laws and commandments of God in their spiritual intent and meaning (Rom. 2:27; I Cor. 7:19; Phil. 1:11; 2:12-13; 3:9; I John 2:3-6; 5:2 -3; II John 2-6; Heb. 10:16; Rev. 22:14).
7) The **righteousness of faith** also means God's **justification** of one's past sins through **faith** and **belief** in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His shed blood for the forgiveness of sins by grace (Rom. 2:14; 3:21-31; 4:2; 3:31; 5:1; Gal. 3:8-10; 5:4-5; Eph. 2:4-10).
8) The **imputed righteousness of God** means the righteousness that God imputes to a believer when he or she believes God and acts upon what He commands with a willing heart (Gen. 15:6; 26:5; Rom. 4:3-5; James 2:14-26).
9) The **imputed righteousness of God** also refers to righteousness imputed by God upon repentance—because the believer's sins have been forgiven and removed through belief in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His shed blood. This imputed righteousness does not mean that Jesus has kept the commandments ***for*** a person. Neither does it remove one's obligation to keep the commandments of God (Rom. 4:6, 11, 22-23). Indeed, it demands that one keep the commandments and laws of God in their full spiritual intent (Rom. 7:6).

In order to understand what Paul wrote in Romans 3:20-31, we will focus on the "righteousness of God"—meaning God's justification of a repentant sinner's past sins.

The *KJV* Translators' Great Error in Romans

In the book of Romans, the *KJV* translators *added* the definite article "the"—though it was not in the original text—when translating the Greek phrase *ergon nomou* into "**the** works of **the** law." Also, they did not make

the word "the" *italic* when writing "the works" or "the law" to show that it was their own addition. The correct translation, a "work of law," is vastly different in meaning from "the works of the law." Many religions require "good works" in order for one to achieve salvation. These are a "work of law." On the other hand, "the work of the law" is commandment-keeping (Rom. 2:14). Usually, Paul talks about a "work of law"—which is far broader than commandment-keeping, and included the traditional laws of Judaism which Christ condemned.

In order to fully understand what Paul is saying in this critical passage in Romans Three, we need to examine the context in which it was written. In so doing, we will come to realize that Paul is talking about how one receives justification by *faith*, as opposed to justification by a *work of a law*—whether by temple ritual or justification through a traditional law of Judaism. He is not proclaiming the elimination of the laws and commandments of God as millions claim and believe.

Romans 3:20-31 Examined

Citing these verses, Evangelical Protestants make the claim that it is not necessary for a person to keep the commandments of God—especially the Sabbath and holy days—in order to have salvation. Moreover, they assert that if one keeps the Sabbath and holy days of God, they are attempting to be *justified* by commandment-keeping rather than by the grace of God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Are such claims true? Why should Sunday-keeping—a man-made tradition contrary to the Word of God—not be justification by works as well? We need to ask, What did Paul actually mean in Romans 3:20-31? Does he really advocate the elimination of the laws and commandments of God?

In the *KJV*, Romans 3:20-21 reads: "Therefore **by the deeds** [works] **of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight**: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. But now **the righteousness of God WITHOUT THE LAW is manifested**, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."

This translation *seems* to indicate that there is no need to keep the laws of God, and that one can obtain righteousness "without the law"—that is, in the complete absence of law-keeping. But how can one who is "living in sin" also be righteous? Is that not a complete impossibility?

Furthermore, how can one be righteous *without* law when the Bible specifically declares, "All Your commandments are righteousness"? (Psa. 119:172). Complicating matters even more, Romans 2:13 says, "The hearers of the law *are* not just before God, but the **doers of the law shall be justified**." What does Paul mean by this?

Romans 3:20-31 is indeed one of the most difficult-to-understand passages that Paul wrote. Did Paul actually mean that one could be righteous *without* commandment-keeping? How is it possible that "by the deeds of the law no one is justified," yet, "the doers of the law shall be justified"? What are the answers to these perplexing questions?

***The Works of the Law*:** This phrase, "**the** works of **the** law" (*KJV*), is perhaps one of the most misunderstood phrases in the epistles of Paul. The confusion originates from an inaccurate translation of the Greek *ergon nomou* (εργων νομου), which literally means "works of law." It does not mean "**the** works of **the** law." In the *KJV*, as well as in other versions, translators have inserted two definite articles into this phrase that are not found in the Greek text. One definite article, "the," has been inserted before the word "works" and the other before the word "law," making it incorrectly read "**the** works of **the** law." The definite articles were added to help clarify the meaning because translators thought that *ergon nomou* referred exclusively to the laws and commandments of God. Consequently, it has been assumed that keeping the commandments of God is not required for salvation because "**the** works of **the** law" cannot justify anyone with God. While it is true that "works of law" can refer to the laws of God, Paul undoubtedly intended a far broader application of the phrase *ergon nomou*.

If the apostle Paul had intended the phrase to read "**the** works of **the** law," he most certainly would have written it that way in Greek. In fact, there is one verse, and one verse only, where Paul actually did write the entire phrase "**the** work of **the** law": "For when *the* Gentiles, which do not have *the* law, **practice by nature the things contained in the law**, these who do not have *the* law are a law unto themselves, who show **the work of the law** written in their own hearts, their consciences bearing witness, and their reasonings also, as they accuse or defend one another" (Rom. 2:14-15).

The Greek phrase in verse 15 is ***to*** *ergon* ***tou*** *nomou* (το εργον του νομου) which, when translated into English, reads "**the** work of **the** law." Here it is quite evident that Paul was indeed talking about the laws of God.

In all places where *ergon nomou* appears, it should be translated as "works of law" rather than "**the** works of **the** law." Paul used *ergon nomou*—without the definite articles—in seven places, which should all be translated "works of law":

> **1)** Rom. 9:31-32: "But Israel, although they followed after a law of righteousness, did not attain to a law of righteousness. Why? Because *they did* not *seek it* by faith, but by **works of law**; for they stumbled at the Stone of stumbling."
> **2-4)** Gal. 2:14-16: "But when I saw that they did not walk uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in the presence of them all, 'If you, being a Jew, are living like the Gentiles, and not according to Judaism, why do you compel the Gentiles to judaize? We who are Jews by nature—and not sinners of *the* Gentiles—knowing that a man is not justified by **works of law**, but through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified by *the* faith of Christ, and not by **works of law**; because by **works of law** shall no flesh be justified.' "

5) Gal. 3:2: "This only I desire to learn from you: did you receive the Spirit of God by **works of law**, or by *the* hearing of faith?"
6) Gal. 3:5: "Therefore *consider this*: He Who is supplying the Spirit to you, and Who is working deeds of power among you, *is He doing it* by **works of law** or by *the* hearing of faith?"
7) Gal. 3:10: "For as many as are *relying* on **works of law** are under a curse, because it is written, 'Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things that have been written in the book of the law to do them.' "

The True Meaning of "Works of Law": It is evident in these passages that Paul is including the traditional laws of Judaism in the phrase "works of law." In Galatians Two, Peter and the others were not following a law of God in eating separately from Gentiles, but were observing a traditional law of Judaism. Peter knew the Jews' traditions because fifteen years earlier he said to Cornelius, "You know that **it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race**…" (Acts 10:28). Peter was referring to a **man-made** traditional law of Judaism. Therefore, Paul's use of the phrase "works of law" includes all humanly-devised religious decrees, traditional laws of Judaism (Mark 7:1-13), as well as the ritual and sacrificial laws followed by Gentiles in worshipping their gods (Acts 14:8-18).

In addition, the phrase "works of law" can include all the rituals and sacrifices under the Old Covenant. Paul wrote that it was impossible for those rituals and sacrifices to atone for sin before God the Father in heaven: "For the law, having *only* a shadow of the good things that are coming, *and* not the image of those things, with the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, is never able to make perfect those who come *to worship*. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered? For once those who worship had been purified, *they would* no longer be conscious of sin. On the contrary, in *offering* these *sacrifices* year by year, *there is* a remembrance of sins; because *it is* impossible *for the* blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb. 10:1-4).

In summary, "works of law" refers to the works of *any* law—the laws of God, the laws of Judaism, and the laws of pagan religions. Clearly, Paul used "works of law" in the broadest sense—which included *all* religious works of law.

Concerning keeping the laws of God in the spirit, Paul wrote to the Romans that they "might serve in newness of *the* spirit, and not in *the* oldness of *the* letter…. [For] the law *is* indeed holy, and the commandment holy and righteous and good…. For we know that the law is spiritual…" (Rom. 7:6, 12, 14). In these verses, Paul is referring to the spiritual intent of the commandments of God, known as "the spirit of the law." True Christians will obey the laws and commandments of God in newness of the spirit. Not only will their obedience come from their hearts, it will be manifest outwardly in their actions.

After a person has been converted, he or she is to walk in *newness* of life and do the "good works" of loving God and keeping His commandments. Commandment-keeping in the spirit of the law keeps a person from sinning, because "by the law is the knowledge of sin."

***Justification by Faith*:** When a person is living in a state of sin, he or she is cut off from God. Thus, the sinner is in a completely helpless condition—because no work of any kind or of any law can forgive sin and remove sin from his or her life. No one can justify himself from sin. It is impossible, even as the proverb declares, "**Who can say, 'I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin**'?" (Prov. 20:9).

Only God, Who is the Heart-knowing God and Lawgiver, can—through His mercy and steadfast love—forgive sins and transgressions of His laws and commandments. No man, minister, rabbi, priest or pope, or any other religious potentate, or any law or work of law can forgive sin, because all sin is against God. Therefore, only God Himself personally can forgive sin: "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; **Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases**…. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him. **As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us**" (Psa. 103:2-3, 11-12).

God grants forgiveness only upon the sinner's genuine repentance toward God, which is accomplished privately through heartfelt prayer, and is evidenced by a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Notice King David's ancient prayer of repentance after He had grievously sinned: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, **blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me**. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be clear when You judge…. Behold, **You desire truth in the inward parts**; and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me**" (Psa. 51:1-4, 6-10).

In order to be made right with God and have sins forgiven and removed, the sinner must repent to God the Father and accept the sacrifice of the blood of Jesus Christ as full payment for his or her sins. Notice how Paul expressed it: "[We, as called, true Christians, are] to *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*; **in Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace**" (Eph. 1:6-7).

Again, in writing to the Colossians, Paul shows God's operation of justification through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His shed blood. It is

God the Father "Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness and has transferred *us* unto the kingdom of the Son of His love; **in Whom we have redemption through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins**…. And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, whether the things on the earth, or the things in heaven. **For you *were* once alienated and enemies in *your* minds by wicked works; but now He has reconciled *you* in the body of His flesh through death**, to present you holy and unblamable and unimpeachable before Him; if indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, *and* which was proclaimed in all the creation that is under heaven" (Col. 1:13-14, 20-23).

The apostle John writes: "If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

This is how God the Father justifies the repentant sinner *separate from* commandment-keeping. No one can be justified in the sight of God by *any* work of *any* law. Rather, justification is graciously granted to the believer based on repentance and faith in the sacrifice and shed blood of Jesus Christ. This *state* of justification is called the "gift of righteousness," or the "gift of justification," which God the Father freely imputes to the repentant believer (Rom. 5:17).

The function of the laws and commandments of God is to show men *how* to live, as well as to show them *what* sin is. No law can forgive sin. No law can give eternal life. That is not the function of law. Only God the Father can justify a person from sin through Jesus Christ's sacrifice and blood, which is *separate from* works of law and commandment-keeping. Finally, justification of past sins does *not* do away with the law or the good works that God requires of true believers. This is what Paul meant when he wrote: "The hearers of the law *are* not just before God, but **the doers of the law shall be justified**" (Rom. 2:13).

***The Righteousness of God*:** The righteousness of God is shown by His grace in forgiving sin through the blood and sacrifice of Jesus. This righteousness places the forgiven sinner in right standing with God. Paul wrote: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; *but* are **being justified freely by His grace** through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through **faith in His blood**, in order to demonstrate **His righteousness**, in respect to the remission of the sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; *yes*, to publicly declare **His righteousness** in the present time, that He might be just, and the one Who justifies the one who *is* of *the* faith of Jesus" (Rom. 3:23-26). The righteousness of God that Paul wrote of is the expression of God's love, mercy, forgiveness and justification through Jesus Christ. In a sense, in this context, the word "justification" could be freely substituted for the word "righteousness" because the righteousness of God means the justification that He freely gives to the repentant sinner.

***"Without the Law"*:** The phrase "without the law" in the *King James Version* (Rom. 3:21) is also misunderstood because "without" gives the impression that there is no law at all. In English, "without" conveys "the absence of." Shamefully, too many believe that Christians can disregard the laws and commandments of God. However, in Romans 3:21, "without" is an incorrect translation of the Greek *chori*s (χωρις), which means "separately, apart from, by itself, without" (Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1974). The correct translation of *choris* is "**separate from**"—thus the phrase should read, "separate from law." Since the laws and commandments of God have not ceased to exist, the phrase "separate from law" is more precise because it shows that the function of the law is **separate from** the function of justification by faith—which is accomplished through repentance and belief in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The entire operation of justification is separate from and in addition to law and commandment-keeping. **Forgiveness and justification of one's past sins can *only* come through the life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. NO LAWKEEPING OF ANY KIND OR ANY ACTION INITIATED BY ANYONE CAN ACCOMPLISH THAT!** *This* is what Paul is writing about—he is not writing about the abolition of God's law!

Here is the full, correct translation of Romans 3:20-31. It shows that "the righteousness of God" is actually the *justification* of God through the operation of the forgiveness of a person's sins:

"Therefore, by works of law there shall no flesh be justified before Him; for through *the* law *is the* knowledge of sin. But now, ***the* righteousness of God *that is* separate from law has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even *the* righteousness of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ**, toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; *but* are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate **His righteousness** [justification], **in respect to the remission of sins that are past**, through the forbearance of God; *yes*, to publicly declare His righteousness in the present time, that He might be just, and the one Who justifies the one who *is* of *the* faith of Jesus.

"Therefore, where *is* boasting? It is excluded. Through what law? *The law* of works? By no means! Rather, *it is* through a law of faith. Consequently, **we reckon that a man is justified by faith, separate from works of law**. *Is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also *the God* of *the* Gentiles? YES! *He is* also God of *the* Gentiles, since *it is* indeed one God **Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith**.

"Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing law [or making it to stand]."

Once a person has been justified of past sins through the righteousness of God as described by Paul—and one has received the Holy Spirit—then God begins to write His laws and commandments into his or her mind and heart, **thereby truly establishing the law**, not abolishing it. "For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after He had previously said, 'This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,' says *the* Lord: '**I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds; and their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again**' " (Heb. 10:14-17).

Romans 6:14—The True Meaning of the Phrase, "Not Under Law, But Under Grace"

This single verse, Romans 6:14—because it is typically taken out of context—has caused a great deal of confusion among nominal "Christians." Read in isolation, it gives the *appearance* that Christians are no longer required to keep the laws and commandments of God: "For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace."

But Romans 6:14 cannot be understood in isolation; the entire context of Romans Six must be examined if we are to understand Paul's intent. In fact, the key is actually given in the first two verses of the chapter. Paul asks and answers the question: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?" (verses 1-2).

Remember that *sin* is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4). Obviously, then, if Christians are *not* to continue living in sin, they must be keeping the commandments and laws of God. However, God's laws are now kept in the spirit—under the grace of God!

Paul goes on in Romans Six to explain that the operation of baptism pictures the "death and burial" of the old sinful man—which justifies one to God the Father and brings forgiveness of past sins. He explains it this way: "Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death [since Jesus died for our sins]? Therefore, we were buried with Him though the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life [now with the Holy Spirit of God—in spiritual obedience].

"For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* **in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin; because the one who has died *to sin*** [through repentance and water baptism] **has been justified from sin** [through the blood of Jesus Christ].

"Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies

no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also, you should indeed **reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord**.

"Therefore, **do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof**. Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.

"For sin shall not rule over you because **you are not under law** [for forgiveness and justification], **but under grace** [for forgiveness and justification]. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law [for forgiveness and justification], but under grace [for forgiveness and justification]? MAY IT NEVER BE! Don't you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks *be* to God, that you were *the* servants of sin, but you have obeyed from *the* heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you" (verses 3-17).

Keep in mind that from Romans 3:20 to 6:23, Paul's entire explanation of justification of past sins by *grace* through the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ is contrasted with the absolute inability of any *law* to bring true spiritual justification to the sinner. That is the context in which Romans 6:14 was written. When Paul writes that Christians are "not under law, but under grace," he means that we are not trying to achieve justification through law—which is in fact impossible—but through God's grace. This, then, is the true, scriptural meaning of Romans 6:14.

The apostle John further explains the *continuous* justification and forgiveness of sins that believers have through faith in the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ: "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness [living in sin], we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth ['Your Word is the Truth,' (John 17:17)]. However, if we walk in the light [of God's Word, in love and obedience], as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin**.

"If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And *yet*, **if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous**; and He is *the* propitiation [continual source of mercy and forgiveness] for our sins; and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins* of the whole world" (I John 1:6-10; 2:1-2).

John then follows his explanation of forgiveness of our sins through

the blood of Jesus Christ with the admonition that we are likewise required to keep God's commandments. This again substantiates that God's merciful grace does not allow anyone to continue to *live* in sin. Notice: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. On the other hand, ***if*** **anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him**. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked" (I John 2:3-6). **This is the full, true meaning of living in the grace of God**.

Romans 10:4—How is Jesus Christ "the End of the Law"?

In the *KJV*, Romans 10:4 reads: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." If this verse is read in isolation—without considering the context and historical background, or the underlying Greek—it does indeed give the impression that Christ brought the law to an end. But is that what it really means? If so, *which* law did Jesus end?

Because of this one verse, numerous people assume that all the laws and commandments of God have come to an end. But is this true? Is it possible for a man to *end* any law of God? Try ending the law of gravity. It can't be done. All things are subject to law and all men are subject to God's law. Would Christ, Who is the Lawgiver, actually end all of God's law, so that people may freely sin without consequence? Absolutely not! But that's what millions of Protestants embrace from reading this one verse.

Rather than read this verse in isolation, let us examine the context in which Paul wrote the passage. Remember, men divided the Bible into chapters and verses. The context of Romans 10:4 actually begins not with verse one, but with Romans 9:30. Paul wrote: "What then shall we say? That *the* Gentiles, who did not follow after righteousness, have attained righteousness, even *the* righteousness [justification] that *is* by faith" (Rom. 9:30).

After one has been justified from past sins, they are to keep the commandments of God in the "spirit of the law." Paul wrote, "Since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith. **Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing law**" (Rom. 3:30-31). And again, "So that even as sin has reigned unto death, so also might **the grace *of God* reign through righteousness** [justification] unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What then shall we say? **Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?**" (Rom. 5:20-21; 6:1-2).

Additionally, the Jews who rejected Jesus Christ and continued with their temple rituals and observation of the traditional laws of Judaism did not attain to the justification of God by their works of law. **True** spiritual justification can only come through the grace of God and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ

for the forgiveness of sins: "**But Israel, although they followed after a law** [In the Greek text there is *no* definite article "the" before "law"] **of righteousness** [justification], **did not attain to a law of righteousness** [justification]. **Why? Because *they did* not *seek it* by faith, but BY WORKS OF LAW** [In the Greek text there is *no* definite article "the" before "works" or "law"]; for they stumbled at the Stone of stumbling, exactly as it is written: 'Behold, I place in Sion a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense, but everyone who believes in Him shall not be ashamed' " (Rom. 9:31-33).

It is important to note that in the above passage there is no definite article before "law" or "works of law." Therefore, Paul is not referring to the Ten Commandments. Paul is actually writing about a "justification by works of law"—that is, through the operation of temple rituals and/or traditional laws of Judaism. Anyone who rejects Jesus Christ can **never** obtain justification of past sins through rituals or Jewish traditional laws, or laws of any other religion. This is why Paul said the Jews stumbled; Jesus was that "Rock of offense"—Whom they rejected. While the Jews attempted to obtain justification of sins through temple rituals and other laws, true spiritual justification of past sins can only come from God the Father through the sacrifice of Christ. This is only obtainable through repentance of sins and water baptism with true faith and belief in Jesus' shed blood—all through the operation of God's grace. This spiritual justification by faith—or "the righteousness of faith"—cannot be obtained by any "work of law."

Notice how Paul explains this in chapter ten: "Brethren, the earnest desire of my heart and my supplication to God for Israel is for salvation. For I testify of them that **they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge**.

"For they, being ignorant of the righteousness [justification] *that* comes from God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness [justification], have not submitted to the righteousness [justification] of God. **For Christ *is the* end *of works* of law for righteousness** [justification] **to everyone who believes**" (Rom. 10:1-4).

In other words, *for those who believe*, true justification comes through Christ—thus putting an **end** to futile attempts at justification through ritual works.

So the actual meaning of Romans 10:4 is that Jesus Christ, through His sacrifice for sin, once for all time, ended the temple ritual laws and the traditional laws of Judaism for justification. By writing this, Paul did not unilaterally terminate all the laws of God as millions want to assume. He was emphasizing that true spiritual justification from God the Father is uniquely received through faith in the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ, which is the operation of faith and grace combined, and cannot be procured by any work of any law.

Paul's Teachings on Justification by Faith vs. Works of Law in the Book of Galatians

As we delve into the apostle Paul's writings in Galatians involving "justification by faith" and "works of law," keep these key background points in mind:

1) Paul instructed Christians in Rome that once we have been justified from past sins, we cannot continue to live in sin as a *way of life*—because sin is the "transgression" of God's law (I John 3:4, *KJV*). He wrote: "What then shall we say? **Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?**" (Rom. 6:1-2).

2) As Jesus Himself taught, it is *sin* to observe *any* humanly-devised, traditional religious law—be it Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, or of any other religion—in place of God's laws and commandments (see Mark 7:1-13).

3) Before Paul's conversion, he was, as Saul, one of Judaism's leading Pharisees. At the behest of the high priest, Saul executed orders to persecute, arrest, imprison and even martyr true Christians (Acts 8:1; 9:1-2; 22:3-5).

In his opening remarks to the Galatians, Paul enumerated how he was "advancing" in Judaism: "For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism, how I was excessively **persecuting the church of God** and was destroying it; and I was **advancing in Judaism** *far* beyond many of *my* contemporaries in my *own* nation, **being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers**" (Gal. 1:13-14).

***Galatians Two*:** Paul wrote that he was forced to rebuke Peter, Barnabas and other Jews publicly for their hypocrisy in reverting back and adhering to a traditional law of Judaism that forbade Jews from eating with Gentiles. Peter knew better, as God first used him to preach the gospel and repentance to Gentiles, beginning with Cornelius and his household (Acts 10).

As will be seen, the account in Galatians Chapter Two does not involve any law or commandment of God—only traditional laws of Judaism, *which are sin*. Observing such traditional Jewish laws can never bring justification—or put one in "right standing" with God the Father. Let us scrutinize the entire account verse by verse:

"But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to *his* face because he was to be condemned; for before certain *ones* came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles. However, when they came, he drew back and separated himself *from the Gentiles*, being afraid of those of *the* circumcision *party*. And the rest of *the* Jews joined him in *this* hypocritical act, insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

"But when I saw that they did not walk uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in the presence of them all, '**If you, being a Jew, are living like the Gentiles, and not according to Judaism, why**

do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize? [That is, to eat separately as do unconverted Jews.] We who are Jews by nature—and not sinners of *the* Gentiles—knowing that **a man is not justified by works of law, but through *the* faith of Jesus Christ**, we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified by *the* faith of Christ, and not by works of law; because **by works of law shall no flesh be justified** [before God from past sins].

" 'Now then, if we are seeking to be justified in Christ, *and* we ourselves are found to be sinners, *is* Christ then *the* minister of sin? MAY IT NEVER BE! For if I build again those things that I destroyed [the adherence to the laws of Judaism], I am making myself a transgressor. For I through law [since the wages of sin is death] died [in the operation of baptism] to law [that is, to Judaism's traditional laws], in order that I may live to God [in love and obedience]. I have been crucified with Christ [by baptism], yet I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me. For *the life* that I am now living in *the* flesh, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness [justification] *is* through *works of* law, then Christ died in vain' " (Gal. 2:11-21).

The whole purpose of repentance, baptism and justification by faith in the sacrifice and shed blood of Jesus Christ is to receive the Holy Spirit of God, which is our begettal from God the Father and the "earnest" (pledge or down payment) of our salvation (I John 3:9; Eph. 1:13-14). Paul wrote nothing in this passage that can be construed to mean he was abolishing the laws and commandments of God—for NO MAN CAN DO SO!

***Galatians Three*:** Paul continues in chapter three, making it clear that any work of any law is not able to bring about justification for past sins. While God requires Christians to keep His laws and commandments in their full spiritual intent, no law has the power to forgive sin, justify a person to God spiritually, impart the Holy Spirit, or bestow eternal life. The function of God's laws and commandments is to *define sin*: "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you *into* not obeying the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ, crucified, was set forth in a written public proclamation? This only I desire to learn from you: **did you receive the Spirit of God by works of law, or by *the* hearing of faith?** Are you so foolish? Having begun in *the* Spirit, are you now being perfected in *the* flesh [through obedience to carnal laws of Judaism]?… Therefore, *consider this*: He Who is supplying the Spirit to you, and Who is working deeds of power among you, *is He doing it* **by works of law** or by *the* **hearing of faith**?" (Gal. 3:1-5).

Concerning the laws and commandments of God, Paul demonstrates that they are **not contrary** to God's promises of eternal life—which can only come through loving obedience and faith in Jesus Christ. "*Is* the law then contrary to the promises of God? MAY IT NEVER BE! **For if a law had been given that had the power to give life**, *then* righteousness [justification] would indeed have been by law. But the Scriptures have shut

up all things under sin, so that by *the* faith of Jesus Christ the promise [of eternal life] might be given to those who believe. Now before faith came, we were guarded under law, having been shut up unto the faith that was yet to be revealed [at Christ's first coming]. In this way, the law was our tutor *to lead us* to Christ that we might be justified by faith. But since faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Gal. 3:21-25).

After repentance, baptism and the laying of hands, God gives the Holy Spirit—which unites with the spirit of man within the believer (I John 3:9) bringing conversion (John 14:17). God, then begins to write His laws and commandments in the mind of the new believer (Heb. 10:16). Instead of the *external* tutoring of the law, the believer now begins to develop the mind of Christ by the Holy Spirit through faith (Phil. 2:5). This is the *internal* working of the Holy Spirit to lead the believer in all righteousness (Rom. 8:14).

***Galatians Five*:** Judaism required that Gentile proselytes be circumcised in the flesh before they could enter the synagogue. They were then required to keep the whole law—meaning all of God's laws, as well as all the traditional laws of Judaism. False teachers were causing converts in Galatia to revert back to those teachings, which were mixed with pagan gnosticism derived from Hellenistic Judaism. This was the "yoke of bondage" of which Paul wrote. On the other hand, the laws and commandments of God were *never* a "yoke of bondage"—even when kept in the letter of the law, as required under the Old Covenant (Deut. 4:1-8, 39-40; 5:1-21, 32-33; 6:1-25).

This is the reason Paul admonished the Galatians to remain unyielding in the *true* faith, warning them not to revert back to "works of law" of Judaism for justification: "Therefore, stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and do not be held again in a yoke of bondage. Behold, I, Paul, tell you that if you become circumcised [in the flesh, rather than in the heart by the Spirit (Rom. 2:25-29; Col. 2:13)], Christ shall profit you nothing! Again, I am personally testifying to every man who is being [physically] circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law [all the Old Testament laws and the traditional laws of Judaism, thereby eliminating repentance, faith and baptism].

"You who are attempting to be justified by *works of* law, you are being deprived of any *spiritual* effect from Christ. You have fallen from grace! For we through *the* Spirit are waiting for *the* hope of righteousness by faith" (Gal. 5:1-5). This is also the meaning of Galatians 5:18. "But if you are led by *the* Spirit, you are not under [*works of*] law.

I Timothy 4:1-5—
Did Paul Teach That All Meat Is Good for Food?

There is no question that the apostle Paul believed—and thus taught—"all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets" (Acts 24:14). This certainly included God's commands concerning clean and

unclean meats (as found in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14). But mainstream Christianity insists that Paul relaxed the biblical injunction against unclean meats. They often site I Timothy 4:1-5, which is misleading in the *KJV*: "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; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and *commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. **For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer**."

Here, Paul warns Timothy of an apostasy to occur in the end times—which would involve various "doctrines of demons." One such "doctrine" commands abstinence from certain meats—which Paul counters by *apparently* saying that *all* meat is good for food, that nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving. But is this really what Paul is saying? Is Paul upending centuries of Jewish adherence to Old Testament food laws?

Note first that this particular "doctrine" refers specifically to abstaining from meat that was "created to be received." Conversely, this substantiates that there are *other* meats which were *not* "created to be received." Indeed, God created meats which were never designed to be food—thus they are termed *unclean*. But *clean* meats were created to be received as food with thanksgiving. Thus, the passage is not dealing with meat in general, but only with *clean* meats—those "created to be received with thanksgiving."

Next, note that the meat being discussed has been "*sanctified* by the word of God." Where in the Bible is meat particularly sanctified—*set apart*—for human consumption? Why, obviously, Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, which lists meats to be avoided and those to be eaten. Thus, Paul did not say that *every* kind of meat was created by God for food—but that every *clean* meat was created by God for food.

Without question, Paul upheld the laws of clean and unclean meats as a requirement for Christians. He described the meats that Christians are permitted to eat as those which God has "created to be received with thanksgiving." Paul was actually condemning a false doctrine that prohibited the eating of *clean* meats. The correct translation helps resolve the matter:

"Now the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith, *and* shall follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons; speaking lies in hypocrisy, their consciences having been cauterized *with a hot iron*; forbidding to marry; *and* ***commanding*** **to abstain from meats, which God created to be received** with thanksgiving by the faithful, even *by* those who know the truth. For every creature of God *designated for human consumption* is good, and nothing to be refused, *if* it is received with thanksgiving, because it is [already] sanctified [set apart] by the Word of God [in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14] and prayer." (Please note how *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order—A Faithful Version* incorporates **inserted**

words and phrases in *italic type* in the appropriate places to make the intended meaning clear. All such insertions are based fully on the contextual meaning of the passage.)

Paul adds that clean meats are also set apart by *prayer*. Indeed, we have Christ's own example of asking for God's blessing on our food (Luke 9:16; 24:30; etc.). This further sets the food apart as approved and even enhanced by God—but in no way can prayer make unclean meat clean.

Mark 7:1-5—Did Jesus Declare All Meats Clean?

It is a widely held conception of modern "Christianity" that Jesus set aside the laws and commandments of God—including those which prohibit certain meats as "unclean." An incident recorded in Mark Chapter Seven is often used as a proof-text for such a view. In this case, Jesus' disciples were criticized by the Jewish leadership for eating without first washing their hands. This dispute had nothing to do with clean and unclean meats. Rather, it revolved around Jewish traditional law of ritual purity, such as ceremonial hand washing.

"Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes from Jerusalem came together to Him. And when they saw some of His disciples **eating with defiled hands (that is, unwashed *hands*)**, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews, **holding fast to the tradition of the elders**, do not eat unless they wash their hands thoroughly. Even *when coming* from the market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves. And there are many other **things that they have received to observe**, *such as the* washing of cups and pots and brass utensils and tables. For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, 'Why don't Your disciples walk according to the **tradition of the elders**, but eat bread with unwashed hands?' " (Mark 7:1-5).

Drawing a sharp distinction between the Jews' traditions and the commandments of God, Jesus accused the scribes and Pharisees of invalidating the Word of God by their traditions.

"And He answered *and* said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, **teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men**." For **leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men**, *such as* the washing of pots and cups [and ritual hand washing]; and you practice many other things like *this*.' Then He said to them, 'Full well do **you reject the commandment of God**, so that **you may observe your *own* tradition**' " (verses 6-9). Jesus sternly rebuked the Jews for "nullifying" the authority of the Word of God by their countless and restrictive traditions (verse 13).

Notice that Jesus' primary response was to defend and *fully support* the laws and commandments of God. In no way have God's laws been abrogated. Having made that point, He went on to deal with the question of eating with "unwashed hands." Addressing the multitude, He said, "Hear Me,

all of you, and understand. There is nothing that enters into a man from outside which is able to defile him; but the things that come out from *within* him, those are the things which defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear" (verses 14-16).

Obviously, unwashed hands will not particularly defile a person. But Jesus said there was "nothing that enters into a man from outside which is able to defile him." Does that mean unclean meats were no longer prohibited by God's law—that literally *nothing* can defile a person? What did Jesus mean?

It is important to realize that the dietary laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 deal with health and cleanliness—not with spiritual holiness. Eating unclean meats can harm one physically, but they will not defile one spiritually. (However, a careless attitude toward any of God's laws can defile one spiritually.) Jesus is referring to one being spiritually *defiled*—not by anything eaten but by the thoughts and attitudes a person accepts into ones heart and mind.

Knowing that His disciples did not understand, Jesus said, "Don't you perceive that anything [food, germs] that enters into a man from outside is not able to [spiritually] defile him? **For it does not enter into his heart**, but into the belly, and *then* passes out into the sewer, purging all food." Food is simply processed, purged from the body. Jesus was talking *spiritually*, making the point that even the dirt on one's unwashed hands cannot defile the heart or make a person unholy.

The defilement of which Jesus spoke comes from *within*: "That which springs forth **from *within* a man, that defiles the man**. For from within, **out of the hearts of men**, go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils go forth from within, and *these* defile a man" (verses 20-23).

The disputed phrase, "purging all meats" (verse 19, *KJV*), simply means that all foods are ultimately purged from the body. **Clean and unclean meats are nowhere discussed in this passage**. The *New International Version* and a few other translations spuriously add to verse 19, "In saying this, Jesus declared all foods 'clean' " (*NIV*, 1984). This is a deliberate, exaggerated disparity reflecting the translators' anti-law bias, **as no such phrase** exists in the original Greek texts.

What *if* Jesus had actually meant to abrogate the laws of clean and unclean meats? Such a position would have easily created one of the biggest controversies of His ministry. Imagine how the Pharisees would have pounced upon such a reversal had Jesus said that swine's flesh was good for food. But there is not so much as a *hint* in the account that the Jews took Jesus to be nullifying the Old Testament food laws. Quite the contrary. And Jesus' point was not at all missed by the Jewish leadership: Ritual washings are ineffective and unnecessary in preventing spiritual defilement; rather, true spiritual purity is a matter of the heart and mind.

Acts 10—Was Peter Shown That Unclean Meats Are Clean?

Obviously, too many assume that the apostle Peter's vision in Acts 10 represents a reversal of God's laws prohibiting unclean *meats*. However, nowhere in the passage is it ever suggested that God had cleansed unclean meats. Rather, this is something "read into" the section by those with a predisposition against God's laws. When the passage is read properly, it becomes obvious that Peter's vision in no way authorized a change in the laws of clean and unclean meats. In fact, Peter's vision had nothing at all to do with clean and unclean meats.

While staying in Joppa, Peter went up on the housetop about noon to pray. In a vision from God, he saw heaven open and what appeared to be a great sheet descending toward him full of unclean wild beasts, creeping things and unclean birds. A voice came to Peter, saying "Rise, Peter, kill and eat" (verse 13).

Peter did not automatically assume that it was suddenly okay to eat unclean meats. He *knew* that Christian's were to continue living according to God's law. His response shows that he obviously did not consider the laws concerning clean and unclean foods to be obsolete.

"In no way, Lord," he replied, "for I have never eaten anything *that is* common or unclean." The voice from heaven added, "What God has cleansed, you are not to call common" (verses 14-15).

The sheet of unclean animals went up and down *three* times. Again, Peter never indicated that he believed it was now permissible to eat unclean meat. Finally, he awoke, wondering what the vision actually meant. But without question, he knew what the vision did *not* mean—that it in no way reflected a change in the laws concerning unclean foods.

Subsequently, Peter was led by God to the home of Cornelius, a Gentile. Peter understood that he was to preach the gospel to Cornelius and to his household—and that they would be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. Peter began to realize that God was opening the door of salvation to Gentiles. Suddenly, the meaning of the vision became clear. Talking to Cornelius, Peter said, "You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race. **But God has shown me** [in the earlier vision] ***that*** **no man should be called common or unclean**" (verse 28).

Jewish tradition—based on a perversion of God's laws regarding what is clean and unclean—forbade Pharisaic Jews to have a close association with Gentiles. Jews considered Gentiles to be unclean, unsuitable for physical contact. Peter was quite familiar with these traditions of Judaism.

God was showing Peter and the New Testament Church that Gentiles were being offered salvation—that they could become *spiritually* circumcised. Thus, the subject matter of Acts Ten has nothing to do with clean and unclean meats. God simply used the vision of unclean animals to emphasize

a point to Peter—that when God has spiritually cleansed a Gentile, he is not to be deemed common or unclean.

Ultimately, Peter understood that "God is not a respecter of persons, **but in every nation the one** [Jew or Gentile] **who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him**" (verses 34-35).

Appendix B

How Did Jesus Christ Fulfill the Law and the Prophets?

Throughout the Bible, there is a *contrast* between the physical and the spiritual. The apostle Paul wrote that the physical comes *first*, then the spiritual (I Cor. 15:45-47). The first man, Adam, came from the earth and was physical. The second Adam, Jesus Christ, came from heaven and is spiritual. Likewise, the Old Covenant was physical, and has been superseded by the New Covenant, which is spiritual. God established the Old Covenant with the children of Israel by proclaiming the Ten Commandments from the top of Mount Sinai. The event was so terrifying to the people that they pleaded with Moses to no longer have God speak *directly* to them (Ex. 20:18-19).

Because the children of Israel were fearful of God's voice and power, Moses stood as mediator between God and the people to bring them God's spoken words. Moses went to the top of Sinai to meet with God, where he received the statutes, judgments and other laws to deliver to the children of Israel. Moses was considered lawgiver and mediator of the Old Covenant (Ex. 20-24).

Moses' office as mediator and lawgiver was a physical *type* of the coming spiritual Lawgiver, Jesus Christ. When the children of Israel were about to enter the Promised Land, God gave this prophecy of the coming Messiah: "And the LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well what they have spoken [that they wanted Moses to speak to them, instead of God]. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, *one* like you [Moses], and will put My words in His mouth. And He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him. And it shall happen, whatever man will not hearken to My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require *it* of him' " (Deut. 18:17-19).

This prophecy of the coming Messiah reveals that those who reject the words of Christ will be held accountable by God on the day of judgment. During His ministry, Jesus confirmed that He was that Prophet and that His words are the *standard* by which all will be judged: "But if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. **The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has one who judges him; the word which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken from Myself; but the Father, Who sent Me, gave Me commandment Himself, what I should say and what I should speak**" (John 12:47-49).

Obviously, the spiritual office of Jesus far overshadows the physical office of Moses. Christ was God manifested in the flesh—the Lord God of

the Old Testament Who had established the Old Covenant with the children of Israel. His death ended the Old Covenant with its "administration of death," and established the New Covenant which offers the gift of eternal life (II Cor. 3:6-11).

Unlike the Old Covenant, which required obedience only to the *letter* of the law, the New Covenant is based on obedience to the *spiritual intent* of the law. For this reason, Christ came as the spiritual Lawgiver to **amplify and magnify the laws of God**: "The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will [through Jesus] magnify the Law and make *it* honorable [or glorious]" (Isa. 42:21). The Gospel accounts of Jesus' life and ministry reveal that God requires obedience to His commandments not only in the letter of the law, but in the spirit of the law as well. Throughout His ministry, Jesus taught repentance from *sin*—which is clearly defined as the transgression of the laws of God (I John 3:4).

In spite of Jesus' clear teachings which magnify the laws and commandments of God, most professing Christians have been taught that Christ came to abolish the laws of God. Jesus, however, emphatically denounced this idea: "**Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled**" (Matt. 5:17-18).

How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law?

To comprehend how Jesus fulfilled the law, we must first understand the meaning of the word *fulfill*, translated in Matthew 5:17 from the Greek verb *pleeroo* (πληροω). Depending on the context, *pleeroo* is understood as either 1) *fulfill* (do, carry out); 2) *bring to full expression*, i.e., show forth the true spiritual meaning; or 3) *fill up*, as in "to complete" (Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*).

As our spiritual Lawgiver, **Christ fulfilled the law of God by bringing it to its full expression, thus revealing its complete spiritual meaning and intent**. He "filled the law to the full" by teaching obedience in the spirit of the law. That is how He magnified the laws and commandments of God and made them honorable.

To fulfill the Law of God by amplifying its meaning and application is the exact *opposite* of abolishing the law. If Jesus had come to abolish the laws of God, He would not have magnified and expanded their meaning, making them even more binding.

Jesus taught His disciples the spiritual meaning and application of every one of God's laws and commandments. For example, He magnified the Sixth Commandment by showing that murder begins in the heart and is rooted in hatred and anger (Matt. 5:21-22). The spiritual amplification of the Sixth Commandment extends far beyond the letter of the law, which judges only physical acts of violence. Under the New Covenant, hatred in one's

heart is judged as murder. This spiritual standard also applies to hatred for an enemy (verses 43-44).

Christ also taught the spiritual meaning and application of the Seventh Commandment. "You have heard that it was said to those *in* ancient *times*, 'You shall not commit adultery.' **But I say to you** [as the spiritual Lawgiver], **everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart**" (Matt. 5:27-28). Jesus made the Seventh Commandment far more binding than did the letter of the law. Thus every individual is held accountable for his or her adulterous thoughts, even if no physical act is committed.

A thorough study of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in Matthew Five through Seven will show that Jesus revealed the full spiritual meaning of all the commandments of God.

Applying the Spirit of the Law Does Not Nullify the Letter

More than thirty years after Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount, the apostle James wrote an epistle in which he expounded on the spiritual meaning of the commandments of God. In his epistle, James shows that Jesus' teachings concerning the spirit of the law *did not eliminate* the need to obey the letter of the law. James explains that Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself" requires us to live in obedience to the commandments of God. James specifically refers to the Sixth and Seventh Commandments and makes it very clear that to break *any* of God's commandments is sin: "**If you are truly keeping *the* Royal Law according to the scripture**, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well. But if you have respect of persons, **you are practicing sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors; for *if* anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one *aspect*, he becomes guilty of all**. For He Who said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' also said, 'You shall not commit murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of *the* law. In this manner speak and in this manner behave: as those who are about to be judged by *the* law of freedom" (James 2:8-12).

There is no question that the apostles in the New Testament taught the full, spiritual meaning of the laws and commandments of God exactly as Jesus did. Never at any time did they write or teach that Jesus Christ came to abolish the laws of God. Again, James wrote that "*if* anyone keeps the whole law, but **sins in [even] one *aspect***, he becomes guilty of all." There is nothing in James' statement that remotely hints that the laws of God were abolished when Jesus died on the cross. In writing these words many years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, James confirms that Jesus did not "do away with" the laws of God. Instead, James makes it explicitly clear that Christians are obligated to keep the commandments of God.

The apostle John, who outlived all the other apostles, also taught obedience to the laws and commandments of God. In the last decade of the

first century, John wrote his Gospel, three epistles and the book of Revelation. In his first epistle, he wrote most emphatically that obedience to the commandments of God is the standard that separates the true followers of Jesus Christ from those who merely profess His name: "**And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. And the one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.** On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected [*made complete*]. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked" (I John 2:3-6).

John clearly preached that those who truly believe in Jesus Christ will be walking as Jesus walked keeping the commandments of God as Jesus did and taught others to do (John 15:10; Matt. 19:17-19). Anyone who professes to believe in Jesus Christ but does not keep the commandments of God is a liar, according to the New Testament Scriptures. For a minister or teacher to claim that the laws and commandments of God have been abolished is a blatant denial of the true teachings of Jesus Christ and His apostles, which are preserved in the New Testament. True Christians need to be on guard against such "workers of lawlessness," who preach against the laws of God and condemn commandment-keeping.

John also shows, those who keep God's commandments are not under condemnation, but can approach God with confidence, knowing that He will hear and answer their prayers: "Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, *then* we have confidence toward God. And whatever we may ask we receive from Him **because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight**" (I John 3:21-22).

The New Testament does not support the widely accepted teaching that commandment-keeping is contrary to faith. Rather, the words of John show that keeping the commandments of God is a sign of true faith and the love that God imparts through the indwelling of His Spirit: "And this is His commandment: that we **believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ**, and that we **love one another** [fulfilling the Royal Law by keeping God's commandments], exactly as He gave commandment to us. And **the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him, and He in him; and by this we know that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us**" (verses 23-24).

Mainstream Christianity ignores these God-breathed New Testament Scriptures and teaches that loving God and one another eliminates the need to keep God's commandments. John exposes the error in this theology when he points out that obedience to God's commandments is the very standard by which love for God and His children is measured: "**By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome**" (I John 5:2-3).

The scriptural truth is this: If we love Jesus Christ and God the Father, we will be motivated to keep the commandments of God. We will desire to keep His commandments in the spirit of the law as an outward manifestation of our love for Him. Those who profess to love God, but refuse to keep His commandments, do not understand the love of God. They are being led by their own human emotions and not by the love that God imparts to His children through the gift of the Holy Spirit. **Feelings cannot be substituted for keeping the commandments of God**. Those who claim to love God, but are practicing lawlessness, are deceiving themselves.

Jesus Christ specifically instructs those who love Him to keep His commandments: "**If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments**…. **The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him**…. **If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me**" (John 14:15, 21-24).

Jesus Christ set the perfect example of true, godly love by keeping all the commandments of God in the full spirit of the law. Before His death, He delivered a new command to His disciples—that they follow His example by practicing the same love that He had manifested during His life with them on earth: "A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you, that *is how* you are to love one another. By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—if you love one another…. **As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love**. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full. **This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you**" (John 13:34-35; 15:9-12).

Jesus Christ taught His followers to obey all the commandments of God in the full spirit of the law as He did. Jesus magnified the laws of God by revealing their full *spiritual* meaning. As spiritual Lawgiver, Jesus Christ made the laws and commandments of God far more binding by setting a higher, spiritual standard of obedience for Christians under the New Covenant.

Jesus Brought the Physical Rituals of the Law to Completion

A second meaning of *pleeroo*—translated "to fulfill" in Matthew 5:17—is "to complete," or "bring to completion." Christ came to bring the entire system of animal sacrifices, temple rituals and laws for the Aaronic priesthood to completion. Through His death, Jesus *ended* the Old Covenant, which had imposed a system of ritual laws on the children of Israel. In its place, He established the New Covenant, replacing the old requirements of the law with a higher spiritual application.

The sacrificial laws were brought to completion through the superior sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The sacrifice of Jesus as the "Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world" superseded and replaced all the animal sacrifices and other physical rituals and ceremonies that were performed at the temple of God in Jerusalem. The apostle Paul confirms the consummation of the sacrificial and ritual system through the one perfect sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 10:5-12).

With the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, the priesthood of Aaron and the Levites came to an end as well. Indeed, a physical priesthood was no longer required because Christ is serving as High Priest in heaven, making intercession for the saints before God the Father.

In the same way, the spiritual temple in heaven has superseded the physical temple that was on earth. Under the New Covenant, true believers have direct access through prayer to the heavenly throne of God the Father. Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father, where He carries out His spiritual work as High Priest (Heb. 10:16-22).

***Physical Circumcision Brought to Completion*:** With the end of the Old Covenant, the requirement for circumcision of the flesh was superseded by spiritual circumcision of the heart. The apostle Paul makes this clear: "For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, neither *is* that circumcision which *is* external in *the* flesh; rather, he *is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly, and **circumcision *is* of *the* heart, in *the* spirit** *and* not in *the* letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God" (Rom. 2:28-29).

Spiritual circumcision brings conversion of the mind and heart, which physical circumcision in the flesh cannot accomplish. To be circumcised in the heart, a person must repent of his or her sins and be baptized by *full immersion* in water. The act of baptism is a **type of circumcision** because the sins of the flesh are removed. Then, through the laying on of hands, the believer receives the Holy Spirit, converting the heart and mind. The apostle Paul describes the spiritual circumcision that takes place at baptism: "For in Him [Jesus Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power in Whom **you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism**, by which you have also been raised with *Him* through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has *now* made alive with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses" (Col. 2:9-13).

How Did Christ Fulfill the Prophets?

During Jesus' life in the flesh, all the Old Testament prophecies concerning His *first* coming were fulfilled. These prophecies included His miraculous conception and birth from the virgin Mary, the flight to Egypt to escape Herod, the return to Galilee and dwelling in Nazareth, the announcing of His ministry by John the Baptist, the healings and mighty works during His ministry, the preaching of the gospel throughout the land of Judea

and Galilee, the persecution and suffering that followed, His death by crucifixion, the place of His burial, and the time of the resurrection. Numerous prophecies that were fulfilled deal with His suffering and death on the Passover day.

Although nearly two thousand years have passed since these prophecies were completed, prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments about Christ's *second* coming have yet to be fulfilled. To be sure, every prophecy in the Word of God will be fulfilled in its set time as determined by God the Father (Acts 1:7). Jesus did not abolish a single prophecy or even a single word of the Old Testament. Again, Jesus said concerning the Scriptures: "For truly I say to you, **until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled**" (Matt. 5:18).

Jesus gave an absolute guarantee that all the prophecies of Scripture would be fulfilled in their time: "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branches have already become tender, and it puts forth its leaves, you know that summer *is* near. In like manner also, when you see all these things [the events prophesied for the end time taking place], know that it [the return of Christ] is near, even at *the* doors. **Truly I say to you, this** [end-time] **generation shall in no wise pass away until all these things have taken place. The heaven and the earth shall pass away, but My words shall never pass away.** But concerning that day, and the hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matt. 24:32-36).

According to the words of Jesus Christ, all prophecies recorded in Scripture will be fulfilled at their proper time as ordained by God. Jesus did not come to abolish the words of the prophets, but to fulfill them. As He came in the *flesh* to fulfill the prophecies of a Savior, so He will return in *glory* to fulfill the prophecies of the coming King Who will bring the government of God to earth.

The Spirit and Intent of the Law and the Prophets

The purpose of the Law and the Prophets and all the writings of the Old Testament is to teach people to love, worship and obey God—and Him alone. Christ revealed the spirit and intent of the Law and the Prophets when He was asked by a scribe to name the "greatest" commandment. Jesus replied, " 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is *the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets**" (Matt. 22:35-40; also see Matt. 7:12).

Under the New Covenant, true worship and love toward God is made possible through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which enables the believer to reverence God and obey Him from the heart. Through deep faith in Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the believer learns to

obey every command of God in the full spirit and intent of the law, as magnified by Jesus Christ. This is the manner in which every true believer will keep the laws and commandments of God, because he or she loves God the Father and Jesus Christ with all the heart, mind, soul and strength.

The Righteousness of Faith of the True Believer *

When a believer is *justified* from past sins through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and is baptized by full immersion in water, he or she receives the gift of the Holy Spirit as a begettal from God the Father. Then the Father imputes to the believer the *very righteousness* of Jesus Christ. The righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is imputed to the believer by God the Father, far exceeds the righteousness required by the letter of the law. Jesus' spiritual obedience was so perfect, pure and wholehearted that He always did the things that pleased God. This perfect righteousness was accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus received without measure from the Father.

The Scriptures reveal that when the believer is begotten with the Holy Spirit, he or she begins to receive the very mind of Christ. With Christ's mind, the believer is strengthened to live by every word of God in the full spirit of the law. The apostle Paul describes this spiritual transformation of the mind as "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). Each believer begins to have **the laws and commandments of God written upon his or her mind**: "But He, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at *the* right hand of God. Since that time, He is waiting until His enemies are placed *as* a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after He had previously said, '**This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days, says *the* Lord: I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds; and their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again**' " (Heb. 10:12-17).

Under the New Covenant, the laws and commandments of God are **inscribed in the mind of each believer through the gift of the Holy Spirit**, which gives the believer the power to bring forth the fruits of righteousness unto eternal life.

* See the section **"Justification by Faith—Is the Righteousness of God Without Law?"** (Appendix A, p. 258).

Appendix C

Halloween and the Flood of Noah—Is There a Link?

Following the dispersion of mankind at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11), virtually every ensuing culture has maintained a legend regarding a "Great Flood." Often, as we will see, such traditions are also associated with a great "Day of Death," as well as a "new beginning" (linked to the salvation of Noah and his family). Interestingly, these traditions are all tied to the fall of the year—specifically the end of October and the beginning of November. Is it possible, as the evidence suggests, that there is a connection between the flood of Noah's time and the pagan holiday known today as Halloween?

Was the flood in the fall of the year? Many scholars believe that—much like today's Jewish calendar—the calendar employed in Genesis began in the fall, with the first month beginning somewhere from mid-September to mid-October. Genesis 7:11 states that the flood began "in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month." Therefore, this could easily place the beginning of the flood at the end of October or the beginning of November. A year later—on the 27th day of the second month—Noah and his family left the ark, their "salvation" complete. Thus, a "new year" began around the first of November.

One scholar writes: "What is often overlooked, however, is that there is [in addition to the great flood legend] the remembrance of the 'Day of the Dead,' followed by a New Year. This occurs on our [Roman] calendar at the end of October or the beginning of November" (Frank Humphrey, *The Great Flood and Halloween*).

The following examples serve to illustrate how widespread the tradition of the "Day of the Dead" and a "November New Year" had become. Note the many "themes" that correspond to Halloween.

• In Egypt it has "long been known that the ship of Isis and the chest or coffin of Osiris [note the **death** theme] which floated on the waters for a year are confused Egyptian recollections of the [great] Flood. Plutarch says [that] Osiris was shut up in his box and set afloat 'on the seventeenth day of the month Athyr, when nights were growing long and the days decreasing.'… In Plutarch's time, Athyr did in fact coincide with October-November."

• "In ancient Assyria the **ceremonies for the souls of the dead** were in the month Arahsamna, which is Marcheswan [the month of Heshvan on the Jewish calendar, which is mid-October to mid-November]. In Arahsamna the Sun God became Lord of the **Land of the Dead**."

• In India, "the Hindu Durga **festival of the dead** was originally connected with their **New Year which commenced in November**."

• In Iran, "the Persians **commenced their New Year in November**, in a month which was named Mordad-month, i.e., the **month of the angel of death**."

• In the fall of the year the Aboriginal Australians "painted white stripes on their legs and arms to **resemble skeletons**."

• In French Polynesia, "the inhabitants … **pray for the spirits of departed ancestors** at the end of their New Year celebration in November."

• In Peru, "the [Inca] **New Year commenced in November** and the festival called Ayamarka—[meaning, the] **carrying of a corpse**—concluded with [the] placing [of] food and drink on **graves**."

• "The Mexican [Aztecs], too, kept the **Day of the Dead** at the same [fall] time of the year."

• In many parts of Europe, "November 2 is **All Souls' Day, the Day of the Dead**."

• In France "it is Le Jour des Morts, Christianized now for centuries, but still at [the] heart [of] the old **Day of the Dead** when flowers are taken to the tombs."

• The "early Anglo-Saxons called November **Blood-Month**," while Celtic inhabitants of Britain "kept their New Year in November."

• In Wales and Scotland "early November is the time for **ghosts to be remembered**."

(Adapted from *The Great Flood and Halloween*, bold emphasis and bracketed comments added; for Web site information see Bibliography.)

Humphrey concludes, "The legends cited above are found all over the world in cultures radically distinct from one another…. And yet they all have in common this **remembrance of death and a new beginning at the end of October** and the beginning of November" (bold emphasis added).

Is this mere coincidence? Or does the evidence presented hint at the true origin of Halloween? Is Halloween, in fact, a sort of morbid memorial to the wicked that God destroyed by Noah's flood? Humphrey suggests that—perhaps *like* the "Great Flood"—Halloween itself is a sober "reminder both of God's judgment on human rebellion and His offer of deliverance to those who put their trust in His mercy."

Appendix D

The Weekly Sabbath and Annual Feasts and Holy Days

The Weekly Sabbath

The weekly Sabbath, known as Saturday today, is the seventh day of the week. In the beginning, the Sabbath was created by God. He blessed and sanctified the seventh day at creation as a special day for rest and fellowship with Him. The Sabbath is a memorial of creation and was made for all mankind. It was the commanded day of weekly worship for 3,000 years before the Ten Commandments were given to Israel. The Fourth Commandment is a reminder to observe and to keep the Sabbath day holy.

As Lord God of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ created the Sabbath by resting on the very first seventh day and by blessing and sanctifying it. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ proclaimed that He is Lord of the Sabbath day. During His ministry on earth, He reaffirmed the sacredness of the Sabbath and taught its proper observance. Jesus Christ Himself showed by example that it is right to do good on the Sabbath day, in addition to resting from one's physical labor and secular business. The apostles of Jesus Christ and the early New Testament church observed the Sabbath and taught Gentile Christians to observe it.

The keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath is a special sign of the covenant between God and His people. God commands that it be observed from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday. During this holy time, Christians are commanded to rest from their labor and to assemble to worship God and to receive instruction from His Word. Observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is essential for salvation and for true fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Scriptural References

Gen. 2:1-3	Mark 2:27-28	Ex. 20:8-10
Ex. 31:13-17	Isa. 58:13-14	Isa. 56:1-7
Isa. 66:23	Ezek. 20:12, 20	Lev. 23:1-3
Luke 4:4	Acts 13:42-44	Acts 17:2
Acts 18:4, 11	Acts 19:8-10	Heb. 4:4-10

The Annual Feasts and Holy Days

The Scriptures teach that there are seven annual feasts and holy days, which were ordained by God to be observed as special commanded convocations. These feasts and holy days portray God's plan of salvation for mankind. The observance of these holy convocations is a sign between God and His people. God's annual feasts and holy days were observed by His people during Old Testament times. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ's entire ministry was centered around the spiritual meaning of these holy days. The New Testament apostolic church faithfully observed these annual feasts and holy days. The Scriptures reveal that they will be observed by all mankind after the return of Jesus Christ.

As the holy days are annual Sabbath days, they may fall on any day of the week (except Pentecost, which always falls on a Sunday). When a holy day falls on a weekly Sabbath, the special observance of the annual holy day takes precedence. God's feasts and holy days are to be observed from sunset to sunset in accordance with the calculated Hebrew Calendar as preserved by the Levitical Jews. The seven annual feasts and holy days are as follows:

Feast or Holy Day	Commanded Scriptural Date of Observance
1) Passover	14th day of the first month*
2) Unleavened Bread (7 days)	15th through 21st days of the first month (the 15th & 21st are holy days)
3) Pentecost	Counted annually**
4) Trumpets	1st day of the seventh month
5) Atonement	10th day of the seventh month
6) Tabernacles (7 days)	15th through 21st days of the seventh month (the15th is a holy day)
7) Last Great Day	22nd day of the seventh month (a holy day)

*Not a holy day

**Fifty days are counted, beginning with the first day of the week during the Days of Unleavened Bread. The feast is observed on the fiftieth day, which always falls on the first day of the week.

Scriptural References

Lev. 23	Ex. 23:14-17; 31:13	Ex. 12:1-20
John 7:37	Matt. 26:17-18	I Cor. 5:7-8
Acts 2:1	Acts 18:21	Acts 20:16
I Cor. 16:8	Zech. 14:16-19	Isa. 66:23

Appendix E

The Biblical Truth About Sunday-Keeping

Sunday, the *first day of the week*, is purported to be the Christian day of worship. It is commonly taught and believed today that Jesus Christ and the original 12 apostles (and especially the apostle Paul) taught that Christians are no longer required to observe the Fourth Commandment—to keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy. It is alleged that commandment-keeping—and in particular the Sabbath commandment—was "nailed to the cross." Thus, it is claimed that Sunday is now the "*Christian Day of Worship*."

Is this claim true? Can such a teaching be *proven* from the inspired Word of God, the Holy Scriptures?

The answer is a resounding *no!* The truth is, Sunday-keeping cannot be supported by the Scriptures. Are you willing to believe the Word of God—or will you simply accept the *teachings of men* as more important than the biblical teachings of God?

If you believe that Sunday worship is Christian—and if you believe that God's inspired Word, the Holy Scriptures, actually teaches Sunday keeping—then **search the Scriptures again**. **You will *not* find**:

1. One text that says that the Sabbath was *ever changed* from the seventh to the first day of the week.
2. One text where the first day of the week is ever called a holy day.
3. One text where we are told to keep the first day of the week.
4. One text that says that *Jesus ever kept* the first day.
5. One text where the first day is ever given any sacred title.
6. One text that tells us to keep the first day in honor of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
7. One text that affirms that *any of the apostles* ever kept the first day as the Sabbath.
8. One text from any apostolic writing that authorizes *Sunday observance* as the Sabbath of God.
9. One text where it says it was *customary* for the Church to observe, or meet on, the first day of the week.
10. One text where we are *told not to work* on the first day of the week.
11. One text where any blessings are promised for observing Sunday.
12. One text where any punishment is threatened for working on Sunday.
13. One text that says the seventh day is not *now* God's Sabbath day.

14. One text where the apostles ever *taught* their converts to keep the first day of the week as a Sabbath.
15. One text that says the seventh-day Sabbath is abolished.
16. One text where the first day is *ever called the Lord's Day.*
17. One text where *the first day was ever appointed to be kept as the Lord's Day.*
18. One text that says that the *Father or the Son ever rested on the first day of the week.*
19. One text that says that the first day of the week was ever sanctified and hallowed as a day of rest.
20. One text that says that Jesus, Paul or any other of the apostles taught anyone to observe the first day of the week as the Sabbath.
21. One text that calls the seventh day the "*Jewish Sabbath*" or one text that calls Sunday the "*Christian Sabbath*."
22. One text authorizing *anyone* to abrogate, abolish or set aside God's Holy Sabbath and observe any other day.

(Adapted from the *Bible Sabbath Association*, Fairview, Oklahoma.)

Appendix F

Rome's Challenge to the Protestants

Rome's Challenge—Why Do Protestants Keep Sunday??

Most Christians assume that Sunday is the biblically approved day of worship. The Roman Catholic Church protests that, indeed, it is not. The Roman Catholic Church itself without any Scriptural authority from God transferred Christian worship from the Biblical Sabbath (Saturday) to Sunday, and to try to argue that the change was made in the Bible is both dishonest and a denial of Catholic authority. If Protestantism wants to base its teachings only on the Bible, *it should worship on Saturday.*

Over one hundred years ago the *Catholic Mirror* ran a series of articles discussing the right of the Protestant churches to worship on Sunday—exposing their claim that the New Testament taught Sunday keeping to be false. The articles stressed that unless one was willing to accept the authority of the Catholic Church to designate the day of worship, the Christian should observe Saturday, the true Christian Sabbath, as both the Old and New Testaments teach. Those articles are presented here in their entirety.

For ready reference purposes, here are links to verses quoted in the article below.

New Testament verses relating to the apostles assembling the "first day of the week"	All New Testament references to "the Lord's day" or "day of the Lord"
1. Luke 24:33-40 John 20:19 2. John 20:26-29 3. Acts 2:1 4. Acts 20:6-7 Acts 2:46 5. I Cor. 16:1-2 Acts 18:4	1. Acts 2:20 2. I Cor. 1:8 3. I Cor. 5:5 4. 2 Cor. 1:13-14 5. Phil. 1:6 6. Phil. 1:10 7. 2 Pet. 3:10 8. 2 Pet. 3:12 9. Rev. 1:10

FEBRUARY 24, 1893, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists adopted certain resolutions appealing to the government and people of the United States from the decision of the Supreme Court declaring this to be a Christian nation, and from the action of Congress in legislating

upon the subject of religion, and remonstrating against the principle and all the consequences of the same. In March 1893, the International Religious Liberty Association printed these resolutions in a tract entitled *Appeal and Remonstrance.* On receipt of one of these, the editor of the *Catholic Mirror* of Baltimore, Maryland, published a series of four editorials, which appeared in that paper September, 2, 9, 16, and 23, 1893. The *Catholic Mirror* was the official organ of Cardinal Gibbons and the Papacy in the United States.

These articles, therefore, although not written by the Cardinal's own hand, appeared under his official sanction, and as the expression of the Papacy to Protestantism, and the demand of the Papacy that Protestants shall render to the Papacy an account of *why* they keep Sunday and also of *how* they keep it.

The following article (excepting the notes in brackets/minor formatting and section headings for readability and the two [internal] Appendixes) is a reprint of these editorials, including the title on the next page. [From the *Catholic Mirror* of Sept. 2, 1893](Bold emphasis added throughout).

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH

[Catholic Sunday]

THE GENUINE OFFSPRING OF THE UNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HIS SPOUSE. THE CLAIMS OF PROTESTANTISM TO ANY PART THEREIN PROVED TO BE GROUNDLESS, SELF-CONTRADICTORY, AND SUICIDAL

Our attention has been called to the above subject in the past week by the receipt of a brochure of twenty-one pages, published by the International Religious Liberty Association, entitled, "Appeal and Remonstrance," embodying resolutions adopted by the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists (Feb. 24, 1893). The resolutions criticize and censure, with much acerbity, the action of the United States Congress, and of the Supreme Court, for invading the rights of the people by closing the World's Fair on Sunday.

The Adventists are the only body of Christians with the Bible as their teacher, who can find no warrant in its pages for the change of the day from the seventh to the first. Hence their appellation, "Seventh-day Adventists." Their cardinal principle consists in setting apart Saturday for the exclusive worship of God, in conformity with the positive command of God Himself, repeatedly reiterated in the sacred books of the Old and New Testaments, literally obeyed by the children of Israel for thousands of years

to this day, and endorsed by the teaching and practice of the Son of God whilst on earth.

Per contra, the Protestants of the world, the Adventists excepted, with the *same* Bible as their cherished and sole infallible teacher, by their practice, since their appearance in the sixteenth century, with the time-honored practice of the Jewish people before their eyes, have rejected the day named for His worship by God, and assumed, in apparent contradiction of His command, a day for His worship never once referred to for that purpose, in the pages of that Sacred Volume.

What Protestant pulpit does not ring almost every Sunday with loud and impassioned invectives against Sabbath [Catholic Sunday] violation? Who can forget the fanatical clamor of the Protestant ministers throughout the length and breadth of the land against opening the gates of the World's Fair on Sunday? The thousands of petitions, signed by millions, to save the Lord's Day from desecration? Surely, such general and widespread excitement and noisy remonstrance could not have existed without the strongest grounds for such animated protests.

And when quarters were assigned at the World's Fair to the various sects of Protestantism for the exhibition of articles, who can forget the emphatic expressions of virtuous and conscientious indignation exhibited by our Presbyterian brethren, as soon as they learned of the decision of the Supreme Court not to interfere in the Sunday opening? The newspapers informed us that they flatly refused to utilize the space accorded them, or open their boxes, demanding the right to withdraw the articles, in rigid adherence to their principles, and thus decline all contact with the sacrilegious and Sabbath-breaking Exhibition [meaning Sunday].

Doubtless, our Calvinistic brethren deserved and shared the sympathy of all the other sects, who, however, lost the opportunity of posing as martyrs in vindication of the Sabbath observance.

They thus became a "spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men," although their Protestant brethren, who failed to share the monopoly, were uncharitably and enviously disposed to attribute their steadfast adherence to religious principle, to Pharisaical pride and dogged obstinacy.

Purpose of Article

Our purpose in throwing off this article, is to shed such light on this all-important question (for were the Sabbath question to be removed from the Protestant pulpit, the sects would feel lost, and the preachers be deprived of their "Cheshire cheese") that our readers may be able to comprehend the question in *all its bearings*, and thus reach a clear conviction.

The Christian world is, morally speaking, united on the question and practice of worshiping God on *the first day* of the week.

The Israelites, scattered all over the earth, keep *the last day* of the week sacred to the worship of the Deity. In this particular, the Seventh-day

Adventists (a sect of Christians numerically few) have also selected the same day.

[***Note:*** There have *always* been seventh day Sabbath-keepers in the world since the First Century AD (other than the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA's)). Today, not only do SDA's number in the millions, but there are thousands of churches, groups and home fellowships that keep a Saturday Sabbath.]

Israelites and Adventists both appeal to the Bible for the divine command, persistently obliging the strict observance of Saturday.

The Israelite respects the authority of the Old Testament only, but the Adventist, who is a Christian, accepts the New Testament on the same ground as the Old: viz., an inspired record also. He finds that the Bible, his teacher, is consistent in both parts, that the Redeemer, during His mortal life, never kept any other day than Saturday. The Gospels plainly evidence to him this fact; whilst, in the pages of the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse, not the vestige of an act canceling the Saturday arrangement can be found.

The Adventists, therefore, in common with Israelites, derive their belief from the Old Testament, which position is confirmed by the New Testament, indorsed fully by the life and practice of the Redeemer and His apostles' teaching of the Sacred Word for nearly a century of the Christian era.

Numerically considered, the Seventh-day Adventists form an insignificant portion of the Protestant population of the earth, but, as the question is not one of numbers, but of truth, and right, a strict sense of justice forbids the condemnation of this little sect without a calm and unbiased investigation; this is none of our funeral.

The Protestant world has been, from its infancy, in the sixteenth century, in thorough accord with the Catholic Church, in keeping "holy," not Saturday, but Sunday. The discussion of the grounds that led to this unanimity of sentiment and practice of over 300 years, must help toward placing Protestantism on a solid basis in this particular, should the arguments in favor of its position overcome those furnished by the Israelites and Adventists, the Bible, the sole recognized teacher of both litigants, being the umpire and witness. If however, on the other hand, the latter furnish arguments, incontrovertible by the great mass of Protestants, both cases of litigants, appealing to their common teacher, the Bible, the great body of Protestants, so far from clamoring, as they do with vigorous pertinacity for the strict keeping of Sunday, have no other [recourse] left than the admission that they have been teaching and practising *what is Scripturally false for over three centuries,* by adopting the teaching and practice of what they have always pretended to believe an apostate church, contrary to every warrant and teaching of sacred Scripture. To add to the intensity of this Scriptural and unpardonable blunder, it involves one of the most positive and emphatic commands of God to His servant, man: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

No Protestant living today has ever yet obeyed that command, preferring to follow the apostate church referred to than his teacher the Bible, which, from Genesis to Revelation, *teaches no other doctrine*, should the Israelites and Seventh-day Adventists be correct. Both sides appeal to the Bible as their "infallible" teacher. Let the Bible decide whether Saturday or Sunday be the day enjoined by God. One of the two bodies must be wrong, and, whereas a false position on this all-important question involves terrible penalties, threatened by God Himself, against the transgressor of this "perpetual covenant," we shall enter on the discussion of the merits of the arguments wielded by both sides. Neither is the discussion of this paramount subject above the capacity of ordinary minds, nor does it involve extraordinary study. It resolves itself into a few plain questions easy of solution:

1. Which day of the week does the Bible enjoin to be kept holy?

2. Has the New Testament modified by precept or practice the original command?

3. Have Protestants, since the sixteenth century, obeyed the command of God by keeping "holy" the day enjoined by their infallible guide and teacher, the Bible? And if not, why not?

To the above three questions we pledge ourselves to furnish as many intelligent answers, which cannot fail to vindicate the truth and uphold the deformity of error.

[From the *Catholic Mirror* of Sept. 9, 1893]

"But faith, fanatic faith, one wedded fast to some dear falsehood,
hugs it to the last." —*Moore.*

Conformably to our promise in our last issue, we proceed to unmask one of the most flagrant errors and most unpardonable inconsistencies of the Bible rule of faith. Lest, however, we be misunderstood, we deem it necessary to premise that Protestantism recognizes no rule of faith, no teacher, save the "infallible Bible." As the Catholic yields his judgment in spiritual matters implicitly, and with the unreserved confidence, to the voice of his church, so, too, the Protestant recognizes *no teacher but the Bible*. All his spirituality is derived from its teachings. It is to him the voice of God addressing him through his sole inspired teacher. It embodies his religion, his faith, and his practice. The language of Chillingworth, "*The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, is the religion of Protestants*," is only one form of the same idea multifariously convertible into other forms, such as "the Book of God," "the Charter of Our Salvation," "the Oracle of Our Christian Faith," "God's Text-Book to the race of Mankind," etc. It is, then, an incontrovertible fact that *the Bible alone* is the teacher of Protestant Christianity. Assuming this fact, we will now proceed to discuss the merits of the question involved in our last issue.

Recognizing what is undeniable, the fact of a direct contradiction between the teaching and practice of Protestant Christianity—the Seventh-day Adventists excepted—on the one hand, and that of the Jewish people on the other, both observing different days of the week for the worship of God, we will proceed to take the testimony of the teacher common to both claimants, the Bible. The first expression with which we come in contact in the Sacred Word, is found in Genesis 2:2 "**And on the seventh day He [God] rested from all His work which He had made.**" The next reference to this matter is to be found in Exodus 20, where God commanded the seventh day to be kept, *because* He had Himself rested from the work of creation on that day; and the sacred text informs us that *for that reason* He desired it kept, in the following words; "***wherefore*, the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.**" (1) Again we read in chapter 31, verse 15: "**Six days you shall do work; in the seventh day is the Sabbath, the rest holy to the Lord**"; sixteenth verse: "***it is an everlasting covenant,***" "**and a perpetual sign**," "**for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and in the seventh He ceased from work.**" [***Note:*** Scriptures quoted throughout these editorials are from the Douay, or Catholic, Version of the Bible.]

Saturday Always the Sabbath

In the Old Testament, reference is made one hundred and twenty-six times to the Sabbath, and all these texts conspire harmoniously in voicing the will of God commanding the seventh day to be kept, because God Himself *first kept it,* making it obligatory on all as "*a perpetual covenant."* Nor can we imagine any one foolhardy enough to question the identity of Saturday with the Sabbath or seventh day, seeing that the people of Israel have been keeping the Saturday from the giving of the law, A.M. 2514 to A.D. 1893, a period of 3383 years. With the example of the Israelites before our eyes today, there is no historical fact better established than that referred to; viz., that the chosen people of God, the guardians of the Old Testament, the living representatives of the only divine religion hitherto, had for a period of 1490 years anterior to Christianity, preserved the weekly practice, the living tradition of the correct interpretation of the special day of the week, Saturday, to be kept "holy to the Lord," which tradition they have extended by their own practice to an additional period of 1893 years more, thus covering the full extent of the Christian dispensation. We deem it necessary to be perfectly clear on this point, for reasons that will appear more fully hereafter. The Bible—the Old Testament—confirmed by the living tradition of a weekly practice for 3383 years by the chosen people of God, teaches, then, with absolute certainty, that God had, Himself, named the day to be "kept holy to Him,"—that the day was Saturday, and that any violation of that command was punishable with death. "**Keep you My Sabbath, for it is holy unto you; he that shall profane it shall be put to**

death; he that shall do any work in it, his soul shall perish in the midst of his people." Ex 31:14.

[***Note***: In other words, the people of Israel (made up of 12 tribes—*one* of which is Judah, which the term "Jew" comes from) anciently maintained the correct day of the Sabbath—and the Jews (who did not lose their identity) to this day STILL keep the correct time of God's Sabbath given to them through Moses! **Time has not been "lost"—we know that Saturday IS God's Sabbath day!**]

It is impossible to realize a more severe penalty than that so solemnly uttered by God Himself in the above text, on all who violate a command referred to no less than one hundred and twenty-six times in the old law. The ten commandments of the Old Testament are formally impressed on the memory of the child of the Biblical Christian as soon as possible, but there is not one of the ten made more emphatically familiar, both in Sunday School and pulpit, than that of keeping "holy" the Sabbath day.

Having secured the absolute certainty the will of God as regards the day to be kept holy, from His Sacred Word, *because* He rested on that day, which day is confirmed to us by the practice of His chosen people for thousands of years, we are naturally induced to inquire *when and where* God changed the day for His worship; for it is patent to the world that a change of day has taken place, and inasmuch as no indication of such change can be found within the pages of the Old Testament, nor in the practice of the Jewish people who continue for nearly nineteen centuries of Christianity obeying the written command, we must look to the exponent of the Christian dispensation; viz., the New Testament, for the command of God canceling the old Sabbath, Saturday.

Investigating the Sabbath in the New Testament

We now approach a period covering little short of nineteen centuries, and proceed to investigate whether the supplemental divine teacher—the New Testament—contains a decree canceling the mandate of the old law, and, at the same time, substituting a day for the divinely instituted Sabbath of the old law, viz., Saturday; for, inasmuch as Saturday was the day kept and ordered to be kept by God, *divine authority alone*, under the form of a canceling decree, could abolish the Saturday covenant, and another divine mandate, appointing by name another day to be kept "holy," other than Saturday, is equally necessary to satisfy the conscience of the Christian believer. The Bible being the only teacher recognized by the Biblical Christian, the Old Testament failing to point out a change of day, and yet another day than Saturday being kept "holy" by the Biblical world, it is surely incumbent on the reformed Christian to point out in the pages of the New Testament the new divine decree repealing that of Saturday and substituting that of Sunday, kept by the Biblicals since the dawn of the Reformation.

Examining the New Testament from cover to cover, critically, we find the Sabbath referred to sixty-one times. We find, too, that the Saviour invariably selected the Sabbath (Saturday) to teach in the synagogues and work miracles. The four Gospels refer to the Sabbath (Saturday) fifty-one times.

In one instance the Redeemer refers to Himself as "the Lord of the Sabbath," as mentioned by Matthew and Luke,[(2)] but during the whole record of His life, whilst invariably keeping and utilizing the day (Saturday), *He never once hinted at a desire to change it.* His apostles and personal friends afford to us a striking instance of their scrupulous observance of it *after His death*, and, whilst His body was yet in tomb, Luke (23:56) informs us: "**And they returned and prepared spices and ointments, *and rested on the sabbath day according to the commandment* ... but on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came, bringing the spices they had prepared."** The "spices" and "ointments" had been prepared Good Friday evening, because "the Sabbath drew near." (Verse 54.) This action on the part of the personal friends of the Saviour, proves beyond contradiction that *after His death* they kept "holy" the Saturday, *and regarded the Sunday as any other day of the week.* Can anything, therefore, be more conclusive than the apostles and the holy women never knew any Sabbath but Saturday, up to the day of Christ's death?

[***Note*** [(2)]: It is also referred to in Mark 2:28.]

We now approach the investigation of this interesting question for the next thirty years, as narrated by the evangelist, St. Luke, in his Acts of the Apostles. Surely some vestige of the canceling act can be discovered in the practice of the Apostles during that protracted period.

But, alas! We are once more doomed to disappointment. *Nine*[(3)] *times* do we find the Sabbath referred to in the Acts, but it is the *Saturday* (the old Sabbath). Should our readers desire the proof, we refer them to chapter and verse in each instance. Acts 13:14, 27, 42, 44. Once more, Acts 15:21; again, Acts 16:13; 17:2; 18:4. "**And he** [Paul] **reasoned in the synagogue *every Sabbath,* and persuaded the Jews and Greeks";** *thus the Sabbath (Saturday) from Genesis to Revelation!!!* Thus, it is impossible to find in the New Testament the slightest interference by the Saviour or his Apostles with the original Sabbath, but on the contrary, an entire acquiescence in the original arrangement; nay a *plenary indorsement* by Him, whilst living; and an unvaried, active participation *in the keeping of that day and not* [*any*] *other by the apostles,* for thirty years after His death, as the Acts of the Apostles has abundantly testified to us.

[*Note* [(3)]: This should be eight.]

Hence the conclusion is inevitable; viz., that of those who follow the Bible as their guide, the Israelites and Seventh-day Adventists have exclusive weight of evidence on their side, whilst the Biblical Protestant has not a word in self-defense for his substitution of Sunday for Saturday.

[From the *Catholic Mirror* of Sept. 16, 1893.]

When his satanic majesty, who was "a murderer from the beginning," "and the father of lies," undertook to open the eyes of our first mother, Eve, by stimulating her ambition, "You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," his action was but the first of many plausible and successful efforts employed later, in the seduction of millions of her children. Like Eve, they learn too late, alas! the value of the inducements held out to allure her weak children from allegiance to God. Nor does the subject matter of this discussion form an exception to the usual tactics of his sable majesty.

Over three centuries since, he plausibly represented to a large number of discontented and ambitious Christians the bright prospect of the successful inauguration of a "new departure," by the abandonment of the Church instituted by the Son of God, as their teacher, and the assumption of a new teacher—*the Bible alone*—as their newly fledged oracle.

The sagacity of the evil one foresaw but the brilliant success of this maneuver. Nor did the result fall short of his most sanguine expectations.

A bold and adventurous spirit was alone needed to head the expedition. Him his satanic majesty soon found in the apostate monk, Luther, who himself repeatedly testifies to the close familiarity that existed between his master and himself, in his "Table talk," and other works published in 1558, at Wittenberg, under the inspection of Melancthon. His colloquies with Satan on various occasions are testified to by Luther himself—a witness worthy of all credibility. What the agency of the serpent tended so effectually to achieve in the garden, the agency of Luther achieved in the Christian world. **(4)**

"Give them a pilot to their wandering fleet,
Bold in his art, and tutored to deceit;
Whose hand adventurous shall their helm misguide
To hostile shores, or 'whelm them in the tide."

As the end proposed to himself by the evil one in his raid on the church of Christ was the destruction of Christianity, we are now engaged in sifting the means adopted by him to insure his success therein. So far, they have been found to be misleading, self-contradictory, and fallacious. We will now proceed with the further investigations of this imposture.

[***Note*** (4): Of course, one would expect a Catholic to demonize someone such as Luther, a person who fought for reforms in the church. If Luther had continued his reforms by accepting the Bible's Sabbath day, papists would not now be taunting "Protestants" with the inconsistency of professing to accept the Bible alone yet following the traditions of the Catholic Church in regards to God's day of worship.]

Did Jesus Change the Sabbath Day?

Having proved to a demonstration that the Redeemer, *in no instance,* had, during the period of His life, deviated from the faithful observance of the Sabbath (Saturday), referred to by the four evangelists fifty-one times, although He had designated Himself "Lord of the Sabbath," He never having *once,* by command or practice, hinted at a desire on His part to change the day by the substitution of another and having called special attention to the conduct of the apostles and the holy women, the very evening of His death, securing beforehand spices and ointments to be used in embalming His body the morning after the Sabbath (Saturday), as St. Luke so clearly informs us (Luke 24:1), thereby placing beyond peradventure, the divine action and will of the Son of God during life by keeping the Sabbath steadfastly; and having called attention to the action of His living representatives after his death, as proved by St. Luke; having also placed before our readers *the indisputable fact* that the apostles for the following thirty years (Acts) never deviated from the practice of their divine Master in this particular, as St. Luke (Acts 18:4) assures us: "**And he** [Paul] **reasoned in the synagogues *every Sabbath*** [Saturday], **and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.**" The Gentile converts were, as we see from the text, equally instructed with the Jews, to keep the Saturday, having been converted to Christianity on that day, "the Jews and the Greeks" collectively.

Having also called attention to the texts of the Acts bearing on the exclusive use of the Sabbath by the Jews and Christians for thirty years after the death of the Saviour as the *only* day of the week observed by Christ and His apostles, which period *exhausts the inspired record,* we now proceed to supplement our proofs that the Sabbath (Saturday) enjoyed this exclusive privilege, by calling attention to *every instance* wherein the sacred record refers to the first day of the week.

References to Sunday after Resurrection of Christ

The first reference to Sunday after the resurrection of Christ is to be found in St. Luke's Gospel, chapter 24, verses 33-40, and St. John 20:19.

[***Note***: Luke 24:33-40 reads, "**And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them. Saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.' And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, 'Peace be unto you.' But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them 'Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.' And when he had thus**

spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet." (King James Version)]

[***Note:*** John 20:19 says "**Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, 'Peace be unto you.**' " (KJV)]

The above texts themselves refer to the sole motive of this gathering of the part of the apostles. It took place on the day of the resurrection (Easter Sunday)[according to Catholic tradition], not for the purpose of inaugurating "the new departure" from the old Sabbath (Saturday) by keeping "holy" the new day, for there is not a hint given of prayer, exhortation, or the reading of the Scriptures, but it indicates the utter demoralization of the apostles by informing mankind that they were huddled together in that room in Jerusalem "*for fear of the Jews,"* as St. John, quoted above, plainly informs us.

The second reference to Sunday is to be found in St. John's Gospel, 20th chapter, 26th to 29th verses: "**And after eight days, the disciples were again within, and Thomas with them.**" The resurrected Redeemer availed Himself of this meeting of all the apostles to confound the incredulity of Thomas, who had been absent from the gathering on Easter Sunday evening. This would have furnished a golden opportunity to the Redeemer to change the day in the presence of all His apostles, but we state the simple fact that, on this occasion, as on Easter day, not a word is said of prayer, praise, or reading of the Scriptures.

The third instance on record, wherein the apostles were assembled on Sunday, is to be found in Acts 2:1: "**The apostles were all of one accord in one place.**" (Feast of Pentecost—Sunday.) Now, will this text afford to our Biblical Christian brethren a vestige of hope that Sunday substitutes, at length, Saturday? For when we inform them that the Jews had been keeping *this Sunday* for 1500 years, and have been keeping it for eighteen centuries after the establishment of Christianity, at the same time keeping the weekly Sabbath, there is not to be found either consolation or comfort in this text. Pentecost is the fiftieth day after the Passover, which was called the Sabbath of weeks, consisting of seven times seven days; and the day after the completion of the seventh weekly Sabbath day, was the chief day of the entire festival, necessarily Sunday. [The count for Pentecost does not begin with the Passover day, but it begins with the first day of the week during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, making Pentecost always fall on a Sunday.] What Israelite would not pity the cause that would seek to discover the origin of the keeping of the first day of the week in his festival of Pentecost, that has been kept by him yearly for over 3,000 years? Who but the Biblical Christian, driven to the wall for a pretext to excuse his sacrilegious desecration of the Sabbath, always kept by Christ and His apostles, would have resorted to the Jewish festival of Pentecost for his act of rebellion against his God and his teacher, the Bible?

Once more, the Biblical apologists for the change of day call our attention to the Acts, chapter 20, verses 6 and 7: *"**and upon the first day of the week,** **when the disciples came together to break bread,**"* etc. To all appearances, the above text should furnish some consolation to our disgruntled Biblical friends, but being Marplot, we cannot allow them even this crumb of comfort. We reply by the axiom: *"Quod probat nimis, probat nihil"*—"What proves too much, proves nothing." Let us call attention to the same Acts 2:46: "**And they, continuing *daily* in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,**" etc. Who does not see at a glance that the text produced to prove the exclusive prerogative of Sunday, vanishes into thin air—an *ignis fatuus*—when placed in juxtaposition with the 46th verse of the same chapter? What Biblical Christian claims by this text for *Sunday alone* the same authority, St. Luke, informs us was *common to every day of the week:* "**And they, continuing *daily* in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house.**"

One text more presents itself, apparently leaning toward a substitution of Sunday for Saturday. It is taken from St. Paul, 1 Cor. 16:1, 2: "**Now concerning the collection for the saints,**" "**On the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store,**" etc. Presuming that the request of St. Paul had been strictly attended to, let us call attention to what had been done each Saturday during the Saviour's life and continued for thirty years after, as the book of Acts informs us.

The followers of the Master met *"every Sabbath"* to hear the word of God; the Scriptures were read "*every Sabbath day."* "**And Paul, as his manner was to reason in the synagogue *every Sabbath*, interposing the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,**" etc. Acts 18:4. What more absurd conclusion than to infer that reading of the Scriptures, prayer, exhortation, and preaching, which *formed the routine duties of every Saturday,* as had been abundantly proved, were overslaughed by a request to take up a collection on *another day of the week?*

In order to appreciate fully the value of this text now under consideration, it is only needful to recall the action of the apostles and holy women on Good Friday before sundown. They brought spices and ointments after He was taken down from the cross; they suspended all action until the Sabbath "holy to the Lord" had passed, and then took steps on Sunday morning to complete the process of embalming the sacred body of Jesus.

Why, may we ask, did they not proceed to complete the work of embalming on Saturday?—Because they knew well that the embalming of the sacred body of their Master would interfere with the strict observance of the Sabbath, the keeping of which was paramount; and until it can be shown that the Sabbath day *immediately preceding the Sunday of our text* had not been kept (which would be false, inasmuch *as every Sabbath had been kept*), the request of St. Paul to make the collection *on Sunday* remains to be classified with the work of the embalming of Christ's body, which could not be effected on the Sabbath, and was consequently deferred to the next convenient day;

viz., Sunday, or the first day of the week.

Having disposed of every text to be found in the New Testament referring to the Sabbath (Saturday), and to the first day of the week (Sunday); and having shown conclusively from these texts, that, so far, not a shadow of pretext can be found in the Sacred Volume for the Biblical substitution of Sunday for Saturday; it only remains for us to investigate the meaning of the expressions "Lord's Day," and "day of the Lord," to be found in the New Testament, which we propose to do in our next article, and conclude with apposite remarks on the incongruities of a system of religion which we shall have proved to be indefensible, self-contradictory, and suicidal.

[From the *Catholic Mirror* of Sept. 23, 1893]

"Halting on crutches of unequal size,
One leg by truth supported, *one by lies,*
Thus sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
Secure of nothing but to lose the race."

In the present article we propose to investigate carefully a new (and the last) class of proof assumed to convince the Biblical Christian that God had substituted Sunday for Saturday for His worship in the new law, and that the divine will is to be found recorded by the Holy Ghost in apostolic writings.

We are informed that this radical change has found expression, over and over again, in a series of texts in which the expression, "the day of the Lord," or "the Lord's day," is to be found.

The class of texts in the New Testament, under the title "Sabbath," numbering sixty-one in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles; and the second class, in which "the first day of the week," or Sunday, having been critically examined (the latter class numbering nine); and having been found not to afford the slightest clue to a change of will on the part of God as to His day of worship by man, we now proceed to examine the third and last class of texts relied on to save the Biblical system from the arraignment of seeking to palm off on the world, in the name of God, a decree for which there is not the slightest warrant or authority from their teacher, the Bible.

References to "Day of the Lord" or "Lord's Day"

The first text of this class is to be found in the Acts of the Apostles 2:20: "**The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord shall come.**" How many Sundays have rolled by since that prophecy was spoken? So much for that effort to pervert the meaning of the sacred text from the judgment day to Sunday!

The second text of this class is to be found in 1 Cor. 1:8: "**Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless *in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."*** What simpleton does not see that the apostle here plainly indicates the day of judgment? The next text of this class that presents itself is to be found in the same Epistle, chapter 5:5: "**To deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved *in the day of the Lord Jesus.***" The incestuous Corinthian was, of course, saved on *the Sunday next following!!* How pitiable such a makeshift as this! The fourth text, 2 Cor. 1:13,14: "**And I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.**"

Sunday or the day of judgment, which? The fifth text is from St. Paul to the Philippians, chapter 1, verse 6: "**Being confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it *until the day of Jesus Christ.***" The good people of Philippi, in attaining perfection *on the following Sunday,* could afford to laugh at our modern rapid transit!

We beg to submit our sixth of the class; viz., Philippians, first chapter, tenth verse: "**That he may be sincere without offense unto *the day of Christ.***" That day was *next Sunday,* forsooth! Not so long to wait after all. The seventh text, 2 Peter 3:10: "**But *the day of the Lord* will come as a thief in the night.**" The application of this text to Sunday passes the bounds of absurdity.

The eighth text, 2 Peter 3:12: "**Waiting for and hastening unto *the coming of the day of the Lord,* by which the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved,**" etc. This day of the Lord is the same referred to in the previous text, the application of both of which *to Sunday next* would have left the Christian world sleepless the next Saturday night.

We have presented to our readers eight of the nine texts relied on to bolster up by text of Scripture the sacrilegious effort to palm off the "Lord's day" for Sunday, and with what result? Each furnishes *prima facie* evidence of the last day, referring to it directly, absolutely, and unequivocally.

The ninth text wherein we meet the expression "the Lord's day," is the last to be found in the apostolic writings. The Apocalypse, or Revelation, chapter 1:10, furnishes it in the following words of John: "**I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day**"; but it will afford no more comfort to our Biblical friends than its predecessors of the same series. Has St. John used the expression previously in his Gospel or Epistles?—Emphatically, NO. Has he had occasion to refer to Sunday hitherto?—Yes, twice. How did he designate Sunday on these occasions? Easter Sunday was called by him (John 20:1) *"the first day of the week."*

Again, chapter twenty, nineteenth verse: "**Now when it was late that same day, *being the first day of the week.***" Evidently, although inspired, both in his Gospel and Epistles, he called Sunday "the first day of the week." On what grounds, then, can it be assumed that he dropped that designation? Was he *more inspired* when he wrote the Apocalypse, or did he adopt a new title for Sunday, because it was now in vogue?

A reply to these questions would be supererogatory especially to the latter, seeing that the same expression had been used eight times already by St. Luke, St. Paul and St. Peter, *all under divine inspiration,* and surely the Holy Spirit would not inspire St. John to call Sunday the Lord's day, whilst He inspired Sts. Luke, Paul, and Peter, collectively, to entitle the day of judgment "the Lord's day." Dialecticians reckon amongst the infallible motives of certitude, the moral motive of analogy or induction, by which we are enabled to conclude with certainty from the known to the unknown; being absolutely certain of the meaning of an expression, it can have only the same meaning when uttered the ninth time, especially when we know that on the nine occasions the expressions were *inspired by the Holy Spirit.*

Nor are the strongest intrinsic grounds wanting to prove that this, like its sister texts, containing the same meaning. St. John (Rev. 1:10) says "**I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day**"; but he furnishes us the key to this expression, chapter four, first and second verses: "**After this I looked and behold a door opened in heaven.**" A voice said to him: "**Come up hither, and I will show you *the things which must be hereafter.***" Let us ascend in spirit with John. Whither?—through that "door in heaven," to heaven. And what shall we see?—"The things that must be hereafter," chapter four, first verse. He ascended in spirit to heaven. He was ordered to write, in full, his vision of what is to take place antecedent to, and concomitantly with, "the Lord's day," or the day of judgment; the expression "Lord's day" being confined in Scripture to the day of judgment exclusively.

We have studiously and accurately collected from the New Testament every available proof that could be adduced in favor of a law canceling the Sabbath day of the old law, or one substituting another day for the Christian dispensation. We have been careful to make the above distinction, lest it might be advanced that the third [(6)] commandment was abrogated under the new law. Any such plea has been overruled by the action of the Methodist Episcopal bishops in their pastoral 1874, and quoted by the New York *Herald* of the same date, of the following tenor:

"The Sabbath instituted in the beginning and confirmed again and again by Moses and the prophets *has never been abrogated.* A part of the moral law, not a part or tittle of its sanctity has been taken away." The above official pronouncement has committed that large body of Biblical Christians to the permanence of the third commandment under the new law.

[***Note*** [(6)]: In their catechisms, Catholic enumeration of Exodus 20, the Sabbath commandment is the third of the Ten Commandments.]

We again beg leave to call the special attention of our readers to the twentieth of "the thirty-nine articles of religion" of the Book of Common Prayer; "It is not lawful for the church to ordain anything that is contrary to *God's written word."*

CONCLUSION

We have in this series of articles, taken much pains for the instruction of our readers to prepare them by presenting a number of *undeniable facts* found in the word of God to arrive at a conclusion absolutely irrefragable. When the Biblical system put in an appearance in the sixteenth century, it not only seized on the temporal possessions of the Church, but in its vandalic crusade stripped Christianity, as far as it could, of all the sacraments instituted by its Founder, of the holy sacrifice, etc., retaining nothing but the Bible, which its exponents pronounced *their sole teacher* in Christian doctrine and morals.

Chief amongst their articles of belief was, and is today, the permanent necessity of keeping the Sabbath [Catholic Sunday] holy. In fact, it has been for the past 300 years the only article of the Christian belief in which there has been a plenary consensus of Biblical representatives. The keeping of the Sabbath constitutes the sum and substance of the Biblical theory. The pulpits resound weekly with incessant tirades against the lax manner of keeping the Sabbath [Catholic Sunday] in Catholic countries, as contrasted with the proper, Christian, self-satisfied mode of keeping the day in Biblical countries. Who can ever forget the virtuous indignation manifested by the Biblical preachers throughout the length and breadth of our country, from every Protestant pulpit, as long as yet undecided; and who does not know today, that one sect, to mark its holy indignation at the decision, has never yet opened the boxes that contained its articles at the World's Fair?

These superlatively good and unctuous Christians, by conning over their Bible carefully, can find their counterpart in a certain class of unco-good people [the scribes and Pharisees] in the days of the Redeemer, who haunted Him night and day, distressed beyond measure, and scandalized beyond forbearance, because He did not keep the [seventh day]Sabbath in as straight-laced manner as themselves.

Protestants Have *Never* Kept God's Sabbath

They hated Him for using common sense in reference to the day, and He found no epithets expressive enough of His supreme contempt for their Pharisaical pride. And it is very probably that the divine mind has not modified its views today anent the blatant outcry of their followers and sympathizers at the close of this nineteenth century. But when we add to all this the fact that whilst the Pharisees of old kept the *true Sabbath,* our modern Pharisees, counting on the credulity and simplicity of their dupes, *have never once in their lives kept the true Sabbath* which their divine Master kept to His dying day, and which His apostles kept, after His example, for thirty years steward, according to the Sacred Record. The most glaring contradiction, involving a deliberate sacrilegious rejection of a most

positive precept, is presented to us today in the action of the Biblical Christian world. The Bible and the Sabbath [Catholic Sunday] constitute the watchword of Protestantism; but we have demonstrated that it is *the Bible against their Sabbath* [Protestant Sunday]. We have shown that no greater contradiction ever existed than their theory and practice. We have proved that neither their Biblical ancestors nor themselves have ever kept one Sabbath day in their lives.

The Israelites and Seventh-day Adventists [and Sabbath keeping churches of God] are witnesses of their weekly desecration of the day named by God so repeatedly, and whilst they have ignored and condemned their teacher, the Bible, they have adopted a day kept by the Catholic Church. What Protestant can, after perusing these articles, with a clear conscience, continue to disobey the command of God, *enjoining Saturday to be kept,* which command his teacher, the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, records as the will of God?

The history of the world cannot present a more stupid, self-stultifying specimen of dereliction of principle than this. The teacher demands emphatically in every page that the law of the Sabbath be observed every week, by all recognizing it as "the only infallible teacher," whilst the disciples of that teacher have not once for over three [now four] hundred years observed the divine precept! That immense concourse of Biblical Christians, the Methodists, have declared that the Sabbath has never been abrogated, whilst the followers of the Church of England, together with her daughter, the Episcopal Church of the United States, are committed by the twentieth article of religion, already quoted, to the ordinance that the Church cannot lawfully ordain anything *"contrary to God's written word."* God's written word enjoins His worship to be observed on *Saturday* absolutely, repeatedly, and most emphatically, with a most positive threat of death to him who disobeys. All the Biblical sects occupy the same self-stultifying position which no explanation can modify, much less justify.

How truly do the words of the Holy Spirit apply to this deplorable situation! *"Iniquitas mentita est sibi"*—"Iniquity hath lied to itself." Proposing to follow *the Bible only* as teacher, yet before the world, *the sole teacher* is ignominiously thrust aside, and the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church—"the mother of abomination," when it suits their purpose so to designate her—[they have] adopted, despite the most terrible threats pronounced by God Himself against those who disobey the command, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath."

Sunday as Day of Worship Is Catholic Creation

Before closing this series of articles, we beg to call the attention of our readers once more to our caption, introductory of each; viz., 1. The Christian Sabbath [Catholic Sunday], [is] the genuine offspring of the union of the Holy Spirit with the Catholic Church His spouse. 2. The claim of

Protestantism to any part therein proved to be groundless, self-contradictory, and suicidal.

The first proposition needs little proof. The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. We say by virtue of her divine mission, because He who called Himself the "Lord of the Sabbath," endowed her with His own power to teach, "he that heareth you, heareth Me"; commanded all who believe in Him to hear her, under penalty of being placed with "heathen and publican"; and promised to be with her to the end of the world. She holds her charter as teacher from Him—a charter as infallible as perpetual [which is not true]. (See Appendix L, "Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 Binding and Loosing in the New Testament Church," p. 267.) The Protestant world at its birth found the Christian Sabbath [Catholic Sunday] too strongly entrenched to run counter to its existence; it was therefore placed under the necessity of acquiescing in the arrangement, thus implying the [Catholic] Church's right to change the day, for over three [now four] hundred years. The Christian Sabbath [Catholic Sunday] is therefore *to this day,* the acknowledged offspring of the Catholic Church as spouse of the Holy Ghost, without a word of remonstrance from the Protestant world.

Let us now, however, take a glance at our second proposition, with *the Bible alone* as the teacher and guide in faith and morals. This teacher *most emphatically forbids any change in the day for paramount reasons.* The command calls for a *"perpetual covenant."* The day commanded to be kept by the teacher *has never once been kept,* thereby developing an apostasy from an assumedly fixed principle, as self-contradictory, self-stultifying, and consequently as suicidal as it is within the power of language to express.

Nor are the limits of demoralization yet reached. Far from it. *Their pretense* for leaving the bosom of the Catholic Church was for apostasy from the truth *as taught in the written word.* They adopted the written word as their sole teacher, which they had no sooner done than they abandoned it promptly, as these articles have abundantly proved; and by a perversity as willful as erroneous, they accept the teaching of the Catholic Church in direct opposition to the plain, unvaried, and constant teaching of their sole teacher in the most essential doctrine of their religion, thereby emphasizing the situation in what may be aptly designated "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare."

[**EDITORS' NOTE** (Written by Michael Scheifler) — It was upon this very point that the Reformation was condemned by the Council of Trent. The Reformers had constantly charged, as here stated, that the Catholic Church had "apostatized from the truth *as contained in the written word."* "The written word," "The Bible and the Bible only," "Thus saith the Lord," were their constant watchwords; and "the Scripture, as in the written word, the sole standard of appeal," was the proclaimed platform of the Reformation and of Protestantism. "The Scripture *and tradition."* "The

Bible as interpreted by the Church and according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers," was the position and claim of the Catholic Church. This was the main issue in the Council of Trent, which was called especially to consider the questions that had been raised and forced upon the attention of Europe by the Reformers.

The very first question concerning faith that was considered by the council was the question involved in this issue. There was a strong party even of the Catholics within the council who were in favor of abandoning tradition and adopting *the Scriptures only* as the standard of authority. This view was so decidedly held in the debates in the council that the pope's legates actually wrote to him that there was "a strong tendency to set aside tradition altogether and to make Scripture the sole standard of appeal." But to do this would manifestly be to go a long way toward justifying the claims of the Protestants. By this crisis there was developed upon the ultra-Catholic portion of the council the task of convincing the others that "Scripture *and tradition"* were the only sure ground to stand upon. If this could be done, the council could be carried to issue a decree condemning the Reformation, otherwise not. The question was debated day after day, until the council was fairly brought to a standstill. Finally, after a long and intensive mental strain, the Archbishop of Reggio came into the council with substantially the following argument to the party who held for Scripture alone:

"The Protestants claim to stand upon the written word only. They profess to hold the Scripture alone as the standard of faith. They justify their revolt by the plea that the Church has apostatized from the written word and follows tradition. Now the Protestant claim, that they stand upon the written word only, is not true. Their profession of holding the Scripture alone as the standard of faith is false. PROOF: The written word explicitly enjoins the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath. They do not observe the seventh day but reject it. If they do truly hold the scripture alone as their standard, they would be observing the seventh day as is enjoined in the Scripture throughout. Yet they not only reject the observance of the Sabbath enjoined in the written word, but they have adopted and do practice the observance of Sunday, for which they have only the tradition of the Church. Consequently the claim of 'Scripture alone as the standard,' *fails;* and the doctrine of 'Scripture *and tradition'* as essential, is fully established, the Protestants themselves being judges."

[The Archbisop of Reggio (Gaspar [Ricciulli] de Fosso) made his speech at the last opening session of Trent, (17th Session) reconvened under a new pope (Pius IV), on the 18th of January, 1562 after having been suspended in 1552.—J. H. Holtzman, *Canon and Tradition*, published in Ludwigsburg, Germany, in 1859, page 263, and Archbishop of Reggio's address in the 17th session of the Council of Trent, Jan. 18, 1562, in Mansi SC, Vol. 33, cols. 529, 530. Latin.]

There was no getting around this, for the Protestants' own statement of faith—the Augsburg Confession, 1530—had clearly admitted that "the observation of the Lord's day" had been appointed by "the Church" only [meaning the Catholic Church].

The argument was hailed in the council as of Inspiration only; the party for "Scripture alone," surrendered; and the council at once unanimously condemned Protestantism and the whole Reformation as only an unwarranted revolt from the communion and authority of the Catholic Church; and proceeded, April 8, 1546, "to the promulgation of two decrees, the first of which, enacts under anathema, that Scripture *and tradition* are to be received and venerated equally, and that the deutero-canonical [the apocryphal] books are part of the canon of Scripture. The second decree declares the Vulgate to be the sole authentic and standard Latin version, and gives it such authority as to supersede the original texts; forbids the interpretation of Scripture contrary to the sense received by the Church, 'or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers,' " etc. [(7)]

**[*Note:* [(7)]: See the proceedings of the Council; Augsburg Confession; and Encyclopaedia Britannica, article "Trent, Council of."]

This was the inconsistency of the Protestant practice with the Protestant profession that gave to the Catholic Church her long-sought and anxiously desired ground upon which to condemn Protestantism and the whole Reformation movement as only a selfishly ambitious rebellion against the Church authority. And in this vital controversy the key, the chiefest and culminative expression, of the Protestant inconsistency was in the rejection of the Sabbath of the Lord, the seventh day, enjoined in the Scriptures, and the adoption and observance of the Sunday as enjoined by the Catholic Church.

And this is today the position of the respective parties to this controversy. Today, as this document shows, this is the vital issue upon which the Catholic Church arraigns Protestantism and upon which she condemns the course of popular Protestantism as being "indefensible," "self -contradictory, and suicidal." (end of editor's note)**]**

Should any of the reverend parsons, who are habituated to howl so vociferously over every real or assumed desecration of that pious fraud, the *Bible Sabbath,* think well of entering a protest against our logical and Scriptural dissection of their mongrel pet [that Sunday keeping is taught in the Bible], we can promise them that any reasonable attempt on their part to gather up the *disjecta membra* of the hybrid, and to restore to it a galvanized existence, will be met with genuine cordiality and respectful consideration on our part.

But we can assure our readers that we know these reverend howlers too well to expect a solitary bark from them in this instance. And they know us too well to subject themselves to the mortification which a further dissection of this antiscriptural question would necessarily entail. Their policy now is to "lay low," and they are sure to adopt it.

APPENDIX I (*Rome's Challenge*)

These articles are reprinted, and this leaflet is sent forth by the publishers, because it gives, from an undeniable source and in no uncertain tone, the latest phase of the Sunday-observance controversy, which is now, and which indeed for some time has been, not only a national question with the leading nations, but also an international question. Not that we are glad to have it so; we would that Protestants everywhere were so thoroughly consistent in profession and practice that there could be no possible room for the relations between them and Rome ever to take the shape which they have now taken.

But the situation in this matter is now as it is herein set forth. There is no escaping this fact. It therefore becomes the duty of the International Religious Liberty Association to make known as widely as possible the true phase of this great question as it now stands. Not because we are pleased to have it so, but because it is so, whatever we or anybody else would or would not be pleased to have.

It is true that we have been looking for years for this question to assume precisely the attitude which it has now assumed, and which is so plainly set forth in this leaflet. We have told the people repeatedly, and Protestants especially, and yet more especially have we told those who were advocating Sunday laws and the recognition and legal establishment of Sunday by the United States, that in the course that was being pursued they were playing directly into the hands of Rome, and that as certainly as they succeeded, they would inevitably be called upon by Rome, and Rome in possession of power too, to render to her an account as to why Sunday should be kept. This, we have told the people for years, would surely come. And now that it *has* come, it is only our duty to make it known as widely as it lies in our power to do.

It may be asked, Why did not Rome come out as boldly as this before? Why did she wait so long? It was not for her interest to do so before. When she should move, she desired to move with power, and power as yet she did not have. But in their strenuous efforts for the national, governmental recognition and establishment of Sunday, the Protestants of the United States were doing more for her than she could possibly do for herself in the way of getting governmental power into her hands. This she well knew and therefore only waited. And now that the Protestants, in alliance with her, have accomplished the awful thing, she at once rises up in all her native arrogance and old-time spirit, and calls upon the Protestants to answer to her for their observance of Sunday. This, too, she does because she is secure in the power which the Protestants have so blindly placed in her hands. In other words, the power which the Protestants have thus put into her hands she will now use to their destruction. Is any other evidence needed to show that the *Catholic Mirror* (which means the Cardinal and the Catholic Church in America) has been waiting for this, than that furnished

on page 21 of this leaflet? Please turn back and look at that page, and see that quotation clipped from the New York *Herald* in 1874, and which is now brought forth thus. Does not this show plainly that that statement of the Methodist bishops, the *Mirror,* all these nineteen years, has been keeping for just such a time as this? And more than this, the Protestants will find more such things which have been so laid up, and which will yet be used in a way that will both surprise and confound them.

This at present is a controversy between the Catholic Church and Protestants. As such only do we reproduce these editorials of the CATHOLIC MIRROR. The points controverted are points which are claimed by Protestants as in their favor. The argument is made by the Catholic Church; the answer devolves upon those Protestants who observe Sunday, not upon us. We can truly say, "This is none of our funeral." If they do not answer, she will make their silence their confession that she is right, and will act toward them accordingly. If they do answer, she will use against them their own words, and as occasion may demand, the power which they have put into her hands. So that, so far as she is concerned, whether the Protestant answer or not, it is all the same. And how she looks upon them henceforth is clearly manifested in the challenge made in the last paragraph of the reprint articles.

There is just one refuge left for the Protestants. That is to take their stand squarely and fully upon the "written word only," "the Bible and the Bible alone," and thus upon the Sabbath of the Lord. Thus acknowledging no authority but God's, wearing no sign but His (Eze. 20:12, 20), obeying His command, and shielded by His power, they shall have the victory over Rome and all her alliances, and stand upon the sea of glass, bearing the harps of God, with which their triumph shall be forever celebrated. (Revelation 18, and 15:2-4.)

It is not yet too late for Protestants to redeem themselves. Will they do it? Will they stand consistently upon the Protestant profession? Or will they still continue to occupy the "indefensible, self-contradictory, and suicidal" position of professing to be Protestants, yet standing on Catholic ground, receiving Catholic insult, and bearing Catholic condemnation? Will they indeed take the written word only, the Scripture alone, as their sole authority and their sole standard? Or will they still hold the "indefensible, self-contradictory, and suicidal" doctrine and practice of following the authority of the Catholic Church and of wearing the sign of her authority? Will they keep the Sabbath of the Lord, the seventh day, according to Scripture? Or will they keep the Sunday according to the tradition of the Catholic Church?

Dear reader, which will YOU do?

APPENDIX II (*Rome's Challenge*)

Since the first edition of this publication was printed, the following appeared in an editorial in the *Catholic Mirror* of Dec. 23, 1893:

"The avidity with which these editorials have been sought, and the appearance of a reprint of them by the International Religious Liberty Association, published in Chicago, entitled, 'Rome's Challenge: Why Do Protestants Keep Sunday?' and offered for sale in Chicago, New York, California, Tennessee, London, Australia, Cape Town, Africa, and Ontario, Canada, together with the continuous demand, have prompted the *Mirror* to give permanent form to them, and thus comply with the demand.

"The pages of this brochure unfold to the reader one of the most glaringly conceivable contradictions existing between the practice and the theory of the Protestant world, and unsusceptible of any rational solution, the theory claiming the Bible alone as teacher, which unequivocally and most positively commands Saturday to be kept 'holy,' whilst their practice proves that they utterly ignore the unequivocal requirements of their teacher, the Bible, and occupying Catholic ground for three centuries and a half, by the abandonment of their theory, they stand before the world today the representatives of a system the most indefensible, self-contradictory, and suicidal that can be imagined.

"We feel that we cannot interest our readers more than to produce the 'Appendix'[8] which the International Religious Liberty Association, and ultra -Protestant organization, has added to the reprint of our articles. The perusal of the Appendix will confirm the fact that our argument is unanswerable, and that the only recourse left to the Protestants is either to retire from Catholic territory where they have been squatting for three centuries and a half, and accepting their own teacher, the Bible, in good faith, as so clearly suggested by the writer of 'Appendix,' commence forth-with to keep the Saturday, the day enjoined by the Bible from Genesis to Revelation; or, abandoning the Bible as their sole teacher, cease to be squatters, and a living contradiction of their own principles, and taking out letters of adoption as citizens of the kingdom of Christ on earth—His Church—be no longer victims of self-delusive and necessary self-contradiction.

[***Note***: [8] At the close of this editorial, Appendix I of this pamphlet was reprinted in full.]

"The arguments contained in this pamphlet are firmly grounded on the word of God, and having been closely studied with the Bible in hand, leave no escape for the conscientious Protestant except the abandonment of Sunday worship and the return to Saturday, commanded by their teacher, the Bible, or, unwilling to abandon the tradition of the Catholic Church, which enjoins the keeping of Sunday, and which they have accepted in direct opposition to their teacher, the Bible, consistently accept her in all her teachings. **Reason and common sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of these alternatives**; <u>either Protestantism and the keeping of Saturday</u>, or <u>Catholicity and the keeping of Sunday</u>. Compromise is impossible."

Appendix G

The Biblical Truth About Sabbath-Keeping

Sunday, the *first* day of the week, is almost universally observed today by "professing Christians." Yet, the Bible teaches that **the only day that is holy to God is the seventh day of the week, called the Sabbath day in the Word of God.**

The Roman calendar used today in the United States shows the seventh day of the week as *Saturday*. Throughout Europe, however, calendars have been changed to show Sunday as the seventh day of the week. In spite of that change, Saturday remains the *true* biblical Sabbath day, holy to God. The Bible clearly commands: "**Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy**. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God…" (Ex. 20:8-10).

Here are 36 profound reasons from Scripture why we should be observing the seventh day Sabbath today, as the weekly day of worship to God:

1. In the beginning God created the Sabbath day (Gen. 2:3).
2. God rested from His labors on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2).
3. The Sabbath was made *for* man, that is, for all mankind (Mark 2:27).
4. God blessed the seventh day because, on it, He rested from the work of His creation (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:11).
5. God blessed the seventh day and named it the Sabbath (Ex. 20:10-11).
6. God not only blessed the seventh day, He also sanctified it—that is, made it holy by His presence and declaration (Gen. 2:3).
7. There is no record in all the Scriptures that God ever removed His blessing from the Sabbath and placed it upon another day of the week.
8. God's people kept the Sabbath *before* the Ten Commandments were given at Mount Sinai (Ex. 16:22-26).
9. God ordained that man should keep the Sabbath (Ex. 20; Heb. 4:3-9).
10. God forbade work on the Sabbath day even in harvest time (Ex. 34:21).
11. God promised the Gentiles, those of all nations, a blessing if they kept the Sabbath (Isa. 56:2).
12. God promised to bless anyone who keeps the Sabbath (Isa. 56:2).

13. Nowhere in the Bible do we find a command to observe any other day of the week as holy, as a substitute or replacement for the seventh-day Sabbath.
14. God calls the Sabbath His *holy day* (Ex. 20:10; Lev. 23:2-3; Isa. 58:13; Mk. 2:28).
15. The keeping of the Sabbaths, weekly and annually, is a sign between God and His people (Ex. 31:12-17).
16. The Sabbath commandment, one of the longest of the ten, is given to God's people so that they might show their love and obedience towards God (Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15; Matt. 22:37-40).
17. Jesus kept and observed the Sabbath as a habit, which expressed His love and obedience toward God the Father (Lk. 4:16).
18. Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath—and as such, the Sabbath is the TRUE LORD'S DAY (Mk. 2:28; Isa. 58:13; Matt. 12:8).
19. Jesus Christ recognized the Sabbath commandment as binding (Matt. 12:12; 5:17-18; Mk. 3:4).
20. Jesus Christ kept His Father's commandments, which included the seventh-day Sabbath (John 15:10; 8:29; 5:46-47).
21. The Sabbath was observed at the time of the crucifixion (Lk. 23:56).
22. The observance of the Sabbath was Paul's practice years after the crucifixion (Acts 17:2).
23. Paul recognized and observed the Sabbath during his ministry, about AD 45 (Acts 13:27).
24. Paul taught the Gentiles on the Sabbath day, at their own request (Acts 13:42).
25. Paul preached to an entire city on the Sabbath day (Acts 13:44).
26. Paul attended a prayer meeting on the Sabbath day, when no synagogue was available (Acts 16:13).
27. It was Paul's custom to preach Jesus Christ on the Sabbath day (Acts 17:2-3).
28. At Corinth, Paul preached every Sabbath for eighteen months (Acts 18:1-4, 11).
29. James recognized the seventh-day Sabbath many years after the resurrection of Christ (Acts 15:21).
30. The seventh-day Sabbath will be observed during the Millennium (Isa. 66:23).
31. The apostle Paul made it clear that the day of rest, the seventh-day Sabbath, was to be observed as a holy day (Heb. 4:4-9).
32. The sanctity of the seventh day was never transferred by Jesus Christ, nor by the apostles, to the first day of the week. Neither was it changed by Jesus' resurrection—for Christ rose "in the end of the Sabbath" and not on Sunday (Matt. 28:1-6).

33. Sabbath-keeping is a requirement for eternal life—as the Christian must be keeping *all* of God's Ten Commandments (Matt. 19:17; Rev. 22:14).
34. The seventh-day Sabbath remains as the day of rest for God's people (Heb. 4:9).
35. Jesus warned that in the end time, as the great tribulation is beginning, we should pray that we would not have to flee on the Sabbath (Matt. 24:20).
36. The sign of God's people in the end time is that they would be keeping the commandments of God (Rev. 12:17; 14:12).

(Adapted from the *Bible Sabbath Association*, Fairview, Oklahoma.)

Appendix H

Rome's War Against the Christian Passover, God's Sabbath and Holy Days

From the death of the apostle John in AD 100, apostate religious leaders and church scholars systematically began to reject God's Sabbath, holy days and feasts. These so-called early "church fathers" found favor instead with Sunday as the weekly day of rest and worship, as well as with various holidays and feasts of pagan origin—all of which they had conveniently "Christianized." The same "theologians" that denigrated the seventh-day weekly Sabbath likewise put forth countless false arguments that Christians were no longer required to observe God's feasts. Their hatred of God's holy days and feasts was, in many cases, more pronounced than their loathing of the Sabbath.

The attack against the biblical feasts and holy days began with the Passover. The church in the West particularly detested the observance of the Christian Passover, which they saw as "Jewish." True Christians kept the Passover on the night of the 14th day of the first month, as commanded by God. A conflict arose over the keeping of Passover—known in history as the "Quartodeciman controversy"—in which Rome called for the abolition of the Passover and the institution of "Easter-Sunday" (derived from Baalism and Mithraism). Central to their efforts was the condemnation of any observance of the Passover and biblical holy days as "Judaizing." In so doing, the western church rejected the true Christ Jesus as the Passover Lamb of God, slain on Nisan 14, as well as the Christian Passover that He instituted.

Baalism was the primary stumbling block that turned both Israel and Judah away from their covenant relationship with God, and ultimately brought them into national captivity. Their worship of Baal focused on a "transubstantiation" ritual celebrated on the day of the sun, Sunday—and was particularly important in sunrise celebrations on Easter Sunday (see Appendix J, "The Eucharist—Sacrifice of the Mass," p. 327).

Orthodox Christendom has always favored the insidious influences of Baalism over adherence to the commandments of God. Deliberate attempts to pervert the true worship of God through the counterfeit teachings of Baalism are recorded in the writings of the New Testament. One motive behind such attempts was the elimination of the Nisan 14 Christian Passover. The epistles of Paul are rife with this doctrinal combat (e.g., Galatians, Colossians, Hebrews), and the Gospel of John attests to this spiritual and doctrinal battle in which all true Christians were fully engaged by AD 70 (see Jude 3-4, 11 and Rev. 2:14).

By AD 95, the leadership of the Roman church was fast abandoning the seventh-day Sabbath for Sunday, and the Nisan 14 Passover for Easter. Once the observance of Easter Sunday superseded the Christian Passover, the abandonment of the remaining biblical feasts and holy days soon followed. These were quickly replaced with "Christianized" occult holidays—Christmas, Halloween, Lent, etc.

This movement soon coalesced into a weekly ritual meal of transubstantiation to Mithras (the Baal of Persia)—and ultimately led to the annual observance of Easter sunrise services in honor of Mithras' supposed resurrection. Mithras was anciently known as the pagan deity Tammuz (Ezek. 8:13-16). This "Christian" celebration—now renamed as a "communion service"—was adopted by growing numbers of churches throughout the empire until it eventually replaced the true Passover service of Nisan 14. This push to "Christianize" pagan worship as "sanctified Christian worship" of God was championed by apostate church leaders of Rome, Asia Minor, and Alexandria, Egypt.

In AD 135, the majority of church congregations in the Mediterranean region had already abandoned the true Passover in favor of Sunday communion and the yearly Easter sunrise service. By AD 195, a mere sixty years later, the Orthodox Gentile bishops of Palestine had fully succumbed to this onslaught. **It cannot be overstated that the first step in this departure from the true worship of God was the introduction of weekly Sunday worship by the leadership of Rome**.

By AD 200, the only remaining champions of truth were found in scattered congregations in Asia Minor, some of whom continued faithfully in the observance of the Passover, feasts and holy days of God well into the sixth century. As the book of Revelation and early church history records, there remained a number of true Christians in Asia Minor who, led by the church at Ephesus, stood fast for the righteousness they had received from the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles, particularly the apostle John. Faithfully, they repelled assault after assault against the weekly seventh-day Sabbath, the Nisan 14th Passover, and the remaining holy days of God.

The church historian Eusebius records the testimony of Polycrates, the leader of the Ephesian resistance, who held fast against this invasion of false doctrine: "[B]ut the bishops in Asia were led by Polycrates in persisting that it was necessary to keep the custom which had been handed down to them of old [given by Jesus Christ as recorded in the four Gospels]. Polycrates himself in a document which he addressed to Victor and to the church of Rome, expounds the tradition which had come to him as follows: 'Therefore we keep the day undeviatingly, neither adding [to] nor taking away, for in Asia great luminaries sleep, and they will rise on the day of the coming of the Lord, when [H]e shall come with glory from heaven and seek out [literally, to raise up] all the saints. Such were Phillip of the twelve apostles, and two of his daughters who grew old as virgins, who sleep in Hierapolis, and another daughter of his, who lived in the Holy Spirit, rests at Ephesus. Moreover, there is also John, who lay on the Lord's breast, who

was a priest wearing the breastplate, and the martyr, and teacher. He sleeps at Ephesus. And there is also Polycarp at Smyrna, both bishop and martyr, who sleeps at Laodicea, and Papirius, too, the blessed, and Melito the eunuch, who lived entirely in the Holy Spirit, who lies in Sardis, waiting for the visitation from heaven when he will rise from the dead. All these kept the fourteenth day of the Passover according to the gospel, never swerving, but following according to the rule of the faith [as taught by Jesus and the apostles]. And I also, Polycrates, the least of you all, live according to the tradition of my kinsmen, and some of them have I followed. For seven of my family were bishops and I am the eighth, and my kinsmen ever kept the day when the people put away the leaven. Therefore, brethren, I who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord and conversed with the brethren from every country, and have studied all the holy Scriptures, am not afraid of threats, for they have said who were greater than I, "It is better to obey God rather than men" ' " (Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. I, pp. 505-507, bracketed comments added).

After the death of Polycrates and his faithful fellow Christian leaders in Asia Minor, the only remaining resistance to the relentless pagan conspiracy was in the distant Mesopotamian Valley and in the mountainous regions of Europe. The true Christian brethren of these regions faithfully preserved the Old and New Testaments from the ravages of the Roman Orthodox, Jewish Orthodox and Gnostic communities. Opposing all corrupting influences, they preserved the only true testimony of our Messiah and His Passover.

Samuele Bacchiocchi writes of Rome's leading role in replacing the true Nisan 14 Passover with Easter Sunday: "There seems to be no question as to Rome being the place of its origin. Later historical data confirm, in fact, the Roman origin of Easter-Sunday. J.B. Pitra, for instance, has discovered and edited the conciliar decree of the Council of Nicaea [by Emperor Constantine in] (AD 325) concerning the celebration of Easter, where it specifically enjoined: 'All the brethren in the East who formerly celebrated Easter [i.e., the Nisan 14 Passover] with the Jews, will henceforth keep it at the same time as the Romans, with us and with all those who from ancient times have celebrated the feast at the same time with us.'… Scholars usually recognize in the Roman custom of celebrating Easter on Sunday instead of the 14th of Nisan, to use Jeremias' words, 'the inclination to break away from Judaism.' Lightfoot holds, for instance, that Rome and Alexandria adopted Easter-Sunday to avoid 'even the semblance of Judaism.' M. Righetti, in his monumental history of liturgy, also points out that Rome and Alexandria, after 'having eliminated the Judaizing quartodeciman tradition,' repudiated even the Jewish computations, making their own calculations, since 'such dependence on the Jews must have appeared humiliating.' The Nicene conciliar letter of Constantine, referred to above, explicitly reveals a marked anti-Judaic motivation for the repudiation of the quartodeciman Passover. The Emperor in fact, desiring to establish a [new religion] completely free from any Jewish influences writes: 'It appeared an unworthy

thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul…. *Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd*; for we have received from our Saviour a different way…. Strive and pray continually that the purity of your souls may not seem in anything to be sullied by fellowship with the customs of these most wicked men…. All should unite in desiring that which sound reason appears to demand, and in *avoiding all participation in the perjured conduct of the Jews*.'

"The anti-Judaic motivations for [the] repudiation of the Jewish reckoning of Passover could not have been expressed more explicitly and forcefully in the letter of Constantine. Nicaea represents the culmination of a controversy initiated two centuries earlier and motivated by strong anti-Judaic feelings and one which had Rome as its epicenter.

"In all this controversy Rome exercised a role of leadership. We have noticed that it was in Rome that the Easter-Sunday custom arose, possibly under bishop Sixtus; it was to Rome that Polycrates addressed himself to defend his different tradition; it was to Rome that the Council of Nicaea pointed as the example to follow on the Easter observance" (Bacchiocchi, *Anti-Judaism and the Origin of Sunday*, pp. 86-87, bracketed comments added).

Appendix I

Fourteen Rules for Bible Study: Spiritual Keys to Understanding the Word of God

There are spiritual keys to understanding the Scriptures. The primary key is that of being in a steadfast, loving, faithful and obedient attitude and relationship toward God. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments" (John 14:15). Likewise, in the Psalms we find that those who keep the commandments of God will be given understanding: "All His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever; they are done in truth and uprightness…. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever" (Psa. 111:7-8, 10). This is the foundation of understanding the Word of God.

Another vital key is clearly taught in Isaiah 28: "Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? *Those* who are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts, [that is, fully grounded in the Word of God]. For **precept *must be* upon precept**, precept upon precept; **line upon line**, line upon line; **here a little**, there a little" (verses 9-10).

The Bible tells us that in order to understand doctrine, we must study it "line upon line" and "precept upon precept." That is exactly how we need to study any scriptural question. The New Testament confirms this approach to understanding the Word of God and establishing sound doctrine. Paul instructed Timothy in how to study and teach doctrine: "Diligently *study* to show yourself approved unto God, a workman [in the Word of God] who does not *need to be* ashamed, rightly dividing [precept upon precept, and line upon line] the Word of the truth" (II Tim. 2:15).

The Word of God is called the Word of truth. It is the Spirit of truth that teaches us all things. Jesus said, "But *when* the Comforter *comes*, *even* the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in My name, that one **shall teach you all things**, and shall bring to your remembrance everything that I have told you" (John 14:26). This is the promise Jesus gave!

The Bible makes it clear that the Word of truth works together with the Spirit of truth to give understanding to those who love God and seek His will. It is self-evident that it is not possible for the carnal mind, which is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9), to come to the knowledge of the truth of God. In fact, the carnal, unconverted mind is enmity (that is, hostile) toward God and is not willing to be subject to God's laws (Rom. 8:7). Regardless of how brilliant or how great one's intellect may be, God's Word is not

understood by human wisdom or reasoning. It is only through the Spirit of God that the Word of God is understood.

The apostle Paul taught that spiritual truths can only be discerned and understood through the Spirit of God: "But according as it is written, '*The* eye has not seen, nor *the* ear heard, neither have entered into *the* heart of man, *the* things which God has prepared for those who love Him.'

"But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God. For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him? In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except *by* the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God; which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in *words* taught by *the* Holy Spirit *in order to* communicate spiritual things by spiritual *means*. But *the* natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand *them* because **they are spiritually discerned**" (I Cor. 2:9-14).

Spiritual truth is revealed by the Spirit. Unfortunately, many people are caught up in the politics of religion, the organizational power structure of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, or the time-honored doctrines of various churches. These things prevent an unbiased study and obscure the spiritual truths in God's Word.

A biblically outlined method of study—"rightly dividing" the Word of God—is the proper way to study the Word of God. When one studies the Bible following the "Fourteen Rules for Bible Study," he or she will find the truth of the Bible as revealed by the Holy Spirit of truth. These rules are not designed to bolster a previous doctrinal position, or justify a particular church doctrine. These things do not really matter; and even if they did, would God overlook such misuse of His Word?

Paul's words to Timothy show the danger in misusing the Scriptures: "See that *they* remain mindful of these things, earnestly charging *them* in the sight of the Lord not to argue over words that are not profitable in any way, *but which lead* to *the* subverting of those who hear" (II Tim. 2:14). Many Bible teachers have misused the Scriptures in this way. In order to justify doctrinal beliefs that are not taught in the Bible, they have twisted and distorted the Scriptures to fit their own private interpretations. Whole churches have been subverted by arguments and disputes over words that have undermined the faith of millions!

The apostle Peter warned the believers to be on guard against false teachers: "As *he has* also in all *his* [Paul's] epistles, speaking in them concerning these things; in which are some things *that are* difficult to understand, **which the ignorant and unstable are twisting *and distorting*, as *they* also *twist and distort* the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction**. Therefore, beloved, since you know this in advance, be on guard against *such practices,* lest you be led astray with the error of the lawless ones, *and* you fall from your own steadfastness" (II Pet. 3:16-17).

Peter understood that those who promote their own private interpretations are rejecting the Holy Spirit of God which inspired every word that is written in the Scriptures: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone's own *private* interpretation; because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the* Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:20-21). Paul also made it clear that the words of the Scriptures were not humanly devised but were "God-breathed." Notice: "And that from a child you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which *is* in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture *is* God-breathed** and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work" (II Tim. 3:15-17).

False doctrines and misinterpretations are continually being propagated because ministers and teachers use the Word of God deceitfully. How diabolical it is to take the Word of God, which is the truth, and misapply it to create a lie! Such deceptive use of God's Word has existed from the time of the apostles. In writing to the believers at Corinth, the apostle Paul contrasted his ministry with the deceitful approach of false teachers in his day: "Therefore, having this ministry, according as we have received mercy, we are not fainthearted. For **we have personally renounced the hidden things of dishonest gain, not walking in *cunning* craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth we are commending ourselves to every man's conscience before God**" (II Cor. 4:1-2).

When studying the Bible, one should apply the "Fourteen Rules for Bible Study" that follow. These rules show the systematic method and the mechanics of proper Bible study.

One should never establish doctrine based on the traditions of men, regardless of how knowledgeable or authoritative they are reputed to be. Nor should one base doctrine solely on the commentaries or other writings of men. Any student of the Bible should strictly follow the Word of God by examining the subject's history and referring to the original languages, Hebrew and Greek, in order to determine precise definitions and meanings of key, critically important words. Such an approach will lead to a clear and complete understanding of what the Word of God truly teaches.

Fourteen Rules for Bible Study

1) Begin with Scriptures that are easy to understand.

2) Let the Bible interpret and prove the Bible. Don't look for what you want to prove; look for what the Bible actually proves.

3) Understand the context—the verses before and after, the chapters before and after. Does your understanding of a particular verse harmonize with the rest of the Bible?

4) As much as possible, understand the original language, Hebrew or Greek. Never try to establish dogmatic doctrine or teachings by using *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. It can be helpful at times, but it is extremely limited.

5) Ask: What does the Scripture clearly say?

6) Ask: What does the Scripture not say?

7) Ask: Who was the book written to?

8) Ask: Who wrote it?

9) Ask: Who said it?

10) Understand the time frame in history when the book was written.

11) Base your study on scriptural knowledge that you already understand. What do you know up to this point in time?

12) Do not allow your own personal assumptions or preconceived notions to influence your understanding and conclusions.

13) Do not form conclusions based on partial facts, insufficient information, or the opinions and speculations of others.

14) Opinions, regardless of how strongly you feel about them, don't necessarily count. Scripture must be your standard and guide.

Appendix J

The Eucharist—Sacrifice of the Mass

Is the bread and wine of the Eucharist transfigured at the command of a priest into Jesus' literal flesh and blood?

The Catholic Church claims that Jesus instituted the "Eucharist"—the so-called "Sacrifice of the Mass"—on the night of His last supper. According to Scripture, however, Jesus kept the Passover that night (Luke 22:15, etc.), instituting the unleavened bread and wine as symbols of the New Covenant. Thus, He instituted the Christian Passover service.

Just what is the "Eucharist," and what is its *true* origin? And what of the claim that, at the command of a priest, bread and wine actually *become* the literal flesh and blood of Christ in the "Sacrifice of the Mass"?

During the second to fourth centuries AD, the apostate "Christian" church in Rome grafted numerous pagan rituals into its "Christianized" practices. Among them was the "Sacrifice of the Mass"—called the "Eucharist"—in which it is claimed that bread and wine are transfigured into the literal flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. "In the celebration of the Holy Mass, **the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ**. It is called **transubstantiation**, for in the Sacrament of the Eucharist the substance of bread and wine do not remain, but the entire substance of bread is changed into the body of Christ, and the entire substance of wine is changed into his blood, the … outward semblance of bread and wine alone remaining" (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, article "Consecration," bold emphasis added). But is this belief founded on the Word of God?

Such a teaching ignores the plain teaching of the New Testament concerning the Passover. As symbols of the New Covenant, the bread and wine of Christ's last supper were clearly **representative** of His body and blood. To take Jesus' words literally—"this is My body" and "this is My blood"— is to grossly disregard a common literary tool of Scripture: **figurative language**.

Such language is widely used throughout the Bible. For example, when David's men risked their lives to bring him much-needed water, he said: "*Is it not* the blood of the men who went *in danger of* their lives?" (II Sam. 23:17). To David, the water was symbolic of the blood of those who risked their lives for him. In a similar manner, Christ is called a "door" in John 10:9, a "vine" in John 15:5, and a "rock" in I Corinthians 10:4—none of which are to be taken literally.

Forcing a literal meaning on Christ's words concerning the bread and wine of Passover creates several problems. First, it ignores the fact that Jesus Christ, Who is seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven, is

no longer composed of flesh and blood—but of spirit (see a description of His glorified form in Revelation Chapter One). Secondly, the drinking of blood is expressly forbidden in Scripture (Deut. 12:16; Acts 15:20).

More importantly, however, the idea of transubstantiation seriously contradicts a pivotal New Testament teaching, that Jesus' sacrifice was efficacious **once for all time, for all human sin—**for Christ was "**offered once** to bear *the* sins of many" (Heb. 9:28). The Catholic Church teaches that in the Eucharist the wafer of bread (as Christ's literal body) is offered up by the priest **in sacrifice**. (The wafer is referred to as a "host," from a Latin word originally meaning "victim" or "sacrifice.") In a quote from the Council of Trent, the church says, "If any one saith that in the Mass **a true and proper sacrifice** is not offered to God … let him be anathema" (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, article "Sacrifice of the Mass," bold emphasis added. Note: "Sacrifice of the Mass" is another name for the Eucharist).

The Catholic idea of Christ being offered up repeatedly as a sacrifice stands in sharp disagreement with Jesus' own words when He said on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Again, Christ's sacrifice was accomplished **once, for all time, for all human sin**. Hebrews 10:10-14 says "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**. Now every high priest stands ministering day by day, offering the same sacrifices repeatedly, which are never able to remove sins; but He, after **offering one sacrifice for sins forever**, sat down at *the* right hand of God…. For **by one offering** He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified."

Those who believe otherwise—and practice the Eucharist—should consider whether they are "crucifying [again] the Son of God for themselves, and are publicly holding *Him* in contempt" (Heb. 6:6).

Clearly, the "Sacrifice of the Mass" is unbiblical. But what, then, is its true origin?

Ancient Transubstantiation Rites

There is considerable evidence that transubstantiation rituals were carried out as part of the religious observances of numerous primitive cultures. Sir James George Frazer writes: "The custom of eating bread sacramentally as the body of a god was practised by the Aztecs before the discovery and conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards [in the sixteenth century]. Twice a year, in May and December, an image of the great Mexican god Huitzilopochtli or Vitzilipuztli was made of dough, then broken in pieces, and solemnly eaten by his worshippers…. They called these morsels [of bread] the flesh and bones of Vitzilipuztli" (*The Golden Bough—A Study in Magic and Religion*, pp. 566-567).

Frazer adds that "the ancient Mexicans, even before the arrival of Christian missionaries, were **fully acquainted with the doctrine of transubstantiation** and acted upon it in the solemn rites of their religion. They believed that by consecrating bread **their priests could turn it into the very body of their god**, so that all who thereupon partook of the consecrated

bread entered into a mystic communion with the deity by receiving a portion of his divine substance into themselves…. The ceremony was called *teoqualo*, that is, 'god is eaten' " (Ibid., pp. 568-569, bold emphasis added).

Even the Catholics admit: "[Pagan] Mithraism had a Eucharist, but **the idea of a sacred banquet is as old as the human race** and existed at all ages and amongst all peoples" (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, article "Mithraism," bold emphasis added).

"The doctrine of transubstantiation, or the magical conversion of bread into flesh, was also familiar to the Aryans of ancient India **long before the spread and even the rise of Christianity**. The Brahmans [of India] taught that the rice-cakes offered in sacrifice were substitutes for human beings, and that they were actually converted into the real bodies of men by the manipulation of the priest" (*The Golden Bough*, p. 568, bold emphasis added).

Amazingly, the concept of literally "eating a god" actually stems from cannibalism. Of the various cultures that practiced cannibalism, Frazer writes that "the flesh and blood of dead men [were] commonly eaten and drunk [in order] to inspire bravery, wisdom, or other qualities for which the [dead] men themselves were remarkable…. By this means the strength, valor, intelligence, and other virtues of the slain are believed to be imparted to the eaters" (Ibid., p. 576).

If the victim was considered to be a god, so much the better: "[B]y eating the flesh of an animal or man he [the savage] acquires not only the physical, but even the moral and intellectual qualities which were characteristic of that animal or man; so when the creature [or man] is deemed divine [a god], our simple savage naturally expects to **absorb a portion of its divinity** along with its material substance…. By eating the body of the god he **shares in the god's attributes and powers**" (Ibid., pp. 573 and 578, bold emphasis added).

Thus, the practice of cannibalism led to the idea of, literally, "eating a god." Over time, this custom evolved into various transubstantiation rituals in which consecrated bread was eaten—but only after it had been "magically" changed into the "literal" flesh of a god. Depending on the culture, wine was also often consumed as the "literal" blood of a god.

But how did this pagan transubstantiation concept find its way into "Christianity"?

The Babylonian Influence

Central to the ancient Babylonian religion was the supreme goddess "mother" Ishtar. Subsequently, every pagan civilization has worshipped its own version of a caring goddess-mother figure, such as Inanna, Fortuna, Hathor, etc. Of this "original goddess" figure, Alexander Hislop writes that "the goddess-mother has evidently radiated in all directions from Chaldea [Babylon]" (*The Two Babylons*, p. 158). As we will see, Babylonian goddess-mother worship was the forerunner of the Catholic reverence of "Mother Mary"—and pivotal to the development of the Eucharist ritual.

Hislop continues: "Now, thus we see how it comes that Rome represents Christ … as a stern and inexorable judge, before whom the sinner 'might grovel in the dust, and still never be sure that his prayers would be heard,' while Mary is set off in the most winning and engaging light, as the hope of the guilty, as the grand refuge of sinners…. The most standard devotional works of Rome are pervaded by this very principle, exalting the compassion and gentleness of the mother at the expense of the loving character of the Son….

"All this is done only to exalt the Mother, as *more* gracious and *more* compassionate than her glorious Son. Now, this was the very case in Babylon: and to this character of the goddess queen her favourite offerings exactly corresponded. Therefore, we find the women of Judah represented as simply '**burning incense, pouring out drink** [wine] **offerings, and offering *cakes* to the queen of heaven**' (Jer. 44:19)" (Ibid., pp. 158-159, bold emphasis his).

In what were known as "bloodless" sacrifices, such "cakes" were offered to the "queen of heaven" (Ishtar) as a form of communion. Hislop adds that, after such sacrifices, Ishtar's worshippers also "**partook of [the cakes and wine]**, swearing anew fidelity to her" (Ibid., p. 159, bold emphasis added).

Riding on the skirts of Mary, as it were, this early form of the Eucharist found its way into the apostate Roman church. "In the fourth century, when the queen of heaven, under the name of Mary, was beginning to be worshipped in the Christian Church [at Rome], **this 'unbloody [bread and wine] sacrifice' also was brought in**…. [At] that time it was well known to have been **adopted from the Pagans**" (Ibid., p. 159, bold emphasis added).

In the Catholic Eucharist, the "host" is a **round wafer**. Contrast this with the reality that when bread is broken, it never breaks into *round* shapes. The *broken* bread at Passover represents the body of Christ, *beaten* and *torn*. This awesome symbolism is completely lost in the "round" wafer.

History, however, links the "roundness" of the wafer with **sun worship**. "The importance … which Rome attaches to the *roundness* of the wafer, must have a reason; and that reason will be found, if we look at the altars of Egypt. 'The thin, *round* cake,' says Wilkinson, 'occurs on all [Egyptian] altars.' Almost every jot or tittle in the Egyptian worship had a symbolical meaning. The *round disk*, so frequent in the sacred emblems of Egypt, symbolized the *sun*.'… [The] 'round' wafer, whose 'roundness' is so important an element in the Romish Mystery … **is only another symbol of Baal, or the sun**" (Ibid., pp. 160, 163, bold emphasis added).

Of this Egyptian practice, Hislop writes: "Now, when Osiris, the sun-divinity, became incarnate, and was born, it was not merely that he should give his life as a *sacrifice* for men, but that he might also be **the life and *nourishment* of the souls of men**…. Now, this Son, who was symbolized as 'Corn,' was the SUN-divinity incarnate, according to the sacred oracle of the great goddess of Egypt…. What [could be] more natural then, if this incarnate divinity is symbolized as the '*bread* of God,' than that he should be

represented as a '*round* wafer,' to **identify him with the Sun**?" Hislop adds that this god who was identified "under the symbol of the wafer or thin round cake, as 'the bread of life,' was in reality the fierce, scorching Sun, or terrible Moloch" (Ibid., pp. 160-161, 163, bold emphasis added).

In the end, says Hislop, "the practice of offering and eating this 'unbloody sacrifice' [of bread and wine] was patronised by the Papacy; and now, throughout the whole bounds of the Romish communion, it has superseded the simple but most precious sacrament of the Supper instituted by our Lord Himself" (Ibid., p. 164).

Mary Worship—and Mary as "Mediatrix of Communion"

When it comes to understanding the "mystery" of the Eucharist, the role of Mary cannot be overstated. Mary is so intimately connected to the Eucharistic mystery that the late John Paul II—in his encyclical letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*—called her the "Woman of the Eucharist." "If we wish to rediscover in all its richness the profound relationship between the Church and the Eucharist, **we cannot neglect Mary**, Mother and model of the Church…. Mary can guide us towards this most holy sacrament, because **she herself has a profound relationship with it**" (Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, ch. 6: "At the School of Mary, Woman of the Eucharist," para. 53, bold emphasis added). The complete *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* is available at www.ewtn.com/library/encyc/jp2euchu.htm.

Mary's connection to the Eucharist stems in no small part from the fact that she is actually *worshipped* by the Catholic Church. Catholics, of course, deny this. However, while there is nothing in Catholic literature that *explicitly* states that Mary should be the object of worship, the sentiment is strongly *implied.* The Catholic reverence of Mary amounts, in practice, to worship because Catholics kneel before her image, pray to her, trust in her for salvation, and attribute to her titles and honors which alone belong to God. For example, a popular prayer in Mary's honor says, "Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy! Our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping, in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us." (Taken from *Mary Worship—A Study of Catholic Practice and Doctrine*, Mary Ann Collins, Jan. 2006, www.CatholicConcerns.com).

Note the use of "Advocate," a title belonging to Christ (I John 2:1).

In the official "Catechism of the Catholic Church"—as proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and approved in 1992 by Pope John Paul II—it is stated that **God has exalted Mary in glory** as "Queen of Heaven" (Catechism, no. 966), and that she is to be **praised with special devotion** (Catechism, no. 971; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Doubleday, pp. 274-275).

One only has to read between the lines to see the high degree of reverence given to Mary. Connected to the worship of Mary is her presumed role as co-mediator with Christ of man's salvation—wherein she is often

referred to as "Mediatrix." According to Catholic Creed, the "Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix" (Catechism, no. 969; Ibid., p. 275).

History had already predicted as much. Hislop writes that "the goddess-queen [Ishtar] of Chaldea [the "Queen of Heaven"] differed from her son, who was worshipped in her arms. *He* was … represented as delighting in blood. But *she* [like Mary in the Catholic Church], as the mother of grace and mercy … was averse to blood, and was represented in a benign and gentle character. Accordingly, in Babylon [as in Rome today] she bore the name of Mylitta—that is, 'The Mediatrix' " (*The Two Babylons*, pp. 56-57).

Scripture, of course, confirms that there is but "one Mediator between God and men—*the* man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5). Referring to Christ, Luke wrote: "And there is no salvation in any other, for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

One of Catholicism's principal proponents of the Marianist Movement, which glorifies Mary, was priest-missionary Louis Marie de Montfort (1673-1716) of France—best known for his works *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* and *The Secret of Mary* (see montfort.org). In his commentary entitled *St. Louis Marie de Montfort on the Eucharist and Mary*, Catholic writer Corrado Maggioni describes Montfort's insight into the role of Mary in the Eucharist. "With great sensitivity and in great depth, Montfort draws attention to the **presence and action of Mary in the Eucharist** without detriment to the excellence of the redeeming work of Christ…. **Mary is mediatrix of Communion**." Maggioni quotes Montfort as saying that people "should go to confession and Holy Communion with the intention of **consecrating themselves to Jesus through Mary**" (from www.marys-touch.com/Saints/montfort3.htm, pp.1-2, bold emphasis added).

Not only has the Catholic Church exalted Mary to an idealized, larger-than-life position as goddess-Mother and Mediatrix, it has also made her a virtual **coequal with Christ in His sufferings**.

In his message to the 19th International Marian Congress (1996), Pope John Paul II said: "Mary is present, with the Church and as the Mother of the Church, **at each of our celebrations of the Eucharist**. If the Church and the Eucharist are inseparably united, the same ought to be said of Mary and the Eucharist. This is one reason why, since ancient times, **the commemoration of Mary** has always been part of the Eucharistic celebration….

"Every Holy Mass makes present in an unbloody manner that unique and perfect sacrifice, offered by Christ on the Cross, **in which Mary participated**, joined in spirit with her suffering Son … **offering her own sorrow to the Father**. Therefore when we celebrate the Eucharist … the memory of his Mother's suffering is **also made alive and present**…. Through spiritual communion with the sorrowful Mother of God, believers share in a special way in the paschal mystery" (*Mary Leads us to Eucharist*, bold emphasis added; available at www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP96-815.htm).

In addition, John Paul says that "Mary, throughout her life at

Christ's side and not only on Calvary, **made her own *the sacrificial dimension*** *of the Eucharist*…. Mary experienced a kind of 'anticipated Eucharist'—one might say a 'spiritual communion'—of desire and of oblation, which would culminate in her union with her Son in his passion… (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, para. 56, bold emphasis added).

It should be obvious that the Sacrifice of the Mass is as much about Mary as it is about Christ. Indeed, in the Catholic mind, Mary is inexorably bound to the Eucharist. What, then, if anything, does all of this suggest?

Namely, that Mary's so-called "presence" in the Eucharist is a huge understatement. Mary is worshipped, looked upon as co-mediator and co-sufferer with Christ, and she is inseparably "present" and "active" in every Eucharist ritual. The emphasis on her role as "mediatrix of Communion"—coupled with the stress placed on her "sacrificial" role—leads one to ask, *Is Mary also present in the host?*

While the Catholic Church clearly does *not teach* that Mary is co-present in the host in the way Jesus is said to be, the subtle *suggestion* nevertheless remains.

Montfort taught that "since Mary gave the Redeemer **his flesh and blood**, it follows that **she cannot but be involved in the mysteries that are a unique memorial of the same flesh and blood**, that is, the Eucharist" (Maggioni, p. 2, bold emphasis added). As Jesus' mother, *her* flesh and blood are now *His* flesh and blood—giving her at least, perhaps, **an indirect presence in the host**. After all, since the Eucharist is a memorial of the sacrifice of Christ—in which, as we have seen, Mary is said to have "participated"—does not the ritual equally become a memorial of Mary?

Certainly, it is possible to **unknowingly worship** some*one* or some*thing*. Of pagan forms of worship, Christ said, "You do not know [who or] what you worship" (John 4:22). Is the Eucharist just another form of *veiled* Mary-worship? Is this not the Babylonian mystery religion brought full circle?

To borrow from Jeremiah 44:17-19, "We Catholics burn incense to Mary, the Queen of Heaven, and pour out drink offerings of wine to her, and make Eucharistic bread with which to worship her"—and to paraphrase Hislop, "All this is done **only to exalt the Mother** above her glorious Son."

Whatever its intention, the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist and transubstantiation stands exposed as nothing more than a fraudulent, *idolatrous*, **pagan tradition**—the product of a combination of Babylonian religious mysteries and primitive ideas of "eating a god." **Regardless of the claims of the Roman church, and the prayers of her priests, Jesus Christ's flesh has never been present in any "communion wafer," nor has His blood ever been present in any "communion wine**."

For a complete historical and theological dissertation on the subject, see Alexander Hislop's *The Two Babylons*, pp. 156-165. (Available at www.biblicaltruthministries.org or www.cbcg.org.)

Appendix K

What Happens to the Dead?

The Bible is quite clear and straightforward concerning death and the state of the dead. Orthodox Christendom, however, would have us believe that death is little more than the death of the body, while the still-conscious "immortal soul" goes on to **one place or another**. But what does the Bible teach about death and the state of the dead?

Billions of people today—and more billions throughout history—have never had even the slightest chance for salvation. In fact, most have never even **heard the name** of Jesus Christ—the **only name under heaven** by which man may be saved (Acts 4:12). Many have, however, known of the teachings of Christianity and the Bible, but never truly had their minds opened so that they might understand.

What happens to such people when they die? Are they, as many believe, "lost"?

Orthodox Christendom, again, teaches that such people are sent immediately at death to be tormented in an ever-burning hell. But does the Bible teach such an outrageous idea? What really happens to the dead?

Is the Soul Immortal?

Interestingly, Orthodox Christendom as a whole does not even pretend to get its beliefs from the Bible alone. Many, in fact, are of pagan origin. The "immortal soul" concept, for example, **does not come from the Bible.** If you believe the Bible is the Word of God and the only reliable source of knowledge about God, then the question is, "What does the **Bible** teach about life after death?"

Most religious leaders today continue to teach the immortality of the soul, despite the fact that the Bible teaches the exact opposite—that the human soul is **mortal**. It can and does DIE (Ezek. 18:20). **God alone** has immortality (I Tim. 6:15, 16).

The immortal soul idea can be traced back to ancient Babylonian mythology, which in various forms spread through the then-civilized world, eventually centering in Egypt in the third and second millennia BC. Greek mythology came mostly from Egypt, and its gods were simply the old Egyptian gods under different names. In the so-called "Golden Age" of Greek civilization, belief in various deities was overlaid gradually with a body of philosophy promoted by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. A major part of Platonic philosophy was based on the supposed **dualistic nature** of man—the idea of an immortal soul trapped inside a material body.

In the fourth century BC, Plato's disciple, Aristotle, served as teacher to the young Grecian prince Alexander—who later as Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire and the rest of the "known world." This conquest led to the spread of Hellenistic Greek philosophy throughout the empire.

Dualism teaches that the body and soul are two irreconcilably different aspects of man and are perpetually at odds with one another. Thus, the "inner person" is actually an "immortal soul" that originated in the heavens and came down to be trapped inside a material, physical body. For Plato, the only true and pure reality was the heavenly—the material was deemed temporary and essentially evil, and was at best only a faulty reflection of the heavenly. Accordingly, the hope of the "spiritual man" was that his conscious immortal soul could return to heaven at the death of the material body.

A few of the earliest "church fathers" were able to discern the fallacy of this doctrine, which had already begun to creep into the Church. Well studied in both the Old and New Testament Scriptures, Justin Martyr (AD 100-167) is one such example. In an extended dialogue with a learned Jewish Rabbi, he states, "If you have fallen in with some who are called Christians … and who say there is no resurrection of the dead, but that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven; do not imagine that they are Christians…" (Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho,* LXXX, www.earlychristianwritings.com. Most post-apostolic "church fathers," however, were brought up believing ideas such as the immortality of the soul prior to becoming "Christian." Through their highly influential writings, they eventually infused such ideas into the doctrines of the Roman Church. The Protestant Reformation—while it did help to correct some doctrinal errors—continued to promote the immortal soul heresy, which today underlies Protestant as well as Catholic doctrine.

How Such False Teachings Hurt People

The heretical idea of an immortal soul living beyond the death of the body has proven most harmful. How? Many of today's false religions play upon the fears of those deceived about the state of the dead. Churches have used false ideas about death to get people to worship dead "saints" instead of God—as well as to deceive them into thinking they can actually buy a deceased loved one's way into heaven (thus filling church coffers).

The immortal soul idea also plays a part in many abominable occult practices such as necromancy—the attempt to contact the spirits of departed loved ones. Thousands of people have been given false hopes and bilked out of their hard-earned money by charlatans who claimed to be contacting the dead through séances. (If anything supernatural actually happens at such events, the "spirits" contacted are not those of any dead human beings—but demons pretending to be the spirits of the dead persons!)

Today, fanatical activists in the Middle East are promised that if they blow themselves up in a crowd and kill as many innocent civilians as possible, their immortal souls will go to heaven and be attended by many virgins.

(One wonders whether they would be as willing to do this if they knew their soul was not immortal—that they would simply be dead afterwards, eventually to face the judgment of God!)

The "Soul"—According to the Bible

What the Bible says about the soul requires some study. The Hebrew word translated "soul" is *nephesh,* defined as "a *breathing* creature, i.e., animal or (abstract) *vitality;* used very widely in a literal, accommodated or figurative sense (bodily or mentally)…" (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible,* Hebrew Lexicon, item 5315; abbreviations spelled out). The various uses of the Hebrew *nephesh* simply refer to the **physical life** of air breathing creatures—including human beings. Rather than being separate from the physical body, the soul is inextricably fused with the body.

When God created Adam in Genesis chapter one, He made him (not just his body) "of the dust of the ground"—and Adam "became a living soul" (*nephesh*). Notice—it does not say that Adam "received a soul," but that he **became a living soul**. The soul is what a person IS—not something he "has." It's the **complete package** of everything one is, both physical and nonphysical.

But can a soul die? In Ezekiel 18:4 we read, "The soul [*nephesh*] that sins, it [not just the body] shall die." For emphasis, the statement is repeated in verse 20. Some point to what Jesus said in Matthew 10:28—"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul"—but they fail to read the rest of the passage. "But rather fear him [God] which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [Greek, *gehenna*]" (*KJV*). Notice, Christ did NOT say this *gehenna* fire burns the soul for eternity, but that it DESTROYS the soul—burns it up, causing it to cease to exist. Christ made it clear that the soul is NOT immortal and has no life or consciousness apart from the body.

Confusing Soul with Spirit

Some misunderstanding of the biblical teaching on the soul may result from the fact that the Bible also teaches that man has a human spirit. The Hebrew word translated "spirit" is *ruach,* which in some places is also translated "breath."

Job 32:8 says there is a "spirit in man." Several passages in Proverbs refer to this human spirit (Prov. 15:13; 16:32; 20:27; 25:28). This inner spirit, which we all have, is **not a separate or additional "being"**—nor an "immortal soul" trapped inside of us. It is a nonphysical dimension that God gives to each of us at conception and is what, in reality, makes us human (Isa. 42:5; Zech. 12:1).

It is the human spirit added to our brain which gives us a **conscious mind** with self-identity—through which we are able to learn complex subjects such as language, mathematics and design (I Cor. 2:11). The human spirit is the sum total of everything about us that is nonphysical—our

thoughts, imaginations, plans, hopes, dreams, feelings, emotions, attitudes—and makes us each who and what we are. The human spirit also provides God with what is comparable to a "recording" of all that we are—which at death returns to God (Eccl. 12:7). God can then use this "recording" to resurrect us back to physical (or spiritual) life with everything that was unique about us intact.

It is important to understand that even with the addition of the human spirit, it is the whole physical and spiritual package that makes up the person—the soul. The whole person **is a soul**—not "has" a soul. Neither the soul nor the human spirit retain any consciousness after death (Psalm 146:4).

Paul writes that through conversion our human spirit is conjoined by God's Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:16). It is through the workings of God's Spirit with our human spirit in our minds that enables us to be able to understand the things of God (I Cor. 2:11). Those who have God's Holy Spirit added to their human spirit in this life become, at death, the "dead in Christ."

Death—According to the Bible

Again, the Bible is clear in its teaching on death and the state of the dead. The difference between being alive and being dead, according to Scripture, is not a matter of place or location—but a matter of being conscious or not conscious. Death, as we will see, is the **total cessation of life**, including consciousness. The only hope for the dead is through a resurrection back to conscious life.

The Bible describes the death of humans as being identical to the death of animals (Eccl. 3:19, 20). Death is the same for all—whether righteous or unrighteous, faithful or unfaithful (Eccl. 9:2). In death, a person's thoughts perish—he or she **knows nothing**, has no consciousness, no awareness (Eccl. 9:5; Psa. 146:4). They are neither looking down from "heaven" nor roasting in a "hell" somewhere in the bowels of the earth. They are simply "dead."

What about Heaven—or Purgatory?

Many are surprised to learn that the Bible does not teach that anyone goes to heaven. On the contrary, Jesus Christ—the very author of our Christian faith, whose words ought to carry far more weight than those of any would-be religious leader—stated emphatically, "No man has ascended up to heaven" (John 3:13). The apostle Peter adds, "David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34)—he is simply dead.

Hebrews 9:27 tells us that it is appointed to **all to die once**. This **first death** (and lying dead for decades or centuries afterward) is neither a reward nor a punishment. It is simply what happens to everyone. In David's case—because he died "in the faith"—he will (in a future resurrection) receive the reward of the faithful. Like all the true saints who have

died, he is simply waiting in his grave for the resurrection.

Another false teaching (also based on the "immortal soul" idea) insists that people go at death to a place called "Purgatory" where they suffer over long periods of time in order to have their sins purged—after which they can go on to heaven.

Obviously, there are no references to such a myth in Scripture. In fact, the idea denies the very sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of sin. When a person is truly converted—has repented of sin and accepted Christ as savior—his or her sins are totally and completely forgiven **at that time**. One does not have to undergo any punishment for such sins—now or after death. To teach otherwise borders on blasphemy!

The Resurrection—A Christian's True Hope

Job asked the question in chapter 14, verse 14, "If a man die, shall he live again?" He gives the answer: "All the days of my appointed time [in the grave] I will **wait, until my change comes**. You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall have the desire for the work of Your hands." This change does **not** occur right at death. Job knew he would have to **wait in the grave** for an unknown period of time before God would raise him up to a CHANGED state—from being dead to being alive.

Again, we must look to the words of Jesus Christ, not to those of human church leaders. The most quoted verse of the Bible—John 3:16—may also be one of its least understood. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him should not…"—what? Not go to hell, but go to heaven? Is that what Christ said?

This passage is not about living forever in a horrible place or living forever in a good place. Location isn't the issue. Christ said those who believe in Him "should not **perish**"—which means to cease to exist—"but have everlasting life."

In the book of Acts and throughout the epistles, Paul and the other apostles describe the Christian hope as being the **resurrection from the dead**. In reassuring Christians of this hope, Paul makes it clear in I Corinthians 15 that Jesus' resurrection is absolute proof of a future resurrection of the saints. He encourages the Thessalonians with similar words in I Thess. 4:13-18. Referring to the resurrection of the true Christian, Christ repeatedly said, "I will raise him up **at the last day**" (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24).

When does God make His final decision whether a person lives forever or perishes? Does God make that decision at the time of a person's death? For those few who have been called to conversion and God's grace, now is their time of judgment. But for the majority, the time for their judgment has not yet come. Remember, the first death is neither reward nor punishment—for in Adam, we all die (I Cor. 15:22). The vast majority of the dead are simply waiting for the resurrection, when they will have their opportunity for "judgment."

Is Today the Only Day of Salvation?

There is an assumption implicit in the teachings of mainstream Christianity that if a person doesn't "get saved" now, in this life, he or she is lost forever. As sincere and well-meaning as these teachers may be, they are simply in error. The Bible DOES NOT teach the idea that this life is the only time in which people may have salvation!

It is important that we understand something largely unknown to world leaders. Satan, the "god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4), currently holds most religious and civil leaders under his sway—having deceived such leaders at every turn (Rev. 12:9). The result is a world of culture and tradition in which whole populations are entrenched in false ways of life. Most people are so steeped in the ways of this world that they cannot possibly understand the truth of God—nor would they be willing to follow God's way of life even if they did understand. This is why, as Paul says in Romans 11:32, God has "concluded them all in unbelief"—but only for a time—"that He might have mercy on them all" in a future time of judgment.

Add to that the fact that the natural human mind simply lacks the capacity or even the desire to understand spiritual truth (I Cor. 2:11, 14). Only if God by His spirit "calls" a person—that is, **opens the mind** of an individual and imparts understanding of His truth—does that person come to repentance and conversion in this life (II Cor. 7:9-11; John 6:44; Rom. 2:4; Phil. 2:13).

Christ indicated to His disciples that such a calling has NOT been extended to most people in this life. They asked Him why He spoke to the masses in parables. He answered, "Because it has been **given to you** to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given…. For this reason **I speak to them in parables**, because seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, 'In hearing you shall hear, and in no way understand; and in seeing you shall see and in no way perceive; for the heart of this people has grown fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and should hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them' " (Matt. 13:11-15).

Up to now, only a tiny minority of all humankind has had the calling of God—and far fewer have actually come to conversion and received God's Holy Spirit. These few—this "little flock," as Christ refers to His true Church—constitute the "house of God." Peter tells us that **now**, in this life, **is the time that judgment must begin at the house of God** (I Pet. 4:17). Thus, when a converted person dies "in the faith" (or "in Christ") their judgment by God has already taken place. God has made the final decision that he or she is going to be in His Kingdom—and has written that person's name in the "Book of Life."

There will be some few who may have committed the "unpardonable sin"—that is, with full knowledge and understanding of the truth and the way to salvation, they have rejected God's grace and forgiveness, and have chosen not to repent and turn from the way of sin to God's way. For such—

and only God knows who they are—their final judgment is complete. They await the resurrection of the wicked and their fate is the second death in the lake of fire. This lake of fire (Greek, *gehenna*) is a consuming fire that totally destroys the incorrigibly wicked. Jesus warned us to fear Him who can "**destroy** both soul and body" in this fire (Matt. 10:28). Malachi 4:1-3 shows that the wicked will become ashes under the feet of the faithful.

A Second Resurrection

As we've seen, the dead in Christ remain **in their graves** UNTIL He raises them up "at the last day," as depicted by the Feast of Pentecost (Job 14:14; John 5:25; 6:39, 40, 44, 54; I Thess. 4:13-16; I Cor. 15:50-54; Matt. 24:30, 31; Rev. 20:4-6). At that time Christ will raise them to eternal life in a supernatural, spirit state—to be just like Christ Himself (I John 3:1, 2; Phil. 3:21; II Pet. 1:4; Daniel 12:3).

But what about the rest of the dead? Judgment for them has not yet occurred. When do they **get their chance** for salvation?

In Revelation 20:5, John writes that the resurrection of the "dead in Christ" (which occurs at Christ's second coming) is only the "first resurrection." He adds that, "the **rest of the dead** lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

But they DO LIVE AGAIN! There is a **second resurrection.** In that same chapter, verse 12, we read, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Here we see pictured the "second resurrection"—the resurrection of all who have ever lived and **died NOT in the faith**—those not having been called and brought to conversion in their first life, now coming before Christ's "white throne" of judgment.

As with most biblical subjects, the whole story is not told all in one place. In Ezekiel 37 we have another view of the second resurrection—dealing specifically with the dead of Israel as they are brought back to **physical** life in the future. They are among the "rest of the dead"—the dead **not** in Christ—who appear before God's throne in Revelation 20:12. Remember, "the rest of the dead" means **all of those** not in the first resurrection—which would include the overwhelming majority of Israelites who had died throughout the ages.

Notice in Ezekiel 37 that after Israel is brought back to life, God gives them His Holy Spirit! In order to receive God's Spirit, however, they must first repent as Peter brings out in Acts 2:38. These newly resurrected Israelites will, apparently, be called before the "white throne" of Christ like the rest of humanity—to account for the deeds of their past. Most if not all will come to see what sinners they were—and in repentance accept Jesus Christ as their Savior with forgiveness of their sins. They will be granted God's Spirit and happily live out their new physical life. (Isa. 65:20 seems to indicate that they may have up to 100 years to grow in grace and knowledge and to build spiritual character before ultimately going on into the Kingdom of God.)

Salvation for Gentiles, Too?

Clearly then, we see "unconverted" Israel resurrected in the future. But what about "unconverted" Gentiles? Chapters Nine through Eleven of Romans shows us that **God will deal with Gentiles as He deals with Israel**. Revelation 20:12 pictures ALL of the "rest of the dead" before the white throne, not just Israel. ALL bow before God and confess their sins. ALL are judged based on their works, and ALL are found guilty of sin (Rom. 3:23).

But will the guilty stand condemned? II Peter 3:9 tells us that God is not willing that **any should perish** (be destroyed and miss out on eternal life). After being shown their sins before the throne of God, ALL will have their **first and only chance** for salvation through repentance, conversion and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Remember, those of the second resurrection NEVER had (in their first life) their minds opened to the truth of God by the Holy Spirit of God—and never had the opportunity (with a full understanding) to repent of their sins and receive God's grace.

Christ died once for ALL: (I Tim. 2:6; Heb. 10:10; I Cor. 15:22-24). Our Lord and Savior did not go through the torture, humiliation, scourging and beating He suffered, followed by His agonizing death on the cross—only to have His grace offered to just part of the human family!

By the time this "White Throne Judgment" takes place, Satan will have been put into the lake of fire and will no longer be able to pervert the truth and deceive humanity. Without Satan's distorting influence—and with their minds now opened by the Holy Spirit—people will for the **first time** be able to think spiritually. Only those very few who refuse, at that time, to repent and accept Christ as their Savior will go on to the ultimate punishment—the lake of fire pictured in Revelation 20:14-15.

Thank God for His incredible, merciful plan! Be encouraged by the truth of the Bible concerning death and the state of the dead—rejoice in the sure knowledge that all who have ever lived will one day have their full chance for eternal life!

Appendix L

What Is the Unpardonable Sin?

As a willful *choice*, the unpardonable sin is the deliberate *rejection* of God the Father and Jesus Christ, and a *repudiation* of the forgiveness of sins and the gift of salvation made possible through Jesus' sacrifice.

The unpardonable sin is a deliberate and calculated renunciation of God. It is *not* an accidental sin, nor is it a sin committed under *temptation* or through *weakness*.

Rather, the unpardonable sin is a knowing, determined, premeditated, willful *decision* and *choice*—arrived at while rejecting any pangs of the conscience, while denying the leading of the Holy Spirit, and while ignoring the pleadings of the Word of God, or of ministers and brethren. It is a willful determination to *reject* the very **gift of repentance**; it is based on hostile *contempt* for the commandments of God and the Spirit of God; it is a willful *repudiation* of the very sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His blood for the forgiveness of sins and the salvation of God.

Satan the devil has *not deceived* those who have committed the unpardonable sin. Rather, they have willingly and willfully—with predetermination and without regret or sorrow—turned their backs on God the Father and Jesus Christ, and the Word of God.

It is not possible to renew such a one to repentance. In fact, it is impossible for even the Holy Spirit to move such a person to repentance. Such a person has "seared" his or her conscience as if with a hot iron—and there is no power, human or divine, that is able to renew them to repentance.

Their choice is *final*, and God's judgment against them is final.

"In [the book of] Hebrews, the characteristic terms for sin that display contempt for God are compounds of ***para,*** many of which occur nowhere else in the New Testament.

para*deigmaizein*, to expose to public humiliation (6:6)

para*pikainein*, to rebel (3:16)

para*pikrasmos*, rebellion (3:8, 15)

para*rrein*, to drift away, fall away (2:1)

para*pherein*, to carry away (13:9)

par*einenos,* being listless (12:12)

"There is no other repentance than that provided through Jesus Christ. There is no salvation apart from the purification for sins accomplished by the divine Son in the final period of God's redemptive activity. The αδυνατον *adunaton* [the impossibility], which is used, absolutely and without qualification in Heb. 6:4, expresses an impossibility because the apostate [has] repudiat[ed] the only basis upon which repentance can be extended. **To repudiate Christ is to embrace the** '**impossible**' " (Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 47A, p. 142).

The Human Conscience

Created by God in all men and women, the human conscience is part of the heart and mind. When anyone sins there is an *automatic* sense of guilt. The worse the sin, the greater the guilt—and hence, dread. "Conscience is that facility within us which decides as to the moral quality of our thoughts, words and acts [i.e., makes us specially aware of our thoughts and actions]. It gives consciousness of the good of one's conduct or motives, or causes feelings of remorse at evil-doing, but its action is involuntary. A good conscience is one which has no feeling of reproach against oneself, [and] does not accuse oneself of willful wrong" (*Cruden's Concordance*, definition of *conscience*).

Warnings Against the Unpardonable Sin

1) Description of the Apostate

Heb. 6:6
"fallen away"
"crucifying the Son of God"
"publicly holding *Him* in contempt"
Heb. 10:26, 29
"willfully go on sinning"
"trampled underfoot the Son of God"
"has regarded the blood of the covenant,
with which He was sanctified, *as* an unholy thing"
"has scorned the Spirit of grace"

2) One's Prior Experience

Heb. 6:4-5
"once enlightened"
"personally obtained the heavenly gift"
"became partakers of *the* Holy Spirit"
"have tasted *the* good Word of God, and *the* powers
of *the* world to come"

Heb. 10:26, 29
"after receiving the knowledge of the truth"
"was sanctified with the blood of the covenant"

3) Impossibility of Renewal

Heb. 6:4, 6
"For *it is* impossible … to renew *them* again unto repentance"
Heb. 10:26
"there is no longer any sacrifice for sins"

4) Their Expectation

Heb. 6:6, 8
"being cursed, the end of which *is* for burning"
Heb. 10:27, 29, 31
"terrifying expectation of inevitable judgment"
"fierce fire"
"much worse punishment"
"a fearful thing to fall into *the* hands of *the* living God"

Comfort

1) Basis

Heb. 6:9
Appeal to "better things"
Heb. 10:32
Appeal to "remember the earlier days"

2) Past Experience as Christians

Heb. 6:10
"work, and the labor of love"
"have served the saints"
Heb. 10:32, 33, 34
"endured much conflict in *your* sufferings"
"companions of those who were enduring the same things"
"showed compassion to me in my bonds"
"gladly endured the plunder of your possessions"

3) Present Responsibility

Heb. 6:11, 12
"demonstrating the same diligence"
"*be* imitators of those with faith and steadfast endurance"

Heb. 10:35, 36
"do not cast away your confidence"
"need to have endurance"

4) Incentive

Heb. 6:11, 12
"the full assurance of the hope until *the* end"
"inherit the promises"
Heb. 10:35, 36
"great reward"
"may receive the promise"

Appendix M

Binding and Loosing in the New Testament Church: Matthew 16:19 and 18:18

The Catholic Church claims that Jesus gave the apostle Peter (and those who would succeed him) the authority of "binding and loosing"—so that whatever they would bind or loose on earth, would be bound or loosed in heaven. They further contend that this authority grants an already infallible pope the power to bind and loose even if such decrees are contrary to the Scriptures—thus making the Word of God of no effect.

Various popes and "church fathers" over the centuries have appealed to this so-called "apostolic authority" of Peter—supposedly passed down to all popes—in order to "Christianize" what were originally occult practices and pagan holidays. One would think, however, that if these popes were really the successors of Peter, they would surely **follow his example**—which was to reject all occult practices and holidays!

In Acts 8:9-24, for example, we see that Peter had an interesting encounter with "Simon the sorcerer," who promoted pagan, satanic practices. According to the Catholic perspective, Peter had the authority to "loose" the clear biblical prohibitions against such practices and incorporate them into Christianity. As absurd as it sounds, those practices would have also then been bound in heaven! But Peter, of course, resoundingly rejected Simon Magus and his satanic, occult religion.

Sadly, the apostate Roman church has embraced numerous Babylonian and Egyptian religious practices for themselves and their followers, while falsely claiming authority from God to do so. As a result, they are truly walking in the footsteps of Simon Magus, instead of the apostle Peter.

Such claims of authority are based on self-serving false interpretations and a misunderstanding of Matthew 16:19 and 18:18, due in no small part to a flawed translation. "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19, *KJV*). A more accurate translation will easily clear up the matter.

In *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*, William D. Mounce gives a clear and insightful explanation of the underlying Greek text, showing that what Jesus actually taught is entirely different from what many religious authorities assume, teach and practice. "In some translations of Matthew [16:19 and] 18:18, it seems like Jesus promised his disciples that whatever they bound on earth would be bound in heaven, and whatever they loosed on

earth would be loosed in heaven. In other words, they had the power to bind and loose, and Heaven (i.e., God) would simply back up their decrees. But the matter is not quite so simple; the actions described [as occurring] in heaven are future perfect passives—which could be translated 'will have already been bound in heaven … [and] will have already been loosed in heaven.' In other words, the heavenly decree confirming the earthly one is based on a prior verdict [by God].

"This is the language of the law court. Jewish legal issues were normally decided in Jesus' day by elders in the synagogue community (later by rabbis). Many Jewish people believed that the authority of heaven stood behind the earthly judges when they decided cases based on a correct understanding of God's laws. (This process came to be called 'binding and loosing.') Jesus' contemporaries often envisioned God's justice in terms of a heavenly court; by obeying God's laws, the earthly court simply ratified [bound or loosed] the [already existing] decrees of the heavenly court" (p. 121, bracketed comments added).

Simply put, man can only ratify and be in agreement with **what God has already established**: "Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in the heavens" (Psa. 119:89).

A proper translation of Matthew 16:19 follows: "And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you may bind on the earth **will have already been bound in heaven**; and whatever you may loose on the earth **will have already been loosed in heaven**."

Clearly, Jesus **did not** give His apostles and disciples the authority to make binding decisions regarding anything on earth that had not *already* been decreed in heaven. Jesus specifically taught that He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets (Matt. 5:17). Therefore, whatever may be bound or loosed by men **cannot be contrary to the laws and commandments of God**, the revelation of the prophets or the teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ **did not** give His apostles the authority to loose any of the Ten Commandments or any of God's laws that are not connected with the priesthood and temple ritual.

However, Jesus **did** give His apostles the authority to loose the religious **traditions** of the Jews (Mark 7:1-13, Acts 10:28) as well as pagan religious traditions (I Pet. 1:18, Acts 14:8-18).

New Testament teachings foreshadowed and prophesied in the Old Testament—and thus "bound" or decreed in heaven *before* Jesus Christ came in the flesh—are as follows:

- To love the Lord God with all one's heart, soul and might (Deut. 6:4-6; Matt. 22:37-40);
- For Jesus to magnify the law and make it honorable (Isa. 42:21; Matt. 5-7);
- For Christ to die for the sins of the world (Psa. 22, Isa. 53; John 1:36; Rev. 13:8);
- Forgiveness of sin, upon repentance, without temple animal sacrifices (Psa. 32:1-2; 51:1-17; Rom. 3:20-24; Heb. 10:1-18);

- Circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:16; Rom. 2:28-29; Col. 2:10-13);
- Sabbath and holy day keeping for uncircumcised Gentiles (Isa. 56:1-6), taught by Paul (Acts 13:42-44; Heb. 4:9, I Cor. 5:8); and many others.

Any Christian-professing ministry or church that promotes sin (the transgression of God's law) in its binding or loosing decisions is operating contrary to the Word and will of God. Its decisions are simply **inventions of men** and do not have the authority of heaven behind them. Some examples would be: adding to or taking away from the Word of God (Deut. 12:30 -32; Rev. 22:18-19); worshiping other gods or goddesses (Ex. 20:2-3; I Cor. 10:20-21); the making and worshiping of idols (Ex. 20:4-6; Isa. 42:8, 17; 44:9-20; I Cor. 10:14; 12:2; Rev. 9:20-21; 21:8); worshiping dead "saints" (Isa. 8:19); exchanging the Sabbath and holy days of God for Sunday worship and the pagan holidays of apostate Christendom—such as Halloween, Christmas, Easter, etc., or any other so-called holy day of any religion of the world.

All binding and loosing decisions made by the ministry and brethren of Jesus Christ must be in complete accord with the Word of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Such decisions are authoritative because they have "already been bound or loosed in heaven" as evidenced by Scripture. As Jesus said, "**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me**" (Matt. 28:18). All binding and loosing must be **based on the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God**, not on the whims of religious leaders who bring in pagan, occult religious practices under false pretenses.

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